

PHILOSOPHY · SCIENCE · RELIGION · THE ARTS

TheoSophia

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THEOSOPHY
A Reconnection of All Life

O HIDDEN LIFE

ESOTERIC ECOLOGY

ORIGINAL VISION
On the Choice of a New Life

TheoSophia



FREEDOM OF THE SOCIETY

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

Resolution passed by the General Council of The Theosophical Society in 1949.

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.

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

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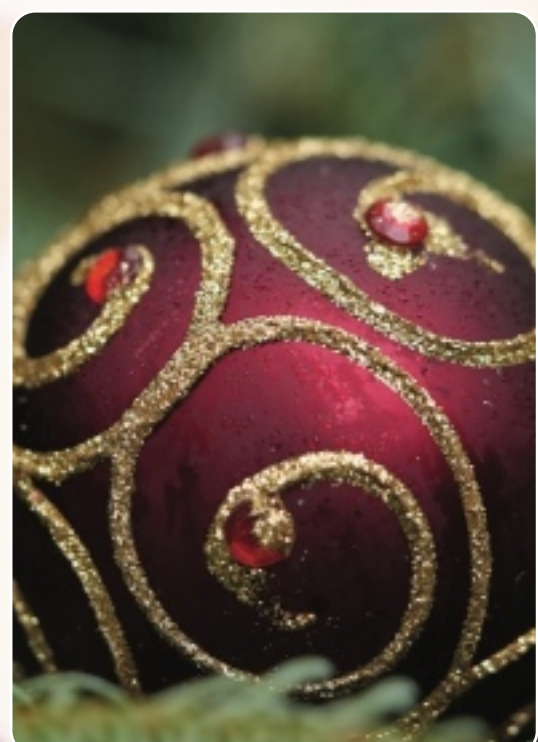
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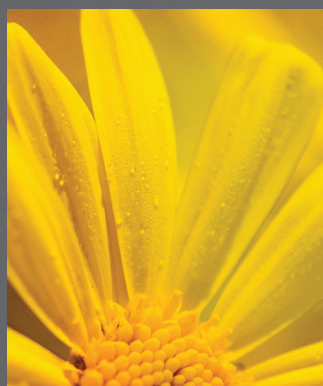
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Christmas Ornament
Pexels



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128th National Convention of the Theosophical Society in NZ Inc.

EMBRACING WHOLENESS ~ AWAKENING OF THE HUMAN HEART

• 16 – 21 January 2025 • Auckland Rose Park Hotel, Parnell, Auckland •

What does it mean to embrace wholeness and to experience the interconnectedness of all things? Through inspiring talks, workshops, and heartfelt discussion, we will delve into the active role the human being plays in the evolutionary journey, not just of themselves but of the whole of humanity. We will be exploring how Theosophical principles can be applied practically to everyday life, supporting personal and collective transformation. We will look at what behaviours and practices can be nurtured to enable deeper insight and understanding of our ourselves, our world and the cosmos.

OUR SPECIAL GUEST – DR JUDE CURRIVAN

Dr Jude Currivan is a cosmologist, planetary healer, futurist and author. She has experienced multidimensional realities since early childhood and worked with the wisdom keepers both incarnate and discarnate of many traditions.

Dr Jude integrates leading edge science, research into consciousness and universal wisdom teachings into a holistic world-view. This underpins her work aimed at enabling transformational and emergent resolutions to our collective planetary issues, raising awareness and empowering fundamental change and sustainable solutions to global problems.



Dr Jude Currivan holds a PhD in Archaeology from the University of Reading in the UK, researching ancient cosmologies, and a Master's Degree in Physics from Oxford University specialising in cosmology and quantum physics. For the last two decades she has also travelled around the world in service to planetary and collective healing, some of which is described in her books *The 8th Chakra*, *The 13th Step* and most recently, *HOPE – Healing Our People & Earth*.

VENUE

The 2025 National Convention will be held at the Auckland Rose Park Hotel (Parnell Room); located in one of Auckland's oldest suburbs, neighbouring the picturesque Parnell Rose Gardens and an easy stroll to the vibrant buzz of Auckland's downtown CBD. Set on a sprawling site of more than 7,000 square metres, the Rose Park Hotel features comprehensive facilities, including a swimming pool and the superb Garden View restaurant. There is ample free car parking for guests and visitors, and its central location makes it easily accessible by bus or train. Shared accommodation is also available at the Rose Park Hotel. All rooms have been refurbished and feature fully renovated bathrooms, high-quality air conditioning units and opening windows for fresh air.



REGISTRATION: see registration form in this issue.

A RADICAL GUIDE TO REALITY

JUDE CURRIVAN'S PRESENTATION

We live in a time when scientific breakthroughs and evidence at all scales of existence are converging with universal wisdom teachings. This convergence is revealing that our entire Universe meaningfully exists and purposefully evolves as an interdependent and unified entity; inviting us to re-member who we really are, and vitally, who we can evolve to become.

Jude's presentation will be followed later in the convention with an experiential workshop, where we will further explore these themes and consider their implications for each and all of us.



HPB Lodge

PROGRAMME

- SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER, DR JUDE CURRIVAN,
- VARIOUS LOCAL AND TSNZ SPEAKERS
- WORKSHOPS AND GUIDED MEDITATIONS
- A SPECIAL THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE PRESENTATION
- ENTERTAINMENT EVENINGS INCLUDING MUSIC AND A QUIZ NIGHT
- A SPECIAL OUTING IN AUCKLAND ORGANISED BY THE AUCKLAND BRANCH
- HPB LODGE VISIT
- TIME TO SHARE AND CHAT OVER A CUP OF TEA

GUEST SPEAKER

Shona Hammond Boys whom we are thrilled to announce will be joining us, is an artist, filmmaker, author, visionary, humanitarian and proud New Zealander, with a passion for her native land. She is the Founder and Director of NZ Children's Art House Foundation, with her work recognised by the Queen. Shona has been the recipient of dozens of awards – both nationally and internationally – for her contributions to the arts. She is a beloved member of NZ's art community and has dedicated her life to children's art and values education across the world.



LOCAL TSNZ SPEAKERS



Richard Sell
(National President)



Kirsty Morton
(Whanganui)



John Vorstermans
(Auckland)



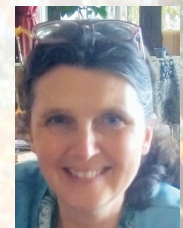
Donna Willard-Moore
(New Plymouth)



Renée Sell
(Auckland)



Carole van Weede
(Auckland)



Wendy Rapp
(Auckland)

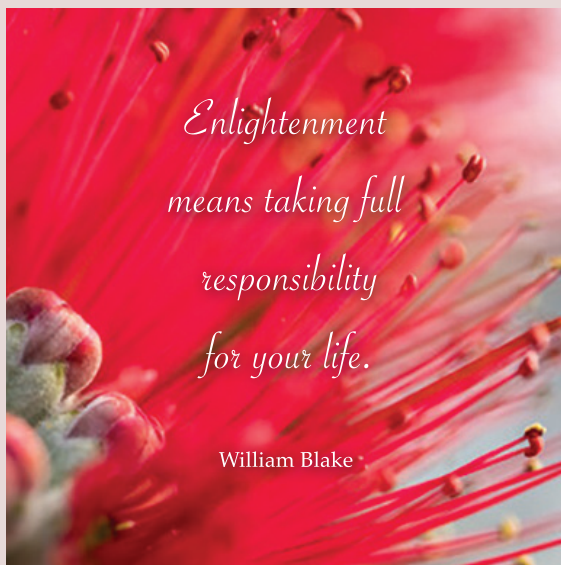
NEWLY ELECTED GOVERNANCE BOARD MEMBERS

The 2024 elections for the Governance Board roles have been counted and the people elected are:

- Helen Sussmilch
- John Vorstermans

Congratulations to them both.

The roles commence after the 17th January 2025 AGM."



WWW.THEOSOPHY.WORLD

A NEW RESOURCE CENTRE FOR ALL THINGS THEOSOPHICAL

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

- eBooks
- video and audio archives
- historical publications
- links to other helpful resources
- poems, quotes and much more...

SOMETHING
TO SHARE?

EMAIL US AT
content@theosophy.world

Theosophy World
RESOURCE CENTRE

THE THREE OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

- To form a nucleus of the Universal Kinship of Humanity, without distinction of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, sexual orientation, caste or colour.
- To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.
- To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being.

Reconnecting

After isolation periods during the height of the Covid pandemic response, many people felt the need to reconnect and some found that difficult. Even now, many prefer to work from home and some school students struggle to recover the routine of daily attendance. Reconnection has been a challenge for many.

On a broader scale, do we need to reconnect with our world, our relationships and our beliefs? Can we live as theosophists with all the ideals and direction originally mapped out by the early leaders? And can we reconnect with life, through theosophy?

Articles in this issue of *TheoSophia* which may encourage this review of connectivity, include those by Richard Sell (p.7), Tim Boyd (p.9), Joy Mills (p.11), Donna Willard-Moore (p.15), Janet Macrae (p.18) and Barbara Hebert (p.23).

Recently, the Theosophical Society in Palmerston North celebrated 100 years since they moved into their building. Reconnecting with friends and family was part of that special day (p.6).

Inevitably, reconnection will be evident also among members of TSNZ at the annual National Convention 2025 to be held in Auckland. There is still time to register (see p.2 and enclosed form).

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Editorial Team of *TheoSophia*. May you enjoy happy holidays, perhaps making happy reconnections of your own.

Pamela Zane
Editor
editor@theosophy.nz

Contributions of poems or articles 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

TSNZ YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/@theosophynz>

I Became a Witness

*The honey-coloured cedar door stood firmly in its
well-framed opening*

*I grabbed its antique bronze handle and slowly
turned the smooth knob*

*Pulling the hinged hulk towards me I peered into
an unfamiliar glass-covered room*

*A solitary golden leaf lay vibrantly on the floor
inviting me to walk along the moss-surrounded
path beyond it*

*With utmost attention I entered onto a long chain
of events*

Each resting stop created a unique vantage point

I am a witness to the struggle of the poor

Yet I receive so I can give

I am witness to the accident of a child

Yet I am unscathed as I feel the pain

I am witness to the abuse of another

Yet I breathe compassionately in the torment

I am witness to the illness of a companion

Yet I keep my health in support

I am a witness to the death of a loved one

Yet I live on in remembrance

Then I discovered the path never ends

The room has no walls

The landscape is in continuous flux

I had become melted into the fabric of life

Murray Rogers

DIARY DATES

2025

January 16-21 128th National Convention of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand in Auckland

January 17 AGM of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand at Rose Park Hotel, Parnell, Auckland

May 10-14 School of Theosophy with Juliana Cesano

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

FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2025		
March	Why Are We Here?	1 January
June	Theosophy, an Impulse of the Spirit	1 April
September	The Discriminating Mind/Discernment	1 July

Contact the editor at editor@theosophy.org.nz or visit our website for the guidelines: www.theosophy.nz

PALMERSTON NORTH CELEBRATES

Helen Sussmilch reports on the special occasion...

