

# *Theosophy* IN AUSTRALIA

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**The Theosophical Society** welcomes students or seekers from all walks of life, belonging to any religion or to none and who are in sympathy with its Objects. It was formed to assist in showing to people that Theosophy exists, and 'to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities'. Wisdom is known by a mind that is completely open. Therefore freedom of thought and open enquiry are given special emphasis in the Society. **Theosophy** essentially refers to 'Divine Wisdom', Sacred Knowledge, which is a transcendent state of consciousness. In a secondary sense, Theosophy is an ancient yet distinct stream of enquiry, exploring and interpreting the truths of existence in terms suited to particular ages, e.g. in the teachings of ancient India, ancient China, Platonism, Neoplatonism, and, since 1875, through the contribution of the TS. At the core of Theosophy is the principle of indivisible Unity underlying the diversity of forms.

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### The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

- I. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.  
~
- II. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.  
~
- III. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.

## From the International President

Tim Boyd



### On Unity

During H.P. Blavatsky's lifetime she shared many things in her writings about meditation and its value. But she had very little to say about *how* to meditate. She did have the wonderful diagram that she dictated just a few years before her death: Diagram of Meditation. In theosophical circles we place great emphasis on meditation, and it would be good if we were to discuss sometimes what meditation is, and what it is not. This is because very often we may be labouring under the belief, when we sit for twenty or thirty minutes or longer in the morning, that we are meditating. Perhaps we are, but perhaps ninety-nine per cent of the time we are not.

When many years ago I first realised that meditation was important, I read books and talked with people to find out what meditation was. Everywhere I looked, there would be a description of a method or technique, but not of what is meditation. Even such things as the theosophical quotation, 'Meditation is the inexpressible longing of the soul for the infinite', has some poetic beauty that points in a certain direction, but

'what do we do with that?' was my question. Probably the best quotation about the meaning of meditation I have found is from a Theosophist and Tibetan Lama born in Germany who wrote many books, Anagarika Govinda. At one time he was asked what 'meditation' is, and his answer is the one I like the best – 'Meditation is not what you think' – short, but to the point! Any time that we are seated and engaged in a process of the nature of thought, of the mind, we are not meditating. Meditation begins at that point where thought ends.

Thoughts never end, that plane is always active, but at the point in which our consciousness moves beyond its involvement in the mental movement, and *only* at that point, meditation begins. Everything else, all of those fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes we spend sitting, would more accurately be described as 'the practice of meditation', not as 'meditation'. Similarly, when practising the piano, we are not *playing* the piano, we are practising. The wonderful thing about meditation is the common experience

that we all have had – the momentary absence of self. This is a moment when we are not on a cushion, that is, we are having a genuine meditative experience. It does not require sitting with the legs crossed with the breath flowing in a certain way. Probably the most profound meditation experiences we have had have been at times when we would not say that we were technically meditating. But the practice is vitally important, much like a farmer prepares the earth for the seed to make itself known.

In Blavatsky's Diagram of Meditation the very first point that she emphasises is that, in meditation, we must make an effort, we must try to conceive of Oneness: 'First conceive of UNITY by Expansion in space and infinite in Time'. In our imagination we try to expand ourselves into all space – it is an imaginative act at first. One of the things that is said to be eternal is space. Whatever our conception may be of the Divine, of God, and so forth, necessarily has the nature of limitless space. To conceive of Unity is an abstract approach, and by virtue of it being so abstract, it will necessarily not be appealing to any and all people.

But there are many other forms of meditation that do exactly the same thing, using different methods. In Buddhism there is the familiar form of *metta* or loving-kindness meditation. There is also a meditation on the

four immeasurable minds. These meditations essentially involve the aspiration that all beings may be happy and free from suffering. At the superficial level it is just a statement of a wish, and it could end there. But at a more profound level the meditation is actually taught beginning with a visualisation, to the extent that we are capable, of all beings before us, and of this good wish flowing toward all of these beings that we have seen in our minds situated in front of us.

This is the way to incorporate a visual component into the same suggestion made by Blavatsky, trying to come to an understanding of Unity by expansion in space. In this case it takes place by expansion to the limitless number of beings before us. Because the beings are unlimited, the wish for their happiness also has the quality of being without limitation, without personal attachment. If the abstract approach is appealing, then simply the expansion is in space and infinite in time – the Blavatsky way. If we require some level of imagery in order to activate the imagination and stimulate the aspiration, there are other methods that accomplish the same thing. These are some ideas on how we can have some practical application of the principle of Unity.

condensed from *The Theosophist*,  
September 2016

## From the National President

Linda Oliveira



Greetings from the National Headquarters. This issue features several thought-provoking articles. One traces some history of the relationship between the TS and Theosophy. Another deals with gender issues through the lens of Theosophy, and the writer of another article is passionate about veganism.

We are a Society of diverse members. The TS, as an entity, does not prescribe how we are to live. Rather, it is a repository of the Wisdom tradition which, by its nature, enriches lives. It is for each of us to find which aspects of this tradition speak to us, and to allow them to inform our lives accordingly. Who we are, and the kind of life we lead, is a matter solely for each of us as individuals.

Consider, for a moment, what kind of person we were on joining the TS, and the kind of person we are now. Has exposure to the Wisdom teachings over time helped us change for the better in some respects, notwithstanding our inevitable shortcomings as humans in progress? For example, have we become a little more accepting of other

human beings who happen to differ from society's general expectations, or of those who have different cultural roots, or else the type of person who used to irritate us easily? Are we perhaps a little kinder, or less prone to judgement of others? Then again, has Theosophy helped to expand our mind? The ultimate effectiveness of Theosophy is whether it changes us for the better; whether we can relate to the world better. Is it possible to have a mind without barriers? We are multilayered beings, so this can present a challenge.

The fact is, it is easy to give or to attend lectures and share our opinions, which may sound quite erudite. But ultimately we are simply left with ourselves. So it is useful to dwell on what actually comprises this thing called 'me', for we live more closely with ourselves than with anyone else.

Exposure to Theosophy during a given lifetime is a very real opportunity. How are we travelling with this?

Comments of up to 200 words on this issue are welcome and may be published.

## What is the Link between Theosophy and the TS?

Pedro Oliveira



G.K. Chesterton once wrote: ‘Paradox – [is] Truth standing on her head to get attention.’ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines paradox as ‘a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which when investigated may prove to be well founded or true.’ A number of wisdom teachings, in different traditions, utilise paradox to communicate a deeper meaning. The word itself has an intriguing etymology: from the Greek *para* – ‘contrary to’ + *doxa* – ‘opinion’. A paradox challenges accepted opinions and invites investigation.

There is a profound paradox at the heart of the work of the Theosophical Society. It carries in its name the designation ‘Theosophical’, from the Greek word *theosophia*, Divine Wisdom, yet from its very beginning the Theosophical Society has refused to officially define Theosophy.

In the Preamble to the original Bylaws of the TS, approved in New York on 8 September 1875, even before the Society was officially constituted on 17 November 1875, it is stated:

Whatever may be the private opinions of its members, the Society has *no dogmas to enforce, no creed to disseminate*. It is formed neither as a Spiritualistic schism, nor to serve as the foe or friend of any sectarian or philosophic body. Its only axiom is the omnipotence of truth, its only creed a profession of unqualified devotion to its discovery and propagation. In considering the qualifications of applicants for membership, it knows neither race, sex, color, country nor creed. (p.81) <sup>1</sup>

The international Rules of the TS do not include any definition of Theosophy. That means the Theosophical Society, during the one hundred and forty years of its existence, has remained loyal to the spirit – and the letter – of the Rules

written by its Founders. This spirit is a robust affirmation that this Society honours the intellectual freedom of every one of its members, not imposing upon them any dogma, any tenets, any doctrines, sublime though they may be. It leaves its members completely free in religious, philosophical and metaphysical questions, asking only that they share their views in an attitude of courtesy and consideration for others.

