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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)

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The Theosophical Society welcomes students or seekers, belonging to any religion or to none, who are in sympathy with its Objects. The motto of the Society is 'There is no Religion higher than Truth'. The word Religion in this statement is a translation of the Sanskrit dharma, which among other things means practice; way; virtue; teaching; law; inherent nature; religion; and that which is steadfast or firm. The word Truth in the motto is a translation of the Sanskrit *satya*, meaning among other things, true, real and actual. It derives from the root *sat*, sometimes translated as boundless unconditioned existence.

Theosophy is not defined in the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, or in any official document. It literally means divine wisdom, *theosophia*, but members of the Society are left to discover what it is for themselves, taking as guides whatever religions or philosophies they wish.

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.

On the
Watch-Tower
The Higher Mind

The Theosophist, March 2013



Radha Burnier



Most people are still developing the mind which is capable of observing and of pondering over what has been observed. It has to develop and realise the unseen realities and then only it begins to know the purpose of what happens. This means seeing events without reacting, because these events are not important in themselves. They will pass away. Even those things that we consider to be very important which may be found in history books, et cetera, pass away, and the world goes on. But we must first look at our own thoughts to know what is of importance, although it has no real significance, except to make us see in a different way.

There are some people who can look without confusion, in a philosophical and even with a somewhat humorous spirit, because they see the temporality of everything, the unimportance of what takes place. Then the inner quietness increases. When passing things are not given weightage, events are seen with a smile.

Everybody has to work slowly to reach the stage when passing things are not given weightage, and one can see what happens to oneself, one's friends and family. The sense of humour is what puts things in a different way. Let us take a simple example: a person suddenly finds that he has inherited a large fortune, he becomes excited and begins to think what he is going to do with the fortune. On the contrary someone who loses what he has, behaves in a way opposed to that of the person who has inherited a fortune. In both situations, the person has to remain calm, and not feel too concerned; he remains unshaken, whether by so-called good fortune or bad fortune. Looked at from a higher standpoint, they themselves do not matter, but what they do to us does. If one can remain pure within,

then the test has been passed. This is very important for all of us. This physical world feels different from what we think it is, when we give significance to what is not real.

The world of our own reactions and conditioning affects us and we call this experience. But actually when we are no more affected by the experience, when we can see all of nature and all the people in the world with a calm internal eye it is wonderful. The ancient books say that one can be like the lotus leaf on which a drop of water falls, but makes no impress. This is a symbol of a person who remains untouched, and uncorrupted whatever happens. The mind remains calm, learns what is not only deeper, but what is nearer the good and beautiful. We know so many things, and we are proud of that, but all those things that we know of are of no value. Someone like the Buddha helps people to change. When the mind is clear because calmness is natural to it, the quiet mind can reach depths which are impossible at present.

Obviously life has great depths. There are people who have touched those depths, who are not just human – they are superhuman, not because they are stronger or cleverer; they have come to what is real and good. This is open to all of us, but we have to begin with the quiet mind. The mind which wanders, which tries to appear cleverer than others, that mind must change. All the cleverness that the world appreciates is not of very great value. It may help at a certain stage to become sharper and see better, but it has no lasting value. But if we find quietness of mind, and begin to look, to listen and be aware, we may come to something which nobody can take away from us – the Eternal.

From the National President



Linda Oliveira



The items in this issue are diverse, ranging from historical to contemporary matters such as: how animals fit into a theosophical view of evolution, a review of writings on science and holistic consciousness, the role of positive deviance (an intriguing term), Zen Buddhism, and some lesser known historical facts about the TS and the United Nations. All in all, some interesting reading.

A Quiet Revolution?

This column in the June issue included mention of values and ethics. Following on from this, it seemed timely to include on the following page of this issue a collectively conceived document which had its genesis as a result of a national workshop, followed by a consultative process involving the National Council, along with the input of all Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups throughout the country. The document concerned was published in this magazine after its adoption. Many members have joined the Society since that time and the tenth anniversary of the document's adoption seems as good a time as any to bring it to the attention of members once more. I am referring to our Guidelines for Conduct.

The Society's Objects, and some official statements of the TS, imply certain types of behaviour which are compatible with being a member of the TS. Yet sadly, from time to time certain values made explicit in our Guidelines for Conduct such as Universal Brotherhood, Courtesy and Consideration, and Cooperation, are not upheld – more often than we might like to admit.

Our Guidelines are simply that – Guidelines. They include suggestions or requests for

behaviour by committees and members which is congruent with this organisation's ideals. Although not enforceable, as mentioned in *Theosophy in Australia* ten years ago, 'They are designed to appeal to the better nature of members and to act as a reminder about the values and standards of behaviour which the Theosophical Society represents.' They can be seen as a useful personal reference, given to members for their information and kept handy in committee meeting rooms.

The values listed prior to the five Guidelines, and the Guidelines themselves, are worth revisiting by TS committees. We all may fall short of the ideals which they embrace. However, strong inspiration can be drawn from some of our varied literature which endows such values with a certain beauty, meaning and depth.

If even a *small* percentage of members could thoroughly embrace our first Object, and at the same time become increasingly Self-aware, then there could be a quiet revolution in our Society; the seeds of meaningful transformation would start to germinate. We can choose to engage in such a process meaningfully. A quiet, individual revolution has the potential to spread to the wider group through a kind of 'osmosis'. It has been suggested that the gist of our first Object is also, in a sense, the agenda for the world today – trying to rebuild the matrix of human culture without any distinctions whatsoever. A Utopian ideal perhaps, but a noble one!

Comment of up to 200 words is invited on items in this issue by 30 September and may be published:
pres@austheos.org.au



Values

These Guidelines embrace the values of:

Universal Brotherhood

Service

Courtesy and Consideration

Cooperation

Diligence

The Theosophical Society in Australia

Guidelines for Conduct

Purpose :

This document was approved by the National Council after consultation with TS Centres around the Australian Section. It provides suggested guidelines for the conduct of members and centres of The Theosophical Society in Australia, which are compatible with the First Object of the Society and encourage a professional and harmonious approach to theosophical work in this country.

Guidelines for Conduct:

1. Each member of The Theosophical Society is requested to remember at all times the ideal of Universal Brotherhood as expressed in the First Object of the Society and to reflect this in his or her behaviour:
 - in all interactions with members and non-members
 - in all committee meetings
 - in all dealings with employees
2. Each member of The Theosophical Society is requested to become familiar with the Society's three Objects, the General Council resolutions on Freedom of Thought and Freedom of the Society, and to use these as guidelines for behaviour and study, as well as activities in TS centres.
3. Each member of The Theosophical Society is encouraged to study Theosophy in a spirit of open-minded enquiry and to consider other points of view with courtesy and consideration.
4. Each member of The Theosophical Society who is an Officer of the Society is requested to conduct his or her duties in the most professional and cooperative way possible in accordance with Lodge/Branch/Group Rules as relevant, the National and International Rules of the Society, and Australian laws.
5. Each Committee within The Theosophical Society in Australia is requested to follow accepted guidelines for committee procedures at all its committee meetings and always to keep in mind the best interests of the Society, rather than personal interests, when decisions are made.

- Resolution of the National Council of The Theosophical Society in Australia, June 2003

Animals and Theosophy

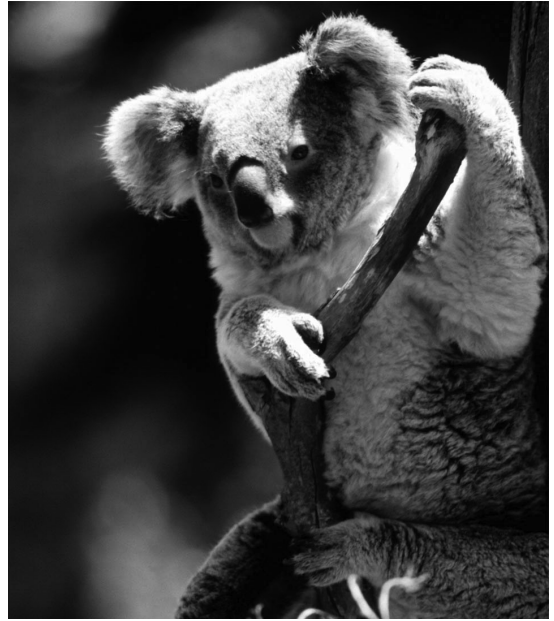
Beverley Champion

In order to address this subject we need, first of all, to journey back to the beginning of time, because Theosophy suggests that time arrived with manifestation. So we are starting at the very beginning, or rather, at the dawn of another beginning, because everything is cyclic.

Regarding this beginning, we need to ask: ‘What was the spiritual impulse which resulted in the gradual formation of what we know as a Cosmos? What was it which started it all again?’ Theosophy calls that initial spiritual impulse Monadic or Cosmic Essence.

The term ‘Monad’ means the One, the unity of all. It is the one spiritual guiding intelligence which emits, or sends out, the rays of Monadic Essence to begin the journey of *informing and experiencing* all subsequent Nature. That is quite a journey and we are told that the journey of the Monadic Essence through our particular life-wave alone will cover millennia!

Let us reduce that mega statement covering millennia to something we can cope with by asking: ‘What is it which informs the small acorn how to grow into a mighty oak tree?’ Theosophical literature suggests it is the Monadic Spiritual Essence which is present in all Nature, and that this Essence is the real pilgrim. It begins its long round of cycles in manifestation, firstly in several elemental stages, and then progresses to experience long aeons in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms before finally gaining an individual human experience.



Theosophy further suggests that the true Self of a human being is an individualised, spiritual ray, ever striving to reunite itself with its Source. However, to achieve that reunion, the Essence must pass through every experience and every feeling that exists in the manifested universe. I repeat – some journey! And just *one stage* of that cosmic process of unfoldment involves Monadic experience which is gained using the vehicles of animal bodies.

Three Proposals

Helena Blavatsky gave us much to think about when she proposed three basic and fundamental ideas to explain the Cosmos and our connection with it, which are for us to ponder on. There are no dogmas in the Theosophical Society. It is for each of us to make up our own minds about the Ageless Wisdom teachings.

