

# *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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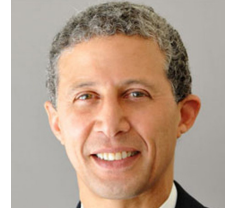
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### Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society

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

## From the International President

Tim Boyd



In thinking about the arc of the TS's work since its founding, it is worth remembering a clear statement that HPB made regarding a periodic strengthening of the theosophical impulse. The language HPB used was that at the last quarter of every century there would be 'an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality'. I had been a member of the TS for one year at the time of the World Congress held in New York City in 1975, the centenary of the founding of the TS.

Many people had come to the Congress from all over the world and, this being the beginning of the last quarter of the century, there was a great anticipation of what direction this new impulse and spiritual upheaval would be coming from. Because HPB had been so emphatic about the last quarter of the century, many different, sometimes strange, ideas were circulating. Depending on who one talked with, one would hear about everything from a re-incarnation of Blavatsky herself, to the appearance of one of the Masters.

One of the luminaries attending the Congress was Geoffrey Barborcka, au-

thor of a number of significant theosophical books. One of his books was titled *HPB, Tibet and Tulku*. The Tulku idea is the one that I would like to consider. Tulku is the process in which an expansive overshadowing consciousness expresses itself through an individual, or individuals. A familiar example is the Dalai Lama tradition. In that tradition it is said that the consciousness of Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara) has expressed itself now in fourteen incarnations of the Dalai Lama. Time after time it incarnates, or expresses itself through its chosen vehicle. Barborcka's contention was that the Tulku process was also in effect with respect to HPB – that her work was an expression of such an overshadowing consciousness.

So in 1975 the question for many was, 'where will this overshadowing consciousness be coming from?' Looking back to that time, people were trying to discern who were the individuals bringing this heightened spiritual impulse, or who was the person that came to bring this greater presentation of occult knowledge, as HPB had said. Even now it is difficult to say. However, if

we look a little more deeply, think a bit differently, then it might be apparent, for, in every case, this overshadowing consciousness necessarily exceeds any individual.

What was happening toward the close of the 20th century? A short list would include such things as the declaration of 'Earth Day' that occurred first in 1970 as a national event in the U.S. Very quickly it became a globally recognised occasion, now taking place in more than 193 countries and coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network. Another powerful idea that took root was the Gaia Theory, in which a group of scientists from varied fields put forward that the Earth is more than a staging ground for a multiplicity of biological processes, but, in the same way that a human being is a greater whole comprised of countless lesser lives (cells, bacteria, and so on), the Earth (Gaia) is a living being, a yet greater life and consciousness within which all the other life forms participate. Out of it came this exploding influence of the ecological movement and environmentalism. The chief characteristic of all of these movements was their grasp and elaboration of the fundamental idea that Life is One.

At the closing of the last century there was also the growth of spiritual psychology and transpersonal psychology. A spiritualised feminism came

into being with a deeper focus than the difference in bodies that we occupy, but which addressed the suppression of qualities of consciousness which gave rise to oppressive social and relationship structures. So consciousness, and the inner causes which then led to outer effects, became the focus. During the same time the worldwide web came into being – an agency which for both good and ill has had a linking effect on humanity. All of these developments and more were being fed and growing right in front of our eyes. But most missed this 'spiritual upheaval' because it was a person that we were anticipating.

Probably it is not a mystery to anyone that there are a variety of issues around the globe causing enormous suffering for the human family. We do not need to go down a list; we see it all around us. Over 143 years now, we have had the opportunity to gradually inculcate these profound ideas and teachings into the consciousness of our world. However we may conceive of it, the focus of the work of the TS has always been related to Unity – the expression through various means of the oneness of life, the wholeness of being.

Extract from 'A Theosophy for Tomorrow', *The Theosophist*, September 2018. Dates for the International President's May tour are on p. 29.

## From the National President

Linda Oliveira



Members are looking forward to the first tour of this Section by our International President, Tim Boyd, who will be accompanied by his wife, Lily. In these pages, he considers the spiritual impulse generated during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Other articles in this issue deal with the depth and profundity of yoga, awareness and communication in plants, and recent exhibitions highlighting the influence of Theosophy on artists. Also, there is an interview with a long-time member of this Section.

The world of plants is fascinating. While travelling the many kilometres to and from my place of work by train, it is possible to take in at a glance the thousands of plants and trees adjacent to the railway track, especially closer to the beautiful Hawkesbury River - a passing panorama of green, water and rocks, and a symphony of diversity and movement. It is possible to observe both the whole, as well as certain differences, as the plant life flashes by. Within the mass of green which meets the eye, many trees grow tall and majestic, with a palpable presence.

Others may be gnarled, or in the process of dying. Some plants cling tenaciously to a precipice, or even grow out of rock. Then again, from time to time vines snake their way up a tree, in competition with the tree itself. Some trees grow strong and healthy, others have more precarious lives, and others do not make it.

Similar broad principles of survival also apply to human life. But while consciousness is present in plants, humans have potentially much more control over the quality of their life circumstances, through the *manasic* principle and physical mobility. In Buddhism, the opportunity of a human existence is deemed to be a precious one. The inventive mind can always come up with something else that we apparently need to do. Therefore the challenge is to start engaging with each moment, to treat each moment as precious, and experience a whole new quality of being.

Comments of up to 200 words on items in this magazine are welcome and may be published.

## Yoga: Discovery of Wholeness

Radha Burnier



Yoga is a word which has become popular all over the world and has come to mean a large variety of things. To many it indicates merely the performance of a series of exercises and practising breathing techniques. But yoga is far more than this. It is not only a technique to be practised, but much more a way of life and a state of being. The philosophy and technique are known to most through the great work of Patanjali, the *Yoga Sutras*, which have generally superseded other statements concerning the transcendental reality whose domain is attained in the state of yoga. There are very few who have studied yoga through works other than the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali.

There are a number of texts which preceded Patanjali, which teach of yoga. That supreme state of unity, called yoga, has been described in several Upanishads and also in the *Bhagavad Gita* though in brief sen-

tences. Each of the chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita* is titled 'Yoga', indicating that there are many aspects to yoga.

### Yoga as a State

One text speaks of the state of yoga, or union, as a state which is void within, void without, full within and full without. This is a cryptic and paradoxical description of what is an indescribable but realisable unity – a wholeness, so totally whole that it appears void to a mind which is accustomed to seizing upon the parts. The human mind is constantly occupied with the parts of the one reality in the shape of objects which present themselves to the vision and the images of those objects which are impressed upon the mind, so that the mind ceases to have the capacity to apprehend the whole which is the Reality. A part, however, can never be the Reality, nor contain the significance of the whole.



In several of the Upanishads, illustrations are given which open the mind to the possibility of a new vision which is the wholeness, the totality, the Reality. One of the Upanishads speaks of the whole, the full, which is not but appears also as the many, even as the one moon when reflected in many pools. The person who does not turn their gaze skyward to look at the one moon, the childish mind which sees the many reflections in the little pools of water, may imagine that there are many moons shining in different places. Similarly, the Upanishad points to the colour of milk. Varied are the colours of cows from which milk is drawn, but milk itself is ever white. Even so is that milk which is the one wisdom nature, found in individuals whose appearances are varied. In another statement it is said that *Ākāsha*, space, or ether, held in vessels of different forms and sizes, seems to be divided in innumerable parts. The vessels may be broken, but *Ākāsha* is whole, imperishable, being ever undivided and indivisible and without form. One who knows that such is the Spirit, the Reality in all, the essence of existence, knows forever.

