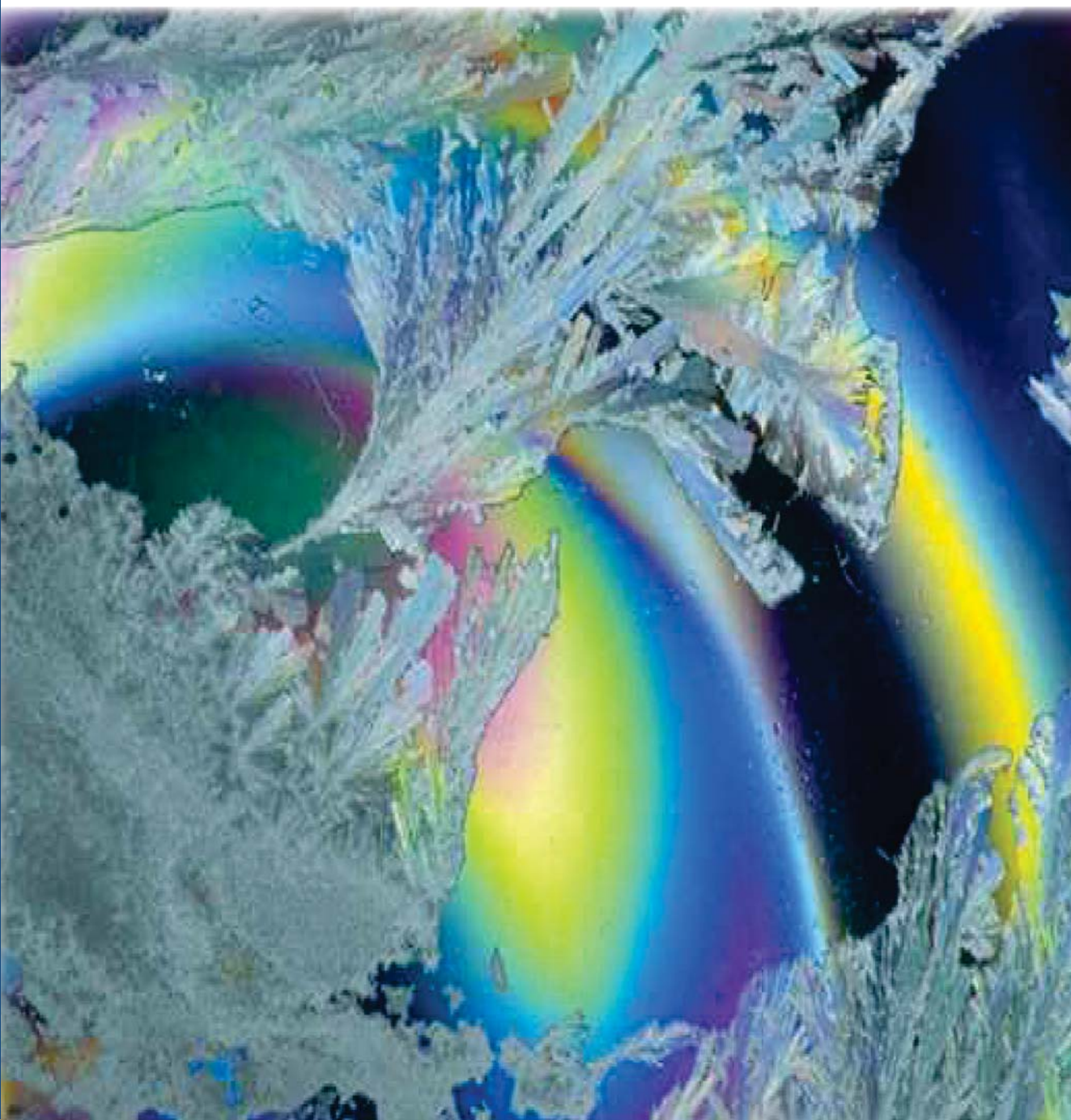


# *Theosophy* in Australia

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The Theosophical Society has its International Headquarters at Adyar, Chennai (formerly Madras), India.

International President: Radha Burnier

International Vice-President: Linda Oliveira

International Secretary: Kusum Satapathy

International Treasurer: Keshwar Dastur

## **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:**

4th Floor, 484 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

Phone: +61 02 9264 7056

Fax: +61 02 9264 5857

www.austheos.org.au

email: tshq@austheos.org.au

National President: Dara Tatray

(email: pres@austheos.org.au)

National Vice-President: Denise Frost

(email: tstasrep@gmail.com)

National Secretary: Zehra Bharucha

(email: natsec@austheos.org.au)

National Treasurer: Donald Fern

(email: treasurer@austheos.org.au)

Education Coordinator: Dara Tatray

(email: pres@austheos.org.au)

## **State Representatives:**

Patricia Hale - SA/NT 08 8297 7892

(email: treasurer@theosophy.org.au)

Dianne Kynaston - NSW/ACT 02 9969 1087

George Wester- WA 08 9255 4890

(email: westerconsult@gmail.com)

Denise Frost - TAS 03 6248 1430

(email: tstasrep@gmail.com)

Geoffrey Harrod - QLD 07 3378 8534

(email: geoffrey.harrod@gmail.com)

Kari Torgersen- VIC 03 9568 7548

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**Editor:** Dara Tatray (email: pres@austheos.org.au)

**Design and Layout:** Zehra Bharucha

**Editorial Committee:** Zehra Bharucha, Olga Gostin, Dianne Kynaston, Janice Scarabottolo

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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)

# Theosophy

in Australia

June 2011 volume 75 number 2

## Contents

<i>From the National President</i>	34	<i>Minutes of the 2011 Annual Convention Business Meeting</i>	57
<i>Theosophists and the Powers Latent in Man</i>	35		
<i>The Mysteries Today</i>	41	<i>Calendar of Events—National TS Centres</i>	59
<i>Science and Religion: A Reconciliation Through Process Philosophy</i>	45	<i>Call for Nominations—Election of State Representatives</i>	60
<i>On the Powers Latent in Man</i>	49		
<i>Shopping and the Seven Rays</i>	53	<i>Reviews</i>	61
<i>'My Words are Easy to Understand'</i>	54	<i>News and Notes</i>	63

*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*

*To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without  
distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.*

*To encourage the study of Comparative Religion,  
Philosophy and Science.*

*To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the  
powers latent in the human being.*

## From the National President ...

Dara Tatray



It was recently my good fortune to present a series of talks at Mt Helena and Springbrook, the aim of which was to provide an immersion experience in the world of which Madame Blavatsky wrote in *Isis Unveiled*. It was an attempt to share my experience of reading that book for the first time a little over thirty years ago, and finding within its pages a vast terrain of spiritual philosophy that previously I had no idea existed: a universe of thought which admitted one to a world of purpose rich in meaning. Indeed, to some extent, *Isis Unveiled* is also the Kabbalah unveiled, Plato unveiled, and Eastern thought unveiled.

We covered a diverse territory taking in Hermeticism, Platonic thought, the Kabbalah, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Advaita Vedānta and to a lesser extent, Taoism. While that may seem like rather an eclectic, disparate series of subjects, I think it is fair to say that everyone gathered at the two events came away with a renewed understanding of the thoroughgoing commonality linking them all. Truly they are each expressions of the one truth; different views of the one snapshot of reality, the same story told in several languages.

Thanks to those who attended these events, I left Mt Helena and Springbrook with a renewed enthusiasm for the Society; and for the love of learning that binds together many of its members. A most interesting question arose in the afternoon “training” sessions at Springbrook. It is a question many members have been asked over the years, by friends

and associates, in an attempt to find out what takes place at TS meetings. The question is: What Do We Do? A query that is liable to silence most members, no matter how talkative they may be in other circumstances. Another question that can raise a deathly silence is the related one: What Is Theosophy? Although the Theosophical Society has been in existence for over one hundred and thirty five years, most of its members cannot answer that question simply, or with any degree of certainty. We considered both matters over several days at Springbrook, in an effort to arrive at a simple understanding.

