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INSIDE Theosophy in the 21st Century
Theosophy in Christianity
Ripples in the Field
2018 World Congress

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

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The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

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

From the International President

Tim Boyd



Seasons of the Mind

In H.P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, before she introduces the actual work itself, she takes some time to point our attention in a specific direction. She states that everything that is to follow must be built upon a basic understanding: the writing of *The Secret Doctrine* was based on the *Stanzas of Dzyan*, and for the reader to have some appreciation of the Stanzas, there are some basic ideas which she listed as the Three Fundamental Propositions.

In the second Fundamental Proposition HPB states that there is a certain observation that has been made in every department of Nature, a fact that is undeniable and universal, the Law of Periodicity. She gives some of the many examples such as the alternation between day and night, life and death, sleeping and waking, and so on. These periodic occurrences are so universal that she describes periodicity as 'an absolute Law of the Universe'.

We also experience periods, larger combinations of day and night, and have the cycle of the year, the annual cycle in which the Earth goes around the Sun. Much of what we recognise as cycles in Nature is also reflected in our own psychological cycles. These interior cycles are the subject of deeper explorations into the nature of the human experience expressed in the scriptures and spiritual approaches of the world. Seasons of inner activity have been enshrined in social, religious, and spiritual practices of the world. In India there is the well-known framework for the stages of life known as the four *ashrama-s* – the four seasons of each incarnation.

The great question that was posed by Ramana Maharshi – 'Who am I?' – is our constant question. How we answer determines how we behave in the world. There are many ways in which this is expressed. 'Who I am', from an occult definition, means that every human being is an expression of highest spirit and lowest matter, linked together by mind. That is not

merely the individual human being, but the human stage; all of us share this threefold nature, its laws and guiding powers. The connecting link between highest spirit and lowest matter is always the mind. To come to understand the workings of the mind in relation to these other two streams is fundamental, and seems to be the quest that we are on at any time we are responding in an awakened manner.

In our process of unfoldment of consciousness, always the mind is the primary component involved. The mind has its seasons. What might those seasons look like? One of the spiritual jewels of humankind is a very small section of the great epic poem, the *Mahabharatha*. Within it we find the *Bhagavadgītā*. This text is an inexhaustible source for accurate, powerful, and usable descriptions of some of these seasons of the human mind and its potential for an expanded expression.

The potential for the human mind is described in *The Secret Doctrine* as the ‘mind to embrace the universe’. In the *Gītā* we have the dialogue that takes place between the warrior prince, Arjuna, and his charioteer, Krishna, the inner Divine, which is an attempt to communicate to us something of this higher potential. Its

meaning is diluted if we regard it as a historical conversation, although that might have its value. It is, as *all* deep truths, more in the nature of a myth.

The *Bhagavadgītā* story begins with prince Arjuna at the commencement of a great battle. The first chapter talks about a particular season of the mind that is rich in terms of its potential. It is also rich in terms of the way it influences us to try to avoid its experience. It is not the place we choose to go in daily life, or in our efforts at expansion and understanding.

This is because the first chapter in the *Gītā* talks about the profound and life-altering experience of Arjuna’s despondency, his despair and depression. It is only out of this initial season of his mind that the dialogue was even able to occur. No one who describes themselves as having a healthy mind seeks out despair or despondency. We also do not seek the spring, the summer, or the winter. They have their time, and they come upon us regardless of our seeking.

Normal intelligence would require us to prepare for that which we know lies ahead. Just as during life we make preparations for the moment when we no longer will be there. That is normal behaviour and preparation.

At a deeper level we also prepare for that moment during the course of a lifetime by experiencing what it means for consciousness to operate apart from the body. We take time for meditation, for a proper perspective on the relationship of consciousness to its vehicle, and, in that process, experiences necessarily ensue, which if rightly understood, tend to ease the process of transition. Anyone who has had the experience of the life that lies beyond the body, at the moment of death, rarely finds themselves craving the limitation, pain, and suffering that come from life within a body. That is part of the practice.

In Arjuna's case, he was ready for something for which his entire lifetime had prepared him. As a member of the warrior caste, it was his makeup, his training, and experience that his life, his dharma, was to do battle. Particularly when such a righteous and noble battle stood before him, the choice in terms of his dharma was obvious. But the choice in terms of this particular season of his mind was in contradiction to his very makeup, his dharma, and so the conversation ensued. Of course, the nature of that conversation went beyond the battle that was ahead of him. After speaking with Arjuna initially, Divine parent that he is, Krishna says to his troubled child:

It is all right, don't worry, there is more to this than you see. There will come a time when you will recognise that none of these people you are going into battle with will die, neither will they come to life. Nothing is born, nothing dies, *all* of it is an expression of the nature of the Divine.

As Arjuna's mind becomes settled, then a deeper possibility presents itself, and so the teachings of the *Gītā* begin to unfold. But for our purposes, this seasonal aspect of the fluctuations in our own consciousness is what we should explore. When we become aware of a thing, then we can do something about it.

At this moment, our work, our capacity allows us to attempt to understand, knowing that by effort some things can be accomplished, but understanding is not one of them; wisdom is certainly not one of them. In the moment where we find ourselves now, we give effort. Our responsibility, our dharma, for those to whom a spiritual path has any meaning, is to try. Success is not guaranteed, neither is it insisted upon, but trying and effort lie within the capacity of every person, without exception.

extract from *The Theosophist*,
December 2017

From the National President

Linda Oliveira



Welcome to the first issue of *Theosophy in Australia* for 2018. In these pages, we consider some thoughts from International President Tim Boyd on the ‘seasons of the mind’. Also included is an article on various manifestations of Theosophy in this century identified by Michael Gomes, who will visit this Section next month. Michael’s tour schedule appears on page 29. As well, there are some thoughts about Christianity in an article by National Lecturer Simon O’Rourke, which highlights its essence in Theosophy, also identifying the Noble Eightfold Path and the Beatitudes as ‘two facets of the same jewel’. A talk from last year’s School of Theosophy deals with the four states of consciousness taught in Indian scripture and their fascinating relationship with the OM. Among other items, two of our members also share aspects of their personal journey in Viewpoint.

In today’s unprecedented age of online convenience in which virtual

relationships flourish, it is so simple to communicate – often very briefly – with a few texted words and emoticons. Although essential in nearly all facets of human life today, the electronic world lacks the subtler nuances of face to face relationships, that sacred group atmosphere which can engendered only by immediate proximity to others, and the subtleties of direct perception. Any members’ organisation can provide a venue for face to face relationships. Centres of our Society may provide a sacred group atmosphere. But direct perception is an individual experience, possibly inspired by the footprints of Those who have gone before.

Much of our literature is a wellspring of illumination to serious students, helping open the mind to so much more than the physical world. This includes the possibility of accessing a much vaster consciousness than the more limited machinations of the everyday mind going about its daily business – electronic, or otherwise.

‘That which is the night of all beings is the time of waking for the disciplined one; when others are awake it is night for the sage who seeth.’