The Theosophical Society building in Palmerston North was opened on Sunday 21 September 1924. To celebrate 100 years of its use, the Central Region of TSNZ held a special gathering with previous members and past presidents as invited speakers. Presenters from Headquarters and the branches explored the theme, “Humanity’s Spiritual Evolution”, leading to an informative theosophical learning experience in an atmosphere of unity and kinship.

New friendships were established and previous links renewed, surrounded at times by the sense of the Silence and cohesive energy leading to reinvigoration of purpose for us all. The Palmerston North Branch appreciated contributions from all those who attended and freely committed to the heartfelt warmth of the weekend.



A rainbow over TS Palmerston North’s 100-year-old building in Church Street.



Celebration attendees from the Central Region and Headquarters of TSNZ.



Clive Conland (Wellington).



National President, Richard Sell making a presentation.



Ross Conland (past President), Richard Sell and Clive Conland – cutting the cake.



Presentation by Andrew Moore (Palmerston North).



Helen Sussmilch and Anthea Clement (Palmerston North).



Kirsty Morton (Whanganui), Helen Sussmilch (Palmerston North) and Sue Harrison (Hawkes Bay).

National President of TSNZ, Richard Sell reflects on...

Reconnecting Theosophy to the Consciousness of Humanity



Hypatia

It has been said that the last vestiges of the ancient wisdom left Europe after the death of Hypatia who was brutally killed by a mob in 414 AD. Hypatia was a Neoplatonist philosopher, astronomer and mathematician who lived in Alexandria. She was one of the earliest mathematicians whose life and works are still known today. It has also been said, that Hypatia was a previous incarnation of Dr Annie Besant.

This withdrawing of knowledge in the world had been proceeding for a long time, with ancient Egypt feeling the ebb of esoteric knowledge in the temples before the time of Christ. We read about this descending darkness in the magnificent book *The Idyll of the White Lotus* by Mabel Collins, published in 1884, which describes the journey of the Pilgrim Soul, in a time when the light in the temples of ancient Egypt was rapidly fading.

The well-recorded period of darkness in western civilisation eventually started to lift with the period known as the Renaissance, when Europe witnessed a flourishing of arts and culture. This led on to scientific renewal which produced extraordinary results over three centuries and eventually paved the way for a revival of the human spirit in the form of greater religious tolerance and general enquiry. Towards the end of the 19th century Theosophy entered the dominion of humanity again with the inception of the modern theosophical movement. Not for the first time had this word been used, having its first known outing in England around 1650, but the term was also applied earlier to the thought of Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus, who founded the Alexandrian school of Neoplatonism in Egypt in the early third century after Christ.

Although the ancient wisdom had been kept alive in the east with varying degrees of success, these too were receding from public involvement over the centuries – for example, the decline of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. By the late 19th century, the clash of religious ideas and the exponential rise of interest in Spiritualism provided a fertile ground for the Society to make a bold entry bringing the eastern knowledge of the Vedas, Upanishads, Advaita Vedanta and Bhagavad Gita to the west. Theosophy itself has a wide scope of thought to offer through enquiry into various religious movements, from mainstream religion to Gnosticism and Hermeticism, the exploration of esoteric subjects like Alchemy, Metaphysics, Astrology and Occultism. It encompasses valuable contributions made by remarkable individuals such as Pythagoras, Paracelsus and Giordano Bruno amongst others.

While the attempt in 1875 was not the first iteration to reintroduce the ancient wisdom into the world, it has propelled a powerful spiritual vibration into the world anew, awakening the consciousness of humanity from its spiritual slumbers. The Theosophical Society is the forerunner of the new age and from it, sprang various shoots of like-minded organisations and thought-provoking ideas and concepts which can be readily accessible now throughout the globe. These ideas are becoming more accepted and are finding their mark by adoption in many domains.

As an example, we can see the holistic view or integration of traditionally opposing fields such as religion and science

occurring in order to take what is best from each to help explain the world of matter and spirit we live in. Revived from the mystery schools of Egypt and Greece, theosophy encompasses another wave of philosophers such as Jakob Böhme, Emanuel Swedenborg, Albert Schweitzer and Carl Jung. We add to the mix discoveries from scientists such as Albert Einstein and theosophists such as Annie Besant, Charles Leadbeater and Geoffrey Hodson, who shone light on scientific discoveries seen from a broader perspective, namely a universal viewpoint. This view did not diminish the empirical system established initially by the likes of Francis Bacon but rather added another dimension to observations and explanations. The 'wise men' of old had passed their lives in learning, not teaching and would not accept clairvoyant investigations until it had been proven by other seers – checking, testing and verifying in every department of nature. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) herself confirmed that "No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions – so obtained as to stand as independent evidence – of other adepts, and by centuries of experiences...".

We can see from the clairvoyant investigations of seer Geoffrey Hodson in his book *The Miracle of Birth*, that this method adds an interesting scope to our understanding of the entry of the Soul into a new form as a foetus and its growing contact with the body as it develops through to birth. The assisting hand of the Deva Kingdom overseeing the growing child and the World Mother's assistance at the birth of every child, sheds new light on the process of our coming into the world and the early infant years of the fresh incarnation. By the same writer in *Science of Seership*, Mr Hodson takes us through some fascinating case studies on illness and disease where he traces back to past lives the original causes of the condition. Through clairvoyant investigation he explains the linkage to the suffering in this life and whether or not there is hope for the patient's recovery. Such explanations as this demonstrates that consciousness of the Soul is unbroken and that there is a continuum which takes into account past and current actions, thought and emotion, to knit a life together at the vibratory (Soul) level we have built for ourselves. We see this idea eloquently expressed in 'The Three Truths' from *Idyll of the White Lotus* where we read: 'Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment'.

Often art and literature are the igniters for the introduction of new ideas into wider communities. The modern medium of film has explored many theosophical concepts tailored for the masses of Humanity rather than expressed in theosophical terms, but the result is the same – a thinking by the individual about such lofty concepts. The Robin Williams film, *What Dreams May Come* depicts the afterlife in a manner that was surprisingly similar in description to be found in various theosophical texts, especially those of C. W. Leadbeater. *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* triggered off mainstream discussion on life beyond our

planet and we find parallels in *The Secret Doctrine* by HPB who tells us that the Universe teems with life raising the fascinating proposition of its being the 'playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing' long before modern science conceived of such possibilities as multi-verses. *Karma* is a word widely used now and was introduced by the Theosophical Society as a term which has profound implications for us all as its understanding seeps further into the consciousness of Humanity over the coming centuries.

As cycles ebb and flow, there are times when Humanity is provided with opportunities for rapid spiritual growth and the unfolding of consciousness. We are living in one of these times now. These times are accompanied with corresponding difficulties and the ability to 'Think' is now a faculty being forced upon us by circumstances across the globe. Painful as it is, many are seizing the opportunity and will move more rapidly towards the Pathway of independent thought and Swift Unfoldment. We can see for ourselves different types of people coming into the world nowadays, those that question and enquire, those that put moral ethos before financial benefit, evidence that continued growth of our species is occurring.

We are fortunate to live in such times. Perhaps in doing so, we may achieve in one or two lifetimes, what would otherwise have taken a dozen. In this endeavour of seeking to understand who we truly are, a Divine Being; those who have been touched or influenced by Theosophy/Ancient Wisdom are very fortunate indeed. As each individual expresses the One Life more powerfully through the personality, Humanity itself is transforming into something more. In *Idyll of the White Lotus* we read "The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit."

As Humanity forges closer connections between its family members the realisation of greater cosmic connection will be experienced. If we take a moment to stop and ponder on this, we can in awe imagine the glory and splendour of what Humanity as a whole will become, in the vast eons that lie ahead.

..... ❖❖❖



Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society, concludes his examination of the process of learning – as a theosophist.

THEOSOPHY AND EDUCATION

Part 2

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) said: “The first necessity for obtaining self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of our ignorance, to feel with every fiber of the heart that one is ceaselessly self-deceived. The second requirement is the even deeper conviction that such intuitive and certain knowledge can be obtained by effort.” She is expressing the idea that we are continually seeing the world wrongly. Equally important is that this condition of wrong-seeing can be corrected. That brings us to the area of our education, our practice. Whether we are learning to play an instrument or the instrument of our consciousness, there are three aspects that are very important. In any practice a key realization is that it is going to take time. It has taken us a lifetime and more to accumulate the conditioning that we have to deal with. So we need to understand that this process of self-education will occur over time; it is not going to be immediate.

The second aspect is intelligent effort. We educate ourselves about who we think we are. In Theosophy we teach ourselves about the soul, the planes in Nature, and so on. With regularity of attention, over time, we intelligently apply the effort that will change the conditioned limits within which we have trained ourselves to function.

The third and perhaps most important aspect is patience. We need to be more patient and forgiving with ourselves. We will stumble and fall many times, but we get up and continue. When we talk about “education” the root word has an important meaning – to lead or draw out from within. The focus of the word is on something already present within us. When we think about the universal consciousness, this is what is to be drawn out. Every person who sincerely embraces a spiritual path, necessarily becomes a healer. “Healing” means to make whole. As we recognize that we are in many ways fragmented and begin with that recognition, then we can move to becoming whole.

The process involves several simple steps. We begin with study, looking for information, but this is not enough to transform. It gives us an idea and leads us to knowledge that can be applied, but information, even formal knowledge,

are not transformative. So along with study we have to experiment. The Dalai Lama has said that each of us has the greatest experimental laboratory that is available – our own consciousness. So, we experiment with quiet.

In our education from school and parents, it is rare that there has been any training in engaging in the process of becoming quiet. But without this skill we are incomplete. Until we can reach some level of centeredness and stillness, we are at the mercy of our emotions, which come and go, our thoughts, which are constantly moving and our bodies, which have their demands. As we start experimenting with quiet, regularly and intelligently, we notice things start to happen. Most of the time when people are sitting on their cushions they would say that they are meditating, but probably that is incorrect. It is not meditation, it is *practising* meditation. We are relaxing the body, focusing on the breath, observing our thoughts and emotions, or becoming quiet. As we become more familiar with this process, it becomes possible to genuinely meditate, to reach the point where we are not engaged with the thoughts. This is when we have moments of true intuitive insight, a perception of wholeness.