The Principal Co-Founders did not see the TS as a freethinkers' club, a political party, a humanitarian group, an *avant garde* social group pressing for cultural changes, nor as a spiritualistic circle. They saw the Society as an instrument for the regeneration of the human mind.

The Principal Co-Founders of the TS, H.S. Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky, equally exercised their freedom of thought by sharing with the membership, in articles and books, how they understood the work before the Society. They did not see the TS as a freethinkers' club, a political party, a humanitarian group, an *avant garde* social group pressing for cultural changes, nor

as a spiritualistic circle. They saw the Society as an instrument for the regeneration of the human mind, and they stated, quite clearly, that there can be no regeneration without one coming closer to wisdom – an insight into the unbroken, uncreated unity of all life.

Colonel Olcott wrote:

One reason for our too general confusion of ideas, is that we are prone to regard Theosophy as a sort of far-away sunrise that we must try to clutch, instead of seeing that it is a lamp to light our feet about the house and in our daily walks. It is worth nothing if it is but word-spinning, it is priceless if it is the best rule and ideal of life. We want religion to live by, day by day, not merely to die by at the last gasp. And Theosophy is the divine soul of religion, the one key to all bibles, the riddle-reader of all mysteries, the consoler of the heart-weary, the benign comforter in sorrow, the alleviator of social miseries.<sup>2</sup> (*The Theosophist*, November 1894, pp.87-92)

### **Theosophy is Transformative, not Merely Descriptive**

It is easy to conceive of Theosophy as a mere description of universal processes, of the human constitution, of karma and reincarnation and what happens after death. Such descriptions are a *part* of the teaching and do widen one's perspective about life and



existence. However, the more we study it and dwell on the core, underlying principles of Theosophy the more we realise that it takes us ever more closely to that uncreated oneness in which humanity ‘lives, moves and has its being’.

Reaffirming the spiritually noble nature of the Society, HPB pointed out the profound and at the same time transforming nature of the work it has to do:

It is not the policy of self-preservation, not the welfare of one or another personality in its finite and physical form that will or can ever secure the desired object and screen the Society from the effects of the social ‘hurricane’ to come; but only the weakening of the feeling of separateness in the units which compose its chief element. And such a weakening can only be achieved by a process of *inner enlightenment*. It is not violence that can ever insure [*sic*] bread and comfort for all; nor is the kingdom of peace and love, of mutual help and charity and ‘food for all’, to be conquered by a cold, reasoning, diplomatic policy. It is only by the close brotherly union of men’s inner SELVES, of soul-solidarity, of the growth and development of that feeling which makes one suffer when one thinks of the suffering of others, that the reign of Justice and equality for all can ever be inaugurated. This is the first of the three fundamental objects for which the Theosophical Society was established,

and called the ‘Universal Brotherhood of Man’, without distinction of *race, colour or creed*.<sup>3</sup>

(*Lucifer*, August 1888, p.429)

The feeling of separateness, a deep-seated form of narcissism and self-importance, lies at the very root of many social ills today. Our culture actively promotes it and one can see how perceptive businesses around the world see narcissistic separateness as a very profitable field for business. Many gadgets for sale thrive on it. A psychological attitude based on separateness feeds xenophobia, intolerance and racism, and tears up the very fabric of family life. In this difficult climate, HPB suggested that the TS should actively encourage soul-solidarity – a profound, unre-served understanding of each other, which could herald change in human consciousness on a major scale. Theosophy lies at the very essence of soul-solidarity and inner Enlightenment.

### **The Mandate of the TS**

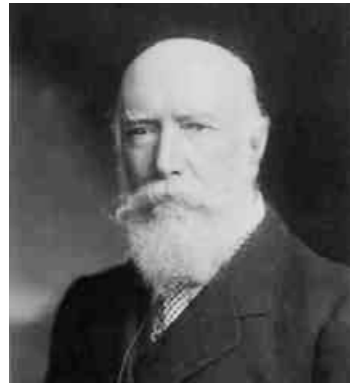
Both HPB and H.S. Olcott made it amply clear that in forming the Theosophical Society they followed the guidance and inspiration of their Adept-Teachers, the Mahatmas, who are referred to as the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. In 1881, seeing how the work of a Branch of the TS in India

was moving away from the central purpose of the Society, a very senior Adept, known as the Mahachohan, conveyed his views about the essential work before the TS to Alfred Percy Sinnett, the well-known recipient of the Mahatma Letters:

The doctrine we promulgate being the only true one, must, supported by such evidence as we are preparing to give become ultimately triumphant as every other truth. Yet it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually, enforcing its theories, unimpeachable facts for those who know, with direct inferences deduced from and corroborated by the evidence furnished by modern exact science. That is the reason why Colonel H.S.O., who works but to revive Buddhism, may be regarded as one who labours in the true path of theosophy, far more than any other man who chooses as his goal the gratification of his own ardent aspirations for occult knowledge. Buddhism, stripped of its superstitions, is eternal truth, and he who strives for the latter is striving for Theos-Sophia, Divine Wisdom, which is a synonym of truth.

For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to popularize a knowledge of theosophy. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom) which is after all only an exalted and glorious

selfishness—but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true theosophist.<sup>4</sup> (*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, pp.2-3)



Alfred Percy Sinnett

From the first paragraph of the Mahachohan's letter, it becomes clear that the Society was meant to be the custodian of a timeless teaching – Theosophy – through the agency of the Masters and their advanced disciple, HPB. The teachings of Theosophy are referred to as 'unimpeachable facts' because, as mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine*, they are the result of the investigation of the nature of life and existence by 'countless generations of seers'. Such seers could see the laws of Nature and the unplumbed potential in human consciousness through direct,

unmediated perception. Theosophy is thus, in essence, unlimited seeing.

Also stated in the above-mentioned quotation is the quintessential mandate of the TS: to popularise a knowledge of Theosophy. In *The Key to Theosophy*, published in 1889, HPB rendered this mandate more explicitly:

It was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities.<sup>5</sup>

Theosophy and its study show that ‘to work for self is to work for disappointment’.

Quite a number of teachings in the world today emphasise ‘self-empowerment’, putting before practitioners the notion – a dangerous one – that the pursuit of unlimited self-benefits is a worthwhile goal, what the Mahachohan called ‘an exalted and glorious selfishness’.

As we have seen so far, both the Founders and their Teachers envisaged the Theosophical Society as a body of men and women committed to sharing the principles of Theosophy with humanity in a non-dogmatic and non-sectarian way. To avoid sectarianism Theosophy has never been officially defined, while it has remained the soul and spirit of the TS. Although the Society does not teach Theosophy officially it leaves its members free to explore it, to the best of their

understanding and comprehension. When members are successful in such an endeavour there will be harmony, understanding, inspiration and an enthusiasm to strengthen the work of the TS in different parts of the world. When they fail we see divisions, personality clashes, parochial views and the weakening of the work, in some cases leading to the gradual disappearance of Lodges, Branches and Groups. In such units the light of Theosophy has been momentarily extinguished.