Another great Upanishad tells of a disciple who goes to a sage and asks what is Reality, the Truth which should be known. The sage gives him water from an ocean and says 'Taste a little of this'. The disciple dips into the wa-

ter and tastes of it. Later he is told to dip into the water again, and he tastes another portion of it. And thus again a third time he tastes the water, realising that each portion tastes of the salt of the one ocean. The disciple learns that thus is that Reality which is the one essence.

The knowledge of the wholeness is not other than the becoming of that wholeness. Where the knower knows the known, there is obviously division. The wholeness of Reality, the totality of the universe and of existence, cannot be known as an object. When a knower perceives that which he imagines to be the Reality, when there are two or more, there is the loss of the totality and therefore of the Reality. The only way of knowing the wholeness, the fullness, the totality is to be that totality or that wholeness. It cannot be known in any way other than through identity.

So the culmination of yoga, which has been called samadhi, is the loss of identity of the self, its total dissolution in the totality or the wholeness. 'It is the spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever-present ray become the All and the eternal radiance' (*The Voice of the Silence*). The word 'samadhi' has also been much misinterpreted, and thought of as a state of trance, or a condition of immobility, a



state which can be attained by various practices. It is in fact a supreme state which is the essence of yoga, the total merging of the subject and the object, the knowing of the fullness of existence by becoming the totality.

Yoga is not only a state, it is a way. That way is indicated by Patanjali, in his second aphorism, in which he defines yoga as the ending of the modifications of the mind. The mind caught in the net of separateness, and imprisoned in its self-enclosing activity, being weary of its own condition, projects an otherness which is freedom from division and conflict.

### Where the self is, the Universe is Not

In one of the great Indian works it is said that where the self is, the universe is not. Even in the higher states of realisation, as long as there is the consciousness of the knower who perceives himself as other than the known, the universe of true existence is not. This same truth is beautifully described in other texts. In one text we are told that as salt dissolves in water, as camphor is consumed by fire, when the self dissolves in spirit, that is samadhi. In the words of Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, 'the dewdrop slips into the shining sea'. This is also the

meaning of *laya* or absorption, which is a sublime state, not the hypnotising of oneself by incantations and music. The word '*laya*' means harmony, it means dissolution, for in wholeness there is harmony. If there is not wholeness, if there is division in the form of a subject and object there is inevitable strife. Among the many definitions of yoga is the one in the *Bhagavad Gita*: yoga is equilibrium, harmony. And we can understand how that harmony can exist only when the self is dissolved in the unity.

The *Kathopanishad* briefly mentions that yoga is birth and death – the birth into universality with the death of the particularity, the birth into reality with the death of the separate self. But such a state of reality, of harmony, of wholeness, of undivided consciousness is as far as we are concerned, a mere speculation, an imagining, a longing. We do not know actually that state in which the subject does not exist and where only knowing, or awareness exists. Speculation, mere thinking about the Reality, which is a wholeness in terms of what the mind knows, which is the division, which is separateness, leads nowhere, because all that is known is unlike the totality.

### Yoga as a Way

Yoga is not only a state, it is a way. That way is indicated by Patanjali, in his

second aphorism, in which he defines yoga as the ending of the modifications of the mind. The mind caught in the net of separateness, and imprisoned in its self-enclosing activity, being weary of its own condition, projects an otherness which is freedom from division and conflict. Concepts are propounded of liberation, of spiritual freedom, of God, of a state and reality other than that which we know. But what yoga teaches is that every statement of otherness by the mind is necessarily in terms of what the mind already knows. Because it knows division, it presumes that there is something which is not division. Because it knows separateness, it projects the opposite. Because it is bound in the prison of self, it imagines something which is not enclosed.

According to the teaching of Mr J. Krishnamurti the mind, being in a prison, imagines that it can move outside the prison, so it projects a state of liberation or freedom. But that state is merely another movement of the mind within its prison, a concept about something it does not know. Whatever the mind projects or conceives is in the field of duality and perpetuates duality. And duality is a contradiction of the totality or of the wholeness.

The mind may extend its own sphere of activity, in the attempt to reach beyond. It may speculate in the field of

philosophy, of metaphysics, of religion, of science, of all kinds of things. But in all such movement of the mind, there is only a widening of the walls of the prison; the walls are never broken down because the movement is still in the field only of images and concepts and hence of duality. For this reason, the important statement is made in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali that it is only with the stilling of the modifications of the mind that there is the state of yoga. The mind alone is the cause of both bondage and liberation, says an Upanishad. The mind held in objects leads to bondage; not attached to objects it is liberation.

Let us see what is the nature of mind or consciousness and what is 'being'. Is it possible to be without consciousness? The feeling of being arises out of awareness, consciousness, and one may even use the term 'mind'. Is it possible to be, without being aware? Life implies consciousness or awareness. If we could imagine a state in which there are no objects, no perceptible things, but which is still a state of existence or life, what would that life be? That life is surely intelligence, awareness, consciousness. Without awareness, there cannot be being, therefore cannot be life.

When we look at the world we may say that it is possible to have material ex-



Andreas Reiman on Unsplash

istence devoid of consciousness. But it is now a proven fact that matter is not what we presume it to be. All matter is energy. The world of objects which we see is not what it appears; all forms are convertible, ever-changing and transient. The physicist knows that energy alone is real, and it is one. That energy was recognised in the ancient world as being the Reality in matter.

It is one of the mysteries of nature and creation that the One Reality-Consciousness-Being appears in many modifications. We do not know why the One reflects itself in the many. And therefore, in many of the Eastern philosophies it is said that maya or illusion, ignorance (which is ignorance of reality and not of man-made ways) is primordial. Maya has no beginning, but it has an end.

Though the consciousness which is pure being, which is undivided in its

essence, undergoes many modifications and limitations and appears as the many, in all the modifications there is a single point of reference which is its own centre. No-one can deny that there is a centre within himself, a point of reference which enables him to relate everything, which leads him to enter into the greater unity of the whole universe. The very word 'unity' would have no meaning for us if there was not such a point of reference within the centre of our own consciousness.

So in the nature of our being, in the centre, is pure awareness in which there is unity and wholeness. Nevertheless, the consciousness or mind, sees an object and attaches itself to that object. It takes the form of the object, assimilates the object into itself. This happens all the time in ourselves. Awareness is awareness of all. A mirror which reflects the objects around it could reflect no more if all the images and the reflections were retained on its surface forever. Similarly, the consciousness which is pure awareness, by imprinting itself with the objects which it perceives, loses its true nature. 'Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects', as *The Voice of the Silence* points out.

The grasping of objects is fragmentation. It divides the mind into little pieces. Again and again this happens

to the mind which seeks objects. It is as if one were to go into a vast field and perceiving a little flower, become so concentrated on the flower that one ceases to see the field as a whole. The consciousness perceives a few objects in the universe and so identifies itself with the experience that the objects afford, that it fails to see the rest of the universe. Each one can notice in himself how such a division of consciousness, which is a vast field, takes place – how that consciousness has captured within itself numerous forces and shapes, and thus itself becomes captive. In Plato's imagery the mind is within the cave where the shadows are mistaken for reality. He taught that if one wants to imagine that light is in the objects which one sees he would be very much mistaken. The objects reflect the light of the sun, and it is the sun's light which makes the objects visible. Similarly, to imagine that Reality is in any object is illusion. The way of yoga consists in releasing the mind, or the consciousness from its captivity in objects, whether those objects are physical or mental. Objects are not necessarily external. The mind can be caught equally in internal objects; the image or concept takes the place of the outward object and the mind still remains bound.