What do we do at meetings of the Theosophical Society? What are they for? One possible answer is this: we explore the nature of reality and the nature of consciousness. Not as physicists, or anthropologists, but as human beings. We explore the nature of reality, using many traditions as our guides; and try to understand the world around us and within us, not as specialists but as human beings.

Live-in retreats present a rare opportunity to gather with others of a similar interest in exploring such matters together.

In this issue, two views on our third Object are presented. They are not meant to cancel each other out. Ultimately, where psychic research and spiritual search meet and part is a matter for individual discovery. Personally however I feel it is time for us to get our heads out of the clouds. ❖

# THEOSOPHISTS AND THE POWERS LATENT IN MAN

**Leslie Price**

From a lecture delivered to the Theosophical Society, London in 2010.



There is a wonderful account of the first years of the Theosophical Society by its president, Henry Steel Olcott. If I may quote some passages, from *Old Diary Leaves* Volume One:

On the evening of September 7th, Mr. Felt gave his lecture on “The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians.” He was a remarkably clever draughtsman, and had prepared a number of exquisite drawings to illustrate his theory that the canon of architectural proportion, employed by the Egyptians, as well as by the great architects of Greece, was actually preserved in the temple hieroglyphics of the Land of Khemi ... The late Dr. Seth Pancoast, M.D., of Philadelphia, a most erudite Kabbalist, being present, categorically questioned Mr. Felt as to whether he could practically prove his perfect knowledge of the occult powers possessed by the true ancient magician; among others, the evocation of spirits from the spatial deep. Mr. Felt replied as categorically that he had done and could do that with his chemical circle. ‘He could call into sight hundreds of shadowy forms resembling the human, but he had seen no signs of intelligence in these apparitions’ ...

Mr. Felt told us in his lecture that, while making his Egyptological studies, he had discovered that the old Egyptian priests were adepts in magical science, had the power to evoke and employ the spirits of the elements, and had left the formularies on record; he had deciphered and put them to the test, and had succeeded in

evoking the elementals. He was willing to aid some persons of the right sort to test the system for themselves, and would exhibit the nature-spirits to us all in the course of a series of lectures, for which we were to pay him. Of course we passed an informal vote of hearty thanks for his highly interesting lecture, and an animated discussion followed. In the course of this, the idea occurred to me that it would be a good thing to form a society to pursue and promote such occult research, and, after turning it over in my mind, I wrote on a scrap of paper the following:

*‘Would it not be a good thing to form a Society for this kind of study?’—and gave it to Mr. Judge, at the moment standing between me and H. P. B., sitting opposite, to pass over to her. She read it and nodded assent. Thereupon I rose and, with some prefatory remarks, broached the subject. It pleased the company and when Mr. Felt, replying to a question to that effect, said he would be willing to teach us how to evoke and control the elementals, it was unanimously agreed that the society should be formed. Upon motion of Mr. Judge, I was elected Chairman, and upon my motion Mr. Judge was elected Secretary of the meeting. The hour being late, an adjournment was had to the following evening, when formal action should be taken.<sup>1</sup>*

You may suspect from these extracts, that the early Theosophical Society was centred on powers latent in man. And indeed we find such a view increasingly held by historians.

As Professor James Santucci the editor of *Theosophical History* expressed it in 1997:

What the Theosophical Society was at its inception is not the Society it has become. I have slowly come to this conclusion after years of investigating its origins and early years. One of the clues that led me to this judgment was the role that George Henry Felt played in the founding of the Society ... This incident, together with a reevaluation of documents and articles and the uncovering of new material, strengthened my suspicions that the Theosophical Society was not an organization that pursued only speculative or theoretical knowledge but cultivated certain practices derived from this knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Dr Santucci wrote these words in his foreword to an eighty page report by a New York lawyer, John Patrick Deveney, entitled, *Astral Projection or the Liberation of the Double and the work of the early Theosophical Society*. Deveney pointed out that:

There was an undercurrent of practical occult or magical work among the members of the T.S. in its New York days that has been largely ignored. This practice and its public advocacy was in sharp contrast to the later professions of the society and is an indication of an undiscussed major change in direction (or at least in propaganda) within the T.S. One aspect of this practical work, the projection of the double or astral body, is especially well documented and will be dealt with here.<sup>3</sup>

Pat Deveney published yet more evidence in *Theosophical History*, July 2003, in the form of: *An Unpublished Lecture by W.Q. Judge in 1876 on His Magical Progress in the Theosophical Society*.

One of the powers, therefore, which interested the early TS, was astral projection. But from the

beginning there were differences of approach to these latent powers. Among the founding TS members was the medium Emma Hardinge Britten. She postulated a new school of the prophets, trained on mediumistic lines, and she engaged in a long struggle with Madame Blavatsky. Indeed the two movements, modern Theosophy and Spiritualism, remain in conflict today. Mrs Britten issued in 1876 a curious volume entitled *Art Magic*. With this, and with her novel *Ghostland*, Mrs Britten claimed occult authority. However, Marc Demarest, an American scholar, through his research reported on [www.ehbritten.org](http://www.ehbritten.org), has traced back much of *Art Magic* to other nineteenth century writers, rather than to a supposed specific occultist, "Chevalier Louis", whom Mrs Britten might have known. Marc has also recently discovered a hitherto unknown newspaper report from 1875 about the early secret magical activities of the Theosophical founders. This will appear in a future issue of *Theosophical History*.

What were the philosophical roots of the search for latent powers in which the Theosophists engaged?

Until Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott left for India in late 1878 they were substantially Western, a point emphasised by Professor Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. In 1878, Madame Blavatsky decided to remove from America to India. After HPB and Colonel Olcott arrived in India in 1879, there was an influx of new oriental teachings. One group of teachings was triggered by some enquiries by an English fellow of the Theosophical Society, F.W.H. Myers, whose certificate of fellowship survives, with a wrongly spelt first name. [Myers is the author of a classic in psychic research: *Human Personality And Its Survival of Bodily Death*, 1903]. Much more oriental teaching came through the Mahatma Letters received by Hume and Sinnett. And when Madame Blavatsky had settled in England in 1887, there was a further expansion in her writings, especially *The Secret Doctrine*, and *Voice of the Silence*, the latter with

noticeable Mahāyāna Buddhist associations.

By then several other approaches to latent powers had emerged through other organisations. Myers had become the leader of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), founded in 1882 in London. As is well known, the SPR reported negatively in 1885 on Theosophical phenomena, a report which was to be widely accepted until in 1986 Dr Vernon Harrison published an exposure of its serious limitations. Incidentally, Dr Harrison had begun his investigation when asked to lecture, on a Sunday evening, from this platform [that is, 50 Gloucester Place in London]. The SPR hoped to bring latent powers within the scope of scientific investigation.

We ought to note another, quite different line; the revival of ritual magic to release latent powers. A number of Theosophists became prominent in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. But Madame Blavatsky did not support this, and set up her own esoteric school, the ES, which distinguished carefully between mere psychic powers and true spiritual development.

It might seem that all was now set fair in the harmonious renewal of the search for the right kind of latent powers in the TS, but there was a new stream which would cause problems. Mr Sinnett, one of the recipients of the original Mahatma Letters, declined to take further instruction via Madame Blavatsky; he turned first to hypnotic subjects who produced revelations when entranced, later he began publishing revelations from mediums such as Robert King, sometimes in the name of the London Lodge, an autonomous body within the TS. We call this stream, Neo-Theosophy.

There was one man who rejected both the Mahatma leadership and some at least of the neo-Theosophy, and that was G.R.S. Mead, who had been private secretary to Madame Blavatsky until her death in 1891. Mead was inspired by the mystical exaltation of ancient Gnostics, theurgists and hermeticists.

In the years after Madame Blavatsky's death, a new and long-lasting source of revelations emerged in the Theosophical Society. C.W. Leadbeater, a clairvoyant, enjoyed first the support of Sinnett and then before long that of Annie Besant, who after 1907 became the president of the Theosophical Society based in Adyar.