The first Proposition deals with the movement of Life, or Consciousness, from the One Source, which she refers to as the ‘Be-ness’ of everything, and the incessant movement towards more and more awareness. Such incessant movement could be seen as ‘Becoming’. This ever moving process necessitates Spirit’s involvement, as form or matter is called into the

great drama in the creation of a new universe. We call this involution as Spirit becomes more and more enmeshed in dense matter.

The second Proposition refers to cyclicity and is sometimes referred to as the Law of Periodicity. By whatever name we call it, it refers to eternal motion ever moving in cycles, with everything continually changing. The Ageless Wisdom states that nothing remains static. Not only does this primal energy move ever forward, but the patterns created are repeated; they come around again with each cycle, being built upon the experience of the previous one. This is the eternal spiral.

In Madame Blavatsky's Third Proposition, she speaks of the identity of every soul with the World Intelligence or World Soul; each soul is not just like it, but *identical* with it. Further, it mentions that there is an obligatory pilgrimage for every soul in accordance with karmic law. If we accept this Third Proposition, we can see that there is really no choice of non-participation in this incredible cosmic dance, no 'stop the world I want to get off', because at soul level we each act, albeit uniquely, as an aspect of this one intelligence.

Involution and Evolution

Involution has been called 'the bondage of consciousness to the rhythm of Time'; pure Immortal Spirit identifying itself with transitory matter and becoming involved. So it would seem that Spirit and Matter are not two different elements, but are both ends of one spectrum, invisible and visible.

If that is so, it is not a case of Spirit *and* Matter, or even Spirit *in* matter but, when it is in manifestation, we see Spirit *as* matter. It is the form or the vehicle – whether plant, animal or human – which is transitory. If it is in manifestation it has a use-by date, a life span, whereas Spirit is eternal.

Evolution, however, could be described as the subsequent unfolding, growth or movement towards an ever increasing Self-Realisation and

The nature of Life, which is universal energy or consciousness, is to act, flow, progress and thereby to evolve. If we are aware, we are conscious of the Spirit of Life evident all around us. In the mountains it is mineral fire. In plants it is etheric fire. In animals it is sentient fire – the animal has the power of sense perception. At the human level we know it as Self-consciousness – we know we are conscious.

Self-Determination as the powerful potentiality of Spirit becomes more fully expressed in the phenomenal or material world; thus the cosmic process continually unfolds towards the awakening of more and more consciousness.

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The 'informing principle' – the Monadic Essence – is called in the human, the Higher Self or human Monad. It is referred to as the animal Monad in that kingdom, but *The Secret Doctrine* tells us that in both of these, human and animal, the Monadic Essence is one and the same. However, by the time the Essence reaches the human form, it is endowed with Divine Intelligence, whereas the animal is endowed with instinctual faculty alone. Instinct is the hallmark whereby the animal kingdom operates as a group.

We have all seen this for ourselves. Watch a flock of white birds against a cloudless blue sky and be amazed as they all change direction as one unit. Now, I don't think there is one bird at the front calling out directions; rather, we are witnessing the instinctual factor in operation allowing the group to act as one. Of course there is often one bird which turns the wrong way, and spends the rest of the time that the flock is airborne, desperately flapping trying to catch up!

Between the human and the animal whose Monadic Essence is fundamentally identical, there is, however, the impassable abyss of 'Mentality and Self-consciousness'.



Do Animals Have Souls?

The question is often asked, 'Do animals have Souls?'. Madame Blavatsky devoted a whole chapter to this subject in Volume VII of her *Collected Writings*. She quoted the Marquis Eudes de Mirville who suspected that soul, whether human or animal, is the One Life (which flows through all). Theosophy, she said, agrees with the philosopher Leibnitz who believed that the souls in man and animal are identical, and further, that the souls of animals are imperishable.

In the same article she tells us that the Christian Vicar of Middleton, Mr Dean, published in 1748 two small volumes upon the subject of animals having souls. In summary, he said, 'the

Holy Scriptures hint in various passages that the [animals] shall live in a future life.' This doctrine had been supported by several Fathers of the Church, reason teaching that animals have a soul and that they shall exist in a future state. He continued, 'The system of those who believe that God annihilates the soul of the animal is nowhere supported and has no solid foundation to it.'

Another church dignitary, Charles Bonnet of Geneva, not only also supported this view but stated that 'As to the destiny of the animal, Providence holds in reserve for them the greatest compensations in future states.' We could add that, by the way some humans treat them, the animals merit the greatest compensation.

Blavatsky went on to say that 'We too believe in "future states" for the animal from the highest down to the tiniest *infusoria*' (a bacteria active in decaying matter), but Theosophy suggests that this comes about through a series of rebirths, each time in a higher form, continuing up to humanity and then beyond. Humanity is one rung on the hierarchical Ladder. In short, she said that Theosophy believes in evolution in the fullest sense of the word. All life progresses, regardless of the form it inhabits.

Madame Blavatsky concluded this 1886 article, 'Have Animals Souls?', with these stirring words:

if these humble lines could make a few readers seriously turn their thoughts to all the horrors of vivisection – then the writer would be content. For verily when the world feels convinced – and it cannot avoid coming one day to such a conviction – that animals are creatures as eternal as we ourselves, vivisection and other permanent tortures daily inflicted on the poor brutes, will, after calling forth an outburst of maledictions and threats from society generally, force all Governments to put an end to those barbarous and shameful practices.

From Group Soul to Individual Soul

On a lighter note, having thus far addressed the theosophical teachings of Madame Blavatsky in relation to the spirituality in animals, let us now look at some of the interpretations on

this subject given by some other theosophical writers.

The life-forms inhabiting the kingdoms prior to the human stage are generally described by these writers as belonging to a Group Soul. It is suggested that in the animal stage, the vast majority of animals are attached to a particular Group Soul to be found on the lower mental plane. Because of the incalculable number of life-forms, particularly in the plant and animal stages (just think of the varieties of insects alone), it does seem logical that they should be Monadically ensouled in various groups. Individuality comes much later in the evolution of a Life Wave. We are told in relation to the life forms ensouled in a Group, that when one of the forms dies, its Soul Spark returns to the Group Soul, enhancing, or otherwise, the whole of the Group.

Jinarajadasa, in his book *First Principles of Theosophy*, describes the process in this way:

Life as it evolves has its stages. First, it builds forms in ultra-physical matter, and then we name it 'elemental' life. Then, with the experiences of its past building, it 'ensouls' chemical elements in combination, and becomes the mineral group-soul. Next, it builds protoplasm, ensouls vegetable forms, and afterwards, at a later period, animal forms.

He goes on to say that out of this group experience, the Monad, a fragment of Divinity, is seeking to ultimately form an Individual Soul or Ego in order to begin a pilgrimage in the human state. However, in relation to that statement, the following very important point is made: that in the eventual process of individualisation from the Group Soul to a Human Ego, it is not that particular animal which becomes the human. All that has for ages been animal, it is proposed, now becomes the vehicle, the body, to hold the now individualised fragment of Divinity, the Spiritual Monad.

The writer mentions that the Monad cannot begin a human pilgrimage until all of the previous stages have been achieved or experienced in the kingdoms preceding the human. He goes on to say that in the human state, there

is an utterly different stream of consciousness or Monadic Divine Life, and a much more evolved mental level which is now active. It is also pointed out that in this human stage a causal body is formed, and the Karmic Law of responsibility now applies.

The life-forms inhabiting the kingdoms prior to the human stage are generally described by these writers as belonging to a Group Soul. It is suggested that in the animal stage, the vast majority of animals are attached to a particular Group Soul to be found on the lower Mental Plane. Because of the incalculable number of life-forms, particularly in the plant and animal stages (just think of the varieties of insects alone), it does seem logical that they should be Monadically ensouled in various groups.

Our Responsibility Towards Animals

Jinarajadasa also states that so many people still take it for granted that animals exist only to serve our purposes. Of course animals can be of help to humanity in the development of civilisation by giving of their strength and intelligence, but they do not exist primarily for our use; they exist to fulfil their own purposes in the overall Divine Plan.

In our dealings with them, it is our duty to see that our treatment and influence hastens their Spiritual evolution. Each action of man which utilises the mere cunning of animals to gratify human desires, is an injury to the evolving animal life. Yes, we do have a superior intelligence which enables us to control the animals, but that control has to be exercised for the benefit of the animal kingdom, not for our own.

In *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, the Master Morya tells us that no matter whether

a life-form is a planet, a human or an animal, these are not 'creations'; they are 'states' for a given time, their present appearance is transitory and but a condition of that stage of evolution at which they have arrived in the descending cycle of involution. It is the tidal wave of life ever moving forward.

I mentioned earlier that responsibility comes with individuality. The Master Morya goes on to say that the life forms of the earlier kingdoms cannot be held accountable for their actions as such responsibility can only apply when matter and spirit are properly 'equilibrated', or properly balanced, and this is only reached in the human stage where the human mind is the pivotal point of balance.

Theosophy teaches that there is One Life, One Law and One Element and this applies to every stage of a life wave, and indeed, to every kingdom evolving during that passage of involution and evolution.

As theosophists, we understand the vital importance of treating animals with compassion, allowing them their dignity. For a long time now, I have lived my life according to my own 'Three R's', and I do not mean 'Reading, Writing and 'Rithmetic'. I mean:

Responsibility for my own thoughts and deeds;
Respect for others, allowing them their freedom

to choose; and
Reverence for all life, no matter what form the Universal Life is inhabiting.

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The behaviour of shoals of fish and flocks of birds shows a coordination that has so far defied explanation. The idea of their coordination taking place through the morphic field of the flock, extending around and embracing the individual birds, seems to make better sense.

In a similar way, social morphic fields can be thought of as coordinating the behaviour of herds of reindeer, pods of whales, and all patterns of social organisation.