Therefore, the most important step that has to be taken in yoga is *pratyāhāra*

or the withdrawal of the mind from objects. It is a fallacy to think that routine, outward practices, without the withdrawal of the mind from particularities, can release it from its self-made prison.

In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* it is said that there are eight limbs to yoga. There are other books which mention fifteen limbs. Many texts, however, make it clear that in the practice of preliminary steps, the mental condition is most important.

### Preparation for the State of Unity

The means to attain the state of unity or wholeness is in the mind itself. But there are aids and certain preliminary preparations. There is first of all a moral preparation which comprises the first two limbs of yoga, called *yama* and *niyama*. Patanjali's work and other books detail what are the virtues which have to be achieved. There is, first of all, *ahimsa*, non-injury. It is explained in the Upanishads that *ahimsa*, like the other virtues, needs to be practised not merely in act, but in the mind and through speech. Speaking of contentment, it is said that contentment is to be happy with whatever comes unasked. Normally we are happy when we obtain what we ask for. A third virtue is non-grasping, non-acquisitiveness, which is not merely the non-acquisition of wealth and things of great price,

but of anything which belongs to another and is not rightfully one's own. The attribution to oneself of credit, or appreciation for a deed which was not done – that, too, would be acquisitiveness. Thus, in the practice of yoga basic importance is given to the mental condition.

One may, however, question the purpose of physical training such as *prānāyāma* and *āsana*. It is of course necessary to keep the physical body in good condition, to do anything well while in the physical world. Patanjali has pointed out that disease, tiredness, languor et cetera. are impediments to the functioning of the mind. The body constantly influences the mind in different ways and vice versa. Practise of the discipline which is *prānāyāma* will show that when there is a rhythmic motion of the breath, a certain quietude takes place in the mind because rhythm of the body brings a certain rhythm into the mind. There are centres in the body of which modern science knows little, but which it is beginning to discover through the effects of such ancient practices as acupuncture. It has also been recently demonstrated with the help of scientific instruments that control of the breath can alter vibrations of the body, and of the mind. Stillness and steadiness in the body can also be used to affect the mind. This is achieved by right use of *āsana-s*.

It is said in some books that originally there were eighty-four thousand *āsana-s* which have been reduced in modern times. Most of these postures and exercises have very little importance, except to keep the body in good condition. One Upanishad goes further in stating that the only *āsana* which is of value in the practice of yoga is that which brings about uninterrupted meditation on reality. Several books on yoga indicate that it is advisable to be in a solitary place – preferably a beautiful place surrounded by trees and flowers – for beauty in nature brings about harmony of the mind. But where the presence of the Real is, says one Upanishad, all places are solitary, for aloneness is in the unity of the Real. The word '*kaivalya*', meaning aloneness, is therefore used for the ultimate state in yoga. In the wholeness, there is nothing else – there being no second, there is aloneness. When there is that Reality, there is silence too. External silence is not of importance. One can be in the midst of conversation and know silence within.

Although physical conditions and training may be desirable and helpful, it is the condition of the mind which is of primary importance in yoga. The condition of the mind when it recognises deeply that its own activities bring about division and duality, when it ceases to grasp objects or to project

ideas, is a natural and pure state of awareness. It is then able to perceive objects, without grasping or holding anything. In Chinese literature it has been said that when the mind holds to nothing, that is liberation.

### Samadhi

The culmination of yoga, samadhi, has been given a number of different names and synonyms, all of which are illuminating. It is not only termed the natural state but has been described as ‘non-mind’. To each person his mind means all the ideas, impressions and so on, which are held within. Mr J Krishnamurti says, ‘The content of consciousness is consciousness’, because to us consciousness does not exist without its content. The self, as we know it, is made up of all the objects that the mind perceives, the impressions of those objects, the reactions to the experiences which the objects provoke and the memories. If this whole complex of impressions, of memories, of images, should cease to be, there would not be the sense of separate selfhood.

So the mind as we know it, is the mind which grasps objects and creates selfhood. When it ceases to grasp objects, it may be called ‘non-mind’. It is the consciousness without content. Samadhi has also been called ‘beyond mind’ and ‘mind beyond mind’. Its syno-

nymy are non-duality, non-dependence and the pure mind, because it does not collect the dust of impressions. It is the void which is the fullness. It is truth and reality. It is immortality, which the mind can never find when held in objects which are perishable. All these are terms to describe both yoga in its true sense and samadhi.

In an Upanishad when a certain person asks, ‘What is the nature of reality?’, the answer teaches of a state in which everything is precious, not because of the thing itself, but because of the one underlying reality that pervades all. In that state, the husband is not dear because he is the husband, but because he is the one. The wife is not dear because she is the wife, but because she is the one. And all things are dear because they are the one. That oneness and that wholeness, that totality is yoga.



Mrs Radha Burnier was the 7th International President of the Theosophical Society from 1980 until 2013. This article is reprinted with permission from *The American Theosophist*, Spring Special issue, 1975.

## Awareness in Plants: Evidence for a Connected Consciousness

Rosanne Debats



While materialists insist that consciousness is something produced by the brain, there is much evidence that it comes before brain activity and causes it, rather than being a product of it. David Spangler, one of the early members of the Findhorn community and the central wisdom keeper of the Lorian Association, describes it thus:

We think of consciousness in a wholistic way, as encompassing the whole being. Really it is the substance of which the being is composed, whether that being is an angel, a deva, a human, a tree, or a planet. ... the fundamental nature of the cosmos is consciousness and matter proceeds from consciousness, rather than the other way around.

*Views from the Borderland*

Yr 7, No. 1, p.4.

Similarly with communication, those with an expanded awareness recognise instances of non-local, non-physical communication, and accept that there may be an all-encompassing field to which everything is connected and to

which everything has access. This includes plants.

### Plant Physical Awareness and Communication

Plants have been shown to have biological mechanisms which in humans would normally be associated with consciousness. In recent years biologists have been describing plants which are aware of their environment, and can process and integrate information. They explore their environments, process and integrate sensory perceptions, learn, and modify their behaviour to suit their purposes. Their ‘nervous system’ is the phloem, the vascular tissue used to transport nutrients, which also carries electrical signals around the plant. They have their own form of ‘intelligence’.

Peter Wohlleben’s book describes communication between plants, largely through chemicals. The view of plants and trees in a competitive struggle with



each other for resources has been replaced with plants and trees as cooperators, involved in tightly interwoven communities in communication with each other. Much of this communication happens underground, through root connection, and the extensive network of fungi mycelium, which act as a kind of underground internet, linking the roots of different plants. By linking to the fungal network they can help out their neighbours by sharing nutrients and information, which helps the whole community. It has been found that large trees help out smaller ones, and that when plants are attacked they release chemical signals into the mycelia that warn their neighbours. Fungi have been called ‘Earth’s natural internet’. Trees and other plants are interconnected and interdependent.

### **Non-Physical Communication**

Beyond physical connections through mycelia, Monica Gagliano, a plant biologist at the University of Western Australia, has carried out experiments which have found plants that can learn and remember. Her book looks at plant decision-making, sentience, learning and memory.