I. K. Taimni, in *The Science of Yoga*, gives an example of intuitive insight. He asks us to imagine walking in a field on a very dark night. We are only aware of the immediate surroundings where we are standing. Imagine that suddenly there is a flash of lightning. For a brief moment that flash reveals to us the entire landscape. Having this perception, we are then able to navigate a terrain that was previously dark and unknown. In our process of experimenting with quiet we will experience moments when we will become profoundly still, when grand ideas and visions will momentarily be breathed into our consciousness and suddenly, we find ourselves functioning at a higher level. This is an important aspect of this process – we must commit ourselves to learn to experiment with quiet and to become more deeply still. As this becomes more of a normal condition for us, our way of seeing changes. The perception of wholeness, seeing something of the universal consciousness, is an antidote, a cure to fragmentation. With

this sort of realization, our very presence produces a sense of wholeness in others.

In the Bible we read that “the prayers of a righteous man are powerful”. The words, thoughts, the presence of a person who is linked to the universal consciousness is powerful. It is something of a culmination of this process of self-education. From this we develop the intention that our role in this world is to heal. It is not merely an act of the personal will, but it becomes our continual intention and need to remain connected with this sense of wholeness, and to allow the energies of this connection to flow through us and have their effect in the world. In this condition, whether we are working with education in a school or a family, our presence and influence is powerful.

Each one of us was born for a specific work that we are here to do. That work is not defined by a formal occupation that we are paid for, the work is to make this world whole. Wherever we are and whatever we find for our hand to do, we do it with this attitude of mind. Although we do not look for results, we can be assured that everything we do, every cause, has an effect.

FROM THE Q&A SESSION FOLLOWING THE ABOVE TALK GIVEN AT THE INVITATION OF THE BRAZILIAN SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY ON 31 AUGUST 2021

Q: The quotation you gave us by HPB, on our inability to see ourselves as we are, is similar to the definition found in her *Theosophical Glossary* on *avidyâ*, or ignorance: “Opposed to *vidyâ*, or Knowledge. Ignorance that proceeds from, and is produced by the illusion of the senses, or *viparyaya*.” How do we overcome ignorance in our lives?

A: The primary question is: “How is it that we are continually self-deluded?” In Yoga, there is the teaching on how we gain knowledge of the world. It teaches that there are organs of knowledge associated with the five senses: ears, nose, eyes, tongue, and skin. All these organs are continually reporting to the consciousness about the world in which we

live. That information, at its very best, is partial, or limited. For instance, a bloodhound dog can walk through a place and clearly distinguish the scent of a person who was there two days earlier. Or there are insects and animals whose eyes are able to perceive things at the level of infrared or ultraviolet light. These are just indications of the limitations of the way we come to know reality.

HPB’s “Diagram of Meditation” states that one of the aspects of meditation is a particular way in which we need to see the world: “We have to see in every embodied being only limitation. In the beginning we have to train our mind to see that the universal consciousness is continually limited in its expression. This training ultimately has results in the way we come to see the world – a break-through to Reality. The great mystic, Rumi, said something that relates to this: “In a wind, every leaf, every twig and branch in a tree moves differently, but they are all connected at the root.” The antidote to separation is the focus on the root.

Q: What is the greatest challenge that you met with the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA)?

A: Anything that is worth doing requires effort. The ATA began as a vision, or dream. In our enthusiasm we went ahead and what we found is that this process works in a counter-intuitive way. The basic idea is that once we genuinely commit ourselves to anything, all the opportunities to realize the focus of that commitment appear in ways that we do not anticipate. We did our planning, provided for structures and people, we met obstacles and, in some way or another, they dissolved. The great philosopher and mystic, Goethe, made the following statement: “Whatever you can do, or dream that you can, begin it; boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.”

From *The Theosophist* – October 2021



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.

O HIDDEN LIFE

International, theosophical luminary, Joy Mills has left many wise insights for us to ponder. Here she considers a well-known verse...



Annie Besant

Sometime in early 1923, Dr Annie Besant, then President of the Theosophical Society, penned some lines that have since become familiar to members throughout the world, have been translated into several languages, and have, indeed, become a nearly indispensable part of every theosophist's vocabulary. The words have been set to music. They have been chanted and sung. Few gatherings of the Society have been held since that year that have not been opened with the recitation of these words. At every International Convention, successive Presidents of the Society have inaugurated the proceedings with the antiphonal recitation of what has come to be known as the "Universal Prayer" or "Universal Invocation." Simple in the extreme, the words possess the magical power of a mantra:

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

So familiar have these words become that it may be that their significance and depth of inner meaningfulness have escaped us. When we become habituated to anything, be it a person, a situation, or an idea clothed in the fabric of language, there is always the danger that we come to take it for granted. In times of stress, we may even mouth words we learned in our childhood, as in the simple prayers of our faith. People have been known to do this automatically at times of crisis. Even avowed atheists have been heard to utter prayers they deny knowing or remembering.

But words are precious and often fragile vehicles not only for thought, but for the aspirations of the heart. They can convey not only mundane meanings that get us about in the world and relate us to each other, but also the hunger of the soul and the beauty of the spirit in their reaching out to that "more-ness" which remains forever indefinable and therefore unspeakable.

Can we pause, then, to examine the lines which Dr Besant

gave the Society and the world? What inner meanings, what deeper realities lie behind the words themselves? To what new insights may we be led, even as we pronounce the words and speak the separate phrases? Have we become attached to these words simply because they came from that heroic soul, Annie Besant? Would it matter if some other individual had served as a channel for their impartation to the world? Undoubtedly, constant repetition has endowed the verse with a certain inner significance, a sacredness if we may call it that, but repetition can also dull the spirit and memorised phrases can be mouthed with little attention of either mind or heart.

Before we examine some, at least, of the inner meaning of the verse, it may be of interest to note its specific origin. In her *Watch Tower* notes from *The Theosophist* of June 1923, Dr Besant wrote that the lines were prompted by a request from a number of members who were helping to organise a "Brotherhood Campaign" in South India. This "campaign" had been inaugurated some time earlier in Great Britain and was just then being taken up in India.

Her comment continues: "I wrote ... a few lines for daily repetition, morning and evening, as I did not feel that I could write a meditation, as they had asked me to do. Meditation seems to me to be a very individual thing, the working of one's own mind on some special theme; the most I could do was suggest a theme. Here it is, as it chanted itself..." Then follows the verse already given above. Further, she adds: "It sends forth successive waves of colour, pulsing outwards from the speaker, if rhythmically intoned or chanted, whether by the outer or the inner voice and if some thousands would send these out over successive areas, we might create a very powerful atmosphere..."

The fact that Dr Besant tells us that the verse "chanted itself" to her may indeed indicate that its true source lay in a deeper or higher realm beyond her own conscious mind, perhaps even from that Source to which she herself always gave the deepest and most profound reverence and obeisance. Surely, we must concur that the words, as she

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gave them, are of such beauty and majestic sweep that any alteration or modification would be improper. The effect on the surrounding environment or community, and on the individual who may be reciting the words as the verse is spoken, can only be guessed at, although many testify to its efficacy in producing an inner peace and even actual healing.

Turning now to the verse itself, we may consider it phrase by phrase, suggesting some of the meanings latent within it. First, "O Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom..." The immediate question that arises is: Why hidden? Is not life in evidence all about us? Life surely is not hidden! But what is referred to here, what is invoked, must be beyond or above the obvious. Dr I. K. Taimni, in his work, *Glimpses into the Psychology of Yoga*, reminds us that: "The Ultimate Reality exists only in the Ever-Unmanifest and is the source of all relative realities which can be within the realm of human experience..."

The highest principle, then, is present everywhere, and yet, is beyond all existence. It is truly the "hidden life" that underlies all of manifestation. Inherent within that Reality is its own dynamism, as it were, making possible the production of all things, all existence, for there, at the heart of Reality, is the throbbing pulse of creation. Without that pulse, nothing can exist. It is ubiquitous, and contains within itself the power of resonating throughout all that ever is or will be. That potency is locked up in every atom and every element of the manifested universe. Truly, it is "vibrant in every atom."

So, all of nature pulsates with the rhythm of the Eternal One, hidden forever, but known by its countless manifestations, as the One becomes the many, and yet remains forever One. This initial phrase is a call to that eternal, Unmanifest Principle: the Supreme Reality which is both beyond the cycles of manifestation and yet forever vibrating through the manifested universe. In terms of human consciousness, it is an invocation to that Atman which is hidden in our very nature, as present here in the physical as at its own level because its resonance vibrates through all the atoms of all our vehicles – carriers of that Atman – from Buddhi to the physical.

"O Hidden Light, shining in every creature..." Again, we may ask: Why hidden? If there were a light shining in every creature, surely that light would be observable. The very nature of light is that it glows and therefore it can be seen. Light radiates outwards, but we are called on to invoke a hidden light, a light that shines within but is not radiating outwards in a visible manner. So, a deeper meaning must be implicit in the words.

The One Reality, when it manifests, may be said to become Light. It is this interior light of the Supreme Reality, of Ishvara, the manifest Deity that is present in every creature. Life has now become light; its very vibrancy is now shining with an inner dynamism. In humanity, Buddhi – the "light of the soul" – is now united with Atma, ready to turn outwards into activity. It is this light which must illumine our entire nature. This light makes consciousness possible, and it is "hidden" because it is not objective to consciousness but is of the very nature of pure consciousness itself. And that light is present, shining through every atom in space.

"O Hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness..." From the polarity of Life and Light there now springs creative activity, Love. Wherever there is polarity, relationship between the poles comes into existence. The purest of all relationships, the one relationship that is not sullied in any manner by any object of either attachment or repulsion, is the relationship of Love. This we may call the underlying 'glue' which holds together all manifested things, all parts of the universe, all elements that appear with manifestation. Therefore it is Love that "embraces all in Oneness." The One has become the many; out of unity has come multiplicity. Yet however great the multiplicity, all is held in the one embrace of that pure relationship which arises when Life and Light come into existence, that relationship of Love. Love lies at the very heart of the

creative process. It is therefore the principle of universal lawfulness, which underlies evolution.