The Bhagavad Gītā (II.69)

Theosophy in the 21st Century

Michael Gomes



Painting by Roma Scott,
based on the Stanzas of Dzyan

A great contribution of modern Theosophy is that it has made esotericism accessible. Once the preserve of a select few and bound by secrecy, such concepts had had limited appeal. When the Theosophical Society was started in 1875 it became the main conduit for such ideas. It was the only game in town, and for many their first exposure to such subjects.

The publication of Mme. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* prominently identified the sources of esotericism: Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, Kabbalah, and Hindu and Buddhist traditions. This was the backdrop against which the Society functioned and, during its first quarter century, produced an enviable synthesis of such ideas, creating in turn modern Theosophy.

HPB defined esotericism as the ancient wisdom religion, 'the esoteric doctrine

once known in every ancient country having claim to civilisation' ('What is Theosophy', *CW*, III:89). It was an heirloom from ancient races to our own. The interrelationship of Nature, the unity of life, cycles and personal responsibility were among its identifying features.

A measure of Theosophy's contemporary status can be seen in its increasing reference and recognition in a number of academic works, a result of growing public interest in esotericism. There have been international conferences about Theosophy organised by competent scholars, and both the Sorbonne in Paris and the University of Amsterdam now offer doctoral programmes in the history of western esotericism. One of the first of such international gatherings was the 2010 Legacies of Theosophy

Conference held at the University of Sydney where I was a keynote speaker. Although Theosophy had spectacular progress in the nineteenth century it was not just a backward looking movement and it continued to grow in the twentieth century drawing on recent developments. The new century saw a growing acceptance of Theosophical ideas with constant allusion in the arts, music and literature. Here are some of the trends that would contribute broadly to shaping Theosophy in the twenty-first century.

Neo-Theosophy

This term has taken on a pejorative implication but was initially used to differentiate theosophical developments in the twentieth century from its original impulse. It covers a wider area than the alternative, ‘Second Generation Theosophy’ and ‘Third Generation Theosophy’. No doubt ‘Fourth Generation Theosophy’ is in the works. In the tradition of co-opting words that were once used as negatives and removing them of their power, I use Neo-Theosophy in the way that Neo-Platonism is used to define its ideas from earlier Platonism. This was not your grandfather’s Theosophy. Members at the time were quite aware that what was happening in the movement was a new phase. It

is significant that Theosophy at the time had such an influence on avant-garde art and music. The term Neo-Theosophy nicely encapsulates itself from what came after it.

Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater’s ideas about auras, chakras and thought forms had wide influence as we see today, giving birth to modalities like Therapeutic Touch. Alice Bailey’s seven ray system and soul-centered astrology made its own impact. Rudolf Steiner broadened his work to include education and agriculture. Jiddu Krishnamurti, who started as the World Teacher, became a teacher in his own right, lecturing throughout the world. He raised new questions that went to the very nature of our seeking.

The modern chakra system, one of the most influential trends that developed at this time, was given impetus by the researches of Theosophists, especially C.W. Leadbeater. Kurt Leland in his recent study, *The Rainbow Body: A History of the Western Chakra System from Blavatsky to Brennan*, credits Leadbeater’s taxonomy of the placement and description of the chakras as having long lasting influence on the spread of the subject.

Psychology

The emergence of the new field of psychology at the beginning of the

twentieth century was seen as a viable tool by Theosophists for understanding the working of the mind. The approach of C.G. Jung was favoured over that of Freud. The publication of Jung's private journal as the *Red Book* in 2009 showed that he was grappling with many of the same issues as Theosophists and had gone on to utilise working on his unconscious through active symbolism. The work of Roberto Assagioli in Italy managed to fuse these concerns as Psycho-synthesis, his particular contribution.

Speaking about the impact of this area, veteran Indian Theosophist Rohit Mehta noted that:

We are ... entering a psychological phase in the understanding of Theosophy. In this age a psychological approach and presentation of Theosophy have become imperative. Man's problems have become greatly intensified at the psychological level. He wants to know whether Theosophy can help him deal with these problems. (English Convention 1956)

Gnosticism

'Papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up' predicted Mme. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled*. And just like that, a treasure trove of Gnostic texts was discovered in Egypt



The second of three fragments of the original Greek text of the Gospel of Thomas. Excavated in Middle Egypt, 1903.

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

in the mid-twentieth century which would have a profound effect on how we see the origins of Christianity. Among its contents, *The Gospel of Thomas*, which has gone on to have an almost canonical life of its own.

Theosophists had been primed for this understanding by the work of Mme. Blavatsky's secretary, G.R.S. Mead, who brought attention to the relevance of the Gnostics with his translations and books from the 1890s on. This period saw the founding of a number of Gnostic Churches that followed a more philosophical orientation than the orthodox groups. Bishop Stephan A. Hoeller, who heads one such body, Ecclesia Gnostica, is a well-known member of the Theosophical Society. The primacy of Sophia, the spiritual feminine, is one of the tenets to gain prominence from this group. A

combination of faith, fact and fiction relating to this area was released as Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) and caught the public imagination.

Eastern Spiritual Teachers

From Swami Vivekananda to Paramahansa Yogananda to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, from the Dalai Lama and Chögyam Trungpa to Thích Nhất Hạnh, the Twentieth Century saw an outpouring of Asian teachers who left their homelands and became global missionaries. One could now study with yoga practitioners from India, sufi masters, Zen monks, and *bikkhus* from a number of traditions, who in turn produced a new generation of students from around the world. Many Theosophists tended to favour Sathya Sai Baba.

Their message would reach millions through influential groups like the Beatles who would be penning songs about 'The Inner Light' promoting the view that 'Without going out of your door / You can know all things on Earth / Without looking out of your window / You could know the ways of Heaven' (1968).

This was no revelation for Theosophists had already been educated by the writings of W. Evans-Wentz on

things like *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, the title of his 1935 book on the subject, and the narratives of Alexandra David-Néel detailing the decades spent in Tibet which confirmed the existence of such traditions throughout trans-Himalaya. Both had been involved with the Theosophical Society.

Contemporary Paganism

At the processional opening of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993, commemorating the original event a century before, as the black robed and mitred priests of the Greek Orthodox Church and Catholic bishops in purple and assorted swamis and Buddhist monks in saffron reached the podium, attention was drawn to the back of the hall by the entrance of the pagan contingent in colourful costumes, attended by the sound of the sistrum. Just as the initial Parliament in 1893 had given legitimisation to the Asian religions that had attended, so the neo-pagan community was now recognised as part of the religious spectrum (though the Orthodox Christian Council did not think so and chose to withdraw from the event because of the presence of such groups).

Contemporary Paganism covers not only the European wiccan tradition,

which gained much prominence from the work of Gerald Gardner in the 1950s, but also rural (pagan) practices that had managed to survive, earth based religions, women's mysteries, the shamanic tradition, tribal rituals, and the recognition of the spiritual heritage of aboriginal/first nation peoples. The prevalence of sage as a clearing ritual is testament to the currency of its ideas.

Science

Is science an aspect of esotericism? 'Modern Science is our best ally', wrote the Mahatma in 1880. Theosophists have always looked to science for verification of their principles. And as the century progressed they were amply rewarded by bestsellers like Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*, 1975, and David Bohm's *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980, and a number of others.