And plants can communicate and respond to the mental and emotional activity of humans and other beings. The term ‘bio-communication’ is used to describe plants as sentient, able to

respond in a telepathic manner, and experience pain and fear. If our brain and nervous system are not involved in our experience of telepathy and our connection to the wider field of consciousness, there is no reason to doubt that plants, even without a brain and nervous system, can also connect.

### **History of Experience of Non-Physical Plant Communication**

Animistic religions and cultures did, and still do, involve communication with vegetation. The so-called ‘primitives’ communicate with their plants through rituals and sacrifice. In the Middle Ages, witches and druids had knowledge of the esoteric dimension of plant life. Early experimenters in bio-communication in the West include Gustav Fechner, in the 1840’s and Indian scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose in the 1910’s. Early Theosophists who contributed observations included C.W. Leadbeater, Dora van Gelder, Geoffrey Hodson, and Rudolf Steiner.

### **The Work of Cleve Backster**

In the 1960s Cleve Backster, an interrogation specialist with the CIA, conducted research that led him to believe that plants can communicate with other life forms. In 1966 Backster used his lie detector machine to test the reaction of his philodendron to the threat of being burned. When he approached the

Backster noted that a plant can become attuned to its keeper. Using synchronised watches, he noted that his plants continued to react to his thoughts and attention even when he was several buildings away. Once attuned to a particular person, plants appeared to be able to maintain that link, wherever they might be. Distance did not matter.

plant with a match, imagining the flame, there was a dramatic upward sweep in the tracing pattern. Backster was certain that the threat of burning caused the plant to feel fear. When he went through the motions of burning the leaf with no intention to do so, there was no reaction. He concluded that plants can feel things, and can also perceive a person's intent. They demonstrated telepathic awareness. He termed the plant's sensitivity to thoughts 'primary perception', since it was perception beyond the usual five senses. These experiences led to forty years of research into plant consciousness.

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be able to maintain that link, wherever they might be. Distance did not matter.

Plants appeared to be sensitive to the death of other living tissue around them. They responded to an egg being boiled, and to boiling water poured down a drain pipe killing the bacteria living there.

Baxter discovered that, instead of strongly responding, sometimes plants that find themselves in the presence of overwhelming danger simply become catatonic, and don't respond to anything. This phenomenon has misled researchers who do not understand the sentience of their subjects. Plants that 'check out' when threatened show no reaction whatsoever. And the researcher reports it as 'failure to replicate'.

Backster went on to experiment with amoebae, paramecium, yeast, mould cultures, scrapings from the human mouth, blood cells and sperm. When monitored with polygraph charts, they showed charts just as interesting as those of plants. In fact sperm were able to react to the presence of their donor.

Backster found bio-communication at the cellular level. He said that these results showed 'primary perception' could be measured in all living things.

### **Devas and Nature Spirits**

The fact that the growth of plants is dependent on more than nutrients,



Tree fern deva as seen by Geoffrey Hodson

Image reprinted from *The Kingdom of the Gods* with permission, TPH, Adyar.

moisture and light was demonstrated dramatically at Findhorn Bay in northern Scotland.

In the early 1960's Peter and Eileen Caddy were at the beginning stages of developing the Findhorn Community. They were guided by their spirit connections to grow a garden. Their soil was terrible, containing almost no organic matter and retaining little moisture. Nonetheless the Caddys and Dorothy Maclean grew a stunning garden on a desolate sandy wasteland, with help and guidance from angelic beings and natural spiritual forces. The produce was huge – forty pound cabbages and broccoli that you could barely carry – and attracted worldwide attention.

One visitor, Professor R. Lindsey Robb, world recognised soil expert and former UN agriculture chief, said the vigour and health of the garden could not be explained by known scientific, organic husbandry. He and many more came and were mystified.

Dorothy Maclean attributed the amazing productivity of the Findhorn Garden to the help she called upon from the plant devas. These are the beings that oversee the development of forms, including those of plants. She described devas as living in the consciousness of their oneness with the divine consciousness. Their lives are expressions of joy, without the contrast or sense of separation that humans feel.

Dorothy explained that she communicated telepathically with the nature intelligences; she channelled. Whenever there was a problem in the garden she consulted the deva of a particular species or the 'overlighting deva' of the Findhorn garden, who gave advice. It was said that the devas were pleased that they were listened to, and in return thrived in harmony with the family living from the vegetables and fruits that the garden produced.

### Shared Consciousness

Jacob Boehme, a sixteenth century German mystic, described the ability to see in another dimension. He said

he could look at a growing plant and by willing to do so, mingle with it, be part of it, feel its struggle towards the light. He was able to share its simple ambitions, and ‘rejoice with the joyously growing leaf’.

Marcel Vogel, a research chemist working for IBM in the United States, worked with plant consciousness. It seemed to him that people varied in their degree of what he called ‘psychic energy’. Also, he found that some of the philodendrons he worked with responded faster, others more slowly.

Vogel found that children were more open-minded, and he taught them how to interact with plants. He had them touch leaves on a plant, and feel their temperature and texture, then gently stroke them, then take their hands away and try to feel the force or energy emanating from them. Some children could get the plant to sway. Vogel said, ‘This is basic training, to develop an expanded awareness of a force which is not visible. Once the awareness is established, they see they can operate with this force.’

Some people report having mystical experiences with elements of nature, including plants.

### **Cooperation with Plants**

A common theme is that plants are conscious beings with which humans

can cooperate. Plants that have been prayed for did better than plants that were ignored. Talking nicely to plants, or abusing them verbally, influences their growth

Machaelle Small Wright developed thirty-three acres in Virginia in the U.S. She calls the method she developed ‘co-creative gardening’, working in cooperation with the nature intelligences. Her garden, Perelandra, is very beautiful and also a research station called the Centre for Nature Research, where she and nature experiment in partnership. Wright’s books are handbooks instructing readers how to cooperate with nature intelligences.

She explains that everything on earth, even everything in the cosmos, is alive, moving, changing, growing, evolving. Everything, in one way or another, is conscious and aware. Nothing of nature has to prove it is conscious, it just is. The devas and nature spirits say, through their channels, that it is mankind who has decided it is the only true conscious creature on earth. By having done this, humans show they do not understand their own true nature.

### **Critique**

The most naive critique of the idea that plants have consciousness is that based on their lack of a nervous system. A brain and nervous system are said

to be necessary for sentience, that is, experiencing pain, pleasure and emotion. Since plants don't have brains or nervous systems, they are not conscious beings. This critique confuses the mechanism used by consciousness for the experience of consciousness. Consciousness can be experienced and expressed in a range of ways, using a range of physical aids.

A more serious criticism is the problem of uneven replicability of experimental results. There have been many researchers attempting to replicate the findings of Cleve Backster and others, with mixed results. And so mainstream biology has labelled this unproven because it cannot be reliably replicated.

Backster has said there is a strong experimenter effect in human – plant communication. Experimenters get what they expect to get. And plants can tune out. Vogel has found that some people are better at this than others, just as some people are more skilled at tuning into their intuition than others.

The third criticism is that the experiments were not done in a proper way, with a set hypothesis, a number of trials, and controls. Vogel believed that failure comes from approaching plants in a mechanistic way and not entering into mutual communication. But this runs counter to the philosophy of many

scientists who do not realise that creative experimentation means that experimenters must become part of their experiments.