Rupert Sheldrake, *The Rebirth of Nature*



ĀTMAGITĀ*

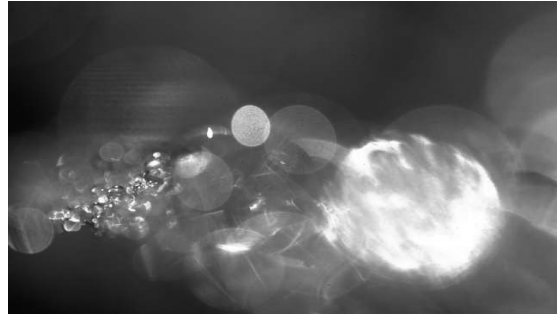
From the Infinite Source of All – the very Fount of Being – aeons upon aeons
ago came I,
Issuing forth as a Spark from the Essence of Flame itself, aware of naught but
transcendent glory.
Commencing a cyclic journey covering incomputable periods of time,
Descending from the regions of starry brilliance –
Akin to their flaming lustre, free from all mantles of form –
I could speed anywhere in the vast reaches of Space:
Through solar systems or galactic universes, withal having no feeling of
awareness,
Yet ever impelled onward and downward, irresistibly drawn to the regions of
density –
Descending lower and lower, stage by stage, attracted to the realms of Form.
There I gathered vestures pertaining to the Kingdoms of Fire, Air, Water and
Earth,
Lingering an aeon in each kingdom, seeking ever a permanent mansion.
At length I emerged from the subtle realms and became manifest in a material
form,
Imbedded in a crystalline encasement, where the pristine brilliance of Flame
itself was mirrored.
After long aeons and cycles I acquired new vestures:
Where lasting gems and shining brilliants were exchanged for beauty and
symmetry of form, and colour and fragrance,
Where the glowing sunlight stimulated yearning for a return to the ancestral
Home – higher, ever higher.
With the passing of further aeons I entered another kingdom,
Having now the power of moving from place to place, and able to wing my way
once more;
Then, with the taking on of warm-blooded vehicles, came new sensations of
devotion, sacrifice and love.
At length I awoke to find myself one of the Host of the Human Kingdom,
Learning of the transmuting power of love, pulsating in consonance with the
Divine Plan.
Now under the regency of the Lordly Ah-hi,
Consciously may I strive to speed upon my way to attain knowledge of Ātman:
As the spark seeks to rejoin the Flame from whence it sprang.
Ever ascending upwards, higher even than the whirling Palaces of the Planetary
Lhas,
Even to the Primeval Seven Sons of Light,
Past blazing suns and trailing comets, past galaxies and island universes,
Even to the Central Spiritual Sun ...
For I have learned to say: *Aham eva Parabrahma.*

The Divine Plan, Geoffrey Barborika

*Ātmagitā may be rendered 'The Song of the Monad'

Science and Holistic Consciousness

Brian Harding



1. Introduction

Twenty-five years ago, David Bohm and David Peat wrote (2011):

Science today ... is beset with serious difficulties. One of the most pervasive of these involves its fragmentary approach to nature and reality ... this fragmentary approach can never resolve the deeper problems that now face our world.

This fragmentation persists in many aspects of our society, for example, in the continued exploitation of natural resources or the way western medicine is practised. However, in leading edge science today, I think we have moved a little towards addressing the fragmentation Bohm and Peat talked about. At the same time, there has been an increasing interest in consciousness and how it may enter into our science. This interest arose, perhaps, with the development of quantum theory when it became more difficult to separate the conscious observer from the observed. Over the years, there have been an increasing number of hints that consciousness, whatever it is, has an important role to play in the scheme of things.

As early as 1930, Sir James Jeans wrote, 'the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine.' In E. Lester Smith's book (1990) we read, 'Intelligence is distinct from the physical organism; it is associated with consciousness and exists free in its own domain.' Lester Smith concludes: 'There is some evidence that it survives death and that a general ocean of intelligence exists.'

Ervin Laszlo (2007) says: 'Through the ages, mystics and seers have affirmed that consciousness is fundamental in the universe',

and he quotes Islamic scholars, Indian mystics and western scientists.

Finally, from another perspective, neuroscientist Paul Nunez (2010) suggests that consciousness may be 'a fundamental property of the universe'.

However, what I want to focus on here, in the space available, is the tendency on the part of some to suggest that quantum physics itself (the Copenhagen version, that is) demonstrates the influence of consciousness on matter; that it somehow forms the bridge between the subjective and the objective. They then go on to suggest that quantum physics can be used to 'prove' the existence of a Universal Consciousness and thence of 'God'. In my view, such speculation is premature, for reasons we will come to. First let's think a bit more about what 'consciousness' is.

2. What is consciousness?

I read somewhere that there have been over eighty attempts to define 'consciousness'. Furthermore, the words 'consciousness', 'awareness', and even 'intelligence' have been used interchangeably, leading to some confusion. In serious research, though, it seems usual nowadays to use 'consciousness', as I have been doing in this article.

Australian David Chalmers is a well-known researcher in this field and currently is Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Consciousness at the Australian National University. He says (2010), 'Consciousness poses the most baffling problems in the science of the mind. There is nothing we know more intimately than conscious experience, but

there is nothing that is harder to explain.’ Fred Kuttner and Bruce Rosenblum point out (2011), that ‘One can know of the existence of consciousness in no other way than through our first-person feeling of awareness, or the second-person reports of others.’

Two diametrically opposed views of consciousness are represented by Chalmers and the late Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the DNA double helix.

Chalmers (1996) says explaining consciousness purely in terms of brain function is impossible. Neuroscience may tell us something about the physical role consciousness plays, but it can’t tell us how consciousness arises. Chalmers suggests that a theory of consciousness should take experience as a primary entity alongside mass, charge and space-time.

Crick, on the other hand, wrote (1995):

You, your joys and sorrows, your memories and ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.

Subjective feelings thus supposedly emerge from the electrochemistry of neurons. Such a view sees consciousness as an ‘epiphenomenon’ of the brain.

3. The place of consciousness in the universe

Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff (2011) have given three general possibilities regarding the origin and place of consciousness in the universe:

A) Consciousness is not an independent quality but arose as a natural evolutionary consequence of the biological adaptation of brains and nervous systems. This is the ‘epiphenomenal’ view expressed by Crick (op. cit.), Dennett (1991) and others.

B) *Precursors* of consciousness have always been in the universe. Biology evolved a mechanism to convert these precursors to actual consciousness. This is the view taken by Penrose and Hameroff, and David Chalmers. It’s a kind of halfway house.

C) However, there’s also a third view, namely, that consciousness is a quality that has always been in the universe (e.g., Lester Smith, op. cit.). Spiritual and religious approaches assume consciousness has always been present as ‘the ground of being’. Idealists even contend that consciousness is all there is – the material world is an illusion.

It’s apparent from what I’ve said that the question of what consciousness is and how it arises is controversial and much research remains to be done. But here I would like to pick up my comment about the relationship, if any, between Bohr’s quantum physics and consciousness. In particular, does consciousness have anything to do with what is called ‘the collapse of the quantum wave function’, as some have claimed? To discuss this, I need to look briefly at the basics of quantum physics.

4. Consciousness and quantum basics

Here I will simply list the three pillars of quantum physics. These are, I suggest, Bohr’s Principle of Complementarity which states that wave and particle models of either matter or radiation complement each other; the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle which puts a limit on the certainty to which pairs of particle properties can be measured (for example, position and momentum); and the Schrödinger Wave Equation which describes by means of the wave function, $\psi(x,y,z,t)$, how matter waves change in space and time.

Now classical physics was based on the notion of complete objectivity. But as quantum physics developed, it began to dawn on scientists that this objectivity was not sustainable. The conscious experimenter is closely involved in all three pillars, but most important is the apparent effect of conscious observation on so-called wave function collapse. It suggests a conscious human observer is needed to bring probability into actuality. This process is basic to Bohr’s Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum theory. Remember, the wave function *psi* (actually the absolute square of the wave function) gives us the probability of finding a particle at a given place at the time of observation. Until observation,

the particle can't be pinned down – there are only probabilities that it exists somewhere. It seems that, at the moment of observation, all the many quantum possibilities collapse into the single actuality seen by the observer.

Taken to its limit, you could say that the universe didn't exist until humans arrived to observe it, a somewhat arrogant conclusion, I feel. Indeed, this was one objection of several that Einstein had to quantum theory as proposed by Bohr – 'I like to think that the moon is there even when I'm not looking at it', he said (quoted in Kuttner and Rosenblum, 2011). And it is this 'collapse of the wave function' which has been the basis of speculation that quantum physics explains how subjective human consciousness is linked to the objective physical world and, further, taps into a universal sea of consciousness, which may perhaps be called God.

While this picture, painted by Amit Goswami (2008) and others, is appealing, I believe it's a step too far. As eminent physicist Brian Greene points out (2004), no one understands how or even whether the so-called collapse really happens. So to jump immediately to invoke here a role for consciousness is at least premature if not unscientific.

Again, I quote 1993 Nobel Prize winner, Anthony Leggett (1991) who said:

It may be somewhat dangerous to explain something one does not understand very well [that is, the quantum measurement problem] by invoking something [namely consciousness] one does not understand at all.

As it turns out, there may be no such thing as wave function collapse. First, in the view of physicist Michael Nauenberg (2011), an associate of the great John Bell, the quantum measurement problem arises from early misunderstandings of what the wave function is. The wave function, say Nauenberg and Bell, is a mathematical symbol; it isn't a physical object. So there isn't any mystery that its mathematical form should change abruptly after a measurement, yielding additional information, has been made.

But there is more. So-called wave function collapse emerges from the Copenhagen

Interpretation, and this interpretation, prevailing for seventy years, has been challenged, especially over the last fifteen years or so. There are theories that work without having to invoke wave function collapse at all, and hence consciousness doesn't come into it.

5. Alternatives to Copenhagen

Decoherence was first proposed by David Bohm in 1952, but it was largely ignored until taken up by German physicist Dieter Zeh and later others, notably Wojciech Zurek of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. It refers to the process by which a quantum system interacts with its macroscopic environment. You could say, loosely, that the quantum nature of the system leaks away to the environment and we finish up with something that obeys classical physics. Because decoherence happens many times faster than anything we can measure, *it only gives the impression* of wave function collapse. By the way, decoherence destroys quantum entanglement, so we need to be cautious when glibly talking of particles being entangled across the universe.