Research with Mr Leadbeater focused at various times on Christian origins, (which interested Mead), past lives of prominent Theosophists (which interested prominent Theosophists), and the occult side of chemistry. On the fringes of the last effort was William Crookes, the greatest scientist ever to join the Theosophical Society, a fellow from 1883 to his death.

In the mid-twentieth century, Theosophical work on the powers latent in man reached its fullest extent. There are still people today who recall Laurence Bendit, a psychiatrist, and Phoebe Daphne Payne (later Bendit), a therapist who worked with children. Phoebe was also a clairvoyant, who first appeared as a contributor to *The Theosophist* in June 1936 ("Health and the Etheric Body"). In 1938 she issued her classic work *Man's Latent Powers* a title which perhaps deliberately echoed the third object of this Society. (The book is still in print as *Mankind's Latent Powers*.) Then came a joint book with Laurence Bendit, *The Psychic Sense*, published in 1943.

We should not underestimate the extraordinary nature of Phoebe Payne's assertions in the context of the Theosophical Society. Phoebe was claiming a variety of psychic abilities, including contact, albeit unsought, with people who had died. Such communications, on a strict interpretation of the Mahatma Letters, ought not to take place. This would be the case even though she was exercising what she termed positive psychism, in contrast to the widespread negative psychism she had found in Spiritualism.

There were of course other clairvoyants in the Society. There was Geoffrey Hodson, and, as already mentioned, C. W. Leadbeater, who died in 1934. Unlike Phoebe, he was on personal terms with the Mahatmas, and also had had revelations about many weighty subjects like the origin of Christianity and the inhabitants of Mars. These were treated as authoritative by many people, but such matters are conspicuous by their virtual absence in these early Phoebe books. Like Madame Blavatsky, and Emma Hardinge Britten, Phoebe was also sensitive to non-human entities. Modern Theosophy has always paid attention to these: psychical research in general has not.

*The Psychic Sense* was the first British book on psychical research to use the chakras as a conceptual tool; they were well known to Theosophical writers, but the expression “chakras” did not appear in the SPR Journal until Arthur Ellison mentioned them in 1962 — later he twice served as SPR president.

Phoebe made another claim—which was elaborated in the jointly authored book *This World and That* in 1950. She professed to be able to attend séances, and unlike the mediums at those séances, to know really what was going on. Her awareness and vision was superior to theirs; indeed she could on occasion cause the creation of spurious communications. This was a remarkable power indeed. If true, it made Phoebe potentially of incalculable use in psychical research, though in fact little formal research appears to have been carried out with her by anyone. There was also the risk that the possessor of such insight might become puffed up, and it is just as well that Laurence testified to her diffidence.

It is apparent that both Phoebe and Laurence from the 1930s did find a congenial network in England in the Theosophical Research Centre (TRC) and its Groups. The TRC was a unique manifestation in the theosophical world, without parallel in any other country. Such was

the strength of the Theosophical Society here that it was able for several decades to attract and retain a number of scientists, doctors and similar professionals. The Bendits wrote and at first informally experimented with the Centre, especially its Medical Research Group, of which Laurence was chairman from 1947-51. The book *Some Unrecognized Factors in Medicine* (1939) was one of the fruits.

Let us focus for a moment on Laurence Bendit. He had been born in Marseilles France in 1898 of American and British parents. His mother joined the Theosophical Society in 1898, and he joined in 1912. His first book in 1926 was *A Renaissance in Healing* — but already in 1923 *The Theosophist* carried a letter from him about youth and sex, followed by others on science, healing and fascism. By the time of his term as General Secretary of the English Section from 1958-61, his Theosophical experience was very long.

As a psychiatrist, Laurence was influenced by the independent E. Graham Howe, who was possibly the person with whom he had a training in analysis. The Bendits met Jung, and in 1947 wrote an introduction to analytical psychology, but although Jung’s name is often mentioned in their writings, they do not seem to have played any significant part in Jungian affairs in the UK. An obvious problem was that although Jung was a Gnostic and something of an occult practitioner himself, he had little sympathy for the forms of Theosophy prominent in his day.

Despite his keen personal interest in Krishnamurti’s teaching, it was obvious to Laurence Bendit, as to others, that in some ways the Coming, as it was called, had been misconstrued. Despite, or perhaps because of his wife’s clairvoyance, he was also sceptical about clairvoyant revelations of history. He was acutely sensitive to the changes in consciousness that had taken place since HPB’s time, indeed since his own salad days in the 1930s. He returned repeatedly to what this might mean



to the presentation of the ancient wisdom, for example in his 1948 Blavatsky Lecture, *Adam the Prodigal Son; in The Changing Face of Theosophy* (1965); and in the late collection *The Mysteries Today* (1973). He was in particular doubtful about the future of ritual presentations of esoteric truths.

His position was delicate. Sometimes he protected himself with the Besant defence — ‘As Dr Besant said’; sometimes he appealed to HPB. In Theosophical matters, both the Bendits often acknowledged the guidance of E.L. Gardner.

The Bendits were respected workers in psychical research between about 1939 and 1961. Laurence on occasion reviewed books in the SPR Journal and also in *Light* (the CPS journal.) However a crisis developed on the Theosophical side. One account of it has been given by Arthur Ellison in his Blavatsky Lecture.<sup>4</sup> A new generation in the Theosophical Research Centre, whose Science Group was chaired by Dr Ellison, was testing clairvoyants. They wanted to work with the best known female clairvoyant in the TS, Phoebe. She declined. New theoretical work also led to the model used in *Man Incarnate* being challenged. There were wider problems historical and scientific, identified in Ellison’s Lecture.

After the passing of Phoebe and then Laurence the kind of third Object work in which they were interested — a combination of healing, practical experimentation, metaphysical analysis and contemplation — became less common in the Society. All that the Bendits wrote can still be read with profit. They would have followed eagerly, I believe, the many new streams of knowledge today, which are often featured in the TS programme. While I would urge you to reread the Bendits, I should like eventually to leave you with this question — how should the Theosophical Society fulfil its third Object in our generation?

In Dr Ellison’s view, the cresting wave of Theosophical research was to pass, to some extent at least, to the new Scientific and Medical Network, because the TS in 1960 had been insufficiently open to new findings. The Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE) based in the United States, is another body where such research has a place. Dr Ian Stevenson, a prominent SSE member, and pioneer reincarnation researcher, had a partly Theosophical background. In this area, perhaps the most useful thing the Theosophical Society could work towards contributing is a solid theoretical framework.

In a broader or higher sense, however, we might ask just what is meant by the powers latent in man? I should like to leave Dr Laurence Bendit, to answer that question, as he did in one of his late essays, to be found in the anthology *The Mysteries Today*:

... man’s greatest power is to become what he is ... This way of seeing is much more useful than to think of ‘the powers latent in man’ in terms of clairvoyance, magical ability, even healing power or the setting loose of kundalini. These are incidental, siddhis, side-issues compared with the fact that man, is the only, or at least the first creature on our own evolutionary ladder... to be capable of self-transformation.<sup>5</sup>

The Bendits had lived through the emergence of depth psychology — Freud, Adler and Jung — and into the era of Abraham Maslow and self-actualisation. The transpersonal psychology movement was just beginning. If they were with us today, they would I suspect welcome the latest developments in brain and consciousness studies, and the move beyond materialistic models of mind. Not forgetting the ancient wisdom, but adding to it, just as Madame Blavatsky engaged ceaselessly with the science of her day. ❖

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Leslie Price is an associate editor of *Theosophical History*.