The shift from the views of science in Mme. Blavatsky's day up to the present was quite dramatic and Theosophists followed it avidly. Theosophy Science groups were started in a number of Sections and a number of studies were published. In America Fritz Kunz and Emily Sellon published the journal *Main Currents in Modern Thought* from 1940 to 1975 which became an outlet for many scientists, educators, and religious figures to dialogue.

Today the work of members like Rupert Sheldrake and Amit Goswami is reaching new audiences, contributing to bridge the body-mind divide.

The 21st Century

These varieties of esoteric experience help us gauge the depths of the ocean of Theosophy. The truths they convey are enduring, but our approach and utilisation of those aspects that are relevant to us is continually being adapted. Even our understanding of the systems that helped inspire Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century – Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, Kabbalah – has expanded. There have been new texts and translations, and wider dissemination of these ideas. These ideas are now reference points in our shaping of Theosophy in the twenty-first century.

While it is too early in this century to declare dramatic results there are some notable indications of what is trending. Speaking at a gathering of Theosophists in the Netherlands in 1990, Radha Burnier, seventh International President of the Theosophical Society, offered the following definition: '“Esoteric” means what is within, within ourselves.' The work to be accomplished was 'for inner unfoldment' and required fundamental

change. ‘Fundamental change means growing in awareness and intelligence, realising the beauty of the whole divine process, and cooperating with it freely because it is so wonderful to do so’, she added (*Human Regeneration*, 1990, p. 139). Anything else was incidental. Because of her long tenure in office (thirty-three years), her words became a defining goal for many within the Theosophical Society. ‘Technical knowledge of the esoteric doctrine’, to use HPB’s words, would only take us so far.

‘You must remember’, HPB writes in her concluding chapter of *The Key to Theosophy* (1889, p.305), ‘that all our members have been bred and born in some creed or religion, that all are more or less of their generation both physically and mentally, and consequently that their judgment is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences.’

The esotericism that Theosophy offered would help in breaking the fetters of our cultural conditioning on spiritual matters, provide us new insights on how to live more humanely, and allow us to become co-workers for effective change. Keeping the link

unbroken with that nucleus of universal brotherhood initiated by those early Theosophists who braved ridicule and scorn, we would be fulfilling their hopes and would experience a world they could only dream of.

‘Consider all this’, HPB concludes in *The Key to Theosophy*. She continued:

and then tell me whether I am too sanguine when I say that if the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years – tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now! (p.307)



Michael Gomes is Director of the Emily Sellon Memorial Library in New York City. He has written extensively on Theosophy and H.P. Blavatsky. He will be discussing the nature of esotericism especially in relation to HPB’s newly published *Esoteric Instructions* at this year’s Springbrook School of Theosophy.

Theosophy in Christianity

Simon O'Rourke



Apse, Assumption Church, Windsor
Crisco 1492, Wikimedia Commons

Each of the world's major Religions has its essence or source in the life-giving Divine Wisdom or Theosophy. We may find somewhere within them the three truths found in *Light on the Path*, if I may paraphrase: the One Life or Principle inseparable from all things which gives life and which may be known; that there are sparks within the flame moving through many lives whose growth and splendour has no limit; and that there is a Law of Eternal Justice under which all these things work. Also, freedom of thought was encouraged by St. Paul when he said, like the Buddha, to 'prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good' (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Do the Christian scriptures support the idea of the One Life? Yes, for in the Acts of the Apostles it states, 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'¹ As some of your own poets

have said, 'We are his offspring.'² (Acts 17:28) and 'One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.' (Ephesians 4:6) 'The Sophia of Jesus Christ', in the Nag Hammadi Library, quotes the Saviour:

He Who is is ineffable. ... Now he is eternal, having no birth; for everyone who has birth will perish. He is unbegotten, having no beginning; for everyone who has a beginning has an end.

People often think that 'God' 'made' or created things but this is an error in many translations supported by centuries of dogmatic belief. The verb γίνομαι [*ginomai*] does not mean 'to make' but 'to become' (see Strong's Greek 1096 in biblehub.com). Hence John

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1. From the Cretan philosopher Epimenides
 2. From the Cilician Stoic philosopher Aratus.

1:3 reads, ‘All things are wont to be (or exist) through it (viz., the Logos), and without it not one single thing which is (or is wont to come) comes into being.’ (HPB, *CW*, Vol. XI, p. 485) If we recall HPB’s Proem to *The Secret Doctrine*, the hidden Principle, Parabrahm (the One Reality, the Absolute), manifests through its universal plastic essence Svabhavat, a word which means ‘Self-becoming’. Therefore, coming back to Acts 17:24-25, we read:

The God who [becomes] the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

Reincarnation was a major belief of early Christianity. Jesus stated that John the Baptist was formerly Elijah. ‘For all the prophets and the law have prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who was to come.’ (Matthew 11:13-14) Some argue that John, when questioned by the authorities, denied he was Elijah (see John 1:21). Of course, reincarnation allows for only the Spirit to be reborn according to its karma and *skandha-s* or attributes, not the previous body itself. John the Baptist truthfully possessed ‘the spirit and power of Elijah’. (Luke 1:17) And Jesus continued to affirm it.

And the disciples asked him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ But he answered them and said, ‘Elijah indeed is to come and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also shall the Son of Man suffer at their hand.’ Then the disciples understood that he had spoken of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:10-13).

Karma is the Law of Causation, and one reaps what one sows. Jesus taught [*italics added*]:

I have come not to abolish [the Law] but to fulfil. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, *not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place*. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your justness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5: 17-20)

And further:

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be the [*children*] of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. If you love those who love

you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

How can this be different to the teaching of the Buddha, who said: 'For never anywhere at any time, did hatred cease by hatred. Always 'tis by love that hatred ceases – only love; The ancient law is this.' (See *Some Glimpses of Occultism*, by C.W. Leadbeater, pages 119-121.) Therefore, is it truly possible to become perfect, and to attain perfect justice even from the effects begun in this life, without the experiences of more than a single lifespan?

The quality and intention of our actions, if not selfless, generate returning conditions that we may describe as good or bad. The Law is impersonal. 'For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality.' (Colossians 3:23-25) Again in another letter there is no doubt that 'God shows no partiality'. (Galatians 2:6) All our actions, including feelings and thoughts, have consequences. In Matthew 5:22, Jesus says: 'I say to you that if you are angry with a brother [or sister], you will be liable to judgement.'

Clearly we are not tested beyond our means to cope:

No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: He will *not let you be tried beyond what*

you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it. [*italics mine*] (1 Corinthians 10:13-15)

And the point of it all is that we gradually educate, rather than punish, ourselves in the principles of moral excellence. This further implicitly suggests that those karmic clouds too great to be borne in one life will be held over to another, or several other future lives. 'We know that all things work together for good' (Romans 8:28), or in other words, *perfect justice rules the world.*



Can a Christian rely solely for Truth on the dogmas of any church? Perhaps we may test for ourselves our experiences and knowledge against our higher intuition, through meditation and contemplation. 'For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within?' (1 Corinthians 2:11)

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes, and the word ‘blessed’, come from the Greek word ‘*makarios*’, which means ‘happy’. These are found in Matthew 5:1-11. The chart below shows the translation from the New International Version (NIV) at biblehub.com, except the translation from the New English Bible (NEB) as noted.