Hidden, then, at the heart of the manifold is Love, which binds the many into the unity of the One. This is the law and the fulfilment of the law, bringing everything into perfect equilibrium, for whatever happens anywhere in the universe has its repercussions everywhere. There is no external authority, no extra-cosmic deity weighing the scales of justice. Love is at the heart of the universe and brings about balance because all that is in the universe is held in its embrace.

Here, too, is the creative principle: Atma-Buddhi joined with Manas, turned outwards now on the great involutionary-evolutionary journey. Manas, or creative activity, is truly love in action. The mind, when infused with intuition, embraces the universe, perceiving all things as they truly are. The mind that can fragment the Real in order to grasp or realise its manifold nature can also be brought into a condition of stillness, in which the modifications of the thinking principle have ceased. In that condition, perception, or awareness, is undivided. The undivided state of consciousness embraces “all in oneness.”

The first three phrases of the mantram remind us of the great triplicity of the Supreme Reality – Life, Light and Love. But this triplicity is “hidden,” because it is not known objectively, but rather underlies the entire process of manifestation. It is “hidden” because the mind alone cannot grasp its essentialness, nor can it be experienced through the instrumentality of the senses. As Dr Taimni points out, in the above quoted work, “According to the Occult philosophy there is a method of knowing the Reality... and this method consists in suppressing the modifications of the mind completely.” That method, of course, is yoga. “Then,” continues Dr Taimni, “the individual consciousness becomes freed from the veil which separates the individual consciousness from the universal consciousness and knows this Reality directly by becoming one with it.”

In the first three lines of our verse, we invoke the triple nature of the One Reality. In that invocation we may perform a supreme yoga of Self-Realisation. Our attention is drawn to the sublime fact that underlying each individual and the universe is the One Reality in its triple aspect of Life, Light and Love. Its realisation lies in a realm beyond the mind, but by invoking it, we bring that Reality into direct awareness, into our consciousness attuned and harmonised with the One.

The final two lines of the verse affirm this realisation. “May all who feel themselves as one with Thee...” The use of the word ‘Thee’ indicates that the triplicity of Life, Light and Love is indeed One – the One Supreme Reality. Note, however, that the emphasis first is on the word ‘feels’. What is it to feel oneself as one with the Supreme? Feeling is acute awareness – awareness without any distracting thought, without any disturbing influence. It is an awareness that is total, which overwhelms us and takes hold of us wholly and utterly. Perhaps it may be compared to the moment of pain when one stubs one’s toe against a stone abutment. At such a moment, there is no other awareness than the awareness of pain. No thought even intrudes at the sharp moment of impact. Only later may we say, “I stubbed my toe” or “I felt pain in my toe.”

The feeling that must come, and must be affirmed in the realisation of oneness, is such a feeling: total, entire, complete, without analysis or reason or logical deduction. Only in such a condition can true knowing arise. In one sense, this ability to “feel ... as one with Thee” may be described as the pain of oneness, the burden of oneness, that we all must bear, if we would know the reality of life itself. It is not, in other words, a selective feeling: “I will feel one with you, but not with that person; I will feel one with a tree, but not with a snake,” etc. When we say, “May each...” or “May all...” we are invoking in ourselves a consciousness

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that has no divisions, no barriers. It is a consciousness infused only with Life, Light and Love, and therefore it is pure and whole.

Out of that acute awareness of “feeling,” must follow a knowing: “Know they are therefore one with every other.” So, the mantram concludes with an affirmation of the certainty of knowledge. Humanity is not only meant to feel; it must know. This is the full burden of self-consciousness. It is a knowing that is not simply a surmise, an opinion, an idea, or a belief that may be altered when some other notion comes along. It is rather a conscious act that arises because we have been immersed in a consciousness that was uncompounded, undivided, whole and pristine in its nature. As a result of the contact with that consciousness, of that non-verbal awareness that we are one with the Universal Reality, that we are truly Atma-Buddhi-Manas, we have to know, to be fully conscious of our oneness with all other units of Life who are equally infused with that Reality, vibrating with it, shining with it, embraced by it. In some versions of the mantram, the word ‘also’ has been substituted for the word ‘therefore’, but it may be noted that in Dr Besant’s original version, the latter word is used. There is a subtle, but very definite, difference between the two words. ‘Also’ is an additive word; it means ‘in addition to,’ ‘this plus that,’ etc. ‘Therefore’ has the connotation of ‘subsequent upon,’ ‘as a result of’; it is not augmentative. What is intended in the mantram is the realisation that when the feeling of unity is present, recognition of the oneness with the Supreme Reality that is Light, Life and Love, then there follows upon that recognition the realisation that one is inevitably united with all other creatures. For how can we be one with the Supreme and remain separate from, distinct from, all others who are equally rooted in the One Reality?

Many more meanings may be discovered in this magnificent verse that Dr Besant bequeathed to us. It is truly a reaffirmation of the entire creative process in which we – and all life – are immersed; a reaffirmation that we hold within our power, as self-conscious units of life, the ability to perceive life, whole and splendid.

This is the vision we can send shining out over the entire world, the vision to which we can give wings and voice and form. This is the vision that can recreate ourselves every time we chant the mantram, and so, recreate and transform our world. Such a vision alone can bring about a new consciousness in the world, a consciousness of unity, of brotherhood, of peace and harmony, of wholeness and holiness.

When we repeat these few simple lines, either alone or in a group, we invoke the One Reality to manifest itself anew, and this is to make whole and make holy all that is in the universe about us. No more wonderful act could we perform.

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Joy Mills (1920–2015), teacher by profession, devoted her adult life to the Theosophical Society. Joining in 1940, she served as National President of both the American and Australian Sections of the Society as well as International Vice-President. Joy’s lecture tours took her to more than 50 countries. As well as her books, her writings have been published throughout the world.

Artists influenced by theosophy have been of interest to Donna Willard-Moore

HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY

Her influence on 20th century art

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was an extraordinary individual – a true renaissance woman. She was involved in art, music and demonstrated phenomenal language abilities. As a profoundly prolific writer, she founded the Theosophical Society and spread its concepts.

Blavatsky's first books, *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) reconsider ancient religions and sacred texts, contrasting them with the scientific knowledge of the 1880s. The extremely long time periods of the Hindu Gods, the Yugas, became, in Blavatsky's thoughtful revision, the vast time-lines of biological evolution which expanded to the solar system with hints of universal scale. More profoundly, evolution was not just survival of the fittest, described by Darwin in 1859, but the consciousness of each group or level's development guided by a layered master consciousness.

In the realm of 20th century art, one can trace links to Theosophy. Beginning in 1886 Post-Impressionism artists include: Paul Cezanne, who embeds geometric forms while stressing the flatness truth of painting, Henri Matisse for colour intensity, or Fauvism, Vincent van Gogh whose expressive brush-marks have vibrant colour and Paul Gauguin, using intense colour and symbolic forms. Norwegian, Edvard Munch, met the French painters but added psychological insight to new symbolic images. Each of these artists have techniques and emphasis integral to 20th century art.

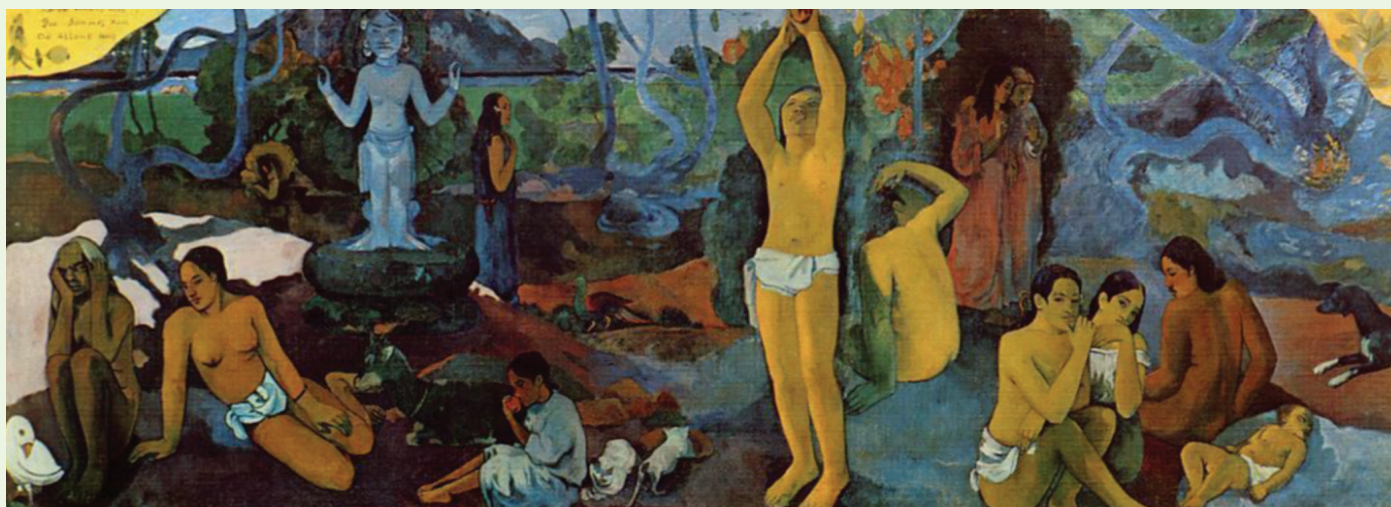
Vincent van Gogh said of his religious experience, "When I have a terrible need of 'religion', then I go out and paint the stars."

Paul Gauguin, known for symbolic structure and colour imagery, posed a challenge with his quote, "Someday art will achieve the perfection of music and express emotion without subject or objects." Is it possible for visual arts to convey pure emotion as music does?

The Theosophical Society had an enormous impact during 1900-1940. Lodges and groups formed to discuss Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*, throughout the world. Artists often list the direct influence of participation in Theosophical Lodges has had on their artwork.

The Bauhaus School of Art and Design existed between 1919-1939. Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee were members of Theosophical Lodges. We have records of school discussions on teaching, abstraction and symbolism. Kandinsky in particular, became a major influence on Bauhaus teachers. For example, Bauhaus teaching stressed experiment and problem-solving which characterise their approach to teaching. It also led to rethinking of the visual arts process as more like research science than a humanity subject. The theosophical member Wassily Kandinsky did his first abstract artwork in 1910. We accept abstract art now but when no abstract painting existed at all, how would the first artist create abstraction? Without objects, how was it a painting?