**If the painter wishes to see enchanting beauties, he has the power to produce them.**

**If he wishes to see monstrosities, whether terrifying, or ludicrous and laughable, or pitiful, he has the power and authority to create them. . .**

**Indeed, whatever exists in the universe, whether in essence, in act, or in the imagination, the painter has first in his mind and then in his hands.**

—Leonardo Da Vinci

## THE MYSTERIES TODAY

Laurence J. Bendit

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EVER since man became man, there has at all times been a direct road between him, at whatever stage of consciousness he was, and the deepest spiritual levels of his being. He has always, in theory, been capable of treading that road as a result of his unaided efforts, but he has also had the help of a more or less explicit philosophy of the facts concerning the universe, himself and the relation between the two. This is often referred to as the Mystery Tradition or Teaching and is a permanent heritage of mankind. Passed on in writing or by word of mouth, this perennial philosophy remains basically unchanged by time, but its expression has varied very markedly. Moreover, there seems always to have been a dual line of approach to the innermost. One of these was through meditation and contemplation and was subjective. The other, outward turned, gave rise to observances, rites, ceremonies carried out in action. The two were complementary and supplementary to each other.

In the West, Egypt and Greece stand out as two main civilizations in which the Tradition was organized into Mystery Schools, each with its own rituals, each with its own symbolism and pomp. Some of the ceremonies were public, as were the great processions in Egypt and those between Eleusis and Athens. They still exist in the West in such things as the rites of the Roman and other churches which have public displays and festivals. Behind the outer shows, however, there lay esoteric ceremonies open only to initiates of the proper grade. Freemasonry, in our time, is a survival of these, adapted and modernized.

There are, however, a number of enthusiasts today who are anxious to revive the ancient Mysteries of Greece and Egypt in their old form. But, apart from the decadence which led to their being eventually outlawed in Rome, there is an important question as to whether this recall of the past is healthy and suitable. Would any success be a forward or a retrograde step in the search for deeper understanding and greater awareness of the meaning of life? This is the problem which prompts the reflections which — without claiming any authority other than my own thoughts — I want now to consider.

Greece, the most recent of the places where the Mysteries flourished on a great scale, lies over two thousand years behind us, Egypt goes much farther still. In the internal, man in general has made vast strides, none more rapid and extensive than in the past two centuries. The *manasic* (pure mental) principle has developed, hardened, become more positive than it ever was before in historical times. (If the myth of Atlantis is actually a fact, then it belongs not to history but to prehistory). Modern man is, therefore, very different from his forbears. Hence, what will be useful to him in furthering his evolution is something very different from what was of use in the days when man was not so *manasic*.

Ancient man (taking this to mean not the primitive but the civilized man of historic times) was collectively not intellectual and critical. He responded to feeling and intuition, he was much more “psychic” and sensitive, if only in a passive way, than his modern counterpart. But this was counterbalanced by a much closer and more direct link with people who were much in

advance of the ordinary, and whose function it was to guide, direct and rule from a standpoint of true spiritual eminence. We see today traces of this tradition in the place we, sometimes rather unwillingly, allow even today to crowned kings, to popes and bishops, as well as in the high-sounding titles — which once meant something — used for instance in Masonic bodies. It seems as if, in old days, there was a hierarchy in the Mysteries, which made an open and unbroken link between the deepest, innermost and most spiritual levels of life and the most mundane public festivals and religious rites open to *hoi polloi*. The highway between extremes was barred by gates of an initiatory nature which opened only to those who were ready to pass them, but nevertheless, it was well known that the Mystery path existed for all to follow if they would. The esoteric teaching and symbolism was the same from first to last. What changed was its interpretation, values, and the understanding of the disciple.

Things are not the same today. If there are genuine Mystery Schools, they are hidden and arcane. There are, it is true, many bodies which claim to be Rosicrucian or to belong to some esoteric tradition, but all of those which make their claims public are spurious. Even if they use genuine old rituals derived from papyri or manuscripts, it is most questionable whether they are in any way linked with the Temples to which the rituals belonged. Their position is as if, in the Catholic Christian churches, the Apostolic Succession which links the modern priest with the furthest origins of the Church were broken and not to be retrieved. Freemasonry seems to be the only genuinely descended semi-public organization, however emasculated its present-day forms. In any case, the average man today ignores, when he does not scorn, these bodies. And even the more studious usually fails to grasp the inwardness of what is presented to him in church, lodge or chapter.

In other words, it seems at first sight as if, with the disappearance of the true Mystery Schools,

the Mysteries themselves had also died. But if we reconsider the matter, a different picture seems to emerge.

*Manas*, in every sphere of life, functions both as a link and a barrier between inner, spiritual consciousness and that of the personality. It is the focus of selfhood and of the field of self-conscious awareness. It acts as a barrier when it ousts intuition and confines consciousness below, or outside itself, in the form of material, pragmatic, detailed knowledge. It is a link when, the intellect being given its proper place, it opens the way to non-intellectual, more-than-rational experience such as that which transforms intellectualism into intelligence — a quality often lacking in the so-called intellectual.

The duality of *manas* also shows in action when, at different times in human history, it swings between introversion and extraversion. We are now surfeited with the latter and its perilous technical achievements, and there is a marked tendency to turn inward and to seek out the meaning of things, no less scientifically, but in the subjective and not the objective field. The result is a tendency for the deepest intuitive thinkers to withdraw from ceremonies and rituals towards a more meditative, quietistic way of life. Otherwise said, it looks as if the modern Mysteries took place, not in outer ceremonies and rites, but in the rich inner world of the mind where myths and visions lead to intuitive insights, *satori*, *Gestalts*, which are in effect initiatory and transformative to the one who has them. True, some will still take part in rituals and outer forms. But the emphasis nowadays lies more on the mythological, spiritual meaning embodied in them than on the forms themselves; for true and valid rituals are no more than the dramatic expression of myth, and, when properly performed, bring with them from the archetypal, spiritual world, the powers which flow through that myth. The principal part of any rite, therefore, is now that which takes place within the mind, not outside it.

If this is so, it appears to contradict, or at least modify, some of the things which have been said about the 'Seventh Ray', often describing it as that of ceremonial. If this is indeed the 'Ray' which is coming into prominence today, when the tendency is to do away with outer ritual, it seems as if its quality were really that of the mental orderliness of what we call Culture (including science) in its true sense. The "ceremonial" takes place as the mind becomes organized and ordered as a temple in which myth is played out and, as it is understood, enriches and enhances the spiritual understanding of the individual. This takes place in each one in an individual and unique way despite the common significance of any myth for all mankind. Conscious self-understanding is the dynamic quality which enables each person to tread the mythological ladder between heaven and earth. Man today, in contradistinction to man in ages past, is able to do things for himself and by himself which, in the past, required at least some help from wiser and senior spiritual teachers and gurus.

It looks as if the older ceremonial initiations at the hands of high-priests and hierophants helped the weakly developed *manasic* aspect of the disciple to overcome a gap in his make-up. His mind was not yet strong enough to do this for himself, and some wisely applied occult and magical lore was able to help him on his way. Yet even then it seems worth considering whether in the ultimate stages, when the disciple became in the full sense a member of what is known as the Great White Lodge, he did not have to take that step and initiate himself by his own unaided efforts. One can conceive of his progress as requiring less and less help from his teachers, as he comes closer and closer to the true and final event, when he stands on his own feet entirely and steps through the portal alone. The Initiation, when it comes, is the greatest of all *Gestalts*, a break-through in consciousness into a sphere hitherto only seen through some degree of veiling but now entered in full conscious perception and awareness.

Such a view calls into question the exact nature of the ceremonial initiations described in certain books. It suggests that they refer, not to the full Initiation, but to something less, however near it may approach to the Reality. For this Reality is something intimate, completely secret so far as any outer showing is concerned, an opening of consciousness from within. And it is something which none can confer on another, however exalted the giver may be. Nor can it be denied to the one who is ready, since it is something he does for himself. It says in the Book of Amos: 'Unto him that overcometh will I give a white stone; and in that stone a new name written, *which none knoweth saving him that receiveth it.*' The Giver, in this case, is God: the human spirit, the Atman. The 'new name' is the keynote, the *mantram* which expresses the man as reborn. The part italicized contains two significant matters: that the individual feels the expansion in himself, the other, that nobody in the outer world is held to be aware of what has taken place, and hence cannot tell him that he has reached this or the other stage on the occult path. It should be added here that sudden minor expansions of consciousness are frequent occurrences in daily life. Sometimes, moreover, they are part of a destructive process in the mind, a step towards unbalance and insanity, which is why so many would-be occultists claim to have become high initiates when they have in reality lost some of their balance and stability and, above all, humility. For, as it has been said, the true Initiate 'is as nothing in the eyes of men' and only the quality of his life and personality gives any key to his stature.