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them saying:

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|---|--|
| <p>1 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. NEB: ‘How blest are those who know their need of God; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.’</p> <p>2 Blessed are those who mourn ¹, for they will be comforted.</p> <p>3 Blessed are the meek (NEB ‘gentle spirit’), for they will inherit the earth.</p> <p>4 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (NEB: ‘hunger and thirst to see right prevail’), for they will be filled.</p> | <p>8 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</p> <p>7 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.</p> <p>6 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.</p> <p>5 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (NEB: ‘How blest are those who show mercy; mercy shall be shown to them.’)</p> |
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1. Mourn, from Old English *murnan*, ‘to long after’, probably from the root *mer* – ‘to remember’.

The Noble Eightfold Path

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|--|---|
| <p>1 Right Belief (View, Knowledge or Doctrine)</p> <p>2 Right Thought (Resolve, Intention or Longing)</p> <p>3 Right Speech</p> <p>4 Right Action</p> | <p>8 Right Concentration (Meditation)</p> <p>7 Right Memory (Mindfulness)</p> <p>6 Right Exertion (Energy)</p> <p>5 Right Means of Livelihood</p> |
|--|---|

The Noble Eightfold Path by AB & CWL (<http://www.anandgholap.net>) and see Wikipedia. See also italicised explanation on following page.

The Noble Eightfold Path and the Beatitudes are two facets of the same jewel. The Eightfold Path represents the wisdom of love, the Beatitudes represent the love for wisdom.

The Beatitudes and the Noble Eightfold Path are enumerated on the previous page. The second chart shows the typical enumeration of the Noble Eightfold Path in which one may progress from first to last, or alternatively adopt the last directly as it contains within itself the previous seven. Following the Law of Correspondences, we may equally see the eight in the same sequence as progressive steps in the *circle* of forthgoing into matter and return to spirit. *The upper two, 1 and 8, represent spiritual awakening and mastery on the plane of abstract thought, so too the next pair on the plane of concrete thought, the next on the plane of emotions and the last pair, in reality two sides of the same thing, on the physical plane.*

The study of symbology shows that when Jesus ‘went up on a mountainside and sat down’ the author meant not a literal mountain but an allegorical mountain, where the element of earth reaches beyond the clouds towards the high thin atmosphere of the abstract mind.

The study of symbology shows that when Jesus ‘went up on a mountainside and sat down’ the author meant not a literal mountain but an allegorical mountain, where the element of earth reaches beyond the clouds towards the high thin atmosphere of the abstract mind.

Right Belief or Knowledge is based on an intuitional certainty in the basic philosophical ideas of the unity of all life, cyclic growth of the inner life through reincarnation, and spiritual guidance through the mirror of Divine justice. It is true faith, at least in the broad evolutionary plan of Spirit, Mind and Body, if not the finer details. Its opposite, Right Concentration, shows the means to achieving a deeper validity to that knowledge, through concentration, meditation and ultimately contemplation. Happy or blessed are those who ‘know their need of God’, who know happiness is only found through inner Wisdom; true philosophers. The means is found in its opposite, not so much in righteousness as in justice, through becoming free of the limitations of karma, overcoming the inner persecution of the dweller on the threshold, our own selfish thoughts and tendencies, and making active the

channel of *Antahkarana* (Sanskrit: ‘the inner cause’, see Wikipedia).

Right Thought is selfless and accurate thinking, inspired by wisdom. It is moral strength. In Theosophical writings, we would perhaps suggest that Right Thoughts are those which are true, kind and helpful. The opposite as shown in the previous table, **Right Memory**, shows the means to this, by avoiding the cynical and critical mind that separates, judges for personal profit, and which chooses to assert its ‘rights’ more often than choosing to assert what is truly right. At the risk of seeming to put a spin on things, we may say that we are attempting to see the higher purpose in every action and every consequence. In a literal reading of the text, the Beatitudes do not seem to make a great deal of sense, particularly the saying ‘Blessed are those who mourn’. The inner outcome, feeling happy, can only be felt in the longing for higher thought. It is the desire to achieve moral strength. Mourning is longing, once we are made aware of the barrenness of petty and selfish thought. Comfort comes in the joy of moral excellence. Its opposite, the means of finding moral excellence, is the beatitude of peacemakers. A peacemaker fosters kind, harmonious and loving memories, and an attitude of universal responsibility. The peace-

maker is constant in vigilance and mindfulness of divisive and egocentric thoughts.

It follows that if one’s philosophy and thoughts are in check then **Right Speech** should be relatively easy. And if the Word, the Logos, was with God, representing cosmic wisdom, one’s emotional nature may reflect that. However, one’s thoughts are often capsized on the same stormy waters that were allegorically stilled by the Initiate Jesus, in which he showed mastery of the emotional nature. Even a kind thought may be spoiled by an undertone of irritability or jealousy. Its opposite, **Right Exertion or Effort**, shows the means to purity. Right exertion is sometimes given as reverence to the teacher. Many sacred texts indicate that the speediest way to unity is devotion, for we become the thing we admire. Selfless devotional exertion is always rewarded with strengthened aspiration. Not so much blessed are the ‘meek’, as happy are the gentle in spirit, who still the stormy waters and whose greater progress is attained through a pure heart. A pure heart is desireless, and better reflects the wishes of a Divine heart.

Right Action and **Right Means of Livelihood** are really two sides of the same coin. Constant practice in

the art of filling every action with practical mercy, or love, leads one to attain the happiness of justice in all actions. Of course, we also need **Right Knowledge**, but if there is doubt then it is better to err on the side of love.

We may also turn briefly to 2 Peter 1:5-8, for another presentation of the Path.

I would suggest that Christianity was meant to stimulate the development of abstract spiritual thought, as well as selfless love. Yet its intellectual life has been enveloped in a centuries old atmosphere of cloying dogma and fear, rather than liberty and reverence. If it has a future, particularly with newer offshoots like the Liberal Catholic Church, then it needs to find a way to preserve the best of its traditions and rituals without sacrificing intellectual freedom, Theosophy and the Spiritual Way or Path. Is there one path or are there many paths? Though the Path is the same, it does not mean we all approach it in the same way. If we do not want to drown we would have to swim, but there are many ways to swim.

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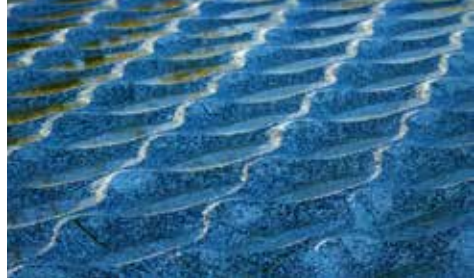


Simon O'Rourke is a National Lecturer for the TS in Australia and a former President of Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney. He has given many talks and study courses, particularly courses covering *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Mahatma Letters*, *The Bhagavad Gita* and the *Ancient Wisdom in Mythology*.