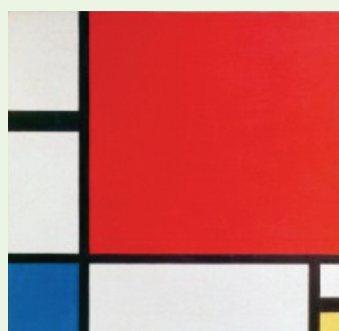
Looking at the early work of Kandinsky, he does have subject matter. For example, in the Blue Mountain painting (1909) there are people riding horses, mountains, trees and sky. In Cannons (1913) abstract objects like cannons and people are floating



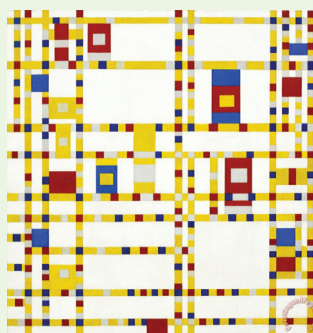
Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?
Paul Gauguin - 1897



Starry Night
Vincent Van Gogh - 1889



Composition II in Red, Blue and Yellow
Piet Mondrian



Broadway Boogie Woogie
Piet Mondrian - 1942-1943

unconnected to the landscape. This requires the viewers to put it all together in their minds. Kandinsky's book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* describes the mystical and symbolic qualities of colour. Kandinsky is the first artist known to have synaesthesia, the experience of having two senses linked, in his case sounds and colours. Kandinsky gives a description of performance of a Wagner's opera saying, "I saw all my colours in spirit before my eyes, wild. Almost crazy lines were stretched out in front of me."

Piet Mondrian, who joined the Theosophical Society in 1909 expressed, "I am driven by the spiritual Theosophy; I became aware that art could provide a transition to the spiritual realms." Mondrian asserted that abstract art is not merely the creation of another reality but a true vision of reality. The art critic Michael Seer stated that Mondrian's religion went from Calvinism to Theosophy then to Neoplasticism. Robert Hughes referred to Mondrian as "...one of the greatest artists of the 20th century ... who believed that the conditions of human life could be changed by making pictures".

In his final years in New York, Mondrian's artwork simplified to black, white, stripes with white, red, yellow, or blue squares. While one might think these paintings could be easily replicated, art historian Dr Peter Gunther pointed out that no critic ever identified a fake Mondrian in a major exhibition. The paintings are

nearly impossible to counterfeit because Mondrian's choices of positioning and placement are so precise. The painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1943) was inspired by NYC Manhattan's grid and the Boogie Woogie of African-American blues and jazz music which Mondrian loved.

A surprising contemporary of Kandinsky, Hilma af Klint, completed her temple 12 cycle paintings between 1906-1915, predating Kandinsky's first abstract in 1911. How did this happen? Rudolph Steiner advised her not to reveal this body of work, suggesting that the public would not be ready for it and to wait 50 years. Hilma af Klint was an artist, a spiritual medium and a theosophist. She described receiving messages from spiritual entities who guided the creation of her artwork. This parallels Blavatsky's guidance by the Masters. Af Klint's sources included Theosophical Society research and literature, as well as the current scientific discoveries about radiation, including x-ray and other sciences investigating the visible in invisible worlds.

Canadian Lawrence Stewart Harris, leader of the Algonquin group, was also a theosophist who viewed it as a mystical branch of religious belief where artists could develop spiritually, as part of a mission to communicate spiritual awareness to world art. But the next generation of American artists took the challenge of pure abstraction to an entirely new level. The style abstract expressionism (1945) is in reality a fusion of surrealism, abstraction, and expressionistic painting. The New York school includes 24 artists. My focus is on Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko.

Jackson Pollock's theosophical ideas recognised a new space in his dripped and splash paintings which was non-representational. He stated, "It doesn't matter how the paint is put on as long as it says something." Pollock aimed to portray powerful ideas through abstraction and expressionism. There is a photo of Jackson Pollock splashing the paint and working on the rhythm in the painting itself. *Autumn rhythm # 30* is a huge painting. Standing before this enormous painting, it feels like a barrier you can't walk into but as you study it, you suddenly realise you can fly into the painting. Pollock was the first artist to do this. His painting is flat but at the same time has an infinity of depth. This is a contradiction of concepts, a new viewing skill in art. The term I learned is 'passage', meaning infinite space and flatness simultaneously. It becomes a requirement for all 20th century art, even in photo realism following abstract expressionism.

In Houston, Texas is a chapel called the Rothko Chapel (1971). Painted by Mark Rothko, it is a set of 14 paintings, in the traditional pattern of a Catholic Church. There are three paintings at the altar, two side panels, three paintings together at both sides, a pair of single panels on each side and a rectangular window on a large canvas which is dark not light. Here at a harpsichord recital, the room was lit by candles only, with the harpsichord before the altar painting. The music was religious. At the end of the performance, we sat there very silently and



Autumn Rhythm #30
Jackson Pollock - 1950

When these artists studied theosophy they evolved art...

then very quietly got up and went out of the chapel in order not to disturb the art.

Rothko's brushwork creates an illusion of vastness and infinity as the viewer explores the paintings, yet when they look away, the artwork rushes back to the viewer, appearing completely flat. This serves as a powerful metaphor for the search for God in the 20th century – elusive and receding from our understanding and scientific comprehension, yet suddenly rushing back to be universally present. Ultimately, this is a profound artistic proof about humankind's evolving perception.

Time and understanding evolves humankind. Helena Blavatsky gave us evolving time with consciousness, layers of revision and transformation manifested by vast and ever-present eternal consciousness. In a universe where everything is alive – every atom – and thus all existence – is alive and conscious. Truth is important because it is “higher than religion”, but it also guides an individual to the next higher truth. For these artists, a truth was that a canvas is flat. When they studied theosophy they evolved art. They discovered how to show the vastness of everything while seeing its flatness and universal oneness.



Jackson Pollock painting



Donna Willard-Moore is a researcher who presents art internationally, on Integral Theory educational and art history. She moved to New Zealand in 1996, discovering the Theosophical Society in New Zealand in 2010. Donna is delighted by learning/research opportunities. She says that TSNZ features extraordinary speakers, addressing relevant topics, while fostering community among those who share her passion for discovery, writing and research. From Texas, Donna holds BFA, MA and MFA (all with honours) from the Universities of Houston and Missouri. She was an Assistant Professor at William Woods University.

American scholar, **Janet Macrae** has researched this intriguing subject that can affect every human being.

ORIGINAL VISION

On the Choice of a New Life

Many years ago, in a seminar at the New York Theosophical Society, a woman told about a spontaneous memory from the time before she was born. “I saw a vision of what I had to accomplish and what the difficulties would be. I remember saying, ‘Yes, I agree to this.’”

What prompted her to share this experience was the seminar topic: Plato’s *Myths and Metaphors*, given by Dr Renee Weber. In the myth of Er, at the end of *The Republic*, Plato explained how a new life is a product of both chance and self-determination. In this story, Er, a soldier who had returned from the realm of the dead, reported that every individual in the group he observed was required to draw a lot. Then, one by one, each chose a life from among many lying on the ground. There were many more choices than individuals present, so that even the last one could probably have found a satisfactory life.

From Plato’s perspective, a satisfactory life is one that will make the soul more just. As the choice is critical for the soul’s development, it must not be made in an impulsive manner. It is essential to have a knowledge of one’s character and how it could be influenced by various experiences. An individual should know what the effect of beauty is when combined with poverty or wealth in a particular soul and what are the good and evil consequences of noble and humble birth, of private and public station, of strength and weakness, of cleverness and dullness and of all the natural and acquired gifts of the soul and the operation of them when conjoined. He will then look at the nature of the soul and from the consideration of all these qualities he will be able to determine which is the better and which is the worse. (Plato, 300)

After choosing their lives, the group of souls walked in a scorching heat through the plain of Forgetfulness. Arriving at the river Lethe (‘Oblivion’), they were all obliged to drink a certain quantity of the water. “And each one as he drank forgot all things.” (Plato, 302) But those who were not saved by wisdom drank more than was necessary.

Striking similarities to Plato’s account can be found in the work of Doctor Michael Newton, a psychotherapist and master hypnotist who has devoted his career to the study of the period between death and rebirth. Newton’s hypnotised subjects remember seeing samples of lives in a location resembling a multidimensional movie theatre. These viewings only occur, however, after much consultation with guides and members of peer groups, during which they analyse the successes and mistakes of the past as well as their desires for the future. The critical issue is the growth of the soul: what things need to be learned and what kind of life will provide the best opportunities to learn them. When asked under hypnosis about his reaction to the experience, one individual replied: “Oh, it’s stimulating – that’s for sure – but we can’t frolic around, because there are serious decisions to be made for the next life. I’ll have to accept the consequences for any mistakes in my choices ... if I am not able to handle a life well.” (Newton, 212)

Each life thus has a blueprint or overall plan and we are ultimately evaluated on the degree to which we fulfil it. Fortunately, the hypnotised subjects remember various “coaching sessions.” Certain thoughts are impressed on their minds as clues to help them complete their next incarnations successfully. At this point the remembrance of former lives is not encouraged,

for the new incarnation must be approached freely, as much as possible, as a fresh start. Far more important is the memory of the original vision, the spiritual blueprint for the coming life.

The work of the 'sleeping prophet' Edgar Cayce (1877–1945) is also consistent with the story of Er, for he believed that each incarnation is consciously chosen for a particular purpose. Cayce is best known for his medical readings. Putting himself in a deep hypnotic trance, he was able to accurately diagnose and prescribe natural remedies for the illnesses of people whom he had never met. All he needed to know was the individual's name. Less well known are Cayce's life readings, in which he elaborated upon the individual's inner conflicts, many of which had their origins in previous lifetimes.

In *Many Mansions*, a detailed study of Cayce's life readings, Doctor Gina Cerminara clarified the difference between the original plan of the soul, or the superconscious life goal, and the consciously planned goals of the personal self.

The superconscious life goal, or spiritual intent, is the basic purpose for which the soul has taken incarnation. It is the central and unifying principle of a life, and thus it never changes. The original plan of the soul can include learning spiritual lessons, strengthening finer qualities such as wisdom and compassion, and neutralising undesirable characteristics carried over from former lives.

The consciously formed life goals of a personality can include pursuing a higher education, developing talents and skills, raising a family, having a successful career, and being respected in one's community. These, of course, can change as life progresses. Cerminara wrote that if the personality can become aware of the purpose for which it took incarnation and can consciously make its life goals identical to or in harmony with these superconscious goals, then progress can be made more quickly and with less struggle.