One of the difficulties in making a real assessment of things today is that we are in a stage of transition between two human eras; and rapid movement inevitably leads to confusion. In the matter under discussion, the confusion has found expression in many of the descriptions of psycho-spiritual life, given as a result of psychic investigation. This is in no way to decry the value of these investigations. They were, after personal bias (often very strong) is discounted,

a magnificent piece of pioneer work. Indeed, one may see them as laying a foundation for future research, using extrasensory perception as the means of discovery. But when most of this work was done, we had only a vague idea of the dynamic importance of myth — and its external expression in rituals. Annie Besant tells us that myth is truer and deeper than historical accounts whether about the universe or about man. She did not, however, realize as we do today, the power of myth itself as a channel of redemptive forces *within* the human mind. It took the genius of C. G. Jung to bring out this aspect of the matter and to show us both how it operates and how to make constructive use of what it brings.

In the psychic investigations even of some very competent people it seems as if actual events, physical or psychic, and myth, had not been fully differentiated. Objective ceremonies and events may well take place in the psychic realm, but that realm is also the one where dreams and visions and the expression of myth originate. If we study some of the descriptions of such matters — and the Wesak, as described by C. W. Leadbeater is an example — it is quite clear that it contains a reference to symbols which belong to the mythological level and which are to be found not only in the occult tradition, but also present themselves in the important dreams of the individual student of life. The question thus arises as to whether the ceremony described is one which actually occurs physically, or near-

physically, or whether in fact Leadbeater did not, in the account of the Wesak, and elsewhere embody something very real but which took place only in the form of a symbolic dream.

As to this it would be foolish to dogmatize, and each one has to make his own judgement both about this and a great deal else. It is, however, a part of the whole question of the Mysteries today. Hence it is one which is important to the theosophical student who is not content to let others do his thinking for him. The latter may have been in order in olden days, before man had learned to think. It is today out of place — as much out of place as any revival of the Ancient Mysteries as such. Man has always needed the Mystery Tradition. He needs it today and he will need it tomorrow. It still exists; but unless we allow ourselves to be misled, it has to be sought in the right place and in the right form. *Manas*, pure mind, is the key today and Truth has to be sought *through* but not in it. By learning to use this mind properly we are led into the new world of intuition and direct apprehension of Reality which lives on the further side of it, and this is the realm of enlightened, personal intuitive knowledge.

This, it appears to me, are the Mysteries of Today. ❖



Today something is happening to the structure of human consciousness.

A fresh kind of life is starting.

—Teilhard de Chardin

## SCIENCE AND RELIGION:

# A RECONCILIATION THROUGH PROCESS PHILOSOPHY

Dr Brian Harding

In this article, the phrase science and religion refers essentially to Western scientific materialism and Christian theology, where strongly entrenched dogmatic views have been in conflict for centuries. The Process Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and its derivative, Process Theology, offer reconciliation between these two world views, provided that both religion and science are willing to give a little ground.

Whitehead was an English mathematician and physicist who became a philosopher. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and later worked at University and Imperial Colleges, London. In 1924, when Whitehead was sixty-three, he was invited to teach philosophy at Harvard University. He spent the rest of his life in America, where he died in 1947.

Whitehead's thought was stimulated by the dramatic collapse of classical Newtonian physics. The book that encapsulates his work, *Process and Reality*, was based on the Gifford Lectures he gave in 1927 at the University of Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> Whitehead saw reconciliation between the scientific and religious world views as vitally important. He says:

When we consider what religion is for mankind, and what science is, it is no exaggeration to say that the future course of history depends upon the decision ... as to the relations between them.<sup>2</sup>

We tend to think of theology and science as somehow constant in their teaching. But, as Whitehead points out, theology exhibits significant gradual development, which often

arises from conflict within its own arena. Science is even more changeable. Consider the vast differences between classical and quantum physics. Ideas change in a matter of years, so fast has been the rate of discovery in recent times. Nevertheless, Whitehead concludes that 'there are wider truths and finer perspectives within which a reconciliation of a deeper religion and a more subtle science will be found'.<sup>3</sup>

### Two Key Problems

As long as extreme theologians (namely, creationists) on the one hand, and extreme scientists (such as Richard Dawkins) on the other, refuse to give even a little in their respective positions, we will not see 'a deeper religion and a more subtle science'. Whitehead wrote of the need to overcome 'exaggerations' on both sides.<sup>4</sup>

Starting with religion, David Ray Griffin claims that a theism based on Whitehead's philosophy can retain all the traditional attributes of God by making one key modification with perhaps minor adjustments to some others.<sup>5</sup> This principal modification removes the idea of an omnipotent God. In Process Theology, God exercises persuasive rather than coercive power.<sup>6</sup> The changes suggested by Griffin essentially mean the abandonment of what he calls supernaturalistic theism for naturalistic theism. That is, we have to abandon the transcendent God who is outside creation, and who arbitrarily suspends the laws of nature when he feels like it. This idea has also created the on-going problems of evil in the world and the problem of human freedom versus predestination.

On the scientific side, scientists are required to give up extreme scientism, where nothing exists beyond the material, and only sensory data from modern scientific experimentation are acceptable in constructing our view of the world. A second modification on the scientific side requires a fundamental change in our conception of the ultimate units of nature. Whitehead rejected what he called ‘vacuous actuality’ — the view that the ultimate units of nature are material particles.<sup>7</sup> He replaced these with ‘occasions of experience’.<sup>8</sup> To understand this concept, and to understand Whitehead, it is necessary to have some idea of Process Philosophy, an excellent introduction to which is to be found in the writings of Charles Birch, one-time evolutionary biologist at The University of Sydney.

### Process Philosophy

Our starting point is *becoming* rather than *being*. Process Philosophy sees the flow of time as simply the flow of experiences; transition and activity are more fundamental than permanence and substance. Furthermore, every concrete actuality, everything in nature, is a subject. This Pansubjectivism is another major component of Process Philosophy. Instead of regarding material particles such as atoms as the basis for understanding nature, Whitehead looked to living organisms (as subjects) as his starting point.<sup>9</sup>

As Charles Birch explains: ‘There are good reasons for this. The only entity we know with intimacy is ourself’; and we know there is more to us than a collection of atoms and molecules.<sup>10</sup> Whitehead extended this idea to other organisms — they, too, have senses, mental attributes, a sense of value and purpose. All entities, from humans to quarks, are centres of subjective experience. Birch arrives at the same conclusion via a consideration of the evolution of Mind: ‘Humans are built out of a mindful universe ... consciousness evolves from a mentality that is not conscious in atoms

to one that is conscious in higher organisms’.<sup>11</sup>

So all entities are subjects; not just objects. And subjects “experience” things. Therefore, Process thought argues that experience is not confined to human beings — all “events” (entities, actualities) in creation are subject to experience, hence the alternative term Panexperientialism. Whitehead includes both outer (sensory) experience and inner (non-sensory) experience in his definition of experience, thus introducing ‘a more subtle science’.<sup>12</sup> With this understanding, he proposed that the world is not made up of material particles, but of events or processes: ‘drops of experience’. Birch calls this ‘the doctrine of a feeling world’, and it extends to atoms and quarks: all are affected by their relationships; all are subjects engaged in a process of becoming.

Subjects also experience things like value and purpose. As Birch explains: ‘Living organisms besides humans experience value because they have feelings’.<sup>13</sup> There is an increase in richness of experience (value) from amoeba to fish to reptiles to mammals including humans. But the experience of value is ubiquitous. Besides an obvious external — instrumental — value, individual organisms possess intrinsic value. Entities are valuable for their own sake. So Pansubjectivism profoundly influences the way we view our world. Among other things, it obliges us to protect our planet and care for other species; it gives added reason to behave responsibly.