Ripples in the Field

Shirley J. Nicholson



Many years ago I taught science to elementary school children. One of the most fascinating lessons for second graders was on magnets. They pointed one end of a bar magnet, the negative pole, toward bits of iron and watched the bits race over empty space to the magnet. They pointed the other end, the positive pole, and saw iron bits spring away from the magnet. The children sensed an invisible force as they pulled iron from the magnet or watched the magnet lift it. They couldn't explain gravity, but they knew that things don't usually act like that.

Later I discovered the magnetor. It consists of two doughnut-shaped magnets, quite strong, one with a plastic cylinder fixed in its centre. The other slips over the cylinder to be placed above the first one. With one side down, the top magnet clamps firmly onto the bottom one, so that it is hard to pull them apart. Flip the top one over, and, behold, its floats in

mid-air above the lower one! Try to push it down to the lower one, and it won't go. You feel strong resistance pressing against you. Let go and it bounces back up. The space between the magnets looks empty, but clearly a force is there between the negative and positive sides.

Then there was the time in my high school days when a woman from Lapland, dressed all in furs, spoke to us in assembly. She told us that her people depend on reindeer for subsistence. They hunt the herds even in the long Arctic nights. To find them they look up at the aurora borealis, that tenuous aura of light and colour caused by conditions in the earth's magnetic field. The deer paw the snow looking for moss and strike magnetic stones underneath, which disturbs the magnetic field. The disturbance appears as ripples in the aurora borealis, a giveaway of the deer's location!

Action at a distance. Things moving things with no detectable connection. Intangible fields you can't see but whose strength you can sense. Magnetic ripples in the sky. I came to respect magnetic fields. Though completely nonmaterial, they are real and can powerfully affect physical matter. I was intrigued, as second graders were.

Then I met Fritz Kunz, who showed me larger implications of these experiences with magnetism. Fritz was a pioneer in the correspondences between contemporary science and Eastern mysticism. He attracted many of the foremost thinkers in the 1940s and 1950s through his Foundation for Integrative Education and its journal, *Main Currents in Modern Thought*. [Most of the issues of this journal are held in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library – Ed.]

Fritz saw the relation between field theory in physics and the idea of Brahman, God, the Void, the nonmaterial Reality at the root of the cosmos. We know that the electromagnetic field, which accommodates both electricity and magnetism, is universal and that its potential can be activated anywhere in space. That is why we can keep in touch with astronauts and space capsules deep in

outer space. The second graders' little magnets and the magnetor have a little field, a localisation, in this larger field.

This space-filling characteristic applies to more than just the electromagnetic field. According to Einstein's theory of relativity, the basic nature of the universe may be described as a universal field whose essential quality is unbroken wholeness. Einstein and others hoped one day to find a unified field that unites all physical forces – electromagnetism, gravity, and nuclear forces.

Fritz envisioned such an ultimate field, but one involving far more than subatomic particles, atoms, and molecules. He spoke of a nonmaterial Reality underlying everything at all levels – physical, biological, psychological, cognitive and spiritual. This is Brahman, the ultimate Reality of the Vedas. As subatomic particles emerge from and dissolve back into the field in a cyclotron, so do universes arise in and eventually sink back into Brahman.

Nothing is separate from this ultimate field, not even ourselves. Our true nature is not in our ever-changing bodies, emotions, and thoughts, the ripples with which we usually identify, but in the universal Reality, the field that underlies them.

Both neuroscientists and spiritual masters tell us that the world as we know it exists in our own minds. What we perceive is coloured more than we imagine by our experience, expectations, biases, hopes, and fears. Then we interpret our distorted perception according to our limited knowledge, our opinions, our attitudes and prejudices. What we perceive isn't the 'real' world at all. It is only our own version that exists as thoughts and perceptions in our minds. Even our sense of being a separate person does not conform to reality. Ordinary mind, as Buddhists call it, is full of deceptions and illusions.

The substrate of ordinary mind is Buddha-mind or the Buddha-field. Imagine the quality of awareness, or knowingness, apart from any content of which one is aware. What we are looking for is not the colour red or sorrow. It is unadorned, pure awareness, always present regardless of what we are feeling, thinking, or sensing. It is a continuum of consciousness in which our individual thoughts and sense impressions arise, just as a local field around a particular magnet arises in the universal magnetic field. Mental events are conditions in this spacious, unbounded consciousness in which there are no divisions, or we could say ripples in a universal field.

We do not notice the field any more than we notice the magnetic field until we observe the action of a magnet. Still our true, abiding nature is in the larger field, the awareness beyond conditions, not in the local ripples or ever-changing conditions.

If we could learn to be very still and let all the ripples die out, we are told, we would recognise ourselves as that universal field. We would realise unbounded Reality as our true nature. The nonmaterial field would become very real to us, as it did to second graders exploring with magnets.

Has anyone played with magnets as spiritual practice? Why not? We might have a field day.



Shirley Nicholson was a prominent member of the American Section and at one time Senior Editor of *Quest Books*. She was the author of *Ancient Wisdom Modern Insight*, and *The Seven Human Powers: Luminous Shadows of the Self*. Reprinted from *The American Theosophist*, Early Winter 1996, with permission.

The Four States of Consciousness

Lucille Crocker



‘All this world is: the syllable OM. Its further explanation is this: the past, the present, the future, – everything is just OM. And, whatever transcends the three divisions of time: that, too is just OM. For truly, everything is Brahman, and this self within (Atman) is also Brahman.’

This is the beginning of the *Māndukya Upanishad* (part of the Vedanta philosophy). It deals with the four states of consciousness, relating them to the sacred word OM. These will be explained further on.

The text continues: ‘The Self has four quarters.’ The translation from the original is ‘with four quarters’ or ‘with four feet’. However, Sri Shankaracharya points out that the figure is not what is implied by the latter, as it is not like the four feet of a cow, but like the four parts of a coin.

The idea is that each quarter resolves into the one next to it, and when the three resolve into the fourth then that fourth is the *full* coin. Shankara also points out that, even in this conception of four parts, the fourth stands on a different footing; for the fourth is a ‘quarter’ in the sense of being this object of enquiry, while the others are so, only in the sense of being instruments or guides directing the attention to it.

This school has emphasised the importance of being aware – realising who we really are and breaking the identification with the physical body, with our emotions and with our mind. For that, self-observation is essential. Take a step back and understand which vehicle consciousness is working from; it will transform us.

Awareness can help us deal better with everyday problems in a practical sense. This volitional perception can stop us from being simply reactive, so as to be more in control of our responses. It can help us transform by uprooting the *klesha-s* and responding with spontaneity, flowing from the higher Self, conscious *manas*. It is all about being awake and being aware, and thus realising who we really are. Shankara said that no action can bring about enlightenment, only the right perception.

We now come back to our self and its four quarters, its four states of consciousness:

The first quarter is *Vaisvānara*, (common to all humans or the material condition); its field is the waking state, outwardly cognitive and enjoying gross objects.