A question can then be asked: What is the Theosophical Society? There may not be an easy answer for this. From a practical point of view it is an association which was started in New York in 1875 and which is now represented in almost fifty countries around the world. From a deeper perspective, perhaps, it is a body of seekers of Wisdom united by its three Objects, and energised by the spirit of altruism and selfless service, that still attracts the guidance and support of those Elder Brothers who helped to bring it into existence some one hundred and forty years ago. It has survived against all odds and opposition all these years because within it are those for whom the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity is a reality.

To tentatively answer the question that forms the title of this article,

the link between Theosophy and the Theosophical Society is in those members who have dared to devote their lives, energy and understanding to this unworldly Wisdom we call Theosophy. The Society never asks any of its members to do that. It only asks the candidate for membership in its ranks to be in sympathy with its three Objects and pay the necessary fees. But the Society has been blessed with generations of members who went beyond nominal membership into a life of such inner exploration that caused them to rediscover themselves as living participants of a greater life – the body of suffering humanity. As one of the Masters wrote to Mr Sinnett: ‘For it is “Humanity” which is the great Orphan, the only disinherited one upon this earth, my friend.’<sup>6</sup> (ML15, p.49)

As she lay dying, in May 1891, HPB said to Isabel Cooper-Oakley: ‘Keep the link unbroken.’ There are some who believe the link was broken a few years after she died. Yet the Society continued to grow and expand throughout the world. Its work has influenced science, religion, art, psychology, medicine and other fields of human endeavour. Its overall membership has fluctuated and yet, in many places, people still join the TS, still search its literature and attend its meetings. How many of them will strengthen the link, only they may know.

### Endnotes:

1. Original by-laws of the Theosophical Society.
2. ‘TS Solidarity and Ideals’, *The Theosophist*, November 1894.
3. ‘The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future’, *Lucifer*, August 1888.
4. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, C. Jinarajadasa (transcr. and comp.), Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1945, Letter 1.
5. *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P. Blavatsky, Theosophical Publishing House, London, 1889, p.57.
6. *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K.H. in Chronological sequence*, A. Trevor Barker (transcr. and comp.), Theosophical Publishing House, Philippines, 1993.



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## Gender Issues in a Changing World

Deepa Padhi



Source: Wikimedia Commons  
Mitch Featherston

Gender issues are a global phenomenon, even though they differ widely in their outer form and expression, according to region and culture. They are as old as humankind itself. In fact right back in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve probably argued over who was going to do the weeding and the sweeping of the fallen leaves.

But gender issues cannot be reduced to a simple battle of the sexes. What exactly do we mean by gender issues and how can we as Theosophists help to bring about progress in this area in today's dynamic and changing world?

Gender issues usually focus on men, women, and the relationship between them; on their roles, rights, and responsibilities. Gender-related issues have become of such interest and concern that many universities now have Gender Studies departments.

For us Theosophists, the main pre-occupation is gender *equality* and doing all we can to achieve it. This is part of the first and principal Object of the Theosophical Society.

Most of us, whatever country we come from, recall a time when men generally worked outside the home and were the sole breadwinners for their family. Women on the other hand, governed the domestic front. They were expected to stay at home, raise children and look after the comfort of their husbands. They were not supposed to take any decisions independently. In other words they did not have any individuality. In some areas they were really no more than privileged servants and objects of enjoyment. This is still the case in many countries.

The social changes of the 1960s and 1970s caused a cultural revolution, particularly in the West, that found

many women changing their role from just child-bearing and rearing to include breadwinning. During this period, there were significant changes in the property rights of women in relation to their marital status. They were given the right to vote in many countries. In India and almost everywhere else, there still remains a disparity between the wages of men and women for exactly the same jobs.

Whatever changes and flexibility in gender roles are evident today are due to the changes in the social structure, education, advancement in science and technology, and to economic factors. Unfortunately the underlying mindset of men and women in our still largely patriarchal society has changed very little, and not at all in many places. With changing times, the role of women in some countries has acquired new dimensions, there is no doubt, but there is a long, long way to go.

### Crimes

I have no need to remind you of the many forms of violence against women: rape, war rape, domestic violence, girl child sexual abuse often in the context of child marriage, forced marriage, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, honour killings, acid attacks, dowry killings,

forced sterilisation, trafficking, and mistreatment of widows.

A strong preference for sons has been causing gender imbalance in certain countries during the past decades through female foeticide, infanticide, and abandonment of newborn girls. It is evident that large parts of China and India will have a 15-20% excess of young men during the next two decades. This will give rise to other gender-related problems.

Fighting against all these crimes is considered a key issue for gender equality. It is not only men who are responsible for them. Even women are to some extent responsible directly or indirectly. They are both victim and agent within the system. The central issue now is the rights of women. Men and women need to enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities, and protection.

UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson, is gathering global attention for the *HeForShe* movement launched very recently. *HeForShe* is a campaign led by UN Women in which men all over the world are encouraged to speak out against the inequalities faced by women and girls. It is really heartening to know that men have begun to defend the rights of women,

to protect their interests, and promote the development of their capacities. Emma Watson mentions that now it is time to unify our efforts. *HeForShe* is a solidarity movement for gender equality that brings together one half of humanity in support of the other half of humanity, for the benefit of all.

Denmark has been crowned ‘The Happiest Country in the world’. One of the reasons why Danes are so happy is that gender equality is prioritised and they feel a responsibility towards one another.

Some scientists today tell us that sexual orientation and gender are not biologically determined. It is the prevalent social and cultural norms that are the determining factors, they say. So-called masculinity and femininity are nothing but social constructs. The study of different human cultures down the ages and across the world today seems to bear this out. The more rigid the gender roles in a given society, the more uncomfortable its citizens feel with changing notions of gender definition and sexual orientation.

### **We are Not Absolutely Masculine or Feminine**

In fact, our spiritual studies indicate that men are not absolutely masculine

The concept of the *ardhanariswar* in Hindu mythology symbolises the union of Shiva or *Purusha* (power) and Shakti or *Prakriti* (creation). It represents a balance of masculine and feminine energies in the universe. In fact, gender equality aims at a balance between femininity and masculinity as both are indispensable for human life.

nor are women solely feminine. Women can be female or male at the emotional level and female or male at the mental level. Similarly, men can be female or male at higher levels while male at the physical level. This is very much in tune with the concept of the *ardhanariswar* in Hindu mythology which symbolises the union of Shiva or *Purusha* (power) and Shakti or *Prakriti* (creation). It represents a balance of masculine and feminine energies in the universe. In fact, gender equality aims at a balance between femininity and masculinity as both are indispensable for human life.

There is another gender issue which is emerging recently and that is the inclusion of transgenders. Transgender is the state of one’s gender identity or gender expression not matching one’s assigned sex. Some people who were

assigned sex, usually at birth, feel that this is a false or incomplete description of themselves. Transgender people face multiple forms of physical and emotional torture. They have been fettered in their professional and civic life. They have been given restricted access to education, health services, and religious places.

Many countries have claimed to identify more than five genders, like Indonesia and India. In India, it has been found that apart from male and female, there are more than twenty types of gender such as transmen, transwomen, androgynous, pangender, and so on. In ancient India, these were referred to as *TrtiyaPrakrti*.