It is up to the personal self to try to remember the vision of the inner spirit. But Plato wrote that unless we are saved by wisdom, we will drink too much from the river of Lethe. Being saved by wisdom involves being attuned to the intuition, the source of our most profound dreams. Intuition speaks through synchronistic events, through subtle hunches and feelings of recognition, through spontaneous symbolic images that arise sometimes in meditation and contemplative prayer, or through our daydreams in moments of stillness. As Virginia Woolf observed: "It is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top." (Woolf, 31–32)

The life of Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) is an interesting example of one in which the personal goals were brought into alignment with the spiritual vision – but not without conflict. Nightingale is best known as the 'Lady with the Lamp', the superintendent of nurses for the British army during the Crimean War (1855–56). She was a brilliant administrator and a pioneer in using statistics to implement public health reforms. Born into a life of wealth and privilege, Nightingale received a classical education from her father, making her one of the most highly educated women of her day.

As an adolescent, she experienced a sudden inner 'knowing' that God had called her to a life of service. It was a brief shift of consciousness to a higher level, in which she apprehended her deep inner purpose. During this experience she was given no details; the specific mission would be her personal choice.

Although only the soul and its advisors can know the actual spiritual plan for its incarnation, we can uncover clues in Nightingale's writings and in various biographies. Her original vision might well have included:

1. Using her great intelligence and administrative abilities for the betterment of humanity rather than for personal gain.
2. Learning patience and tolerance towards individuals who did not share her progressive

It is up to the personal self to try to remember the vision of the inner spirit...

...only the soul and
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vision, particularly those who tried to obstruct her reform efforts.

3. Learning to work at a task for its own sake rather than for recognition or specific results. In her copy of *The Song Celestial*, Edwin Arnold's translation of the Bhagavad Gita, Nightingale marked the following passage:

Abstaining from rewardment in the work, while yet one doeth it full faithfully, saying "'Tis right to do!" – that is true act and abstinence! (*quoted in Cook 2:242*)

Since childhood, Nightingale was drawn to nursing and public health and was determined to make these interests the focus of her life. She was well-aware of the difficulties. As a woman she could not hold public office to influence health policies; moreover, nursing in the public hospitals of the time was considered a disreputable occupation. But she moved forward to actualise her personal goals. These included:

1. Improving her mind through a study of comparative religion, philosophy, and statistical science. Two of her main interests were Plato's dialogues and the writings of the medieval mystics. Thus, she was familiar with the myth of Er.
2. Becoming a nurse; helping to establish nursing as a respected occupation; developing nursing principles.
3. Working to improve government policies regarding public health, especially hospital design and sanitation, through her personal contacts and influence.

Nightingale's personal goals did not include engaging in the lifestyle of a typical upper-class Victorian woman, for she felt that only through working in nursing and public health could she actualise her spiritual vision. Unfortunately, this created a serious conflict with her mother and older sister, whose plans for her were quite different: a good marriage, an elegant home, a family, relationships in high society. Although history tells us that Nightingale was true to her vision, her peace of mind was disturbed by feelings of guilt for disappointing those she loved.

In the myth of Er, Plato explained that conflict is not necessarily detrimental, because it can strengthen the soul. He described an individual who had lived in a peaceful, well-ordered state; his virtue, however, was only a matter of conformity, and he had not internalised any strong values. Left to himself, he made an impulsive choice for a new life. Er reported that those who had been "schooled by trial" and who had developed a sound philosophy were the most careful in choosing their lives. Perhaps Florence Nightingale chose to be a woman in Victorian times to strengthen her character and her inner resolve.

Doctor Victor Frankl, who developed logotherapy (meaning-centred psychotherapy), wrote that "everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfilment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated". (Frankl, 113). Struggle and conflict are not unhealthy and may even be necessary for the fulfilment of one's purpose. What is unhealthy is an existential vacuum or lack of meaning, characterised by an inner emptiness and boredom. Indeed, Nightingale might very well have suffered from this if her personal plan had deviated from her spiritual vision.

Aligning or synchronising one's personal plan with the spiritual vision allows one to tap into spiritual resources, such as moral strength, resilience, wisdom and courage. Frankl, for example, felt that knowing his life's purpose, which was to develop his method of logotherapy and write his book about it, gave him the strength to survive three years in Nazi concentration camps. Knowing her life's purpose gave Nightingale the strength to devote her life to the public good, in spite of a debilitating chronic brucellosis infection.

The reports of modern individuals who, like Er, travelled to the realms of the dead and returned, often emphasise a sense of purpose. For example, one individual told near-death expert Raymond Moody: "I say God surely was good to me, because I was dead, and he let the

doctors bring me back, for a purpose. The purpose was to help my wife, I think, because she had a drinking problem and I know that she just couldn't have made it without me. She is better now, though and I really think it had a lot to do with what I went through." (Moody, 73)

Kenneth Ring and Evelyn Valarino, in *Lessons from the Light*, write that a sense of purpose is either clarified during the near-death experience or the individuals express a deep desire to discover their mission and actualise it. Fortunately, most people do not have to go through the trauma of a near-death experience to remember the deeper purpose of their lives. According to these researchers, there is accumulating evidence, based on informal questionnaires and interviews, that studying the reports of the near-death experiencers can have a profound effect on an individual's attitudes and behaviour. The following statement came from a Swiss woman with a university degree who read Moody's *Life after Life*: "I don't want to sound pompous, but it was a revelation to me. Not Moody's comments or analysis, but the testimonies of the experiencers. I read, cried a lot and knew it was true! I was profoundly touched at a level other than the intellectual, rational one. The experiencers' words went straight to my heart, my soul, the essence of my being – whatever you want to call it. I immediately knew it was true ... I had the impression that this was a truth I had always known but had simply forgotten." (Ring and Valarino, 211)

As a renewed sense of purpose is characteristic of the near-death experiencers, perhaps a study of their reports could help us remember the original visions for our own lives. This could also be true with respect to a study of the memories of Newton's hypnotised subjects. Part of the power of these testimonies is that they come from modern individuals with whom we can identify. May we all benefit from the profound inner experiences they have so generously shared.

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Janet Macrae is a co-editor of *Suggestions for Thought by Florence Nightingale* (University of Pennsylvania Press) and the author of *Nursing as a Spiritual Practice: A Contemporary Application of Florence Nightingale's Views* (Springer). Her article *Florence Nightingale's Scientific Spirituality* appeared in *Quest*, the magazine for the TS in America, winter 2020.

Struggle and conflict are not unhealthy and may even be necessary for the fulfilment of one's purpose.

Insights from Jiddu Krishnamurti...

FRAGMENTS OF THE AGELESS WISDOM

Look with eyes that are not confused.
There will be confusion only when there is division
between the observer and the observed.
This division takes place when there is the image,
The formula, the concept, the ideal.
Therefore, self-knowing, knowing oneself as one is,
Is the beginning of wisdom,
Which cannot possibly be bought in books.
One has to observe oneself, not analysing,
But observing oneself in relationship,
Because in relationship all your reactions come out –
Antagonisms, fears, anxieties, bitterness, loneliness.
Without understanding all that, to find if
There is something beyond all human thought,
If there is something real, true, is not possible.
Therefore, one must lay the foundation,
And to lay the foundation one must
Observe one's life daily without distortion.

From Jiddu Krishnamurti's Public Talk 1, Sydney, 21 November 1970.



Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986), author and lecturer on spiritual and philosophical subjects, had a major impact on 20th Century thought. He was discovered as a child in India by Charles W. Leadbeater, who prophesied that the then sickly and almost illiterate boy would become a great religious leader.

From that point, Krishnamurti and his younger brother Nitya were raised and educated by Theosophists at the Theosophical Society based in Adyar, Chennai, India. The Order of the Star in the East was established, to promote the idea that Krishnamurti was to be the vehicle of the “World Teacher” or Maitreya. Krishnamurti was referred to by his friends as “Krishna”, “Krishnaji” and “K”. His early writings were often published under his ‘star name,’ Alcyone.

Eventually, Krishnamurti rejected the “World Teacher” title, disbanded the Order of the Star in the East and spent the rest of his life speaking around the world to all kinds of people about a spiritual life based on awareness, inquiry and freedom.

ESOTERIC ECOLOGY

Barbara Hebert studies a less visible relationship affecting our world.

When I think of ecology, my mind goes immediately to the environment. From there, it goes quickly to the impending ecological disaster that humanity has created. All of us are aware of this, and many are doing what they can to mitigate the damage to our great mother, the Earth.

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines ecology as the branch of science that focuses on “the interrelationship of organisms and their environments” and “the totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment.” It is relatively simple to gather information about ecology in the familiar sense. However, it is not necessarily easy to learn about the hidden components of ecology.

From our studies, we know that there is more to our environment than simply its visible aspects. I believe that there is not only a physical ecology, which we can see, but also a hidden or unseen ecology, which we may term *esoteric ecology*. It involves our relationships with others and our environment in imperceptible ways. I am specifically referring to the astral light and the reciprocal interactions we have with it.

Like other living things, the Earth has something comparable to the etheric double of the human being. Using a term coined by the 19th-century French occultist Éliphas Lévi, H.P. Blavatsky refers to it as the astral light. According to Theosophy.wiki, the *astral light* is not a universal principle; rather, it is a lower form of akasha that belongs to our world. HPB writes,

“There is one great difference between the Astral Light and the Akâsa [akasha] which must be remembered. The latter is eternal, the former periodic” (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 10:360–61). The Ageless Wisdom teaches that all that happens on the Earth is recorded in the astral light. The thoughts, feelings and actions of humans are inscribed in this medium and frequently pollute it. The astral light then reflects what it has received back to the Earth and its inhabitants. As HPB writes in the “Theosophical Glossary”, the astral light “gives out nothing but what it has received; that it is the great terrestrial crucible, in which the vile emanations of the Earth (moral and physical) upon which the Astral Light is fed, are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics – moral, psychic and physical.” HPB also writes:

As the Esoteric Philosophy teaches us, the Astral Light is simply the dregs of Akâsa or the Universal Ideation in its metaphysical sense. Though invisible, it is yet, so to speak, the phosphorescent radiation of the latter, and is the medium between it and man’s thought-faculties. It is these which pollute the Astral Light, and make it what it is – the storehouse of all human and especially psychic iniquities. In its primordial genesis, the astral light as a radiation is quite pure, though the lower it descends approaching our terrestrial sphere, the more it differentiates, and becomes as a result impure in its very constitution. But man helps considerably in this pollution, and gives it back its essence far worse than when he received it. (*Collected Writings*, 10:251)

Given the Theosophical teachings regarding the astral light and its role in both receiving and emanating all of the occurrences on Earth, our discussion about esoteric ecology must include some thoughts regarding the interrelationship between ourselves and this unseen component of our earthly environment.