The second quarter is the *Taijasa* (the ‘brilliant’ or the mental condition); its field is the dream state, inwardly cognitive and enjoying subtle objects.

When one who is asleep feels no desires, sees no dreams, that is deep sleep. The third state is *Prājña* (the cognitional, or the intellectual condition), having this state of deep sleep for its field, with experiences all unified, cognition reduced to a mere indefinite mass, full of bliss, enjoying bliss and forming the gateway to all definite cognitions.

The fourth, *Turiya*, is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, uninferable, unimaginable, indescribable. It is the essence of Self-cognition, common to all states of consciousness. All phenomena cease in this state. It is peace, it is bliss, it is non-duality, all experience is unified. This is the Self, and it is to be realised. This Atma is to be identified with OM when OM is considered as a single syllable.

However, when OM is considered as composed of parts, the quarters of the Atman are to be identified with the parts, and the parts with the quarters. The parts of OM are: A, U and M.

A, the first letter, has no preceding letter or sound. So also, the waking state identified with *Vaisvānara* is known to precede dreams and deep sleep states.

Taijasa, which has the dream state for its field, is the letter U, the second part of OM, because they are both superior and in-between.

Prājña, whose field is deep sleep, is the letter M, the third part of OM, because they are both the measure and the end of the other states. One who knows this measures everything by his or her knowledge and comprehends everything within.

The syllable OM in its partless (soundless) aspect, is the Fourth state, transcendental, supreme bliss and non-dual, devoid of phenomenal existence. Thus, the syllable OM is verily the SELF (Atman).

He who knows this, merges his Self in the SELF.

OM – AUM

Reference:

Sarvananda, Swami (transl. with notes), *Māndūkyopanishad*, Sri Ramakrishna Math Printing Press, Chennai-4, no year given.



Adapted from a talk
at the 2017
School of Theosophy.

Viewpoint



The TS in my life - What it Means

My personal journey in the TS began in the very early 1990s when attending an after-work activity while I was working for a United Nations organisation in Rome. After the doors of the great building of the international headquarters had closed at the end of the working day, an elderly Maltese gentleman regularly conducted ‘human values’ classes for anyone who was interested; although never deliberately described as such, these were classes in Theosophy. When he knew I was going to Australia to live he agreed it would be a good idea for me to join The Theosophical Society in Australia which, he said, ‘was doing good things there’.

The TS has magnificent literature and teachings to help us during all of our life span. Or should we call them the Theosophical view, because we are never dictated to, nor coerced into accepting them. We are encouraged to become aware of the ethical principles which make for a good, useful and

altruistic life, and by adhering to the principle of karma, to be also aware that we have personal responsibility for what follows from our smallest actions; to at least try to live consciously. We learn of the power and energy of thought.

Some of the literature extends further than being beneficial only to our earthly life span and it gives an indication of what we can expect beyond. In *The Astral Body and Other Astral Phenomena* A.E. Powell consolidates ideas from other writers to give particulars of the after-death state. If we acknowledge that we are striving to improve our evolution during our life, we should surely want to know what to expect at death and its after-state. Likewise, for the period before birth, we may like to know what happens during the process of rebirth. Theosophical literature can help give indications on these states.

I find the Theosophical path to be a global holistic venture, accompanying us and leading us on our journey

from birth, through life, to death and onwards.

Janice
Scarabottolo



Janice Scarabottolo is newsletter editor and a former committee member of Canberra Branch.

Those who Plant Kindness Gather Love

A New Year has begun. Although 2017 was a transformative year for me physically amongst other things, it was also a somewhat quieter year for social interactions in general and my TS journey. It has, however, provided me with much needed time to reflect on many areas of life and their importance and significance in the bigger scheme of things.

A major positive has been the clearing out of ‘stuff’ which has created a significant improvement in space in my home, as well as head space. I thoroughly recommend it if life seems to be slow or anyone is feeling confused or stuck in any way. I still have a lot more to cull. Although I have done a lot less reading of late I have also seen this as a positive thing, allowing

me time to think, reflect and assess some personal beliefs, amongst other things, and free up my thinking.

During this time that I have allowed for myself, many new insights about human interactions have become clearer, both within my family sphere and also my TS family. Growth can sometimes be painful. With regard to the TS we all have, and make, choices at times, such as the degree to which we choose to become involved in some matters – or not.

What does ‘putting our money where our mouth is’ actually mean? Being involved in the TS has taught me many things that I treasure. However, of particular significance in the last couple of years, has been something which came directly in my path – the question of seeing injustice and asking myself what I was willing to do about it.

We see and hear about so many forms of abuse on social media – be it bullying, character assassination or otherwise; such things are very soul destroying for the victim.

To quote H.H. the Dalai Lama, ‘Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. If you cannot help them, then at least don’t hurt them.’ However, once one takes up this banner, expect division to occur as it will cause

discomfort temporarily on some level for one person, or many. I believe in the domino effect. Touch that first domino and watch what happens.

Intentions are key! To quote another wise person, Helen Keller: ‘The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt by the heart.’ That was my sole motivation and inspiration to act against injustice. Not one of us is perfect, we all make mistakes, and we all need someone to believe in us and have our back at times.

The Dalai Lama said it perfectly:

This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.
(izquotes.com)

I believe that many of us forget this simple philosophy at times in our thoughts, words and deeds; I for one am guilty many times over. However, I am trying to pass on the essence of this message to my grandchildren with every chance I get.

Remembering it is the New Year, though, I am trying to remind myself daily to live by the following words

of the Lord Buddha: ‘Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment.’

(The Teaching of Buddha: The Buddhist Bible: A Compendium of Many Scriptures Translated from the Japanese, 1934)

After recently watching a programme about strange signals from outer Space on SBS, and being fascinated by the phenomenon known as the Dyson Sphere (Google it), I vowed to continue my enquiries into all things scientific, metaphysical, artistic and beautiful.

And to finish with a quote from someone who said it much more concisely: ‘The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.’
– Albert Einstein

I wish you all a wonder filled year!



Carmen French

Carmen French is a former President of Sunshine Coast Lodge



11th WORLD CONGRESS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY



Singapore, 4 - 9 August 2018

**Theme: Consciousness, Contemplation, Commitment:
The Future Is Now**

Venue: Ramada and Days Hotels Complex, Zhongshan Park

TS members have the opportunity to attend a World Congress of the TS every seven years or so. These infrequent events provide an excellent opportunity to meet members from around the world. Singapore is an attractive and popular city, and our hosts will be the members of Singapore Lodge.

Cost:

The following package rates include accommodation from 3 August (check in) until 9 August (check out). They include the conference fee, breakfast, lunch and dinner from 4-8 August 2018, and breakfast on 9 August.

Days Hotel (*)**

SGD\$1,165, twin-share

SGD\$1,589, single occupancy

Ramada Hotel (**)**

SGD\$1,306, twin-share

SGD\$1,801, single occupancy

Registration:

Registrations with Singapore Lodge are now open. Go to the international TS website at: <http://www.ts-adyar.org/event/11th-world-congress>

See also: singaporelodge.org/tswc2018.htm

Additional information will be provided as it comes to hand.