On 15 April 2014, the Supreme Court of India recognised a third gender that is neither male nor female, stating that ‘Recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue, but a human rights issue.’<sup>1</sup>

### **A Theosophical Position**

Now what might be a Theosophical position on all this? I would suggest that every being, whether male or female or transgender, is first of all a human being and therefore has a human right which is gender equality. Every human being, irrespective of

any gender, has an intrinsic value independent of extrinsic or utility values like profession, status, power, wealth, and so on. Every human being is complete and neither needs to abuse nor dominate another. No one is superior or inferior.

In the pursuit of gender equality, we are really making an effort to embrace all humanity irrespective of any gender. In fact, the issue of gender equality can be solved only with the understanding of spiritual equality. The soul has no gender. Outwardly we look different from each other, like one wave of the ocean looks different from another wave. Essentially all are one, rooted to one source. The physical differences of name and form (*nāmarupa*) are due to our ignorance of the truth — *avidyā* or *māyā* in the Advaitic terminology. ‘We are all atoms, obeying the law together. Our denying it does not disprove it. It simply ... keeps us miserable, poor, and selfish’<sup>2</sup>, says a great Theosophist, William Quan Judge. The fundamental teaching of Theosophy is that all human beings, having the same spiritual and physical origin, are essentially of one and the same essence, and that essence is one — infinite, the uncaused cause, and eternal, whether we call it Pure Consciousness, God, or Nature. Therefore, nothing can affect one nation or one human being without



affecting all other nations and people. In the words of HPB, ‘This is as certain and as obvious as that a stone thrown into a pond will, sooner or later, set in motion every single drop of water therein.’ She explains it further:

Every physical action has its moral and everlasting effect. Hurt a man ... you may think that his pain and suffering cannot spread by any means to his neighbours, least of all to men of other nations. We affirm *that it will* ... therefore, we say, that ... every man is ... to understand and accept as *an axiomatic truth* that by wronging one man we wrong not only ourselves but the whole of humanity in the long run. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p.47) <sup>3</sup>

While the changes so far have not all been pleasant, changes are a part of life. They can symbolise growth and development. But too often people are comfortable with their traditional mindset, with narrow and biased ideas, and when changes come their way they resist them. As life is in a constant state of change, one can either learn to live in harmony with the flow of life, or one can oppose it. But in the end the individual who obstructs the natural flow will simply suffer.

The time has come. Present-day human beings are adequately intellectually equipped to understand the unity of all life and the universality of Brother-



hood, but very few are prepared to carry out this intellectual recognition in daily life. Dr Annie Besant, a great Theosophist, our second international President, the founder of the Theosophical Order of Service, and an acknowledged champion of gender equality, mentioned that our social, religious, and economic opinions may differ. However, she added that on the cardinal fact that we are a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, we must agree; we cannot honestly remain in the Society if we cease to believe in that supreme fact.

The Theosophical Order of Service is the right platform for putting into practice the principle of Universal Brotherhood by educating people on gender equality issues through workshops, seminars, billboards, captions, posters, signature drives, friendly competitions in the form of essays, and so on.

In view of these changing times, I would like to suggest that the term ‘Universal Brotherhood’ may be appropriately replaced by the term ‘Universal Humanhood’ to convey explicitly the gender harmony we all so greatly need. I would like to mention here that the Theosophical Society in America, under pressure from its female members, changed to the non-gender-specific ‘Human Family’ in the late 1990s.

There is a silver lining as far as the movement for gender equality is concerned. Dr Rupert Sheldrake, a scientist and a Theosophist, advocates that if a critical mass of a particular species behaves in a particular way, through morphic resonance others will behave in a similar way, even in the absence of any known means of connection or communication. If all TS and TOS members, the educated classes of society, and the political leaders of the world try to understand the spiritual import of gender equality and promote it in practice, then there will definitely be a change in the minds of people in general. There will be a change, a change from gender discrimination to gender inclusion, from differences to unity — the much-needed paradigm shift.

This will help give rise to a healthier civilisation, where there will be balance and harmony between genders and a value system based on love, tolerance, and compassion.

### Endnotes

1. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27031180>

(accessed 27 February 2017)

2. [http://nexus.universaltheosophy.com/archive/groups\\_tt\\_20140903\\_key-concepts\\_universal-brotherhood-bare-html.html](http://nexus.universaltheosophy.com/archive/groups_tt_20140903_key-concepts_universal-brotherhood-bare-html.html)

(accessed 27 February 2017)

3. Blavatsky, H.P., *The Key to Theosophy*, Theosophical Publishing House, London, 1889.



Dr Deepa Padhi is President of the Theosophical Order of Service, Mahabharat group in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, and Head of the TOS Odisha Region. Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, October 2016.



## Theosophy, Veganism and the Pathway to Final Liberation

Heather Fisher



Theosophy is the teaching that guides us to recognise our true Self.

‘What is this wisdom teaching for, if it only leads us to where we are?’<sup>1</sup>

As Theosophists seeking to unfold the mystery of our existence and how we might obtain final liberation (release, Enlightenment, Nirvana), we must look to how we live in the world and how we treat our fellow beings.

The Buddhist concept of the Noble Eightfold Path – Right Understanding, Right Intent, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration,<sup>2</sup> – points us to how we might live well in the world.

There is only the One Life, the One Reality. All manifestation contains the spark or seed of the Divine; not just humankind, but all living things.

A Divine Consciousness permeates all of life on this planet: the rocks, the oceans, the grasses, the trees, the insects, the beasts, birds, fishes, bacteria, even the air that we breathe – and us humans.

Madame Blavatsky put it eloquently in her article, ‘The New Cycle’:

... to admit the omnipresence of an impalpable Proteus, omnipotent in its ubiquity throughout all the kingdoms of nature, including man; ... indivisible in its essence and eluding form ... It is sufficient to recognise these truths, to be a Theosophist, for this recognition is tantamount to admitting that not only humanity – composed as it is of thousands of races – but everything that lives and vegetates, in short, everything that is, is made of the same essence and substance, is animated by the same spirit, and that, consequently, everything in nature, whether physical or moral, is bound in solidarity.<sup>3</sup>

We are living in the age of Kali Yuga, in which the golden bull of Divine Truth stands only on one leg, and materialism and self-centredness overarch all aspects of our existence. We need to be even stronger and more awake to counteract these negative and destructive forces – to support the poor ‘one leg of Truth’ by contributing loving compassion for the upliftment of not only our individual selves, but all of Life.

So our task at this stage of our evolution is to develop our mental capacity. This is the purpose of life right now. We have something to focus on immediately – we can forget the remote past and remote future.

## Vegetarianism

These Truths lead me to the subject of vegetarianism, which in the early days of the Society was promoted as being the most acceptable way of living according to *ahimsa* – harmlessness. Well, the world has come a long way since then and sadly the manner in which our food is produced has changed dramatically as well. Even fifty years ago we did not have the behemoth of industrial agriculture, in which animals

are so entirely commodified, that they are not even considered as sentient beings – just a product to be processed for profit.

The food industry is on a par with the global armaments and pharmaceutical industries in directing how we live, so that they may gain. Unfortunately the people involved in these industries appear to be completely immersed in attributes of Kali Yuga, their total identification with materialism precluding them from recognising the rights or the suffering of other living beings, or the environment.