### Process Theology — Pantheism

We have seen how Process Philosophy introduces ‘a more subtle science’. Now we will see that Process Theology also presents ‘a deeper religion’.

In contrast to classical (supernaturalistic) theism, which separates God from the world, the theism of process thought is naturalistic. Technically it is known as Pantheism,



meaning “everything is in God.” God is one ‘in whom we live and move and have our being’ (*Acts 17:28*). This is not the same position as Pantheism, which identifies God with the world. Pantheism claims that God is everywhere and permeates the world (including us) but is not identified with it. God is within everything, but also transcendent.

Process theologians argue that even God is best understood in terms of relatedness and process, rather than as an unchanging, static, totally transcendent, Being entirely unaffected by the world. God is not Aristotle’s God of unilateral power — the Unmoved Mover. Whitehead’s reinterpretation of God portrays ‘the World as requiring its union with God’ and God, ‘requiring his union with the World’.<sup>14</sup> That is, God and the world are not separate but intimately related and mutually interdependent, just as are all other things (events, entities, actualities).

So Panexperientialism means just that — *all* entities “experience;” and that includes God. Some aspects of God *are* immutable and eternal in the traditional sense, such as, God’s love and compassion. God ever works for good, beauty and justice. This aspect of God Whitehead calls God’s ‘primordial nature’. It is the presence of God in the world — God in all. However, this aspect of God, according to Process Theology, acts by persuasion not coercion.

Importantly, however, there is a second aspect of God in which God experiences the world — God’s ‘consequent’ nature. This is the presence of the world in God. Because of this presence, God feels every feeling. Thus, God, says Whitehead, ‘is the great companion, the fellow sufferer who understands’. In this aspect, God is not immutable; but rather changed through experience and relationship, just as all entities are.

God’s persuasion and compassion are manifest in the life of Jesus. ‘Behold I stand at the door and knock’ (*Rev 3:20*) is the image of God’s

relation to human beings. As Charles Birch put it: ‘There is no forced entry, just patient persuading ... We have our own degree of freedom to respond or not respond’.<sup>15</sup>

God does not interfere with natural law because God *cannot*. God’s power is not the power to manipulate things and people. It is the power of persuasive love working in the world of entities endowed with a degree of self determination. In every event we are addressed by God’s compassionate love as is the whole of creation. The world lives by the incarnation of God in itself.

That God’s power is persuasive not coercive means that God is not unilaterally responsible for any event. God and the world are co-creators:

The ordering of the creation by God and the creatures can be likened to the role of the conductor and players in an orchestra ... Both composer-conductor and the players determine the final outcome ... In so far as man partakes of this creative process, he partakes of the divine ... His true destiny as co-creator of the universe is his dignity and his grandeur.<sup>16</sup>

God is not omniscient in the sense that God knows everything, past, present and to come. God knows the future as a range of possibilities of which one or more may be actualized (shades of quantum indeterminism here). God is omniscient only in this sense. But God is ‘the lure of the world’, urging us (not compelling us) toward an increase in love, compassion and the higher good. We can work with God in making choices that further this end — or not.


We have seen that in Process thought, God has two natures: a primal nature and a consequent nature. God’s primal nature conserves actualized values, cannot be destroyed by death and gives ultimate meaning to the whole creative process. God’s consequent nature reacts to the world (is

moved by the world) and is created moment to moment. This aspect of God feels every feeling in the world. Finally, according to Process Theology:

The world perishes but what has been achieved lives forevermore. Our existence and that of the rest of creation enriches the divine life and that is the ultimate meaning of existence.<sup>17</sup>

## Conclusion

I find in Process Philosophy and its natural theism the 'deeper religion and more subtle science' that can bring about an end to the conflict that has dogged Western religion and science for centuries. I share Birch's view that;

In the vision of God who is not the supreme autocrat but the universal agent of persuasion, who feels all the feelings of the world, I find not only a new way of understanding the world, but also a new way of facing the tasks of today.<sup>18</sup> 

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Dr Brian Harding is a member of Brisbane Lodge, and a former science journalist and researcher.

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**Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.**

—William James (1842 - 1910)

## RADHA BURNIER

### On The Powers Latent in Man

From *The World Around Us: 'On the Watch-Tower' Articles from The Theosophist of 1980-2007*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai 2009.

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Cruelty, oppression and misery play a great part in human life and activity. To a large extent the lust for power is responsible for this state of affairs. Lust for power is often intermixed with the desire for pleasure and profit of various kinds. In Eastern tradition the desire for these three things — power, pleasure and self — is considered to be the source of suffering and pain. The mind which craves for any or all of them is twisted and driven into undertakings which are destructive but which sometimes appear to be laudable. Certain actions appear worthy from the outside but are, in fact, seen to be ignoble and tainted when their motives are examined. Man prides himself on the great knowledge which he has obtained in varied fields, but one wonders how much of his search for knowledge represents a pure interest in truth and how much of it is acquired for ulterior purposes in order to dominate others.

Although not many people have questioned the aims and ethical validity of pursuing knowledge in the more usual areas, there are grave doubts about the desire to acquire psychic powers. Psychic powers and knowledge of the extrasensory are not qualitatively different from the knowledge and power which man has at the physical level. The former is merely an extension of the latter, comparable, for example, to the extension of vision through the use of such instruments as the microscope and the telescope. Thus, clairvoyance, when it is accurate and reliable, is an extension of the field of vision. Neither seeing through a telescope or

microscope, nor becoming a clairvoyant frees a man or helps him to become free from selfish motives. On the other hand, love of power and the lust for new experience have driven people to acquire knowledge in the psychic field. Therefore, many warnings have been given against the acquisition of the lower *siddhi*-s (psychic powers) while there remains even a jot of impurity in the mind.

The true spiritual goal is a state of perfect unselfishness. The spiritual man is one in whom there is no touch of the desire for power or personal profit. 'Not for himself but for the world he lives'. He does not seek to dominate others or to occupy a commanding position. A reading of *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* makes clear that the writer is full of humility and makes no effort to bring the will of another into subjection. As HPB has said, all the *siddhi*-s attend on such a man and he is naturally endowed with inner strength. It is a strength which seeks to serve and not to push or suppress.

The Theosophical Society exists to bring about the regeneration of man, which implies the realization of the deep harmony and unity which underlies existence and is the meaning of life. As said before, the extension of knowledge and, through it, the obtaining of power in the physical and in the psychic fields, brings about no radical change in the nature of man. A magician, a conjurer, a clairvoyant or a researcher in the psychic field is like any other human being, confused and self-centred. His actions do not

tend to be less contradictory or more kind and harmonious because he adds to the knowledge of ESP or is clever at producing phenomena.

The third Object of the Theosophical Society is often misunderstood. It is thought that investigation of ESP, psychic phenomena and so forth, is part of the work to be undertaken by the Society. The meaning of the third Object, however, should be considered in the context of the *raison d'être* of the Society itself, which is to bring about a radical change in humanity from a state of selfishness to one of absolute unselfishness, from a state of conflict and discord to a realization of total harmony and wholeness. The pursuit of ESP research or the extension of one's visual and other responses into a slightly larger area, is trivial from the point of view of the lofty aim set before the Theosophical Society, which calls for discovery at a much deeper level than either the physical or the psychic.

In the depth of human consciousness there lie hidden potentials which few persons even dream of. These blossom in full in the liberated men who are perfect in love, wisdom and selfless purity. He who is concerned for the regeneration of mankind must learn to let the power which is pure love and wisdom, unfold so that he may become a benefactor in the real sense. The powers latent in man cannot be "acquired" because the search for power is destructive and causes suffering. Spiritual powers manifest themselves naturally as a person learns to shed the selfishness with which he has tried to protect himself during long ages and many incarnations.