In her talk “Mastering the Cycles of Existence,” given at the 145th Theosophical Society International



... there is not only a physical ecology, which we can see, but also a hidden or unseen ecology

Convention (held in December 2020), Elena Dovalsantos said, “With us in the midst of a global pandemic, one might surmise that an accumulation, or a great accumulation, of human iniquities in the astral light have now returned as global karma.” Dovalsantos then referred to the many thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that must have been recorded in the astral light, including divisiveness, wars, greed, cruelty to our fellow humans and to animals, the destruction of our environment, and so on. Just as human beings are responsible for the pollution of our planet, we are responsible for the pollution of the astral light. Furthermore, like the pollution of the physical planet, the pollution of the astral light seems to be causing dire consequences. Clearly what we are seeing is what humanity has fed into the astral light, and it is being “radiated back intensified.”

While this discussion of the astral light and its relationship to the extraordinary happenings in our world today may be interesting to contemplate, how can it be helpful to us? Have you ever wondered about the timing of your birth? That is, why were you born at this particular time in history? The teachings of the Ageless Wisdom may provide us with some answers. As we read in the Theosophical texts, each lifetime is a part of our spiritual pilgrimage, providing an opportunity to learn and grow from our experiences. May I suggest that in this incarnation, we are being called upon not only to learn and grow, but to put our beliefs into action. We are being faced with a spiritual test. Are we really willing to work for the Light? Can we put our beliefs into action? Most Theosophists spend a great deal of time studying and discussing abstract concepts about the universe and our place in it. How often do we take action based on those Theosophical teachings?

On January 6, 2021, the Capital of the United States was attacked while Congress was in session. Many of us watched the proceedings with shock and horror. Many of us no doubt experienced feelings of anger, frustration, and disgust, possibly even fear and sadness. Questions loomed about the safety of the people in the nation’s Capital, about the sanctity of the democratic process, and even the future of democracy in the United States. It might even be fair to say that many were shaken to their core by the day’s happenings. We know from our studies that thoughts are things that have the power to impact others. Many of us, at least initially, probably radiated fear, anger, and similar emotions into the world, thus exacerbating the situation in a powerful but unseen way. How long did it take to realise what we were doing and change direction to send out thoughts for peace and unity?

As children, my siblings and I would play in a circular water-filled metal trough during the hot days of the Louisiana summer. We would all swim in the same direction and create a strong flow; then we would reverse course and try to swim against the current in the opposite direction. That is how I felt when I changed course from sending out thoughts of anger and fear to sending out thoughts of peace and unity. I felt as if I was going against the current, and it was uncomfortable. However, as more people began to call for peace and unity, the current seemed to change, and it became easier.



Going against the current, whether in water or in the world, is never easy. But our task as Theosophists is not easy. Many of us are called to the bodhisattva path, the path of selflessness, the path of liberating humanity from its suffering. Walking this path means that our primary goal is to help humanity. It may mean going against the current – whatever that happens to be. It means learning to remain calm in the storm and refusing to add to the confusion and chaos that already exists. It means balancing fear and negativity with peace and light. It means seeing all beings, regardless of their behavior, as extensions of ourselves, knowing that we are all aspects of the One Unity that is the ground of being.

When we focus on such thoughts, we are helping humanity. We are putting the Ageless Wisdom into practice. Perhaps we were born at this very time in history so that we can bring light to the world in our own unique way, based on our beliefs and our studies. There is a reason each of us is here now. What is it? What role will each of us play in helping to liberate humanity?

Taken from *Quest* magazine 2021 spring.

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

A flower blossoms; then withers and dies. It leaves a fragrance behind, which, long after its delicate petals are but a little dust, still lingers in the air. Our material sense may not be cognizant of it, but it nevertheless exists. Let a note be struck on an instrument, and the faintest sound produces an eternal echo. A disturbance is created on the invisible waves of the shoreless ocean of space, and the vibration is never wholly lost.

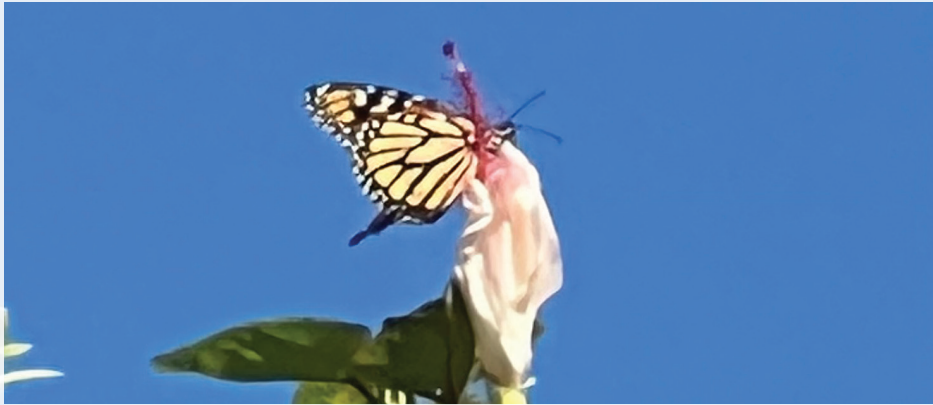
Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

Isis Unveiled (Vol.1&2): A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology



THE UNITY OF LIFE

Universal kinship is evident in the world around us.



The transcendent consciousness brings out another insight into the nature of things – the unity of life. This is the ultimate foundation of universal kinship.

If we look at a single leaf of a tree, its life appears to be separate from the other leaves. The apparent proof of such separateness is that if we cut that leaf, it will die, but the other leaves will not die or be injured.

Yet look again. What gives life to the leaf? It comes from the nourishing sap that passes through the twig, the same twig that supplies the same life to the other leaves. In other words, the leaf does not have a separate life. There is only one life that animates not only the leaves but also the twigs, branches, trunk and roots of the entire tree which are but the outer garments of that life. The garment withers and dies during autumn and winter and a new garment springs up in spring and summer. The garment changes, but the life doesn't. It's the same one life. The leaves look separate, but they're really but one life.

Look at our fingers. They're also separate. You wound the small finger and you feel the pain, but the other fingers aren't bleeding. They remain healthy and unaffected. And yet these fingers don't have separate lives. They are part of the one life that runs through the entire body of the human being. The separateness is superficial. If we look deeper into the nature of the fingers, we will see that they are not really separate.

The deeper the self-realisation of a person, the more they influence the
whole universe
by their subtle spiritual vibrations,
and the less they themselves are affected by the phenomenal flux.

Sri Yukteswar

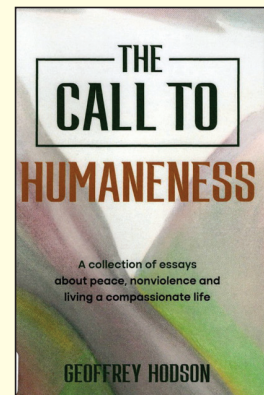
From website: www.theosophy.nz

Recommended Reading

THE CALL TO HUMANENESS by Geoffrey Hodson

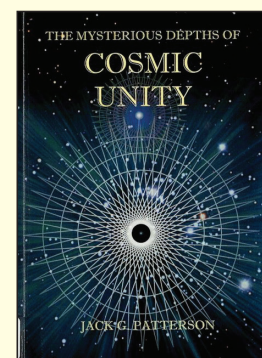
Just off the press in 2024 is this newly compiled collection of essays by Geoffrey Hodson about peace, non-violence and living a compassionate life. While Geoffrey Hodson's teachings are well-known, his specific writings on *Ahimsa* are less known. The practice of *Ahimsa* as "active non-violence" and "dynamic compassion" is particularly relevant in our modern world. At this time when humanity is experiencing tremendous challenges and global change, the message of *Ahimsa* appears to be needed more than ever.

In these essays, Geoffrey points out the karmic interconnectedness of all life, and the special interrelationship between human suffering and animal cruelty. Geoffrey advocates for a "spirit of kindness" to be incorporated into the education of children, government systems and organisations and for specific effort towards eliminating cruelty, in all its expressions, to enable the healing and balancing of our planetary 'home'.



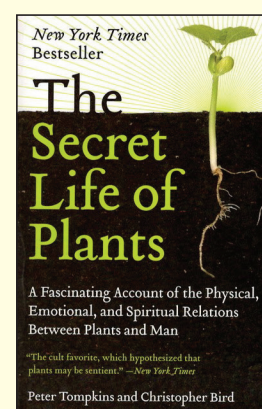
THE MYSTERIOUS DEPTHS OF COSMIC UNITY by Jack Patterson

This book is an attempt to show that by the study of wholeness and interconnectedness, the human mind, despite the limitations imposed upon it by its individuality, may gain a glimpse of the reality of Cosmic Unity and how this glimpse may be widened when consciousness functions beyond the mind. Jack Patterson talks about the limitless forms that exist between the seen and unseen worlds – from the highest spirit to the lowest matter. He speaks about the interaction of spirit and matter, producing consciousness and making the evolutionary process possible. Jack looks at the concepts of wholeness and interconnectedness from many different angles, in the hope that these concepts may become increasingly recognised and embraced by conservationists and ecologists and play an important role in changing the way of thinking and therefore the way of life, of all humans.



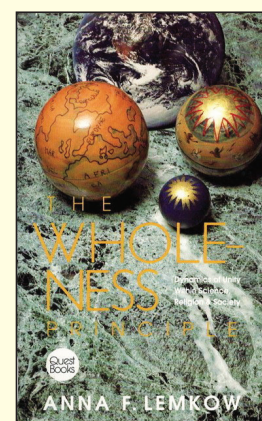
THE SECRET LIFE OF PLANTS by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird

This classic work was first published in 1972 and has remained relevant and popular ever since. Through remarkable research, the authors cast light on the rich psychic universe of plants and explore the way in which plants respond to human care and nurturing. This book outlines not only plants' ability to communicate with people, but also their surprising reaction to music and ability to detect human lies, alongside their curative powers. The authors speak at length about the depth of the interrelationship between humanity and nature and they urge us to protect the environment that nourishes us. This book also covers the importance of soil health, the interrelationship between people, plants and chemicals, as well as specific guidance about the use of dowsing for establishing plants' needs and health.