Intensive industrialised farming is what we face. I refer readers to the documentary *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*<sup>4</sup> and to the confronting documentary *Earthlings*<sup>5</sup>, exposing the impact of these practices on the planet today. Millions of animals are enslaved, exploited, and cruelly treated to feed us human beings. These animals have the right to live a natural life free from suffering, just as humans do – we are all manifestations of the One. And in fact, these poor creatures would not be in such abundance if not for humans modifying and intensively breeding them. If people could really see these farming practices up close and personal, as shown in *Earthlings*, they could not help feeling shocked that they are contributing to this process.

Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of laws — eternal harmony ... a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.<sup>6</sup>

*The Voice of the Silence*

## No Longer Enough

As honourable as vegetarianism has been, I believe this is no longer enough. Some of the worst cases of animal suffering happen to dairy cows, which lose their babies at birth, are forced to reproduce at an unnatural rate, and to lactate for their entire lives; and to hens which are kept in intolerable conditions and forced to continually lay their eggs at a rate far beyond what is usual – and endure painful ‘modifications’ to their bodies to ensure their productivity. And I should mention that these animals are all female – the males are put to death shortly after birth, often in distressingly inhumane ways for the baby chicks, and sold for young meat in the case of the calves.

So lacto/ovo vegetarianism no longer comes under the banner of *ahimsa*.

Turning away from all animal products seems the truly spiritual (Theosophical) action to take. A *solely plant based diet*, and an animal product free way of life, would assist us in refining our own vibrations and help to purify our



vehicle. Not to mention the overall benefit to the planet. No leather furniture, apparel or accessories, no feather doonas, no animal testing for cosmetics or household products, no animal ingredients in medications and health supplements, no animals as entertainment, no vivisection. Even seemingly innocuous jubes contain gelatin, which is derived from animals.<sup>7</sup>

We can read a thousand books, listen to a hundred talks, have a head full of facts, quote dates and aphorisms, but if we haven’t integrated these teachings into the way we live, into how we treat our fellow beings and the natural world, then we haven’t learnt a thing. To know these things and still continue on the path that promotes and sustains cruelty, suffering and environmental destruction is wilful ignorance and causes stagnation, even injury to our Spirit.

The path to final liberation is the simplest thing in the world – Thou

Art That – Atman is Brahman! This is Self-Realisation.<sup>8</sup> But of course we all know that it is not so straightforward in reality. So we *do* read, study, strive to understand and make changes in our lives to embrace more closely the spiritual path. We are confronted by a myriad of emotions, challenges, relationships, political situations, fears and anxieties as we journey through this incarnation, which all impede our spiritual wellbeing, hence our need to enquire and to appreciate the teachings of the Wisdom tradition. As most Theosophists subscribe to the principle of reincarnation, we comprehend that this life is one of many journeys in the physical realm.

These realisations, along with recognising the influence of Kali Yuga, can help us make more sense of our little lives and also of these difficult and sometimes frightening times we are living in. If we can live at our ‘soul’ level, resonating with the Divine Eternal, above the petty considerations, hardships and cruelties of the world we find ourselves in, then our lives can become much more meaningful, gentle and fulfilled – and true Theosophy can thrive in our being.

### Endnotes:

1. ‘The Five Seeds’, talk by Tim Boyd, National Convention, Perth, Australia, 2016.

2. <http://www.buddha101.com>

3. ‘The New Cycle’, H.P. Blavatsky, *La Revue Theosophique*, Paris, Vol. 1, March 21, 1889, pp.3-13.

4. *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*, Kip Andersen & Keegan Kuhn, June 2014.

5. *Earthlings*, Shaun Monson, September 2005. Narrated by Joaquin Phoenix.

6. *The Voice of the Silence*, H.P. Blavatsky (transl.), The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 2005, p.109.

7. Gelatin is a protein substance derived from collagen, a natural protein present in the tendons, ligaments, and tissues of mammals. It is produced by boiling the connective tissues, bones and skins of animals, usually cows and pigs. ... As a foodstuff, gelatin is the basis for jellied desserts; used in the preservation of fruit and meat, and to make powdered milk, meringue, taffy, marshmallow, and fondant. It is also used to clarify beer and wine. Gelatin’s industrial applications include medicine capsules, photographic plate coatings, paper production and dyeing and tanning supplies.

[www.howmade.com](http://www.howmade.com)

8. Vedanta school of Hindu thought.

### Suggested reading and Links:

Adyar Pamphlet No.33 -

*Vegetarianism and Occultism* by

C.W. Leadbeater, November 1913,

Theosophical Publishing House,  
Adyar, Chennai (Madras) India.  
‘The Secret Doctrine, a Friend’, by  
Raymond Rugland, *Sunrise* magazine,  
Theosophical University Press, April/  
May 1988.

*The World Around Us*, Radha Burnier  
(On The Watch-Tower articles  
from *The Theosophist* 1980-2007),  
especially Section 1, 1 Theosophy.  
<http://www.adaptt.org/veganism.html>  
<http://www.veganaustralia.org.au/>  
<http://w.w.w.jamesaspey.com.au>  
- this speech is your WAKE UP CALL1



Heather Fisher has been a member of Blavatsky Lodge since 1992. She has worked in the Lodge on various occasions, and in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library at the National Headquarters. In past years she served on the TOS National Committee. She has been a vegetarian for forty-five years and transitioned to veganism two years ago.

Help Nature and work on with her;  
and Nature will regard thee as one  
of her creators and make obeisance.

And she will open wide before thee  
the portals of her secret chambers,  
lay bare before thy gaze the  
treasures hidden in the very depths  
of her pure virgin bosom. Unsullied  
by the hand of matter she shows her  
treasures only to the eye of Spirit —  
the eye which never closes, the eye  
for which there is no veil in all her  
kingdoms.



*The Voice of the Silence*, Fragment I

## Q and A



The answers below were given by the Q and A panel during the 2016 Convention. The panellists were Pedro Oliveira (facilitator/participant) as well as Pamela Peterson (Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney), Grahame Crookham (Canberra Branch), Lynette Muller (Brisbane Lodge) and Lucille Crocker (Blavatsky Lodge).

### **Q: Do you think that there is a core teaching in Theosophy? If there is one, why is it a core teaching?**

PP: I think it is the search for eternal Truth, whatever that may be, taking into account that truth like everything else, evolves. What was the truth a couple of centuries ago is no longer a truth. We, too, must evolve.

LM: Given that the Theosophical Society stands for Freedom of Thought, this suggests that we do not have a rigidity of teachings as understood in the context of say, a university course. Given that the Second Object is to encourage the study of philosophy, religion and science, this provides a very broad and open area for continual growth and research.

LC: There are no teachings that we have to adhere to at all within the

Society. We can accept or reject them; even Blavatsky said not to believe something just because she said so, but to think about it. So we have the choice to embrace any teachings, or not. I think that is really important.

GC: Recently I gave a talk on 'The Divine Plan According to the Masters'. My preparation was based on Geoffrey Barborcka's book, *The Divine Plan*. To me, the Divine Laws which summed it all up – and I guess this is a core principle – is *Tat Tvam Asi*: 'Thou art That.' There is only One Self. And there really is nothing other than God. This reality is the manifestation of God. It is one thing to think this, but another thing to realise it. I am still trying. That is the challenge.

### **Q: What is a teaching?**

PP: It can be a variety of things. For some people, it is something that they



believe is set in stone. That is the pathway, the old and trodden highway of routine that Madame Blavatsky spoke about; that is the way that she thought the real student should discard in order to embark on freedom of thought. She mentioned that only when you start along the path of independent thought do you become a Theosophist, an independent thinker, a seeker of the eternal Truth.