Phenomenology, 'a monistic/holistic, appropriately participatory, scientific approach to understanding nature', was originally developed by the great German writer Johann W. von Goethe (1749-1832). It was given theoretical grounding and expanded explanation by Rudolf Steiner and developed further by others. Special attention is given to the process that links the observer to the observed. The observed can only be fully known if the observer is aware of their own opinions and values. By really observing nature, a relationship develops so that the observer becomes aware of dimensions not normally comprehended with the rational mind. From such a stance, nature is experienced more fully than can be described by the experimental sciences.

### **Meaning and Implications**

Theosophist John Van Mater, Jr., has described the link between Backster's work and cosmic energy. He says:

... there is a life force, a cosmic energy surrounding living things, shared by all kingdoms including the human. ... Nature is a great brotherhood of beings, a symbiosis on many levels, most of it beyond our detection and ordinary understanding. ... Plants are also a link in

the chain of beings, in which each kingdom or level needs the others in order to function and evolve.

(*Sunrise*, April/May 1987, pp. 133-134)

Vogel says that all cells are linked to a non-local spaceless - timeless continuum that we call the Field or the Absolute. Since we are all part of this, we are all connected. Since everything is connected to the Field, it makes sense that anything living can access this Field. Even cells can therefore access the interconnected web of the whole.

If bio-communication is real it means that we influence all living things around us with what we think. If plants are sentient and have the ability to feel and perceive subjectively – we need to adjust the way we think and feel about plants.

If bio-communication is real it means that we influence all living things around us with what we think. If plants are sentient and have the ability to feel and perceive subjectively – we need to adjust the way we think and feel about plants.

If we are sending out positive and loving thoughts and vibrations to our surroundings it will affect all living things around us through the non-local space-

less - timeless continuum, the Unified Field. And the same with negative thoughts. Be aware. ‘Hug’ trees and plants. Connect with them.

If this became the dominant paradigm, agricultural methods would change. Farmers would again become more connected with the land, rather than viewing it from the heights of their air conditioned tractor cabins.

Vegetarians can thank the fruit and vegetables they eat for providing them with the sustenance they need for their strength and health.

The Findhorn Foundation week on ‘Spiritual Practice: Nature’, held in 2010, encourages us to:

Co-create with nature. When we have a plan, invite nature to cooperate with it.

Watch your language. Don’t ‘kill’ weeds but ‘remove them’. Always talk with the language of light. We are in cooperation, not war.

The earth needs our love – give it with every step we take.

By connecting with the Higher Realms of Nature, we become aware of and expand the part of ourselves which operates at this level, and thereby expand who we are.

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Rosanne DeBats has spent many years in public policy research and has been a registered psychologist. She is interested in exploring our expansion of consciousness, our awareness of worlds and intelligences beyond the everyday, ways of connecting with Source, and the Oneness of All. She is a member of Adelaide Lodge.

We never look deeply into the quality of a tree; we never really touch it, feel its solidity, its rough bark, and hear the sound that is part of the tree. Not the sound of wind through the leaves, not the breeze of a morning that flutters the leaves, but its own sound, the sound of the trunk and the silent sound of the roots.

Jiddu Krishnamurti





## The World of Art and the Theosophical Society

Dianne Kynaston



Oriental, Wassily Kandinsky  
source - see p.23.

From the very early days of the Theosophical Society there have been many artists who have garnered inspiration from the numerous concepts found in Theosophical teachings. Two of the major sources of such inspiration have been the books, *The Secret Doctrine* by H.P. Blavatsky, and *Thought Forms* by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater.

In recent years there have been various art exhibitions featuring artists who were either members of the Theosophical Society, or whose work was directly influenced by theosophical ideas, and a number of conferences held around the world at which academics have explored these connections.

In the past twelve months there have been two exhibitions of note. The first was held at the Calgary Museum in Canada on the theme of *Higher States – Lawren Harris and His American*

*Contemporaries*. Lawren Harris was part of the ‘Group of Seven’, that is, seven Canadian artists, who, like the Heidelberg School in Australia, created a school of contemporary Canadian art, partly inspired by Kandinsky’s abstract art movement, but very much inspired by the unique Canadian landscape.

A beautiful catalogue of the exhibition has been published which primarily features the artwork of Harris, together with some of his Canadian and American fellow artists. In the Foreword of the catalogue there is a reference to Kandinsky’s quote in his book, *The Spiritual in Art*, that he ‘felt it appropriate to quote the mother of modern Theosophy, Madame Helena P. Blavatsky. ... *The earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now.* Blavatsky looked forward to a future of fewer material

encumbrances to the reflection of eternal truths. Looking backwards to art of the past would “produce an art that is still-born”’, according to Kandinsky. The most attuned artists, therefore, demonstrated a progression toward a dematerialised future.

The Galerie Lelong in New York recently held an exhibition of the artwork of African American artist Mildred Thompson entitled *Radiation Explorations and Magnetic Fields*. The catalogue of her beautiful and energetic paintings makes the following statement:

She sought harmony in the spiritual and the material, the intuitive and the factual, connecting the seemingly distant worlds of science and metaphysics in an attempt to locate universality, or at least a space of commonality from which we can derive understanding. It was her studies not only of quantum physics but also cosmology and theosophy, for example, that inspired the ‘Magnetic Fields’ series, begun in 1990. In imagery and inspiration, Thompson’s ‘The Five Mysteries’ etchings from 1989 can be seen as precursors. She described them as referring to cosmic notions of what goes on beneath the earth and things of the atmosphere.

Currently the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra is holding a small exhibition on the Art Deco period of Australian art. One of the artists fea-

tured is Christian Waller, who, though not a member, produced a number of artworks that were heavily influenced by theosophical concepts. Her book, *The Great Breath*, is simply a series of six black and white illustrations based directly on *The Secret Doctrine*, with titles such as *Lords of the Flame* and *The Lunar Pitris*.



Photograph of the Swedish painter Hilma af Klint (1862–1944) at her art studio. source: [studiointernational.com](http://studiointernational.com)

The Guggenheim Museum in New York is staging an exhibition of the artwork of Hilma af Klint running from 12 October 2018 until 23 April this year. Hilma was a Swedish artist at the turn of the last century, and was also a

member of our Society. The promotional material for the exhibition stated:

... When af Klint began creating radically abstract paintings in 1906, they were like little that had been seen before: bold, colourful, and untethered from recognizable references to the physical world. It was several years before Vasily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, and others would take similar strides to free their own artwork of representational content.

The work of the Theosophical Society has been to search and examine both the Ancient Wisdom Teachings and many departments of the development of modern society – social, political, artistic, et cetera, and it is heartening to see some recognition of its influence in the work of many great artists.

### References:

*Higher States – Lawren Harris and his American Contemporaries*, Roald Nasgaard and Gwendolyn Owens, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Canada, 2017.

*Mildred Thompson: Radiation Explorations and Magnetic Fields*, Galerie

Lelong & Co., New York, 2018.

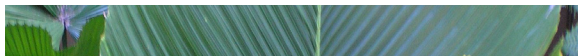
*The Great Breath* by Christian Waller, Gryphon Books, 1932/1978.

Website of The Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Painting on p.21 by Wassily Kandinski - Ermell, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63967344>



Dianne Kynaston joined the Theosophical Society in 1974. She served for eight years as General Secretary of the Australian Section, and as editor of the Section's magazine, *Theosophy in Australia*. A former President of the Indo-Pacific Federation, she has been an active member of Newcastle Lodge in various capacities. Currently a member of the national Executive Committee and a National Lecturer for the Section, Dianne has undertaken a great deal of research work into historical aspects of the Society including artists who have been influenced by Theosophy.