It is important, especially at this turning point in the history of humanity, that members of the Theosophical Society should concern themselves with essentials rather than with what is unimportant from the point of view of moral and spiritual transformation. There are endless facts about the universe which are as yet unknown. So, we could interminably pursue the details of information obtainable at various levels but which leave us unchanged. The modern world

provides continual testimony to the fact that growth of knowledge does not create a better world. Perhaps it only accentuates problems. What is essential is not more information either in the physical or psychic fields, but a growth in love and wisdom, tranquillity and unselfishness by whose power and virtue humanity can truly redeem itself.

*(The Theosophist November 1990)*

The third Object of the TS is 'to investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man'. To understand the true significance of this Object, it is necessary to examine it in the larger perspective of the overall aim of the TS. We must see that the three Objects of the Society are closely related to each other and the Society has a single, encompassing purpose, comprehending the three Objects. This can be summed up in the words "human regeneration".

Regeneration implies the coming into being of a new quality of mind. The human mind is habituated to dividing, compartmentalizing and labelling everything it sees. It separates the world into nations, races, the high and low, the pleasing and not pleasing. This, to the sorrow of man, ensnares him in rivalry, hatred and the multifarious forms of strife we know.

Universal brotherhood without distinctions is the antidote to this condition. A mind which is not deluded by distinctions is fundamentally different from one which is conditioned and fragmented. The second Object of the Society has truth for its goal; religion, philosophy and science being different ways to it. The perception of truth transforms the mind, and thus the motto 'There is no religion higher than truth' is basic to the Society's purpose. The third Object is also linked with regeneration. Because the three Objects are thought to be unconnected, the Society loses strength and its members often pull in disparate directions.

The third Object does not refer to the

development of such psychic powers as clairvoyance and clairaudience. These are not very different from the expanding of vision by the use of a microscope or telescope. People who see more than others do not necessarily grow out of their ignorance and folly, so long as their minds remain at the same level of perception. They even risk becoming vain and therefore more foolish. What makes a person wiser is understanding the significance of what he sees.

The word 'power' generally has a perverted meaning. It suggests the desire to utilize or dominate others and fulfil personal and selfish ends. Interest in obtaining power is an expression of the greed which is an important characteristic of the average human mind. Not being fully satisfied with material gain, it wants new things, among them power which others do not have. It is not the object of the TS to satisfy such greed. The third Object of the Society refers only to those powers that are completely free of the selfish and personal element, powers which are of the nature of the life and consciousness which we share with all the universe.

Power in its pristine sense means energy. The entire universe is energy, and every atom of matter, every creature, big and small, is a storehouse of power, for life is energy and consciousness is energy. The energy that is life is extraordinarily creative; it is also a manifestation of supreme intelligence and love. Because power, love and intelligence of a sublime order are all equally its aspects, Nature's ways are always good. Destructiveness exists only in the mind of man. As *The Mahatma Letters* say:

... humanity alone is the true source of evil ... The origin of every evil, whether small or great, is in human action, in man, whose intelligence makes him the one free agent in Nature...Therefore it is neither nature nor an imaginary Deity that has to be blamed, but human Nature made vile

by *selfishness*. Think well over these few words.

Man is not his body. He is essentially a focus of consciousness, but his consciousness has a special awareness not possessed by other creatures. This is signified by describing him as the only free agent in Nature. Man is capable of perceiving values which are not concrete, but which are not abstract either, for they have a reality that abstractions do not have. Values appertain to the non-material realm of truth and the special ability of the human consciousness is to rise to this level.

It would be a truism to say that consciousness must be conscious, but observation would show that man's capacity to be conscious is extremely poor even at the mundane level. People constantly miss what is before them, which is made clear by comparing their vision with that of great artists. Why are artists needed to show what everyone should be able to see for himself? Not only are many things at the form level ignored by the average person, but what he misses at subtler levels is far greater.

HPB gave a useful illustration. A savage looking at a marvellous painting does not even realize that it represents a design, because in his mind the colours and forms are not related together. If the consciousness of the savage were to become more refined, he would see a pattern emanating from the previous chaos. He begins to see the relationship between the lines and images in the picture with a sense of wholeness. When his perception becomes still more sensitive, he awakens to the beautiful. There are of course great depths he can reach in the perception of beauty. All this time the canvas remained the same, but as the consciousness becomes more sensitive, it discovers increasing meaning and beauty. The inherent power of consciousness to know — to know beauty, truth, harmony and other values — has expanded. What was latent before has unfolded.

When a person is not conscious of something, he has no relationship with it. Though it may be true that at a profound level everything is related, it is not a fact for one who is not aware. If he passes by a flower without seeing it he has no relationship with it. If he does not give attention to a person, he has no relationship with him. If he is aware only in a restricted way, his relationships are correspondingly inadequate.

Unfortunately we never give our full attention to anything. The mind is distracted by its habits of greed or fear. Restlessness and fragmentation debar it from functioning according to its true nature, which is knowing.

Like the savage in our example we see meaningless colours and images on the canvas of life, but when our latent power to know awakens, there is a new kind of cognition. A hidden world of truth and beauty is revealed in

every movement of life, and its significance is known. When a person sees the inner spiritual nature of all things, truth in all beings, reality in every particle, he is a different being, full of love and wisdom and compassion.

The power to know can expand into omniscience. An Adept, it is said, does not have to go through a laborious process of research to know anything. He merely turns his attention to something and knows it wholly in its essence, because his consciousness has touched the level of universal knowledge.

In the consciousness of man, knowledge, truth, beauty and love are latent. These are all aspects of power. There is a Latin saying *omnia vincit amor*, 'Love conquers all'. This is literally true, for all the truths of the spiritual nature are expressions of the boundless universal energy. ☒

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Based on a survey that they conducted, an American Science Community has published a list of ten most important discoveries or inventions, to some extent a fairly arbitrary selection as follows (available at <<http://www.infoniac.com/science/the-most-important-inventions-and-discoveries-of-the-humanity.html>>):

1. Mendeleev's periodic table of elements
2. Iron processing (Egypt 3500 B.C.)
3. The invention of the transistor by John Bardeen and colleagues in 1948
4. Glass processing around 2200 B.C. in South-Western Iran
5. The optical microscope in the seventeenth century
6. The invention of concrete
7. Steel processing around the year 300 B.C.
8. Brass processing around 5000 B.C. in present-day Turkey
9. The discovery of the diffraction of Roentgen rays in 1912 by Max von Laue
10. Iron processing technology dating back to 1856

But perhaps due to their bias towards science and technology they neglected to list the most important discoveries in the psycho-spiritual field; two of the world's greatest discoveries of all time. One from the field of Vedānta: *Ātman is Brahman*. And the other from Mahāyāna Buddhism: *All is empty of self*. They also left out the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875 and the birth of Carl Gustav Jung in the same year.

# Shopping and the Seven Rays

Tony Fearnside

Accounts of the Seven Rays are often couched in esoteric phraseology as befits their status in occultism and so are hard to express in twenty-first century terminology, or to apply to present day situations. On the other hand they may simply be a list of attributes with examples of people that fit the various Rays; usually supermen or women, such as Winston Churchill or the great composers, and so are also hard to apply to everyday situations.

On many occasions in the past I have been frustrated, annoyed even, by others' shopping habits and, to be honest, I seem to annoy others too, when we shop together. So that the other day when I came across them, the words by Geoffrey Hodson on this topic were like a bolt from the blue or even a message from heaven. In chapter ten of his book *Basic Theosophy The Living Wisdom* (1981, TPH, p. 231-234), Hodson ascribes shopping behaviour to personality traits decided by a person's dominant Ray.

Please take a few minutes to read the original but in the meantime the following abbreviation could help you to understand and tolerate others' shopping behaviour and more.

The First Ray shopper strides into the shop with a pre-determined choice, makes his purchase quickly and strides out again paying little attention to others.

The Second Ray shopper gives due consideration to the wishes and priorities of others, sympathises with the feelings or mood of the shop assistant and proceeds to give a detailed list of his or her needs.