So teachings are things which should evolve, and should not be set; they should always be challenged and everything should be questioned. You do not take anything at face value until you have examined it carefully. The onus is on the individual.

Teachings must be examined first and not accepted without question. If they are still relevant and valid, well and good. But be careful of teachings, as well as what you teach people, because they can so easily become very dangerous and damaging dogma. We have seen this in terrible situations throughout the world, with people accepting teachings unthinkingly or without any choice.

LC: A Teaching transforms your life, and once you are transformed you are never the same.

LM: This is a very difficult question to answer because of the breadth of it. What comes to mind is the Ten

Commandments, with which I am sure you are all familiar. These can be understood as a teaching for living in harmony, when one understands them and their application. They provide guidelines. In the context of history, they have stood the test of time.

GC: I'll keep it succinct. I just see a teaching as a communication of an understanding or an insight

**Q: How can the TS hold itself together without dogma or doctrine?**

PP: Here is part of a quotation which caught my attention quite a few years ago and I thought it was very powerful. It said: 'The very root idea of the Theosophical Society is free and fearless investigation.' This was a quotation made by Helena Blavatsky in *The Theosophist* in 1879. So I believe the answer to this question is free and fearless investigation; and when you think about this, we therefore have no dogma or doctrine.

GC: I think one of the strengths of the Theosophical Society is the absence of a doctrine. It gives me freedom of thought, gives me the freedom not to commit to a belief, so I'm free to think differently tomorrow from how I think today.

LM: Given that the Second Object of the Society is the study of religion,

philosophy and science, and that the focus on philosophy encourages enquiry, this in itself provides an open opportunity for continuous exploration. Faith is a substance of things hoped for and, according to St Paul, the evidence of things not seen. Faith requires belief. Philosophy, on the other hand, requires an open mind, facilitating opportunities for continual expansion of communication and tolerance.

LC: For me, freedom of thought has been essential throughout all these years and is the thread that has kept me going in the Theosophical Society. We gather around teachings, and not a teacher. That does not mean we have to accept whatever we hear or see, or read or share, but that we consider these things with intelligence and respect for others.

PO: In 1889 Madame Blavatsky wrote an article called ‘The New Cycle’. She was writing about the energies that will come into play in this New Cycle and one of them was materialism. Most likely, she was not wrong. In that article, which is on our website, she says that the Theosophical Society as an institution, does not teach anything, does not believe anything, does not accept anything. This is one important statement that she made. But in *The Key to Theosophy* she made what I would call the complementary statement to this: that the TS was founded to let people know that that such a thing as Theosophy exists. In her mind, these things were both foundational principles.



Not everything promoted as being spiritual, philosophical or religious helps to elevate the human condition. Sometimes the originally spiritual teaching was corrupted out of ignorance, thirst for domination, and so on. In other cases the teaching is offered by a ‘false prophet’ – someone whose intention is not at all to give a spiritual teaching, but to obtain personal profit. There are also some schools that spread a kind of ‘spiritual materialism’ leading to the psychic, to fanaticism, or other forms of selfishness. Therefore, each member of the TS must develop a deep understanding and discrimination in order to discover, in an open and non-dogmatic way, where Theosophy is truly expressed and where it is not.

## Education



### ***The Secret Doctrine* by Helena P. Blavatsky An Eclectic Introduction to its Study**

This is a new study course for those who are interested in the study of Madame Blavatsky's classic work, compiled and edited by Pedro Oliveira. It includes contributions by Annie Besant, Gottfried de Purucker, Geoffrey Barborcka, Boris de Zirkoff, Grace Knoche, Ralph Hannon, Ianthe Hoskins, Joy Mills and Virginia Hanson. Contents include:

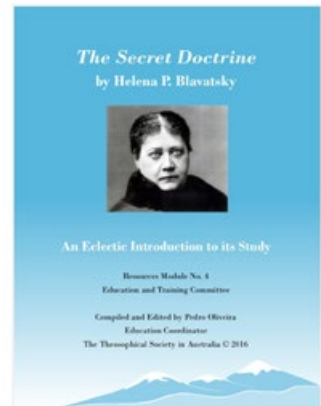
#### Introduction:

1. Who was Helena P. Blavatsky?
2. Why *The Secret Doctrine* was written
3. How *The Secret Doctrine* was written
4. The Three Fundamental Propositions of the Proem
5. How to Study *The Secret Doctrine*
6. Serious Students Explore *The Secret Doctrine*
7. The Stanzas of Dzyan: Ultimate Mystical Metaphysics
8. 'The Source of the Stanzas is Truth'
9. *The Secret Doctrine*: Its Practical Application
10. Bibliography

**Cost:** \$20.00 (includes postage within Australia)

#### **Orders can be placed with:**

Education Coordinator  
The Theosophical Society in Australia  
Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Email: [edcoord@austheos.org.au](mailto:edcoord@austheos.org.au)  
Telephone: (02) 9264 7056



## Tour

### International Speaker

### Dr Pablo Sender



Pablo Sender, PhD, is a Microbiologist and has a doctorate in Biological Sciences. He became a member of the Theosophical Society in his native Argentina, in 1996, where he was an active member and part of the National Council. He lived and worked at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, India, and later at the National Centre of the TS in America. He currently lives and works in Ojai, California, at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy. He has presented Theosophical programmes in many countries, including a session at the School of the Wisdom in Adyar. He has published two books in Spanish and a number of articles, both in Spanish and English, in various theosophical journals.

Tues 18 April	public seminar , Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 2.30pm 'Desires, Emotions and the Spiritual Path' to 5.00pm
Wed 19 April	Blavatsky Lodge, public lectures 'The Secret of Who You Really Are' 1.00pm 'The Power of Awareness' 6.00pm
Thurs 20 April	Adelaide Lodge, public seminar 3.00pm 'Desires, Emotions and the Spiritual Path' to 5.30pm
Fri 21 April - Sun 23 April	weekend seminar, Launceston 'The Illumined Mind - its Nature and Awakening' see page 27
Tues 25 April - Mon 1 May	School of Theosophy, Springbrook see page 27

## National Calendar of Events



**Weekend Seminar, Emmanuel Centre, 123 Abbot Street, Launceston**

**Theme: ‘The Illumined Mind – its Nature and Awakening’**

**arrivals Fri 21 April – departures Sun 23 April For TS members**

**Guest Presenter: Dr Pablo Sender, USA**

**Cost:** \$175 for full weekend, includes all meals. Early bookings are essential.

**All enquiries regarding bookings / further information:**

Ruth Holt, Launceston Lodge Secretary tel. 03 6383 4722

mob. 0448 297 246 email: [launcestontheosophicalociety@gmail.com](mailto:launcestontheosophicalociety@gmail.com)

**Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook, QLD**

**2017 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY**

**arrivals Tues 25 April – departures Mon 1 May**

**Theme: ‘The Yoga of Theosophy’ Dr Pablo Sender, USA**

**For TS members**

**Cost:** \$300 for accommodation, meals and tuition.

This School is full. Further applicants may be placed on the waiting list.

**Enquiries to: National President** [pres@austheos.org.au](mailto:pres@austheos.org.au)

**Springbrook Centre**

**arrivals Thurs 27 July – departures Sun 30 July**

**Theme: ‘Unfathomable Godhead: Exploring the Mysticism of Meister Eckhart’ For TS members and non-members**

**Presenters:** Pedro Oliveira and others

**Cost:** \$150 members / \$180 non-members

**Enquiries to: Education Coordinator** [edcoord@austheos.org.au](mailto:edcoord@austheos.org.au)

tel. 02 9264 7056 (Mon-Thurs)

**Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh, NSW**

The next Canyonleigh event will be announced in the June issue of *Theosophy in Australia*.