Please note: The deadline for registration and payments is 4 April 2018

Enquiries to: 2018wc@singaporelodge.org

Education

Pedro Oliveira

Hegel and HPB

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was one of the great philosophers of his era. According to the Wikipedia, his philosophy of spirit conceptually integrates psychology, the state, history, art, religion, and philosophy. His philosophy of absolute idealism influenced many scholarly thinkers in Europe. H.P. Blavatsky made a number of references to him in her writings and some from *The Secret Doctrine* are included below:

According to Hegel, the ‘Unconscious’ would never have undertaken the vast and laborious task of evolving the Universe, except in the hope of attaining clear Self-consciousness. (*SD*, vol. I, p. 51)

To quote Hegel again, who with Schelling practically accepted the Pantheistic conception of periodical Avatars (special incarnations of the World-Spirit in Man, as seen in the case of all the great religious reformers) ...

the essence of man is spirit only by stripping himself of his finiteness and surrendering himself to pure self-consciousness does he attain the truth.



Christ-man, as man in whom the Unity of God-man (identity of the individual with the Universal consciousness as taught by the Vedantins and some Adwaites) appeared, has, in his death and history generally, himself presented the eternal history of Spirit – a history which every man has to accomplish in himself, in order to exist as Spirit.

(*SD*, vol. I, p. 52, footnote)

‘The history of the World begins with its general aim’, says Hegel:

the realization of the Idea of Spirit—only in an implicit form (*an sich*), that is, as Nature; a hidden, most profoundly hidden unconscious instinct, and the whole process of History . . . is directed to rendering this unconscious impulse a conscious one. Thus appearing in the form of merely natural existence, natural will—that which has been called the subjective side—physical craving, instinct, passion, private interest, as also opinion and subjective conception—spontaneously present themselves at the very commencement ...

(*SD*, vol. I, pp. 640-41)

The ABSOLUTE; the Parabrahm of the Vedantins or the one Reality, SAT, which is, as Hegel says, both Absolute Being and Non-Being.

(*SD*, vol. I, Proem, p. 16)

Tour - International Speaker Michael Gomes



Michael Gomes has written extensively on the work of H.P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement. He has edited a number of Mme. Blavatsky's writings, producing abridgements of her major books *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. As a lecturer he has presented at academic conferences and throughout the Theosophical world. He was chosen to give the prestigious Blavatsky Lecture of the Theosophical Society in England in 2017, honouring the centenary of its establishment. His most recent work is the chapter on Theosophy in *The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism* (2016). Michael Gomes is Director of the Emily Sellon Memorial Library in New York City.

Wed 18 April:	Blavatsky Lodge, public lectures 'The Legend of Shangri-la' 'As Above, So Below: Principles of Hermetic Wisdom'	1.00pm 6.00pm
Fri 20 April:	Adelaide Lodge 'The Book of Nature', member's lecture 'The Legend of Shangri-la', public lecture	10.30am 6.00pm
Sun 22 April:	Perth Branch Classics of Modern Theosophy', public seminar	9.30am
Tues 24 April:	'The Book of Nature', members' lecture	7.30pm
Thurs 26 April – Wed 2 May:	SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY, Springbrook see page 30	
Wed 2 May:	Brisbane Lodge 'The Benefits of Theosophy', public lecture	7.30pm
Sat 5 May:	Atherton Lodge 'The Legend of Shangri-la', public lecture 'The Book of Nature', members' lecture	2.00pm 3.30pm

National Calendar of Events



Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, 1070 Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh, NSW

**Theme: ‘Towards Stress Free Living: Cultivating Stillness’
arrivals Fri 23 March – departures Sun 25 March 2018
for TS members and non-members**

Presenters: Linda Oliveira (National President),
Pedro Oliveira (Education Coordinator), Marie Bertelle (meditation leader)
and Brian Parry (former National Lecturer)

Cost: members \$125 (twin share) or \$150 (single room guaranteed)
non-members \$150 (twin share) or \$210 (single room guaranteed)
Includes sessions, accommodation and catering. Some places still available.

Enquiries to: Pedro Oliveira, edcoord@austheos.org.au
tel. 02 9264 7056 (Mon-Thurs)

Emmanuel Centre, 123 Abbot Street, Launceston

**Theme: ‘Search for the Inner Self’, weekend seminar
arrivals Fri 6 April – departures Sun 8 April For TS members**

Presenter: National Lecturer Barry Bowden

Cost: members \$190 / non-members \$245
Cost includes sessions, accommodation and catering. Please register early.

All enquiries regarding bookings / further information:

Denise Frost tel. 0400 140 624
email: launcestontheosophicalociety@gmail.com

**Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook, QLD
2018 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY**

arrivals Thurs 26 April – departures Wed 2 May

**Theme: ‘HPB’s Esoteric Instructions’ Michael Gomes, USA
For TS members**

Cost: \$360 Includes tuition, accommodation, catering and
train/airport transfers.

Some places are still available.

Enquiries to: National President pres@austheos.org.au

... / continued on next page

Springbrook Centre

arrivals Thurs 26 July – departures Sun 29 July

Theme: ‘The Science of Yoga’ For TS members and non-members

Presenters: Pedro Oliveira, others TBA

Cost: \$160 members / \$200 non-members (includes sessions, accommodation and catering)

Enquiries to: Education Coordinator

edcoord@austheos.org.au tel. 02 9264 7056 (Mon-Thurs)

Registration forms and further information about Springbrook and Canyonleigh events are at: www.austheos.org.au/what's on

2017 International Convention, Adyar



Pictured above are fourteen out of a contingent of twenty-seven Australian members who attended the 2017 International Convention at Adyar.

Back row, left to right: Wendy Fitzpatrick, Dorothy Bell, Heather Fisher, Victor Gostin, George Wester, Pedro Oliveira

Front row, left to right: Rosanna Cummins, Helen Lambert, Linda Oliveira, Olga Gostin, Jean Carroll, Dianne Kynaston, Jenny Lee-Robbins, Gerard Brennan

Review

The Bhagavad Gītā – A Guide to Navigating the Battle of Life

A New Translation and Commentary
by Ravi Ravindra, Shamballa Boulder,
2017, pp. 302, USD19.95 (Shambhala
Publications, Book Depository)



One of the respected early scholars in the Theosophical Society, T. Subba Row, stated the following regarding *The Bhagavad Gītā*:

Among other appellations Arjuna has one very strange name – he is called at different times by ten or eleven names, most of which are explained by himself in Virataparva [one of the chapters of the *Mahabharata*]. One name is omitted from the list, i.e., Nara. This word simply means ‘man’. But why a particular man should be called by this as a proper name may at first sight appear strange. Nevertheless herein lies a clue, which enables us to understand not only the position of the *Bhagavad Gītā* in the text and its connexion [*sic*] with Arjuna and Krishna but the entire



current running through the whole of the Mahabharata, implying Vyasa’s real views of the origin, trials and destiny of man.