## An Interview with Beverley Champion: To Live is to Discover



The following interview with Beverley Champion was conducted by Nancy Inkster, as part of Adelaide Lodge's regular radio programme which ran for several years.

*BC, introductory remarks:*

As we travel through life what is it that we are trying to discover, what are we seeking? A Theosophist is one who seeks one's own Truth. To do this we need to question, to ponder, and to assess this inner impulse which urges us to discover our own Self or true essence. This is a personal quest.

As human beings, we have the capacity to make choices about the path we will take. The path itself may have been karmically chosen, but the choice is ours as to how we will travel on it. Will we treat it as a freeway and rush along on 'fast forward', impatient with other travellers who cross our path and oblivious to the magic of Nature all around? Or will we consciously choose to discover the treasures of life

which are concealed in every waking moment? On fast forward, we are under the illusion that we can take ten steps at once. However, the reality is that we can only take the most important step – that is, the next one.

*NI: How, then, can we make progress on this quest?*

BC: Once we set out on our quest to discover our own Truth – and satisfy this inner longing – we begin to understand that if any progress is to be made, there are certain rules to be taken into account. One of these is understanding the power of our thought and the effect it has on the quality of our daily life. Although understanding this is important, we eventually come to realise that the treasure being sought will not be found by way of the mind alone.

We may follow this path of reason for a while but, as author G.R.S. Mead tells us, ‘Reason is only a rider, it guides, but it does not carry.’ The mind will furnish us with all manner of suggestions, but the treasure will still elude us if we rely solely on the mental level. So we need to look elsewhere.

On the pathway of our spiritual Quest, we come across tempting signs pointing to other byways. Exploring these side paths seemingly turns us aside from our quest. We may eventually retrace our steps, but the experience we have gained can prove to be just what was needed for our progress and, in retrospect, we see the value of the detour.

Alternatively, we can become stuck in one of the side detours and perhaps the name of that place would be ‘Fixed Beliefs’ – a place where we have momentarily ceased to move forward and closed our mind to new possibilities. In contrast, however, there are times when we need to pause awhile, to take time to observe and absorb the wonders and beauty of Nature. This experience can enrich our journey as we move on.

*NI: How do we recognise a truth?*

BC: The word ‘truth’ is always abstract. We are, however, given an opportunity to actually see truth in manifestation in all that is beautiful, in all that uplifts and sustains us at that deeper

level where we seek the treasure. For example, when we observe a magnificent sunset, the rising of a full moon, even a tiny, perfect flower, we have in that moment of complete identification with the essence of another life form, discovered a treasure which is the very Truth of that life form.

It is an exciting thought that each new day presents us with a whole bank of new moments to experience, and if each momentary experience can be significantly, or even partially, understood – not in relation to other moments, but in its own unique right – then its purpose is fulfilled.

We humans often make hard work of our search for our own spiritual Truth, but in the constant activity of seeking we can miss the jewel contained in the quietness, the stillness of the moment. The jewel is the deep and certain realisation of Who and What we are, not the acquisition of more and more knowledge about the journey.

I read somewhere that life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards. We are so wise with hindsight. The task, then, would seem to be awareness of our attitude to the very mundane moments which go to make up our daily existence.

*NI: Can you tell us more about discovering our own truth?*

BC: Wisdom is said to be learning to discern the true from the false, and then consciously choosing to live in that awareness because we then begin to see that Truth is not hidden in the search, but in the seeker – that which we call Divinity is not to be sought, rather, the seeker is to be known.

To know the seeker requires an inward journey and, according to author Sydney Banks in his article entitled ‘Cleaning out the Clutter’<sup>1</sup>, the channel to this inner awareness, the channel to the Soul, needs to be open and uncluttered by the negativity and rush with which we so often cloud ourselves. He feels that the Soul thrives on three things.

The first is quiet or stillness. In this silent ‘Soul state’, we see that no effort is required on our part, we just have to be in that state of harmonious reality whilst still going about our everyday business of living. In that state, we find that our actions stem from compassion, love and wisdom.

Gratitude is suggested as the second requirement on which the Soul thrives. I feel that gratitude is what we used to call ‘counting our blessings’ – but so often, we spend our waking moments ‘counting our problems’. We constantly need to remind ourselves that we can only live this present moment. By learning to live in the present, not distracted by what is past and what might

happen in the future, we can make this moment beautiful and special.

Inner peace is the third suggested requirement of the Soul and by endeavouring to consciously stay connected to the moment we are in we are, in effect, staying connected to our Centre. If we examine our feelings at such times, we find that they are always positive and this, in turn, nourishes not only the Soul, but also our physical, emotional and mental bodies.

Recognising what is really only brain thinking, and being able to switch over to soul thinking, we find that in this state of consciousness we can forgive everyone with whom we have had a problem, real or imagined! Holding a grudge is baggage we do not have to carry around – we elect to do so. By being willing to forgive, the burden is dropped and we have then discovered another of life’s treasures – contentment.

*NI: How can we become more contented in our lives?*

BC: As human beings, much of our unhappiness stems from our longings at the mental level to change ‘what is’ in our lives. We seem to find such difficulty in accepting our circumstances, but if we have understood at all the principle of the Law of Cause and Effect, the Law of Karma, we know that

what is happening in our lives, the circumstances in which we find ourselves, have been brought about not only by our own actions, but also by the previous personalities of the Soul. The peace of mind we are seeking comes about by accepting responsibility for what we think, say and do. This also brings a new resolve to live more harmoniously, and the Wisdom Teachings tell us that every effort we make assists not only ourselves, but also lifts the whole of the evolving life wave.

The way we live our life is our contribution to the Universe, and the motive behind our actions will dictate whether we are acting for the little self, the ‘wants’ of the personality or, altruistically, for the whole of life, whatever the form. H.P. Blavatsky wrote that ‘We are instruments of action for the World Soul’, and understanding that is quite a responsibility.

The philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, agreed with the idea that we are instruments for a higher power, when he wrote in his essay on *Self Reliance*: ‘We lie in the lap of an immense intelligence which makes us receivers of its truths and organs of its activity.’

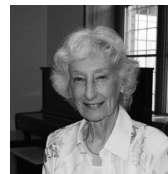
If we are contributing to the evolving universe in the way we live our life, then each contribution is unique, with each one being a vital piece of the whole. It has been said that we

should be trying to discover our note in the whole cosmic orchestra, and what personal thread we should be weaving into the tapestry of humanity.

Our world today is desperate for more and more people to understand that harmony and peace are possible in our time. This will happen when enough people make a personal commitment to live a more harmonious life, allowing our differences to enrich, rather than divide. This would bring with it the understanding that there is really only one race – the human race.

#### Endnote:

1. *Beyond Religion: a Personal Programme for Building a Spiritual Life Outside the Walls of Religion*, David N. Elkins, Ph.D, Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1998.

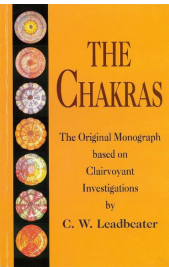


Beverley Champion was National President of the Australian Section from 1996 to 2002, is a former Vice-President of the Indo-Pacific Federation, and a past President of Adelaide Lodge. She has lectured widely for the TS in Australia, as well as in New Zealand, Pakistan, India and the U.S.A.