**Registration forms and further information about Springbrook and Canyonleigh events are at: [www.austheos.org.au/what's on](http://www.austheos.org.au/what's on)**

## Viewpoint

David Bevan, Launceston



### Reflections on my First Year in the TS

In November 2015 I attended my first TS meeting. It was a visit to a labyrinth in the grounds of a local Christian spiritual centre. What a delightful introduction to the TS. An opportunity to experience quiet reflection and to experience what a labyrinth walk can uncover from deeper within.

While new to the TS, I am not new to the search for an increasing understanding of the mysteries of the universe, or to quote from the TS Objects, the ‘unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being’. In the TS I have found a wealth of new material, some ‘useful’ and some not so. With so much information disseminated by the TS in its publications, meetings and workshops, it is like being a kid in a lolly shop. One needs to discriminate, pursuing that which enriches one’s journey and letting go of that which is likely to be a distraction.

And speaking of ‘discrimination’, early this year one of our Lodge members facilitated a number of discussion sessions on the TS classic, *At the Feet of the Master* (‘discrimination’ being one of the four qualities described

therein). For me these sessions were a baptism of fire. I was surprised by the passion with which members held such diverse views regarding the meaning and relevance of the book’s content. It reinforced the words I discovered in ‘The TS – What is it all about?’ (a brochure I received on joining the TS):

Members of the Society are united by a common search and aspiration for Truth in their lives, *not* [my emphasis] by a common set of beliefs.

In order to address my personal idiosyncrasies, my aversion to certain phrases and my desire not to throw the baby out with the bath water, I prepared an edited personalisation of *At the Feet of the Master*. When I read this I find the message far more accessible than the original. The process of personalising the wisdom of others is very empowering. We can hold ‘sacred’ texts in such reverence that we feel unfit to improve on them.

Later I would come to discover something of the history of the TS, its strengths and its dysfunctions, just as participating in TS meetings and Lodge business is highlighting my personal strengths and my personal

dysfunctions. (The outer is a reflection of the inner.)

To my surprise there are also such diverse views amongst members about what Theosophy is and how it is practised. And then I found the following in another TS information booklet, ‘Theosophy: Revisiting the Ancient Wisdom’:

Theosophy is not defined in the Constitution of the Theosophical Society or in any of its official documents. It comes from the Greek, *theosophia*, meaning *divine wisdom*, but it is left to the members to discover what it is for themselves, taking as guides whatever philosophies or religions they may wish.

This reinforced another theme in ‘The TS – What is it all about?’:

Ultimately [the search for Truth in our lives] is individual ... and the Society seeks to provide an environment in which it can take place.

So there, for me, lays the beauty and the paradox that is the TS, a society of ‘like-minded’ people that have so little in common. Each of us is travelling a unique and individual path, and yet drawn to do so in conjunction with others who are often travelling very different paths.

The TS becomes an excellent environment in which to practise tolerance, patience, understanding and centredness.

At a time when religion is less popular in society, it is surprising to many members that the TS does not attract higher participation. I think we need to reflect on what it is about the TS that makes it unattractive to non-members.

One aspect is that theosophy (with a small ‘t’) is widely available outside the TS. I have been discovering it in many forms and places for 20 years. So the TS needs to offer something that cannot easily be found outside the TS.

The output of the TS is not our meetings, our publications, our seminars or even our community. It is us. If we do not embody (or strive to embody) the teachings that we find personally meaningful, what is the point? When it is self-evident from our interaction with others that we have a wisdom/contentment/happiness that others do not have, they will think ‘I want what s/he’s got!’ and they will wonder where they can get it. So, in the young Krishnamurti’s words: ‘It is not enough to say that [wisdom is] true and beautiful; [one] who wishes to succeed must do exactly what is said.’

And this brings me to a closing remark. I believe a fourth Object should be added to the three TS Objects that have held the TS in such good stead: To encourage and facilitate personal transformation.

**Some Images – the 2017 Convention, Hobart**



Berry Dunston and Axel von Krusenstierna, Hobart. middle - Linda Oliveira



featured speaker:  
Dr Bruno Cayoun



left: Ken Edwards, Melbourne  
right: Dr Grahame Crookham,  
Canberra





Beverly Parker,  
Far North Queensland



left to right: Edward Sinclair, Melbourne  
Lynette Muller and Dr David Allan, Brisbane



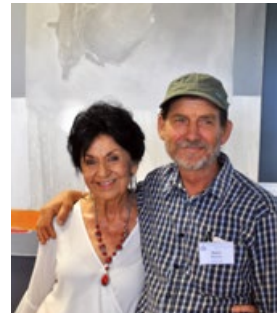
members from Perth



Helen Steven,  
Hobart



members from Queensland



Pamela Peterson, Sydney  
and Barry Bowden,  
Toowoomba

## Call for Nominations National President



### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

In accordance with Rule 20(1) and Rule 21 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia I am calling for nominations for the office of National President, for a three year term commencing January 2018. The position is a full-time one, based in Sydney. The candidate shall be a member of the Theosophical Society who has been in Good Standing for the last five years at least.

Linda Oliveira is in her second successive term as National President and is thus eligible to be nominated for re-election.

Nominations should be effected on Form 7 of the Rules and should be accompanied by a photograph of the candidate, curriculum vitae, relevant biographical data, a personal statement by the candidate, and the agreement of the candidate to stand. There shall be three nominators who must be members of the Society who have been in Good Standing for the last three years.

Nominations for the Office of National President must be received by the National Secretary on or before Friday 21 July 2017. All of the above conditions of the Rules must be met for the nomination to be valid. Please contact the National Secretary with any questions.

Dara Tatrav  
National Secretary



## News and Notes



### National Council Appointments

The annual appointments made by the National Council for 2017 were as follows:

National Vice-President: Phillipa Rooke

National Treasurer: Beatrice Malka

National Executive Committee:

three ex-officio members (the National President, National Secretary and National Treasurer), Dianne Kynaston, Dai Trandang, Marie McArdle, Denise Frost (from Tasmania) and Harry Bayens (from Western Australia).

### Meditation not only Reduces Stress – it Changes your Brain

Sara Lazar, a neuroscientist at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, was one of the first scientists to take the anecdotal claims about the benefits of meditation and mindfulness and test them in brain scans. She was surprised to discover that meditating can literally change your brain. Dr Lazar reported that long-term meditators have an increased amount of grey matter in the insula and sensory regions, the auditory and sensory cortex. When you are mindful, you are paying

attention to your breathing, to sounds, to the present moment experience, and shutting down cognition. The senses are therefore enhanced.