Another alternative to Bohr is the Many Worlds interpretation, introduced by Hugh Everett in 1957 when discussing the possibility of a wave function for the entire universe. It asserts the reality of such a universal wave function, but denies wave function collapse. All possible alternative histories and futures are real, each representing an actual universe. So the Many Worlds Interpretation is one of several multiverse theories.

Finally, another proposal, again by David Bohm, has been taken up in recent times by Sheldon Goldstein of Rutgers University in New Jersey, among others (see Buchanan, 2008). Like Einstein and others, Bohm was deeply concerned about reality and what quantum theory really meant. He criticised the majority of scientists who were content to go along with the Bohr theory simply because its mathematics gave predictions that proved to be correct. In a sense, their attitude was 'as long as it works, why do we need to understand it?'

There isn't space here to go into the details of Bohm's theory but he points out that quantum theory itself can be understood without reference to consciousness. However, it's important to note he is *not* saying that there is no link between quantum physics and consciousness. Indeed, he suggests that quantum theory and consciousness *are* linked, but not through any doubtful 'collapse of the wave function', rather because they both arise out of a new kind of order, a deeper order underlying all things, which he calls the 'implicate order'. Through this, he writes (2003) 'it is possible to understand the universe as a unique and independent reality, which includes both observer and observed' and 'one thus obtains a yet deeper understanding of the undivided wholeness of the universe...'

Bohm's work is summarised in a book published posthumously by his collaborator Basil Hiley in 1993 – *The Undivided Universe*.

6. Concluding remarks

Consciousness has been a hot topic for study over a period of some thirty years by scientists from many disciplines. There are a number of theories about what consciousness is, how it arises and its role in the universe.

As for the role of quantum physics and the collapse of the wave function, we might accept the view that it arises from early misunderstandings. On the other hand, it seems progress is being made in developing alternatives to the Copenhagen Interpretation that don't require the collapse of the wave function at all, notably David Bohm's theory. This last theory should be of particular interest to theosophists in that it leads to holism and an undivided universe.

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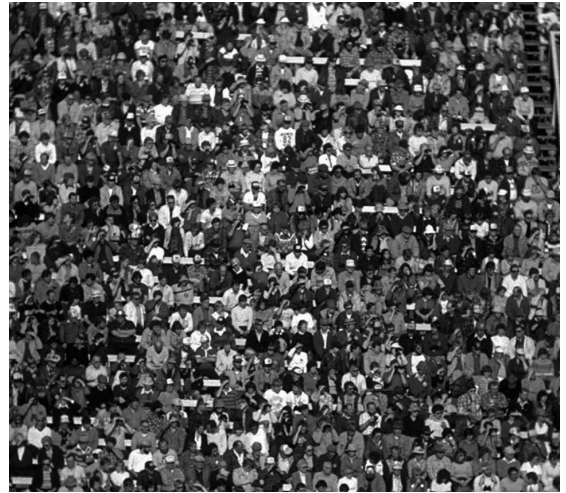
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Rites, Norms and Positive Deviance

Olga Gostin



In an earlier article I addressed several examples of ritual change and/or persistence of ritual in very different cultural contexts [November 2012 – Ed.]. I then attempted to explain why ritual forms such an intrinsic part of our social being, even in modern, secular society. Writing in *The Weekend Australian*, Nikki Gemmill summarised it well when she referred to her imminent god-motherhood as one of ‘those ceremonial pauses that charge our life journeys with meaning like a lamp lighter’s glow along a darkened path’.¹

These interpretations nevertheless beg the question: What about rites which appear to violate basic human rights like *sati* (widow immolation) in the past, extant bullying initiation in military academies, female genital mutilation (FGM) and/or aspects of sharia law like stoning ‘adulteresses’ and rape victims to death? Dare one even raise the issue of common ethical standards (moral ‘best practice’, as it were), or should we dismiss any critique of such practices in the name of cultural relativity and ethical pluralism? These issues can hardly be resolved in this short article, but I do feel that they should be raised to counteract my earlier sanguine and possibly overly optimistic validation of ritual.

Dead Tradition vs Change

Krishnamurti did not mince his words on the ‘dead weight of custom’ as it applied to his

fellow Indians, stating that the true enemy of freedom is ‘dead tradition’ and living at ‘secondhand’. Specifically he chastised ‘the enslavement of life of today to the worn-out formulae of a past age’.² The traditions to which he referred ranged from *sati* to the caste system itself. This raises the question: What determines that a given ritual falls under the umbrella of ‘dead tradition’, and if so, how does one bring about change without rocking the foundations of social engagement? These are not hypothetical or merely sociological questions. They touch at the very core of our First Object, postulating the brotherhood of all peoples ‘without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour’. In real life, however, we tend to evaluate and react to practices or beliefs that are manifestly in contradiction not only to our own (culturally defined) norms, but also to more widely acceptable ethical standards, as encapsulated, say, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Positive Deviance

I should like to address this complex issue in the light of a fascinating text that I have recently read entitled *The Power of Positive Deviance*.³ The authors develop the theme that no lasting change can be effected unless a problem is identified as such by the people themselves and unless they own and address the solution(s) themselves. So much seems pretty obvious, but the authors

crucially suggest that the solutions to even the most intractable problems are embedded *within* the so-called pathological state, manifested as a form of departure (or positive deviance) from the dysfunctional norm. It is the identification and nurturing of so-called positive deviants that holds the clue to lasting change.

Rather than prescribe a remedial dietary solution from the top down through aid agencies, the authors set about observing what made the positive deviants (PD) buck the dominant trend. What was it that caused variants to succeed against all odds?

Let me illustrate this theme with reference to the Sternins' own experience of severe infant stunting among Ketchua villagers in Bolivia and rampant acute childhood malnutrition in Vietnam. In both instances the authors (medical professionals) noted that there were a few exceptions of non-stunted and well-nourished children (so-called positive deviants from the norm) amidst the vast majority, showing the effect of inadequate diet. Rather than prescribe a remedial dietary solution from the top down through aid agencies, the authors set about observing what made the positive deviants (PD) buck the dominant trend. What was it that caused variants to succeed against all odds? In Bolivia they found that all villagers prepared the same type of soup made up of roughly the same quantity and range of vegetables and fish, shared equally among all family members. It took some time before the team realised that the substantial difference was that in families with non-stunted children, the PD mother would ladle the soup

by scooping right down to the bottom of the pot for all family members. This was different from conventional practice that reserved the bottom of the pot (with its accumulated vegetable and fish pieces) for adults going out to work while children were served only from the liquid top of the pot. In Vietnam PD households were found to supplement the basic diet of rice with a few tiny crabs and shrimps, plus leafy greens collected daily while working in the paddy fields. None of these formed part of the standard diet but were the crucial differential to account for the well-nourished condition of PD children.

Having identified the positive deviants/variants, the researchers facilitated gatherings run by the people themselves in which the problems (of stunted growth and malnutrition) were identified, verified by accurate weight and height checks, and then addressed in terms of alternative preparation and distribution of food as described above. The authors refer to this approach as a 'somersault' approach, based on the inversion of traditional explanations of poor health as a function of widespread poverty. Poverty was indeed universally prevalent, but there were alternative approaches used by PD parents that resulted in different outcomes. Importantly, the positive deviants were not aware of the impact of their 'aberrant' practices: the invisible connection was not yet manifest. For the researchers it was vital that the PD themselves recognise the beneficial effect of their practices, and that they self-select to address the community and convince their neighbours to modify their cooking or ladling practices. 'It was clear to us that the process of self-discovery was every bit as important as the actual behaviours encountered'. In time, community members who had become convinced of the beneficial aspects of PD behaviour, set about spreading their message to other communities. Within six years, malnutrition in twenty-two Vietnamese provinces (with a total population of 2.3 million) had fallen by 65%-80% thanks to this grass-roots movement.

Positive Deviance and Positive Solutions

Reflecting on their methodology – developed and refined over several decades – the

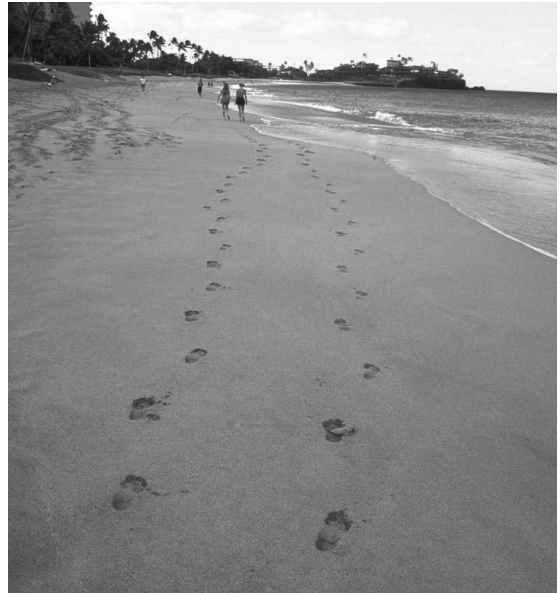
researchers summarised the essence of their approach: ‘It’s easier to act your way into a new way of thinking, than to think your way into a new way of acting’. Specifically, the authors advocated against ‘top-down’ and ‘new brooms sweep clean’ solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Instead, they looked to identified PDs to bring about novel solutions ‘disseminated through an infinite number of small adjustments’. In this way change flowed naturally from the social substratum without undermining it by major reform. The process does result in radical change across time, but is incremental at any given moment of time. As the authors put it: ‘The mantra of the PD process is to leave as much cultural DNA intact as possible’. Importantly therefore, ‘transformation occur(s) precisely because *it wasn’t* the intended objective’, underlining the ‘importance of conserving all that is possible and changing only that which is necessary’. In fact, as the authors observed when they applied PD to high rates of infant mortality among the Pashtuns of Pakistan: the way to change a community is not to engage in community change.

A corollary of this approach is that successful solutions cannot be carried across communities, much less cultures. ‘Solutions are never exported wholesale’ as each community, village or culture has distinctive attributes, and hence its own PDs and related behaviours. Paradoxically, ‘a curious thing about the framing of a problem is that it *always* changes when you engage the stakeholders ... You don’t really understand the problem until you’ve developed the solution. It morphs into something else’. Indeed, even today’s (localised) solutions may ‘shed light on a deeper layer of the problem in a forward spiral toward enduring remedies. “Solutions” have a shelf life. It’s an ongoing quest.’