(*The Theosophist*, February 1886)

The uniqueness of the *Bhagavad Gītā* includes the fact that the teaching is ministered unto Arjuna by Krishna in the middle of a battlefield. One of the corollaries of this stupendous metaphor is that the teaching addresses our situation in daily life as we are. And even more meaningfully, the instruction begins when Arjuna found himself in a state of despondency.

Ravi Ravindra is well-known in the Theosophical world for his many talks and seminars which have been conducted over a long period of time, in several countries. Both his scientific training and his academic exploration of the great religious traditions have equipped him with unique talents for addressing the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gītā*: an earnest spirit of enquiry and a profound reverence for the sacred.

In the acknowledgments page he narrates the moving event when his father read a verse of the *Gītā* to him:

‘At the end of many births, a wise person comes to Me, realizing that all there is is Krishna (Vāsudeva). Such a person is a great soul and very rare.’ That was his poignant introduction to one of the great classics of world spirituality.

Ravindra describes the intent behind the book:

What interests us here is the transformational teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, its yoga, by which warriors may be internally integrated and discover their right relation to all

levels of energy in the universe, and their proper place in the cosmic order. We are not interested in entering into scholarly disputations or sectarian arguments; rather we wish to place ourselves, as much as the clarity of our hearts would allow, in the light emanating from the Gita.’

Dr Ravindra’s book will be of interest to all students of the *Bhagavad Gītā* but also to those who are searching for a deeper meaning and realisation in the midst of a confused world.

Pedro Oliveira

News and Notes



Advance Notice - 2019 National Convention
Theme: Divine Wisdom in Theory and Practice
Saturday 19 - Saturday 26 January

Our annual national gathering is due to rotate to Sydney next year and will be held at Sancta Sophia College, the University of Sydney, which is a very attractive venue near the city CBD.

Cost recovery rates 2019: single rooms with shared bathrooms \$955.50 for 7 nights; twin or double ensuite rooms \$903 per person for 7 nights; single ensuite rooms \$1,165 for 7 nights.

A Convention payment plan is now being offered for members who would like to pay in instalments. For enquiries, please contact the National Secretary, Dara Tatray: natsec@austheos.org.au tel. 02 9264 6404

Response from a Member

I've just received my *Theosophy in Australia* magazine with Annual General Report et cetera. It sounds like everyone has been incredibly busy. Lovely to read about all of the volunteer help.

In this day and age of things going digital, I have opted to still receive the magazine as a hard copy. This is because I put it in the waiting room at my studio. This space is shared by another business and a number of people pick up the *Theosophy in Australia* magazine as the articles aren't too long and I've had some wonderful discussions about it with some of my students.

Louise Dixon, National Member, Qld

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

The Theosophical Society in Australia as we know it today is a product of well over a century of impressive service by

volunteers and officers, as well as the non-members. All gifts and bequests are used carefully and responsibly to further the work and the Objects of the Theosophical Society in this country. The following form of words is provided for those members who wish to make gifts or bequests in their wills to The Theosophical Society in Australia:

To The Australian Section Theosophical Trust (whose registered office is Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street, Surry Hills, NSW, 2010) to be held in trust for The Theosophical Society in Australia.

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

Further Enquiries:

Please contact the National Secretary
email: natsec@austheos.org.au

Tel. 02 9264 6404



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

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

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 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: c/- 53 Chataway Crescent,
Fadden ACT 2904
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent
& Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612
7.30pm 1st Monday of month (Feb - May, Sep - Dec)
Emeritus Faculty ANU: 2.00pm 1st Saturday of
month (June - Aug), discussion group 2.00pm
3rd Saturday of month
President: Dr Grahame Crookham
Tel: 0490147020
email: tificrook@tpg.com.au
Secretary: position vacant
Newsletter Editor: Janice Scarabottolo
Tel: 02 6288 7656 email:janton@netspeed.com.au

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:
Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 2065
Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)
Telephone: 02 92676955 Fax: 02 9283 3772
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
www.tssydney.org.au
Meet: 1.00pm Wednesdays
President: Sally Gray
Secretary: Pamela Peterson
Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:
Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,
Mayfield NSW 2304
7.30pm 2nd Friday each month
<http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/>
President: Tony Buzek
Secretary: position vacant
Tel: 0452 633 132

Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: Members' Lounge,
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre,
30 Parke Street (above Coles)
Katoomba NSW 2780
Meet: every Monday, 2.00 - 4.00pm
Coordinator: Jessica Gemmill
Tel: 02 4782 4269
Email: helen.lambert1@bigpond.com

Gosford Group:

Meet: The Narara Community Centre,
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser
Tel: 02 4339 7118, 0400 713 273
Email: marifraser256@gmail.com
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group:

Postal address: c/- The Manor,
2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088
Meet: c/- 31 Riviera Street
Avalon NSW 2107
2.00 pm 3rd Friday each month
Coordinator: Dianne Kynaston
email: diannedeva@gmail.com

Queensland

Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,
Atherton QLD 4883
Meet March and April: temporary premises -
Meeting Room, Community Services Tablelands
(CST), Shop 1, 30 Mabel St, Atherton
Meet May: Expected to be Meeting Room, rear of
CST, 38 Mabel St, Atherton, otherwise 30 Mabel St
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 Wednesdays, library open 6.30-7.30pm
President: John Harris
Secretary: Phillipa Rooke

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
7.00pm Thursdays
President: Pam Walsh
Tel: 0427 713 061 (Pam Walsh)
Email: theosunshinecoast@gmail.com
Secretary: position vacant

Toowoomba Group:

Meet: Hospice Board room, 57b O'Quinn Street,
Toowoomba QLD 4350
Meet: every second Thursday, 6.30pm
Annual Springbrook retreat each Winter
Coordinator: Gayle Thomas
Tel: 0438 331 885

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

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: 08 8223 1129
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au
<http://www.austheos.org.au/adelaide>
Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of
every month. Please contact Lodge for additional
meeting dates.
President: Travis James
Secretary: position vacant

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

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
www.theosophicaltas.websyte.com.au
Meet: 7.30pm Mondays
President: Helen Steven
Secretary: position vacant
Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:

54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston TAS 7250
Postal address: as above
email: launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com
www.austheos.org.au/launceston
Meet: 1.00pm Wednesdays except first Wednesday of
the month and National Speaker meetings, when we
meet at 7.30pm
President/Secretary: Denise Frost
Tel: 0400 140 624

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

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624
email: meltheos@bigpond.com.au
Meet: usually 4th Saturday each month
President: Edward Sinclair
Secretary: Kari Torgersen

Mornington Peninsula Group:

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month
(12.00pm meditation - 12.30pm lunch - 1.30pm
Theosophy)
Coordinator: Alice Opper
Tel: 03 5976 3815
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

Wodonga-Albury Group:

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

Western Australia*Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*

21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104
Email: tsp Perth@iinet.net.au
<http://www.tsp Perth.com.au>
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
President: Franco Guazzelli
Secretary: Carole Ann Webster

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:

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

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

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

Freedom of Thought

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

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

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



Freedom of the Society

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

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

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1949)*