Differences in brain volume were found after eight weeks in five different regions in the brains of two groups. In the group that learned meditation, there was thickening in four regions:

1. The primary difference, we found in the posterior cingulate, which is involved in mind wandering, and self-relevance.
2. The left hippocampus, which assists in learning, cognition, memory and emotional regulation.
3. The temporoparietal junction, or TPJ, which is associated with perspective taking, empathy and compassion.
4. An area of the brain stem called the pons, where a lot of regulatory neurotransmitters are produced. Also the amygdala, the fight or flight part of the brain which is important for anxiety, fear and stress in general, became smaller in the group that went through the mindfulness-based stress reduction programme. This was also correlated to a reduction in stress levels. (*Washington Post* online)

### Gifts and Bequests to Further the Work of the TS in Australia

The Theosophical Society in Australia as we know it today is a product of well over a century of impressive service by volunteers and officers, as well as the more tangible gifts and bequests received from both members and non-members. All gifts and bequests are used carefully and responsibly to further the work and the Objects of the Theosophical Society in this country. The following form of words is provided for those members who wish to make gifts or bequests in their wills to The Theosophical Society in Australia:

‘To The Australian Section Theosophical Trust (whose registered office is Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,

Surry Hills, NSW, 2010) to be held in trust for The Theosophical Society in Australia’.

The Australian Section Theosophical Trust is a company formed to hold monies, investments, real or personal property in trust for The Theosophical Society in Australia, which is not incorporated. Further Enquiries:

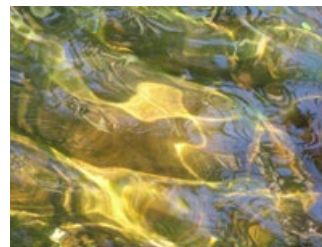
Please contact the National Secretary  
email: [natsec@austheos.org.au](mailto:natsec@austheos.org.au)

Tel. 02 9264 6404

The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

### Namaste (5)

Dare you and I gaze upon the world  
And clearly see what there is.  
Rather, we colour dreams that mould  
Away to dust the wants in time.  
Kindle the flame to see truly,  
Open the hand to touch with care,  
Beckon with heart to those in need,  
On all life be gentle – for the  
Real way is not in dust, or want nor time.



Dr Helen Lambert

## Section Directory

### Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404

Fax: 02 9264 5857

[www.austheos.org.au](http://www.austheos.org.au)

Campbell Theosophical Research Library:

[campbell@austheos.org.au](mailto:campbell@austheos.org.au)

### Australian Capital Territory

*Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:*

Postal Address: c/- 53 Chataway Street,  
Fadden ACT 2904

Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent  
& Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612

7.30pm 1st Monday of month (Feb - May, Sep - Dec)

Emeritus Faculty ANU: 2.00pm 1st Saturday of  
month (June - Aug), discussion group 2.00pm

3rd Saturday of month

President: Dr Grahame Crookham

Tel: 0490147020

email: [tifcrook@tpg.com.au](mailto:tifcrook@tpg.com.au)

Secretary: position vacant

Correspondence Secretary: Peter Fokker

Email: [fokkerbakker@gmail.com](mailto:fokkerbakker@gmail.com) 02 62363170

Telephone: 02 6288 7656

### New South Wales

*Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:*

Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 2065

Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards  
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)

Telephone: 02 92676955 Fax: 02 9283 3772

Email: [contact@tssydney.org.au](mailto:contact@tssydney.org.au)

[www.tssydney.org.au](http://www.tssydney.org.au)

Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays

President: Marie McArdle

Secretary: Pamela Peterson

*Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:*

Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,  
Mayfield NSW 2304

7.30pm 2nd Friday each month

<http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/>

President: Tony Buzek

Secretary: Jane Wilson

Tel: 0452 633 132

Email: [gnlodgetheos@gmail.com](mailto:gnlodgetheos@gmail.com)

*Blue Mountains Group:*

Meet: Senior Citizens Meeting Rooms

Upper level, Central Arcade

81-83 Katoomba Street, Katoomba

Meetings every Monday, 2.00pm

1st Monday of month - Public Meeting

Subsequent Mondays - *Secret Doctrine* Study Group

Coordinator: Donald Fern

Tel: 02 4757 1910

*Gosford Group:*

Meet: The Neighbour Centre,

Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250

8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month

Coordinator: Marianne Fraser

Tel: (02) 4339 7118, 0400 713 273

Email: [marifraser256@gmail.com](mailto:marifraser256@gmail.com)

Secretary: Roni Ostergaard

Telephone: 02 4358 1413

*Northern Beaches Group:*

Postal address: c/- The Manor,

2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088

Meet: c/- 22 Laitoki Road

Terrey Hills

NSW 2084

8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month

Coordinator: Dianne Kynaston

### Queensland

*Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:*

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,

Atherton QLD 4883

Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services

Tablelands, 38 Mabel St, Atherton

2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.

President: Max Brandenberger

Secretary: Chris Pang Way

Tel: 07 4091 5156

*Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:*

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000

Tel: 07 3839 1453

Email: [brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au](mailto:brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au)

[www.theosophyqld.org.au](http://www.theosophyqld.org.au)

Meet: 7.30pm Fridays

President: John Harris

Secretary: Lynette Muller

*Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004*

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,  
 Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556  
 7.00pm Thursdays  
 RSL/CWA Hall, 123 Poinciana Drive, Tewantin  
 7.00pm Fridays  
 President: Joanna Teazis  
 Tel: 0422 944 075  
 Email: theosunshinecoast@gmail.com  
 Secretary: Pam Walsh

*Toowoomba Group:*

Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba  
 1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday  
 at 2:30pm each month  
 (Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)  
 Annual Springbrook retreat each Winter  
 Coordinator: Gayle Thomas  
 Tel: 0438 331 885

**South Australia**

*Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*  
 310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000  
 Tel: 08 8223 1129  
 Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au  
 http://www.austheos.org.au/adelaide  
 Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of  
 every month. Please contact Lodge for additional  
 meeting dates.  
 President: Kevin Davey  
 Secretary: Marie Paul

**Tasmania**

*Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:*  
 13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000  
 Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)  
 www.theosophicaltas.websyte.com.au  
 Meet: 8.00pm Mondays  
 President: Helen Steven  
 Secretary: position vacant  
 Email: helen\_steven@live.com

*Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:*  
 54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston TAS 7250  
 Postal address: as above  
 email: launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com  
 www.austheos.org.au/launceston  
 Meet: Wednesdays 1.00pm, or else 7.30pm when  
 interstate visitors are speaking.  
 President: Jenny Haslem  
 Secretary: Ruth Holt  
 Tel: 0448 397 246

**Victoria**

*Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:*  
 126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
 Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624  
 email: meltheos@bigpond.com.au  
 Meet: Saturdays  
 President: Ken Edwards  
 Secretary: Edward Sinclair

*Mornington Peninsula Group:*

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,  
 Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday  
 of the month 1.00pm - 3.30pm  
 (meditation - lunch - Theosophy)  
 Coordinator: Alice Opper  
 Tel: 03 5976 3815  
 www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

*Wodonga-Albury Group:*

Meet: Shop 6, Tower Place, High Street,  
 Wodonga VIC 3690  
 1st Tuesday each month  
 Library hours Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm  
 Coordinator/Secretary: Denis Kovacs  
 Tel: 02 6024 2905

**Western Australia**

*Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*  
 21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000  
 Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104  
 Email: tsp Perth@iinet.net.au  
 http://www.tsp Perth.com.au  
 Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays  
 President: Harry Bayens  
 Secretary: Carole Ann Webster

*Mount Helena Retreat Centre:*

1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082  
 All enquiries to Perth Branch  
 Tel: 08 9328 8104

**Theosophical Education  
 and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Qld**

2184 Springbrook Road,  
 Springbrook QLD 4213  
 Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211  
 email: info@tsretreat.com.au  
 Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

## *Freedom of Thought*

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

*Resolution passed by the General Council  
of the Theosophical Society (1924)*



## *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 (1949)*