The authors should know. Over several decades, the research team extended their approach to a wide range of complex social issues including female circumcision in Egypt, golden staph infections in a veterans’ hospital in Pittsburgh, girl soldiers in Uganda, Merck’s pharmaceutical sales in Mexico, and many more. Throughout,

though incrementally more confident, the authors stress that:

PD is an approach, not a model. Malleability is an essential feature of the positive deviance process ... PD is based on the socio-cultural context of each program community. It must always be, by definition, ‘ours’, and is genetically, ‘culturally appropriate’.



Reconciling Seemingly Harsh Practices with the First Object

In these concluding reflections, I should like to return to the opening paragraphs and the conundrum of how to reconcile seemingly harsh, if not inhumane, social practices with our First Object that declares the Universal Brotherhood of all peoples. People come with cultural baggage, and some baggage can be ethically toxic. How do we engage with these issues, with these people, with this alien Other? In the first instance, I would venture that our First Object requires us to do just that: open our hearts and minds to the infinite diversity and convolutions of our complex Other(s). Secondly, the clue to engaging with (changing?) aberrant beliefs and/or practices lies not in knee-jerk opposition or public opprobrium, but in positive engagement with a keen eye and ear to possible (likely)

positive deviants. This means that members of the particular community must *define* and *determine* their own ethical dilemmas and must be supported as they *discover* and *design* solutions in their own communities. There is a profound lesson here for Australia and its multicultural society, whether dealing with refugees, First Australians, drug pushers or sex traffickers.

Indeed, the Theosophical Society itself may find a positive use for the power of positive deviance. For years we have reflected on the declining membership of our society; we have had intimations of systemic failures in organisational management; we have been witnesses to less than brotherly diatribe. On the other hand there are pockets of enlightened energy, relatively harmonious lodges, satisfied individuals. Might it not be time to take a hard look at our Society, not as a witch-hunt, but as an exercise in defining and determining what is amiss; and discovering and designing solutions, tailored as they must inevitably be, to the circumstances of each lodge, though mindful of our international span? Each National Convention sees us raising the threat of the likely demise of the Society, yet little seems to be carried forward. It is time to ferret out the national and international PDs in our midst, and to facilitate changes in our Society through their agency and our participation. Let me conclude with the words of Lao-Tzu:

Learn from the people
Plan with the people
Begin with what they have

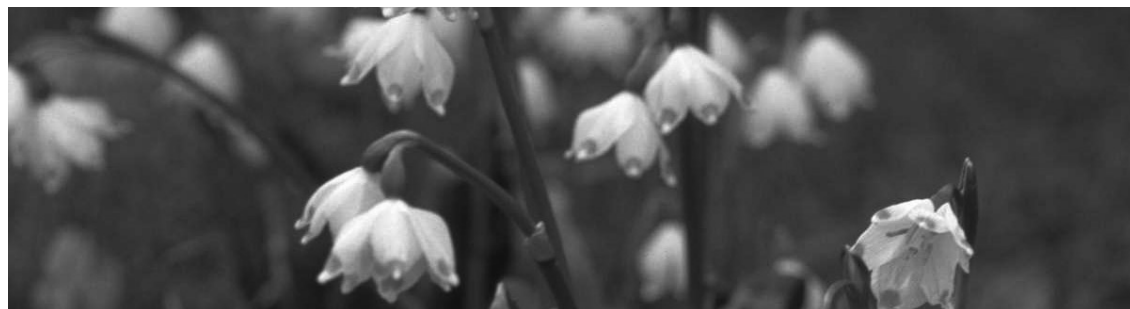
Build on what they know
Of the best leaders
When the task is accomplished
The people all remark
We have done it ourselves.

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From the Archives -
Zen Buddhism

Theosophy in Australia, August 1959

Joseph Zahara



A few years ago, I was privileged to attend a six months' session at the School of the Wisdom, at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, India. Our activities there included the preparing and the delivering of certain lectures, and I was given the subject of Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. The Adyar Library is recognised as being one of the most comprehensive in oriental literature, and so I had a very wide range of material for research at my disposal. My object was not merely to skim superficially over my subject or to deliver it academically, but to study, brood over and digest its substance, so that it became part of my very system.

In my research and study, I was intrigued to discover what few students of Buddhism seem to know, that the Lord Buddha had two distinct schools of instruction. One was exoteric – for 'the householder', and the other was esoteric – for 'the homeless'. In its exoteric aspect, he presented the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, with which students of occultism are acquainted, and which must take 'the householder' many lives to attain to perfection. On the other hand, the esoteric instruction given to his chosen disciples, 'the homeless', was quite simple, and was designed to attain that perfection here and now, cutting across all barriers, and eliminating all other activities and disciplines.

Here is an example: At a large festival, a gathering of his disciples from all over the

Buddhist world, so it has been recorded, a question was put to the Lord Buddha, 'What actually is meant by "Nirvana?"' Here is his answer:

The term Nirvana is used with different meanings by different schools of thought. Some postulate that all creatures are a manifestation of the vital force of a Supreme Being, to which all in due time return in full consciousness. To them that constitutes Nirvana. Then there are the religionists who offer as a reward for belief and good behaviour an eternity in paradise, which to them is Nirvana. Then there is the young disciple full of zeal and aspiration, but alas who has a conscience with its standards and values, and who is grappling hard with his mind to overcome his conscience, thinking that Nirvana is the reward if he conquers and overcomes his mind. He does not dream that his mind, Universal Mind, Buddhahood and Nirvana are integrally one, and that the obstruction between his mind, Universal Mind, Buddhahood and Nirvana is the defilement of his mind, with its identification with his personality and its vehicles. Let him remove that obstruction, that identification, and he will then instantly return to his noble and sublime state of Buddhahood, Nirvana.

In starting upon my research on Zen Buddhism, I formulated seven questions to which I wanted answers:

1. What is Zen?
2. The origin and the meaning of the word Zen.
3. The necessary qualifications to be admitted into a Zen Monastery.

4. What are the imparted instructions in Zen?
5. How does Zen work when imparted?
6. The ultimate objective of Zen.

Zen repudiates all these and avers that there is no necessity to climb up each rung of perfecting through endless cycles of rebirths. Illumination, cosmic consciousness, can come upon one, not like the rising of the sun gradually bringing things to light, but more like the freezing of water – sudden, abrupt – providing one is properly prepared to receive it.

What is Zen?

Zen actually is a system of occultism, one among other such systems. But whereas most systems postulate many steps of spiritual unfoldment and insist that the aspirant must go through all the grades successively in order to reach fulfilment, which will take many lives to attain, Zen repudiates all these and avers that there is no necessity to climb up each rung of perfecting through endless cycles of rebirths. Illumination, cosmic consciousness, can come upon one, not like the rising of the sun gradually bringing things to light, but more like the freezing of water – sudden, abrupt – *providing one is properly prepared to receive it.*

The Origin of Zen

The word ‘Zen’ is a Japanese word, derived from the Chinese word ‘Ch’an’, which in turn is a corruption of the Sanscrit [*sic*] word ‘Dhyani’, implying a state in which a man endeavours to realise union with ultimate Reality.

Tradition states that Zen originated at the moment when the Buddha attained supreme insight into the mysteries of life and death, and that insight was handed down through a

line of patriarchs, without any intermediary doctrinal teaching; it is available now as it was in its beginning, and ever will be to all beings, without any distinction of race, sex, caste or colour, who seriously desire it, and who are properly prepared to receive it.

During my research, I came across many anecdotes and allegories which illumined certain teachings better and more simply than reams of written explanations. Here is one which reveals the kernel of the Zen instructions:

An elderly Indian king, according to tradition, having served faithfully his country and performed his duties to his family, transferred his responsibilities to his eldest son and retired into a forest to ‘realise himself’. There, with his own hands he built himself a hut with a small altar, on which he placed a statue of his patron, the Lord Buddha. Every morning at sunrise he would go forth naked and gather wild flowers, which he reverently placed before the statue before performing his devotions. One morning he returned from his foray with a bundle of flowers in each hand and on entering his hut he found to his astonishment that the statue of the Lord Buddha had come to life and was looking at him. The Lord spoke: ‘Drop what you have in your right hand’, and he automatically obeyed. The order was repeated, ‘Drop what you have in your left hand’, and he again obeyed. ‘Drop all of your other valuables’, the voice commanded. ‘My Lord’, the bewildered king answered, ‘I have no other valuables. I am, as you see, totally naked.’

‘What about your cherished opinions, beliefs, traditions, associations, religion, philosophy, political, social and national allegiances? Drop them!’ This the king did, most reluctantly, and as he did he became truly naked, he became instantly enlightened, he recovered the knowledge of his true state.

The Necessary Qualifications

To be qualified for admission into a Zen monastery, it is stated that one must possess a consuming longing to be delivered from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death, and a realisation of the futility of all attempts to reach enlightenment by intellectuality alone.

The Instructions in Zen

There are in Zen no sacred books or dogmatic tenets, nor are there any symbolic formulae through which access may be gained into the significance of Zen. The instruction that is given, as in the original Indian system, is by way of a 'koan', meaning an insoluble problem, which admits of no intellectual solution. As for example: A man walking through a forest became aware of a vast and spreading fire which had sprung up at his rear, and he hastened forward to escape it, only to come face to face with an impassable precipice. What was he to do?

Here is another example: A man returned home one evening with a baby gosling. For safety he placed it in a bottle. Next morning it had grown considerably and it was impossible to get it out, without breaking the bottle or pulling it out in bits. The man did not want to do either. Was there an alternative?

The main idea of the koan practice is to baffle, excite and exhaust the intellect, until it is realised that intellectuality and speculation are only thinking about the problem. Next, it is to provoke, irritate and exhaust the emotion, until it is realised that emotion is only feeling about the problem. The idea behind this method is that when the student has come to an intellectual and emotional impasse, a higher faculty or insight will take charge of the mind and give it enlightenment.