## Education

Pedro Oliveira



***The Chakras – A Monograph by C.W. Leadbeater, originally published in 1927 by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1927/2006.***

This is a pioneer study of the chakras, the psychic energy centres existing in the subtle body of human beings. The book has sold more than 300,000 copies since its first publication.

Contents of the book include, among others, the meaning of the word, the etheric double, the centres, the root chakra, the spleen chakra, the navel chakra, the heart chakra, the throat chakra, the brow chakra, the crown chakra and other accounts of the centres.

Other contents are the primary or life force, the serpent-fire [kundalini], the three spinal channels, the marriage of the forces, the sympathetic system, the centres in the spine, vitality and the vitality globule.

Of particular interest in an age that seems to freely stimulate the chakras are the following subjects: the arousing of kundalini, the awakening of the etheric chakras, casual clairvoyance, the danger of premature awakening, the spontaneous awakening of kundalini, the etheric web, the effects of alcohol and drugs, the effect of tobacco and the opening of the doors.

Some copies of the book are available at the National Headquarters at a cost of \$8.00 each plus postage.

Enquiries can be directed to: [education@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:education@theosophicalsociety.org.au)



crown chakra

National Tour  
International President  
Tim Boyd



The Australian Section is very pleased to welcome our International President, Tim Boyd, to Australia in May this year. Tim will be accompanied by his wife, Lily, for his first tour of this Section. He joined the Theosophical Society in America in 1974. Together with Bill Lawrence, a TS member and mentor, and others he founded a Theosophical spiritual community in Chicago's inner city. In 2007 he became president of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) USA, and in 2011 was elected President of the TS in America. In 2014 Tim was re-elected as President of the TS in America, his term ending in 2017. He was also elected as President of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, in 2014. He currently shares his time between the headquarters of the TS Adyar in Chennai, India and Chicago, USA, where he lives with his wife, Lily, and daughter, Angelique.

**Please reconfirm starting times with lodges and branches  
- contact details on p.35. Talk/workshop titles TBA.**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Sun 5 May   | Melbourne Lodge, 1.30pm   |
| Wed 8 May   | Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney, 3.00pm & 6.00pm  |
| Sat 11 May  | presentations during weekend seminar for TS members, Launceston (see also p.30) |
| Tues 14 May | Brisbane Lodge, 7.30pm  |
| Fri 17 May  | Adelaide Lodge, times TBA   |
| Mon 20 May  | Perth Branch, 7.30pm  |
| Tues 21 May | Perth Branch, 7.30pm  |

## National Calendar of Events



**Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, 1070 Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh, NSW** For TS members and non-members

**Theme: 'The Science of Yoga'**

**arrivals Fri 29 March - departures Sun 31 March 2019**

**Presenter: Pedro Oliveira**, Education Coordinator

**About:** See national website. *Some places are still available.*

**Cost:** members \$125 (twin share) or \$150 (single room guaranteed) non-members \$150 (twin share) or \$210 (single room guaranteed) - includes sessions, accommodation and catering.

**Enquiries to:** Pedro Oliveira, [education@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:education@theosophicalsociety.org.au)  
tel. 02 9264 7056 (Mon-Thurs)



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

**2019 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY** For TS members

**Arrivals Fri 26 April – departures Thurs 2 May**

**Theme: 'Seeking Out the Way'**

**Presenter: Perry Coles**, long-time TS member  
and student of Theosophy, Perth



**About:** Morning classes will include reference to The Pilgrim and the Three Halls, Freedom and Discipline, Psychic and Spiritual, and Discipleship and Daily life. Afternoon interactive classes about the TS to be given by **Linda Oliveira** and **Pedro Oliveira**.

**Cost:** \$360 - includes tuition, accommodation, catering, train/airport transfers

**Enquiries to:** National President [pres@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:pres@theosophicalsociety.org.au)  
tel. 02 9264 7056 (Mon-Thurs)

**Emmanuel Centre, 123 Abbott Street, East Launceston**

**TS Seminar for TS Members.** Interstate members welcome.

Featuring the International President, **Tim Boyd**

**arrivals Fri 10 May - departures Sun 12 May**

**Theme and details:** TBA. All enquiries to:

Education Coordinator [education@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:education@theosophicalsociety.org.au)

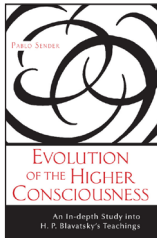


**Further information for Springbrook and Canyonleigh events:**

**<https://theosophicalsociety.org.au/events#list>**

## Review

***Evolution of the Higher Consciousness – An In-depth Study into H.P. Blavatsky’s Teachings***, Pablo Sender, Fohat Productions, Ojai, California, 2018, xvii + 201 pp, pb US\$24.95 or HC US\$34.95, plus shipping. Enquiries and orders: [fohatproductions.com](http://fohatproductions.com)



In the Preface to his book, *The Divine Plan* (TPH Adyar, 1961), Geoffrey Barborka stated:

The idea was stressed that *The Secret Doctrine* was written from the Platonic standpoint rather than the Aristotelian. Therefore a universal outlook must be sought for primarily. So often, difficulty is experienced in understanding the teachings because of attempting to view them ‘from below’ – that is, from the individual’s viewpoint – rather than ‘from above’, from a cosmic standpoint.

In this new contribution to the theosophical literature Pablo Sender seems



to be guided by a similar intent to that of Barborka. For example, in the Preface he states that:

The general aim of this work is to bring together what Blavatsky has presented throughout her voluminous writings about the evolution of the higher consciousness. We will examine the nature of our spiritual dimension and why it ‘descends’ to take birth in a body – exploring the purpose of what we call ‘life’. Efforts have been made here to present these teachings in a systematic way and explain Blavatsky’s frequently obscure words.

In the Introduction he sounds an alert about remaining stuck in concepts only in the study of Theosophy:

If, throughout the years, we remain at the conceptual level of study we may amass enormous amounts of information, but this will not stimulate our own insights and develop true wisdom. In fact, mere conceptual study tends to narrow our views and can frequently cause a fundamentalist view of thinking; keeping us from seeing the truth in presentations that do not agree with style and language we are familiar with.

Those who have indulged – and continue to indulge – in this pattern of

thinking seem to have ignored HPB's advice in the so-called Bowen Notes: '... no picture will ever represent the TRUTH.' Theosophical study, when rightly approached, can lead to the transformation of the mind.

The first part of the book, entitled Theory, deals with Madame Blavatsky's essential teachings on Evolution, Ātman – The Higher Self, The Monad, Manas – The Ego, Kāma – The Animal Soul, Communication with the Higher and Evolution of the Higher Ego. The second part, called Practice, explores subjects like The State of Manas Taijasa, The States of Consciousness, The 'Thought-Producer' and The Sense of Space.

Dr Pablo Sender, who is a well-known international lecturer and a student of Madame Blavatsky's teachings for over twenty years, has written a book that will certainly be welcomed both by serious students of Theosophy as well as by those who would like to begin an exploration of the deeper aspects of life. The book is enriched by a glossary, a bibliography and an index.

In *The Secret Doctrine* (Summing Up, Vol. 1) HPB affirms that what we know as Theosophy is 'the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages' discovered by 'countless generations of initiated seers'. She goes on to say that

'the flashing gaze of those seers has penetrated into the very kernel of matter, and recorded the soul of things there, where an ordinary profane, however learned, would have perceived but the external work of form'.

Their method of investigation was 'by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great adepts...'