THE WHOLENESS PRINCIPLE by Anna F. Lemkow

Anna Lemkow wrote this book after 30 years' experience in her service with the United Nations for the economic and social development of developing countries, as well as contributing to peace curriculum papers for the U.N.-sponsored University for Peace, in Costa Rica. She offers guidelines for integrating two historic developments – the current worldwide rethinking of liberalism, socialism and capitalism, along with the convergence of science, philosophy and religion. Her private study in holistic philosophy and integrative approaches to science, the spiritual domain and world affairs, enables her to bring together the writings of many different thinkers into an integrated 'wholeness'. This book is an enquiry into the dynamics of wholeness as an all-pervasive principle.





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



Carol Collier, TOS National Director
sends season's greetings to members,
friends and family around New Zealand.

Thank you as always to the wonderful friends of TOS New Zealand for the love and backing of various projects we support.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to meet and spend time with Shona Hammond Boys, artist, author, musician and filmmaker. Shona has been the National Director and founder of NZ Children's Art House Foundation for over 30 years. Shona is internationally recognised for her work and a passionate art networker in the community where children come to explore their own ideas, have their own individual artistic experiences and discover who or what they are and can be. Art Houses are for children aged seven to seventeen. Some of the older youth clubs can go up to 25 years of age and they can become loyal friends of the Children's Arthouse. The New Zealand Children's Art Clubs in their Houses work after school hours, providing art club facilities and working closely with schools in school time providing art extension opportunities.

Each Children's Art House is a busy contributor to its community and region and the exhibitions and projects operating throughout New Zealand are inspirational and varied. The NZ Children's Art Clubs promote healthy mind, healthy body attitudes and the art work coming from the children shows great respect and empathy for these attitudes. It is very moving to see the contributions of children, families and schools in communities. Recently I attended the opening of one of these special projects with community supporter, Carolyn Longden. See 'A Blooming Fence - A Work In Progress' (next page).

TOS NZ and the local Waikato Theosophical Study Centre are supporting a new community initiative, Here2Care, in the Waikato. It is very exciting to see this project getting off the ground and to have met Paul Tierney who started it. See 'Here2Care Project'.

The ethos around both of these local projects in the Waikato very much resonates with the TS/TOS values and the importance of education and creativity for the individual. We are very blessed to have Shona Hammond Boys as an invited guest to the upcoming National TS Convention to be held in Auckland in January 2025. Shona is inspiring and full of energy for life. I encourage you to attend this special event.

TOS NZ has committed to supporting projects with an educational and community benefit, as we commit to service for others both in New Zealand and further afield. If you would like to donate, you can send your much appreciated contribution to the TOS NZ account. Please ensure you put your name and name of project in the reference lines and drop us an email at tos@theosophy.org.nz indicating which project you wish to

support, or 'TOS General projects' for us to decide where best to put the funds. We will send you a receipt. If you would like to organise your own TOS project and would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

On behalf of the TOS NZ team, Renée, Sue and myself, we wish everyone a very happy festive season and Happy New Year!



HERE2CARE PROJECT

TOS NZ and the Waikato Theosophical Study Centre are supporting a community initiative 'Here2Care' in the Waikato. Here2Care was founded by Paul Tierney, a former community constable in the New Zealand Police Force. Here2Care focuses on providing a safe space for young Hamilton people to complete community service hours in a judgment-free space. The work undertaken at Here2Care contributes towards the community centre including a community garden. The location also has a drop-off space for donations and recycling.

Photos are of Carol's initial visit on behalf of TOS NZ and the Waikato Theosophical Study Centre, meeting with Paul Tierney (Here2Care), Judge Denise Clark and Carolyn Longden (Chartwell Mural organiser for the *Blooming Fence Project*) for the opening of Here2Care. More recently, Paul presented TOS NZ with a Certificate of Recognition. Here2Care have aspirations to provide an art and music space catering to all age groups. Their values of Aroha (Love), Tautoko (Support) and Manaaki (Care) align with local Community needs. If you would like to donate to this very worthy cause, all donations would be gratefully received (see donation slip).



A BLOOMING FENCE – A WORK IN PROGRESS by Carolyn Longden

Four local schools, Bankwood Primary, Fairfield Primary, Fairfield Intermediate and Hukanui Primary, were invited to send 50 children each to paint my fence in Chartwell. Children in this area desperately need space to be creative. I decided to provide it. My fence is 35m. long and this term, half of it has been beautifully painted. One young man excitedly said “Miss! I used my imagination!” while waving his hand towards his artwork. Excitement, success, achievement, fulfilment, pride, determination, co-operation, communication, problem-solving and teamwork, all in two hours a day.

This can be replicated around the city and the country. In term four, Shona Hammond Boys is running workshops teaching how to co-ordinate mural painting in this city for our tamariki. Shona Hammond Boys QSM has been doing this for over 30 years in New Zealand. She has been invited by various states in America to teach mural co-ordinators and spent six weeks teaching in Australia sponsored by the Northern Territory Government.

Children’s creativity, their personal self-expression, has no provision in today’s world. They do not need to be ‘taught’ art, they need space to BE art. The Arts are a basic human necessity and for many generations space has been denied for The Arts to be experienced by our young people, with dire consequences, lack of fulfilment, satisfaction, pride and despair. If children are given creative space, they have the opportunity to contribute to society and are much less likely to commit crime and suicide. Someone has to establish a network of Children’s Art Clubs around this country.

We look forward to seeing you and celebrating our endangered children, our bright, gifted, highly motivated creative future leaders.

The Chartwell Children’s Mural Opening was in March 2024:



Authentic Turkish scarf to be raffled for the TOS.
\$5 per ticket.

TOS in NZ

To help contact:
CAROL COLLIER

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Vegetarians Today

From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, **Margaret Johns** urges us to consider compassion during the holiday season.



I recently came across an editorial in the December 1957 issue of *The New Zealand Vegetarian*, written by Mary Stroobant, which began "The irony of celebrating Christmas, the birthday of the Prince of Peace, with the wholesale slaughter of animals, does not occur to the majority of people. Yet, this way of marking one of the great festivals in the Christian calendar could hardly be less in accord with the spirit of Christianity, which teaches love and compassion for all sentient life." Although the number of people professing to be Christian has dropped and the Christian aspect of Christmas has changed to become more commercial than spiritual, the sentiment expressed by Mary Stroobant holds true. How many today stop and think of the cruelty involved in the production of Christmas food and the sustainability of the practices involved?

The NZ Vegetarian *Think Kind* Student competition took place between May and August this year with judging over September/

October and attracted nearly 300 participants from schools all over New Zealand – results are on www.vegetarian.org.nz/think-kind. We are hopeful that this competition is encouraging more students (and their parents and teachers) to be kinder and more compassionate towards not only animals but also their fellow human beings and the world as a whole.

The NZ Anti-Vivisection Society (NZAVS) has led the fight to stop animals from being used and killed in experimentation for over 45 years. New Zealand has some of the most progressive animal welfare laws in the world but is lagging behind the rest of the world in stopping the use of animals in research.

So, this Christmas let's resolve to talk gently and kindly to others, and make the necessary changes in our lives to bring about a healthier, more sustainable, more compassionate world.

With summer holidays on the way, here are recipes to share:

VEGETABLE KEBABS

- 1 capsicum sliced into 2cm strips
- 4 tomatoes quartered or use whole baby ones
- 2 small onions, quartered
- 8 brussel sprouts, halved
- Soy & ginger marinade
- 1x 225g tin of pineapple pieces
- 8 button mushrooms, halved
- 2 courgettes cut at 2cm intervals
- 16 pieces of baby corn
- 1x 300g block firm tofu cut into 2cm cubes

Once prepared, thread ingredients onto kebab sticks.

Place in high-sided tray, prepare marinade and pour over kebabs and refrigerate overnight.

Cook on barbecue or roast in oven, turning frequently to avoid burning.

Note: Ingredients are suggestions and a starting point only – see what's in your fridge or garden!



Soy & Ginger Marinade

- 1 small onion diced
- 1 Tbsp oil
- 1 cup water
- 3 Tbsp soya sauce
- 4 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp cornflour
- 2 tsp finely chopped ginger
- 2 Tbsp sugar

Sauté onion and garlic in oil. Mix cornflour in water, avoiding lumps.

Put all ingredients in pot with sautéed onion mixture, mix together then brush over kebabs and leave overnight.

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 lending library at TSNZ national office by contacting the librarian by email: library@theosophy.nz or telephone (09) 523 1797. The library is open on Wednesdays or by appointment on a Thursday.

Cost to members is the return postage of books. Non-members may join the library for a joining fee of \$50.

Vasanta House Accommodation

Short stay accommodation is available at TSNZ National Section, Vasanta House in Epsom, Auckland. Rates vary for members and non-members. The house requirements are vegetarian, smoke-free and alcohol-free. At certain times of the year Vasanta House is closed for events, Board and Management meetings etc. For bookings and more information please email the office at: office@theosophy.org.nz

*A myth is far truer than a history,
for a history only gives a story of the shadows,
whereas a myth gives a story of the substances that cast the shadows.*

Annie Besant

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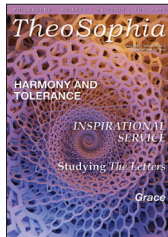
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Theosophy

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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A Theosophical Worldview

The Theosophical Society, while reserving for each member full freedom to interpret those teachings known as Theosophy, is dedicated to preserving and realising the Ageless Wisdom, which embodies both a worldview and a vision of human self-transformation.

This tradition is founded upon certain fundamental propositions:

- * The universe and all that exists within it are one interrelated and interdependent whole.
- * Every existent being – from atom to galaxy – is rooted in the same universal, life-creating Reality.

This Reality is all-pervasive but it can never be summed up in its parts, since it transcends all its expressions. It reveals itself in the purposeful, ordered and meaningful processes of nature as well as in the deepest recesses of the mind and spirit.

- * Recognition of the unique value of every living being expresses itself in reverence for life, compassion for all, sympathy with the need of all individuals to find truth for themselves, and respect for all religious traditions. The ways in which these ideals become realities in individual life are both the privileged choice and the responsible act of every human being.

Central to the concerns of theosophy is the desire to promote understanding and unity among people of all races, nationalities, philosophies and religions. Therefore, all people, whatever their race, creed, sex, caste, or colour, are invited to participate equally in the life and work of the Society. The Theosophical Society imposes no dogmas, but points toward the source of unity behind all differences. Devotion to truth, love for all living beings and commitment to a life of active altruism are the marks of the true Theosophist.

Prepared by the Theosophical Society of America.

Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment;
Cleverness is mere opinion,
bewilderment is intuition.

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī



December 2024