The Zen method consists, in short, in putting one in a dilemma, out of which one must contrive to escape, not through logic and intellect, but through a mind of a higher order. When the koan has been given by the Master and is set before the mind, the command is given never to let it slip by and never to waiver in one's determination to face the dilemma. The idea is not to search for a solution in what you have heard or read or debated or speculated upon, but to try to penetrate the dilemma. Intellectually you will come to an impasse, there is no sense to it, you will feel impatient with it. This feeling becomes intensified because the problem seems impenetrable, but when at long last you relax

totally, as if nothing in the world really matters, the impossible happens – you can cross the impassable abyss, you can bring out the gosling from the bottle without breaking it or tearing the gosling to bits. Illumination or 'Satori', as it is termed, takes place, and you see and function on a higher dimension of consciousness, where 'alternatives' exist and can be exercised.



Here is one of the many sermons given by one of the Zen masters, which will further illustrate the instruction:

My brother – to be born as a human being is a rare event and so is the opportunity to listen to a discourse on Zen. Listen and take serious notice. If you fail to achieve emancipation in this life, when do you again expect to achieve it? Whilst still alive be therefore assiduous in practising Zen. The practice consists of abandonment. 'To what?', you may ask. Abandon all the working of your relative consciousness, which you have cherished since the beginning of time. Search for the sense of the koan. To do that you must put your whole mental strength into the task – like the mother hen sitting on her eggs, like a cat trying to catch a rat, like a thirsty man in a desert trying to find water – and whether you are walking, sitting, or lying down, let your mind be perpetually fixed on the koan. The time will come when your mind will suddenly come to a stop like an old rat who finds himself in a corner. Then there will be a plunging into the unknown with a cry. Ah, that is it, and when that cry is uttered, you have attained Satori.

How does Zen work?

The work of the koan when imparted by the Master and put into practice is intended to

liberate all the energies stored up in man, which in ordinary circumstances are cramped and distorted, so that they find no adequate channels for activity. It is stated that this body of ours is something like an electric battery in which a mysterious power lies latent, and when this power is not properly brought into operation, it either grows mouldy and withers away, or is warped and expresses itself abnormally. Zen practices in particular are destined to start this power working.

The objective, as already stated, is the removal of all mental obstruction and to come into direct contact with Reality, without allowing theories, creeds, dogmas and philosophies to stand between the knower and the known, and this can be obtained in the Now.

Has anyone attained Illumination through Zen? Here is one of the descriptions of a state reached through Zen, which I found in my research work:

A feeling of great exultation, a feeling due to the fact of the breaking up of the restrictions imposed upon me as an individual being, and with it an infinite expansion of consciousness. A wanderer

and outcast, maltreated not only by others but by myself, suddenly finding that I am volitional and the possessor of all the wealth and power in the world.

Here is another:

A great sense of the beyond – the individual shell exploded at the moment of Satori. Not that I became inspired with a Being greater than myself or absorbed in him, but that my individuality in which I was rigidly held together and kept separate from other individuals, became loosened somehow from its tight grip and melted away into something indescribable, something which was of quite a different order than that which I was accustomed to. The feeling that followed was that of a complete release from something that held me, that feeling that one has finally arrived at one's destination – home!

[References were not provided when this article was originally published - Ed.]

Joseph Zahara was the father of a former General Secretary of the Australian Section, Helen Zahara.

Zen spirit has come to mean not only peace and understanding, but devotion to art and to work, the rich unfoldment of contentment, opening the door to insight, the expression of innate beauty, the intangible charm of incompleteness.

Zen Flesh, Zen Bones



Unity

Phillipa Rooke

Esoteric Philosophy is adamant that at the heart of manifested creation, beneath appearances, and underlying everything, there is a Fundamental Unity. HPB expresses it in *The Secret Doctrine* as the One Fundamental Law. It reads:

The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature – from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyāni-Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptance of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual or physical worlds – this unity is the one fundamental law in Occult Science.¹

So no matter what we see, be it a person, an animal, a so-called inanimate object, a galaxy, a tree, *all* have proceeded from only the one source.

For us as humanity, it therefore follows that the essence of that one source is also the essential nature, the real nature, of each one of us; and it is not doled out as a small bit for you and a big bit for me. It is not fragmented, it is only ONE THING.

So why can we not see this?

The human mind remains for the most part, caught up in the illusion of separateness, involved with thoughts and emotions of a transitory nature and in this state, the seeing of Unity, our real nature, is not possible.

As TS members we have agreed to the three Objects, the first of which is of course ‘to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction ...’ et cetera. Now if we take this seriously, as indeed we should, this in itself is no small task. It means that through relationship with each other, we have to come to a very human form of Unity. This requires self-examination in order for us to change, as change we must, and also a great deal of awareness in dealing with the stuff of our minds; and there will be sufferings and realisations along the way.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, when asked, ‘what brings about a change?’, said: ‘With crystal clarity,

see the need for change. This is all.’² Perhaps an intense self-awareness will provide that ‘crystal clarity’?

He also stated:

It is the person you imagine yourself to be that suffers, not you. Dissolve it in awareness. It is merely a bundle of memories and habits. From the awareness of the unreal to the awareness of your real nature there is a chasm which you will easily cross, once you have mastered the art of pure awareness.³

So the movement, the change from the suffering of the separate self to realising our real unitive nature, starts with awareness, awareness of ‘what is’, till we clearly see the need for change. And how, after mastering awareness of the ‘unreal self’, can we come to that ‘pure awareness’, the awareness of our real nature – unity with all creation in the ONE THING?

I would suggest that it is through meditation. Dr Pablo Sender has suggested an outline for meditation as being a reversal of manifestation, based on the first four discs of which HPB speaks, in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*.⁴ It is:

1. The cross within the disc – watching the play of the mind
2. The horizontal line within the disc – watching the play of the mind – with no reactions
3. The disc with a central point – coming to a point of no-thought
4. The plain disc – pure awareness – resting in UNITY⁵

And that is the task!

Endnotes

1. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol I, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1979, p. 120.
2. Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, *I Am That*, Part II, Chetana, Bombay, 1973.
3. *ibid.*
4. Blavatsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.
5. Dr Pablo Sender. From the third DVD in a series of eight entitled ‘*The Secret Doctrine*, Esoteric Insights and Spiritual Practice’, from the Australian School of Theosophy held at Springbrook, April 2013.

Phillipa Rooke is the President of Brisbane Lodge. She gave this talk at the 2013 School of Theosophy.

The Theosophical Society and the United Nations

The following information was published by the Theosophical Order of Service in 2011. It is reprinted here as a matter of historical interest due to the references to the Theosophical Society.

A History of Support

Theosophists wishing to see spiritual principles permeate and uplift society will be interested to know that Presidents of the Theosophical Society have actively supported the United Nations (and its predecessor, the League of Nations) since its inception. They have always believed in its potential as a vehicle for spiritual forces and global transformation.

In this publication by the Theosophical Order of Service, the history of the Theosophical Society's support for the UN is outlined and some suggestions made for practical action in continuing this support. Since the TS is strictly neutral in political matters, activities focus on support for the UN's aspirations in the realm of world peace, unity and relief of suffering.

The United Nations, which officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, was built on universal values of peace, human rights, human dignity and worth, along with justice, good neighbourliness, freedom, respect for nature and shared responsibility. These reflect the fundamental principles of the Theosophical Society since its inception in 1875.

The third purpose of the United Nations – 'To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion' – is aligned with the Theosophical Society's



first Object: 'To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour'.

Several International Presidents of the Theosophical Society were staunch supporters of the United Nations and its precursor, the League of Nations.

Annie Besant, who served as President from 1907 to 1933, became one of the first members of the League of Nations Union in England. In a series of lectures on 'The Great Plan'¹, Annie Besant wrote of how the next stage of the Plan would be the building up of a free Commonwealth of Nations. She believed the Theosophical Society had a significant role to play in helping create 'the true Spiritual League of all the Nations'. Without spiritual inspiration, she felt that the merely political League could never achieve its purpose.

Magazine issues of *The Theosophist* from the early 1900s, show that the Theosophical Society was indeed a leader in sowing seeds of internationalism and world brotherhood on a multitude of fronts.

Mrs Besant's successor, George Arundale, was also a staunch supporter of the League of Nations. In Australia, where he served in the late 1920s as General Secretary of the TS, Mr Arundale joined the League of Nations Union and edited an Australia-India League Bulletin. During the 1930s he took up the theme of a plan, launching a campaign entitled 'There is a Plan'. He wrote, 'Every nation is a word in the world-song of Life, a class in the world-school. Every citizen must learn to speak the word and to master the lesson of his class.'²

George Arundale served as President during the difficult time of the pre-war and war years. Actively devoted to the cause of peace, he set up a Peace and Reconstruction Department of the TS in 1940 to contribute to a Charter for World Peace to be ready when the Second World War came to an end.

C. Jinarajadasa took over as International President in 1948 and showed great dynamism regarding the TS and the UN. In his first year as President, the following resolution was passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (Adyar). Advisory rather than mandatory, it points to real support and commitment on the part of the Theosophical Society:

As all members of the Theosophical Society desire earnestly to establish World Peace as a realisation of Universal Brotherhood, the General Council of the Theosophical Society recommends all Lodges throughout the world to be informed of the work of the United Nations. And the Council further suggests that one meeting each year be devoted to describing the work of the United Nations towards ushering in the era of World Peace and Brotherhood.

During the late 1940s, Mr Jinarajadasa worked tirelessly to obtain TS consultative status with the UN.³ When observer status was finally granted, an invitation was received to send representatives to conferences held by the UN Department of Public Information.

When N. Sri Ram took over as International President in 1953, he carried the torch forward, writing about the United Nations in several 'On the Watch-Tower' articles. In the June 1953 issue of *The Theosophist*⁴ he wrote:

Those who condemn the United Nations and would fain throw it on the scrap-heap, have not so far offered a practical alternative. ... I feel, therefore, that in spite of every defect, every weakness and short-coming that we may find in the existing organism, the way of practical action is to infuse into it or into the minds of people in regard to it more of the life and spirit that is needed. If the United Nations were to cease to exist this moment, there would be a vacuum ready to be occupied by those forces which would much rather operate in isolation or through private compacts than in a medium where their motives and actions can at least be criticised, where they have to justify themselves in some manner at the bar of world opinion.