*Evolution of the Higher Consciousness* honours this approach by not treating Theosophy as a cosy ideology but as a living teaching that demands enquiry, effort, dedication and an increasingly open mind. This book belongs in every theosophical library.

Pedro Oliveira

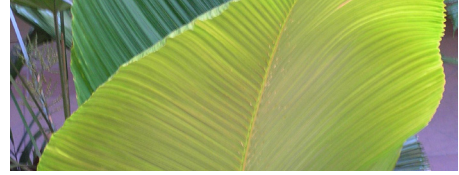
The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

## News and Notes

### 2019 International TS Convention - Varanasi, India, December



The next International TS Convention will be held at Varanasi, India, from 31 December 2019 to 5 January 2020, due to an invitation from the Indian Section, whose Headquarters is in Varanasi. In past years international conventions have taken place there periodically. This provides an excellent opportunity for members to visit Northern India. At that time renovations will be taking place at Leadbeater Chambers, the main guest house at Adyar. Further details will be provided as they come to hand.



### 2019 Indo-Pacific Conference, Manila, the Philippines, November



Our Section is part of the Indo-Pacific Federation with its twelve member countries. Federation Conferences are held every three years. The next Indo-Pacific Conference is due to take place in Manila from **9-12 November 2019**, with **arrivals on 8 November** and **departures on 13 November**. The theme will be 'Let Your Light Shine'. It is anticipated that information about the venue will be available in March. Enquiries to Dr Rosel Dovalsantos, President, TS in the Philippines: [roseldovalsantos@gmail.com](mailto:roseldovalsantos@gmail.com)



### Why are all Australian TS members receiving this issue?

A Notice of Motion to change the Section's Rules, in order for each member to once again receive four print copies of *Theosophy in Australia* per year, as part of their annual dues payment, was unanimously approved as from the 2019 Convention Business Meeting after voting took place around the Section. *If any couples prefer to receive only one print copy, or if any members prefer not to receive a print copy, please contact the Membership Secretary: membership@theosophicalsociety.org.au.* However, the same rate for annual dues will apply to all members.

### 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 many 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 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 Tel. 02 9264 6404

### *The Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches*

The freedom of Lodges and Branches is defined by the scope of the Society's Objects as well as its essential mandate to make Theosophy known as a practical living Wisdom, which can uplift human consciousness to a realisation of the Oneness of life. Therefore, although the Society has no official creed of its own and upholds freedom of thought, and while it is acceptable to invite some outside speakers who can contribute to the exploration of the Ageless Wisdom, it is not appropriate for our platform to be used by such speakers to actively promote other organisations or belief systems. Each Lodge and Branch was chartered by the International President to be a representative of the Society in its area. Its work and programme should reflect the character, altruistic ethos and spirit of the Theosophical Society.

*Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (2019)*



## 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  
<https://theosophicalsociety.org.au>  
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:  
[catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au)

### Australian Capital Territory

*Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:*  
Postal Address: c/- P.O. Box 760, Rozelle NSW 2039  
Meet: 3rd Saturday of month, 2.00-3.30pm  
Emeritus Faculty, Australian National University  
President: Marie McArdle  
Secretary: Barbara Harrod  
Tel: 0402 530 859  
[email: canberratheosophicalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:canberratheosophicalsociety@gmail.com)  
<https://canberra.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

### New South Wales

*Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:*  
Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 1590  
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)  
<https://sydney.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>  
Meet: 1.00pm Wednesdays  
President: Sally Gray  
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

*Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:*  
Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,  
Mayfield NSW 2304  
7.30pm 2nd Friday each month  
President: Tony Buzek  
Secretary: Dianne Kynaston  
Tel: 0452 633 132  
Email: [diannedeva@gmail.com](mailto:diannedeva@gmail.com)  
<https://newcastle.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

### Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: Members' Lounge, Blue Mountains  
Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street (above Coles),  
Katoomba NSW 2780  
Meetings every Monday, 2.00 - 4.00pm  
Coordinator: Jessica Gemmell  
Tel: 02 4782 4269  
[email: Pattie Thompson, p.thompson12@bigpond.com](mailto:email:PattieThompson,p.thompson12@bigpond.com)

### Gosford Group:

Meet: The Narara Community 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:email: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/- 31 Riviera Street  
Avalon NSW 2107  
2.00 pm 3rd Friday each month  
Coordinator: Dianne Kynaston  
[email: diannedeva@gmail.com](mailto:email:diannedeva@gmail.com)

### Queensland

*Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:*  
Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,  
Atherton QLD 4883  
Meet: Meeting Room,  
Community Services Tablelands,  
rear of 38 Mabel Street, Atherton  
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.  
President: Max Brandenberger  
Secretary: Chris Pang Way  
Tel: 07 4091 5156  
<https://atherton.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

*Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:*  
355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000  
Tel: 07 3839 1453  
[email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au](mailto:email:brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au)  
<https://brisbane.theosophicalsociety.org.au>  
Meet: 7.30pm Wednesdays, library open 6.30-7.30pm  
President: Phillipa Rooke  
Secretary: Dianne Manning

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

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,  
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556  
Tel: 0417 873 481  
7.00pm Thursdays  
Email: [theosophy.sunshinecoast@gmail.com](mailto:theosophy.sunshinecoast@gmail.com)  
<https://sunshinecoast.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>  
President: Joyce Thompson  
Secretary: Jean Carroll

*Toowoomba Group:*

Meet: Hospice Board Room, 57b O'Quinn Street,  
Toowoomba QLD 4350.  
Meetings on a Thursday evening once a fortnight at  
6.30pm.  
Annual Springbrook retreat each Winter  
Coordinator: Gayle Thomas  
Secretary: Barry Bowden  
Tel: 0438 331 885  
email: [gaylethomas8@gmail.com](mailto:gaylethomas8@gmail.com)

**South Australia***Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000  
Tel: 08 8223 1129  
Email: [president@tsadelaide.org.au](mailto:president@tsadelaide.org.au)  
[www.theosophical.org.au](http://www.theosophical.org.au)  
Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of  
every month. Please contact Lodge for additional  
meeting dates.  
Acting President: Kevin Davey  
Secretary: position vacant

**Tasmania***Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:*

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000  
Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)  
<https://hobart.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>  
Meet: 7.30pm Mondays  
President: Helen Steven  
Secretary: Berry Dunston  
Email: [helen\\_steven@live.com](mailto:helen_steven@live.com)

*Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:*

Meet: Scouts Hall, 1 St. Georges Square, East  
Launceston,  
1st and 2nd Wednesday of the month at 1.00pm  
Postal address: 28 Teggs Road, Gravelly Beach, TAS  
7276  
email: [launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com)  
<https://launceston.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

President/Secretary: Franka Hughes  
Tel: 0400 140 624

**Victoria***Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:*

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624  
email: [info@melbournetheosophy.org](mailto:info@melbournetheosophy.org)  
<https://melbourne.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>  
Meet: usually 4th Saturday each month  
President: Edward Sinclair  
Secretary: Maria Jevic

*Mornington Peninsula Group:*

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,  
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday  
of the month  
(12.00pm meditation - 12.30pm lunch + library -  
1.30pm presenter + questions and comments)  
Coordinator: Alice Opper  
Tel: 03 5976 3815

*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: [tsperth@iinet.net.au](mailto:tsperth@iinet.net.au)  
<http://www.tsperth.com.au>  
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays  
President: Franco Guazzelli  
Secretary: Matthew Thompson

*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](mailto: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)*



## **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.**