In May 1957, N. Sri Ram made these comments in his column 'On the Watch-Tower':

The United Nations is an organisation which is obviously meant to develop into a bone-frame

for a new body of humanity. The whole of humanity has to be organised in such a way that it can function as one body, though divided into different States, and this new body has to be upheld by a structure which will express its common will and purpose.

The history of TS support spills over to the work of the Theosophical Order of Service in its worldwide efforts to alleviate suffering and to promote peace, development and quality of life for all.

In keeping with the spirit and intent of the 1948 Resolution, TOS members and groups may continue to support the work of the United Nations. Throughout the year, special UN days can be recognised in TOS programmes or projects through presentations, articles, exhibits and debates. United Nations Day – October 24 – can be set aside and celebrated with a special programme of meditation and readings interspersed with discussion. Practical ideas like these will be described in future brochures published by the International TOS UN Committee.

Theosophists believe that the nations of the world constitute a single humanity – a single human community. The United Nations is but the physical demonstration of our concept of Universal Brotherhood.

Diana Gracey Winslow⁵

Endnotes:

1. 'The T.S. and the League of Nations' by Bhagavan Das – excerpts from *Adyar Pamphlets*, 1934 – Nos. 190-91.
2. *There is a Plan for the Nations* – a booklet printed by the Vasanta Press, Adyar, Madras in the 1930s.
3. 'A Summary of C. Jinarajadasa's Correspondence and TS Activity with the United Nations from 1948 to 1949' compiled by Ananya Rajan, April 2011.
4. *On the Watch-Tower – Selections from The Theosophist*, by N. Sri Ram – Theosophical Publishing House, 1966.
5. 'A Theosophist Looks at the United Nations Organisation' by Diana Gracey Winslow, Chief Brother, the Theosophical Order of Service, USA – from an article featured in the November 1953 issue of *The Theosophist*.

[In 1966 the General Council decided that as the TS constitution precludes it from expressing official views, it could not have consultative status with the United Nations. - Ed.]

Q and A: TS Service /The Biggest Human Problem

Below are some further responses from the Q and A panel during the January 2013 Annual Convention:

What can we do to actually help our membership see that there are possibilities for serving within our Lodges?

Harry Bayens, Perth:

When I became President [of Perth Branch] I just assumed that the whole committee would share the vision that we are heading for. However, it doesn't work that way. People have their own motives. One of the ways we can encourage better service, or encourage good members to serve, is by picking up our standard of behaviour. We need to change the culture to get a committee functioning well. People with good-will will volunteer and provide service, but very few good people will waste their time when there are arguments. Accepting whoever is available for a committee is fraught with danger. Improve behaviour, try to encourage the good people and become professional.

Beverley Champion, Adelaide:

The same core of members in every lodge tends to do all the work for many years. We need to look at groups which have been successful in this country. Those groups which meet in a community centre – pay rent for the night, use their own cups and bring their own milk – may attract more people without the responsibilities of running a lodge. Madame Blavatsky said to let the world know that Theosophy exists and we cannot simply keep on doing that in the same way.

What do you think service means to a theosophist? How do people serve in your lodge or branch?

Ken Edwards, Melbourne:

Contemplating this, if we look at service as a

theosophist to a lodge – going to committee meetings and helping organise the programme – we are struggling. We have only a few people who are willing workers.

What, in your opinion, is the biggest human problem in the world today?

Ken Edwards:

Population. We are denuding the planet – the forests, for example – and nobody seems to care. We only have one Earth. It is up to us, but also up to national governments and the United Nations.

Beverley Champion:

The biggest human problem today is people. Involution is over, we are told, yet we are still in the midst of it. Creeds are so separative and we are going through stormy times. The good news, we understand, is that evolution is headed towards the ascendancy of spirit over matter. I have great faith in humanity to come out of this, but it is up to each of us to set an example.

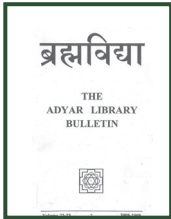
Harry Bayens:

Arrogance and lack of tolerance seem to be causing huge problems, as well as armaments and manipulation by the media. We need to remain well informed, which takes time and discipline. I do not think that we can accept what newspapers say as fact these days. We should maintain an alertness to the myths which are constantly spread out there which lead to religious and other types of intolerance, as well as arrogance.

Carolyn Harrod, Brisbane (moderator):

We (humans) are one of the greatest influences on what is happening in our world. We can cause catastrophes or not, depending on how we act as individuals. Theosophy gives us some very strong pointers as to how we can actually do this in a positive way.

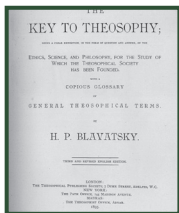
Education



Brahmavidya is the Bulletin of the Adyar Library and Research Centre, located at our international Headquarters at Adyar, Chennai, in India. It presents studies on religion, philosophy, culture, and various aspects of Indology and the Sanskrit language. It was started in 1937 following the initiative of Dr C. Kunhan Raja, Director of the Adyar Library as well as Reader and Head of Department of Sanskrit in the Madras University. Scholars from both the Eastern and Western world have contributed erudite articles to it since its inception.

The Adyar Library was started in 1886 by Col. Henry S. Olcott and today it is one of the well-known oriental libraries in the world, dedicated to research and publication in the field of eastern civilisation, philosophy and religion. It contains over 250,000 printed volumes and around 20,000 palm-leaf manuscripts from India, Sri Lanka, China, and other places.

Through the initiative of Gil Murdoch, our Webmaster, the Campbell Theosophical Research Library has recently started a unique project of creating an Index of all articles of *Brahmavidya*, starting with the existing collection in the Library. Once completed, this Index will be incorporated into the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*, thus making the unique scholarly heritage of *Brahmavidya* available to all interested researchers and students around the world.



New Study Course: An Introduction to *The Key to Theosophy* by Pedro Oliveira, Acting Education Coordinator

Although written in 1889, this Theosophical classic contains much food for thought while outlining essential teachings in the field of Theosophy and the core work of the Theosophical Society. This study paper concentrates on key passages in every chapter of the book, with questions for additional individual or group study and discussion.

The book presents important statements about the nature of Theosophy and the work of the TS, but also about Karma, Reincarnation, the Human Constitution and After-Death States. This Introduction highlights selected essential points in every chapter of the book. Below is an excerpt from the comments on the Dedication page.

HPB writes:

Dedicated by 'H.P.B.' to all her Pupils, that They may Learn and Teach in their Turn.

It is important to note that although the Theosophical Society has no *official* teaching or teacher, as it grants on all its members the widest measure of freedom of thought and investigation, it leaves the responsibility of expounding the many facets of the Theosophical philosophy in the hands of individual members. Thus, generations of students have shared their enthusiasm for Theosophy with other members, some of which went on to become presenters themselves. However, before they could do so they also had to learn. It has been emphasized many times that the TS is essentially a body of *students*. Perhaps one is bound to remain a student to the very end of one's life as Wisdom, in its entirety, cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of anyone.

This study course is another module of the Resources Package, which is a response by the National Headquarters to the survey of lodges/branches undertaken last year.

Annual Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society In Australia

The 2014 Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia will take place at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday 22 January 2014 at The Women's College, University of Sydney. This notification is provided in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia.

AGENDA

Roll Call of Voting Delegates and Proxies
Confirmation of Minutes of 2013 Convention Business Meeting
National President's Report for the Year Ended 31 August 2013
National Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 31 August 2013
Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31 August 2013,
and Auditor's Report thereon
Budget for the Year Ending 31 August 2014
Appointment of Auditor
Announcement of Newly Appointed Officers and National Council Members
Announcement of Ballot Results:
- Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia/Northern Territory
Notices of Motion
Place and Time of Next Convention
Resolutions of Goodwill
Any Other Business



Archival photo of the 1922 Convention picnic
of the Australian Section, Mrs Macquarie's Chair, Sydney

National Calendar of Events...



2014 ANNUAL CONVENTION FOR TS MEMBERS

Theme: 'Theosophical Landscapes: History, Culture and the Arts'

Tues 21 Jan (arrivals) - Tues 28 Jan (departures)

Key Speakers:

Prof. Garry Trompf, Emeritus Professor, Department of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney

Fiona Fraser, Ph.D. Candidate in Music and History, Australian National University

Full programme: will appear in the November 2013 issue of this magazine.

Regular Registration Fee (non-refundable): \$40 per person for day and live-in registrants

Deadline for full payment, live-in registrants: no later than Friday 22 November

Registration Forms: on Section website www.austheos.org.au/what's on

Also available from lodges/branches around the Section

Cost: \$89 per night including all meals, as well as morning and afternoon teas

Further Enquiries: Jennifer Hissey, Convention Secretary, TS National Headquarters

Tel: 02 9264 7056 (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9.00am – 3.30pm)

email: Jennifer@austheos.org.au



Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook QLD

Theme: 'Healing and Transformation: an Exploration Through Dialogue and Practice'

Thurs 24 Oct (arrivals) - Mon 28 Oct (departures)

Presenters: Dara Tatray and Horacio Paz

Cost: members \$150/ non-members \$175 - includes accommodation, all sessions and meals and \$10 non-refundable registration fee

'You would not find out the limits of the soul even by travelling along every path, so deep a logos (meaning) does it have' (Heraclitis)

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

Fri 8 Nov (arrivals) - Sun 10 Nov 2013 (departures)

Theme: 'The Art of Blending Mind and Heart' (with reference to the *Tao Te Ching*)

Presenters: Horacio Paz and Dara Tatray

Cost: members \$130 / non-members \$145 - includes accommodation, all sessions and meals and \$10 non-refundable registration fee

Horacio Paz is a highly accomplished Tai Chi practitioner and teacher. Dara Tatray has a long-standing interest in practising and studying non-dual consciousness.

Explore the healing power of conscious awareness in the beautiful surrounds of the Gold Coast hinterland or the Southern Highlands.

Registration forms for Springbrook and Canyonleigh events: available from the National Headquarters (02 9264 7056) and on the national TS website: www.austheos.org.au/what's on

Review



***Enduring Grace -
Living Portraits of
Seven Women Mystics***

Carol Lee Flinders
HarperOne,
New York, 1993,
272 pages.
Currently in print.

Most writings on the subject of mysticism tend to focus on men who have undergone mystical experiences, so it was with relish that I took up reading this book about seven women whose lives and writings reflect not only a yearning for, but a direct experience of, mystical revelation from a feminine viewpoint.

All seven women lived within the Roman Catholic community, with five of them having entered convents, but two were living outside the disciplines of convents. They lived across eight centuries and in five different countries. They were:

Saint Claire of Assisi	1195-1253	Italy
Mechthild of Magdeburg	1210?-1297	Germany
Julian of Norwich	1342-1416?	England
Saint Catherine of Siena	1347-1380	Italy
Saint Catherine of Genoa	1447-1510	Italy
Saint Teresa of Avila	1515-1582	Spain
Saint Therese of Lisieux	1873-1897	France

The author, Carol Lee Flinders, approaches these women not from the devotional Roman Catholic stance, but from a very feminine and academic viewpoint, and one that is coloured by her interests in Eastern religions. Ms Flinders is known in America as a writer of books on food, particularly vegetarian food, and she begins her preface by quoting from an American food critic, M.F.K. Fisher, and then a quote from Mechthild. She then states that her friends wondered how she could write on these two totally different subjects, and she answers by saying:

Whatever interest we have in food, the late and much loved Mrs Fisher reminds us, arises out

of the simple fact that we are hungry – hungry, albeit, for all kinds of things. Mechthild, too, recognizes how hungry we are, and for how many forms of nourishment, but she traces that hunger to the soul itself, and insists that nothing short of ‘the fullness of God’ can satisfy it. That is the short answer. I like to offer it because it hints at the rich possibilities of dialogue between women – no matter what their historical context – who know something of ‘the wilder, more insistent hungers’.

Although each of the women mystics colour their experiences in the vocabulary of the Christian Church, they all relate experiences and concepts which go beyond religious dogma of any faith. They have opened themselves up to not only the great Oneness of Life – the ultimate Unity; they also gave back to those around them, whether in the cloisters or in the local community, and their teachings have resonated down through the ages.

Ms Flinders has approached her subjects through the eyes of a modern woman. Mechthild is regarded as a ‘supreme poet-mystic’ of her time. Her voices are as varied as a good cabaret singer’s: from an exquisitely lyrical passage, all light and piercing sweetness, she can drop into ‘pure, gravelly voiced blues’. Saint Teresa of Avila compares the soul to a castle made of diamond and states: ‘All our attention is taken up with the plainness of the diamond’s setting or the outer wall of the castle; that is, with these bodies of ours.’ Ms Flinders states, ‘Given the excessive emphasis Western culture has placed upon the physical appearance of women, Teresa’s remark has special force for women readers now, but probably did then, too.’

Overriding the outlines of the lives of these women and their mystical experiences is the emphasis on the fact that each of these women approached their mysticism from a very feminine perspective. None of them were ‘meek and mild’ – they each took strong stances within

their family, their community and the confines of the patriarchal church.

This concept is illustrated with these words that appear on the back of the book:

Flinders' compelling and refreshingly informal portraits reveal a common foundation of conviction, courage, and serenity in the lives of these great European Catholic mystics. Their

distinctly female voices enrich their writings on the experience of the inner world, the nourishing role of friendship and community in our lives, and on finding our true work.

This book is a very enjoyable and worthwhile read and should find its place in all lodge libraries.

Dianne K. Kynaston

News & Notes

School of the Wisdom, Adyar



The late 2013/early 2014 sessions of the School of the Wisdom, to be held at our International Headquarters in India, will be:

11 - 22 November 2013

Theme: The Way of Self-Preparation: Studies in *Light on the Path*

In this session we will consider, together, the fundamental challenges, tests and the nature of self-preparation to be faced by someone who aspires to travel from the darkness of egoism to the Light of Wisdom.

Director: Pedro Oliveira

Acting Education Coordinator, Australian Section.

(Previously International Secretary of the Theosophical Society, President of the Indo-Pacific Federation and Officer-in-Charge of the Editorial Office at the International Headquarters. Author of *N. Sri Ram: a Life of Beneficence and Wisdom*.)

25 - 29 November 2013

Theme: The Mahatma – on Discipleship

The course will explore the theme in selected letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, which throw light on Discipleship. The approach will be that of deep reflection and meditation.

Director: Prof R. C. Tampi

(A long-standing member of the Theosophical Society. Retired Professor of English and a former National Lecturer for the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society. He has been the Director of the School of the Wisdom for several years.)

2 - 13 December 2013

Theme: Mind Training Through Awareness

Director: Venerable Olande Ananda

(The Venerable Olande Ananda, a Theravada Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka, is a resident meditation teacher at the Pagoda Meditation Centre. A patron of the Sri Lanka Besant Lodge, he has taught Buddhist meditation in different countries.)

8 - 31 January 2014

Theme: Shiva, the Creative Energy of Transformation

In this course we will try to understand the inner meanings behind the functioning and manifestations of the creative energies of transformation in the images and descriptions of Shiva over the centuries. We will pay particular

attention to the manifestation of Shiva as *Ardhanaranarishvara*, Half-Man-Half-Woman, calling for a reconciliation of the masculine and feminine energies in each searcher.

Director: Dr Ravi Ravindra

(Retired Professor of Comparative Religion and Physics from Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada, author of many papers in Physics, Philosophy and Religion and of several books, including *Whispers from the Other Shore*, *The Yoga of the Christ* and *Science and the Sacred*.)

For further information about these courses, please see:

www.austheos.org.au / Newly Added

Intending applicants for the School need to contact the National President for a form and a letter of recommendation, prior to contacting the International Headquarters. Please email pres@austheos.org.au

2014 National Convention

Members are encouraged to attend the National Convention to be held in Sydney next January on the theme of 'Theosophical Landscapes: History, Culture and the Arts'. Conventions are a great opportunity to spend quality time with members from near and far, and to hear a broad range of viewpoints. Apart from a variety of talks, workshops and other sessions, next year's day outing will include a trip to the Central Coast, followed by afternoon tea at The Manor, a well-known historical residence located on beautiful Sydney Harbour and home to a number of theosophists. We look forward to seeing you in Sydney. **See page 93 for more details.**

Theosophical Order of Service

Our International TOS Conference was held at the American Section's campus at Wheaton, Illinois, in mid-July. There were five delegates from Australia in attendance. A full report will appear in the next issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. In the meantime, our groups around the country continue to support individuals in their local groups and raise funds for our projects in developing countries.

Jean Carroll, National Director
The TOS in Australia
tos.australia@gmail.com

Mornington Peninsula Group

Special acknowledgement is made of a very dedicated National Member, Shirley Stack Tolhuis, who established the Mornington Peninsula Group twenty-eight years ago. This Certified Group is still meeting regularly in a local neighbourhood centre. Shirley was the Coordinator of the Group for many years. Latterly the Group's Secretary, Shirley is now stepping down from that position and will continue her support for the Group. Such dedication is inspiring and helps to add strength to the TS.



Meeting of Sunshine Coast Lodge, Queensland, July



The National President with members of the Committee of Atherton Lodge in Far North Queensland, July

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.

Section Directory

Australian Section National Headquarters

4th Floor, 484 Kent Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 0163 / 9264 6404
Fax: 02 9264 5857
www.austheos.org.au
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:
campbell@austheos.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:
Postal Address: PO Box 7418,
Fisher ACT 2611
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent &
Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612
7.30pm 1st Monday of month
(Please confirm by email or telephone)
President: Peter Fokker
Tel: 02 6236 3170
Email: fokkerbakker@gmail.com
Secretary: Tony Fearnside
Telephone: 02 62887656
Email: janton@netspeed.com.au

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:
2nd & 3rd Floors, 484 Kent Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: 02 9267 6955 Fax: 02 9283 3772
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
www.tssydney.org.au
Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays
President: Stephen McDonald
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:
Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,
Mayfield NSW 2304
8.00pm 2nd Friday each month
(excluding January)
Study group (members) confirm dates
with Lodge
http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/
President: Tony Buzek
Tel: 02 4933 1326, 0452 633 132

Blue Mountains Group:
Meet: 1st Floor, 122 Katoomba Street,
Katoomba NSW
2.00pm 1st Monday each month
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

E-mail: 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/ Dawn Kagan,
2/78-80 Alexander Street,
Crows Nest NSW 2065
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month
Coordinator: Dai Trandang
Tel: 0438 357 522

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
www.theosophyqld.org.au
Meet: 7.30pm Fridays
President: Phillipa Rooke
Secretary: Phoebe Williams

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004
Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
7.00pm Thursdays
President: vacant
Tel: 07 5441 7658
Email: joyglynn@bigpond.com.au
Secretary: Joyce Thompson

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: Barry Bowden
Tel: 0427 751 464

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.
Acting President: Nancy Inkster
Secretary: Marlene Bell

Tasmania

Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:
13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000

www.theosophicaltas.websyte.com.au
Meet: 8.00pm Mondays
Acting President and Secretary: Helen Steven
Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:
54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston, TAS 7250
Postal address: 66 Flinders Street,
Beauty Point, TAS 7270
email: rmholt@gmail.com
www.austheos.org.au/launceston
Meetings: Wednesdays commencing
7.00 pm for meditation, followed
by meeting at 7.30 pm
President: Tony Harrison
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@netspace.net.au
Meet: 2nd, 3rd and 4th Tuesdays, 6.00pm
President: Kari Torgersen
Secretary: Ken Edwards

Mornington Peninsula Group:
Meet: Mt. Eliza Neighbourhood Centre,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month 11am - 3.30pm
(meditation - lunch - Theosophy)
Coordinator: Daphne Standish
Tel: 03 9589 5439
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://tsp Perth.iinet.net.au
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
President: Harry Bayens
Secretary: Deborah Weymouth

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:
1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082
Currently Closed
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
Administrator: Dara Tattray
Tel: 02 9264 6404