The Third Ray shopper forms a clear idea of what he or she wants as regards material, style, texture and colour and

selects the likely store well beforehand.

The Fourth Ray shopper is more likely to be concerned with the appearance and beauty of the purchased item while the way in which he or she shops will vary according to mood.

The Fifth Ray shopper will probably pay close attention to detail: the shopping expedition will have been carefully planned and the precise details of the purchase will have been decided in advance; price is important, and comparisons with goods in other shops made so that the cheapest can be bought.

The Sixth Ray shopper is universal rather than particular regarding both goods and store and is likely to buy the item suggested by a persuasive shop assistant.

[The Seventh Ray shopper tends to seek perfection regardless of price and is likely to tender more than the price and not to count the change.

Hodson goes on to say that pure Ray types are rare, but even so:

Knowledge of the seven rays is helpful in the comprehension of others, especially of those whose approach to life, methods of obtaining desired ends, and ultimate destiny differ from one's own. Such knowledge can bestow upon those who possess it one of the highest virtues. This is a wide tolerance born of deep understanding, concerning the ideals and actions of other nations and of other individuals (p.237). ❖

Tony Fearnside is a forester by profession, a member of Canberra Branch, and a Third Ray shopper.

# 'My Words are Easy to Understand' — Some themes from the Philosophy of Lao Tzu

Richard Larkin

*The Dao that can be expressed  
is not the Eternal Dao  
the name that can be named  
is not the Eternal Name*

These immortal words begin one of the most widely studied of all spiritual classics, one of the most widely translated books after the Bible and the *Bhagavad Gīta*.

There is more than a degree of irony in the title of this article. It is well known that the *Dao De Jing* of Lao Tzu is anything but easy to understand, being one of the most enigmatic and cryptic of sacred scriptures to be found in our world. As those first four lines suggest, it baffles, teases, frustrates, but also fascinates and inspires. And all this in eighty-one very short “chapters” or verses, which only add up to a small paperback, commentaries included. Yet this small book is one of the basic texts and guiding lights of a world religion, with a mountain of commentaries and scriptures based on its cryptic verses.

While Lao Tzu did not found Daoism, which grew organically from China’s prehistoric past, his *Dao De Jing* did become a foundational scripture for Daoism, shaping and directing the development of Daoism in all its many forms.

There are any number of themes in the *Dao De Jing* that have been explored by generations of Daoist practitioners — themes that range from the mystical to the political. I will touch upon a few of them in this article.

## The Dao

The *Dao* is seen as both manifest and unmanifest reality, encompassing all, forever flowing and

recreating itself, both creating and sustaining the cosmos. It is both creator and at one and the same time the creation. Chapters 1 and 42 describe the creation from unmanifested *Dao* to a single principle (which may be the life force of chi), to a duo of yin and yang, which then combine with the power of chi to create ‘the myriad things’ that make up our universe. At the same time it is also a description of the continuous recreation of the phenomenal world that is happening right now as you read these words. Our cosmos is an imminent event for Lao Tzu!

*One looks for it and does not see it:  
its name is ‘seed’*

*One listens for it and does not hear it:  
Its name is ‘subtle’.*

*One reaches for it and does not feel it:  
its name is ‘small’.*

*These three cannot be separated,  
Therefore, intermingled they form the  
One.*

*Its highest is not light,  
Its lowest is not dark.*

*Welling up without interruption,  
one cannot name it.*

*It returns again to non-existence.  
This is called the formless form,  
the objectless image (Ch 14).*

## Chi (Qi)

Chi is the pure energy coming directly from the source of the *Dao* that sustains all life in our universe. In a more practical sense it is also a vital component in maintaining our health, and plays a key part in Daoist meditation practices (chapter 10 is used as a basis for meditation). The gentle exercises of Tai Chi are a good example of this Daoist yoga.



## Yin and Yang

Our cosmos is in a continual cycle of creation and production — birth, death, renewal. The *Dao* accomplishes this through the interplay of the forces of Yin and Yang. It is often believed that these forces represent feminine and masculine elements in Daoist thought. As far as it goes this is true, but they are much greater than that.

Yin and Yang are cosmic principles that are complementary polarities keeping all of life in a dynamic balance. For example states such as heat, dryness, light and so on, are seen as Yang elements, balanced out by coolness, shade, wetness and so forth, which are Yin elements. Nothing could survive without both of these forces working together to produce and sustain life. Both are necessary and are as important as each other.

Thus Yin and Yang are seen as basic ingredients to fertility, a concept seen throughout the *Dao De Jing*. This is often symbolised in feminine terms, where the *Dao* is called ‘mother’ (in chapters 25 and 52). Water is also an important symbol of *Dao*, in this case as a Yin element, seemingly insubstantial but strong enough to wear down the strongest stone. It is also a symbol of freedom, with the ability to gently move around all obstacles, just as Lao Tzu advised. Of course the paradox here is that a “weak” Yin element can always overcome or dominate a “strong” Yang element. Lao Tzu loved these sorts of paradoxes, which he considered as just part of life.

## Being and non Being, Emptiness and Fullness

The *Dao* is empty like the space between the hills that define the valley (a favourite image of Lao Tzu’s, used throughout his writings). Yet it is this very emptiness that actually defines these things and even makes them what they are.

*For existence and non-existence generate each other.*

*Heavy and light complete each other.*

*Long and short shape each other (Ch 2).*

*The space between Heaven and Earth is like a flute:*

*empty, and yet it does not collapse;*

*when moved, more and more emerges from it (Ch 5).*

Being and nonbeing — these principles are also part of the interplay of Yin and Yang. Non-being is as vital as it is creative. It is the potential and limitless possibility and primal unity of everything just before they manifest into actuality (Chapters 2, 5, 11, 14 and 40 explain this idea in further detail). Without non-being, being will never come about.

## Actionless Action or Wu Wei

This concept has been made famous by Zen Buddhism in the modern world, but its origin is to be found in Lao Tzu’s work. It is a concept vital to the *Dao De Jing* and is found in many of its chapters.

The whole concept is of course a paradox. How can doing nothing be action? What it means is that we all have the ability to do any task in a natural, unaffected way through trained instinct or from spontaneity. When any action is performed in this way, it is done with minimal effort but maximum effect — that is, with great efficiency.

For example, driving your car “on automatic” — you effortlessly drive along the road, paying an easygoing and subconscious attention to the road yet being able to think about other things at the same time. This is a very practical aspect of Lao Tzu’s philosophy, which complements his more cosmic musings (a nice balance of Yin and Yang perhaps!).

All this is part of Lao Tzu’s emphasis on

spontaneity, which he saw as being the way of the natural world. Do things and let things happen in a rhythmic way as happens in nature, and all will turn out for the best.

## De or Teh

Since the entire second portion of his book is named after this concept, it is naturally of great importance. Often translated as “virtue”, *De* is actually a bit more than that. Virtue implies morality and a positive way of life; *De* refers to the power within us that fosters morality and ethical living. *De* is more like an inner strength or power that we all possess in embryonic form. In a sense it is our very own individual portion of the *Dao*. That makes *De* the microcosm of the *Dao*-s macrocosm, reminding one of that old Hermetic aphorism ‘as above, so below’.

An important part of Lao Tzu’s teaching is the cultivation of *De* through the various systems of yoga devised by the ancient Daoist practitioners. One of our problems as human beings is our alienation from the *Dao* and all things natural, leading to a lack of harmony and indeed instability from an imbalance of our Yin/Yang energies. Lao Tzu tells us that this problem can be overcome by mastery of desire, which automatically strengthens one’s portion of *De*. Through yoga and *wu wei*, a purified and rebalanced *De* will develop, which will then lead the practitioner to enlightenment and long life (chapters 12, 19, 23 and 46 refer to this).

*Therefore if you set about your work with  
Dao  
you will be at one in Dao with those who  
have Dao,  
at one in Life with those who have Life...  
(Ch 23).*

The end result of this process will be a new human being, someone in touch with the mystery of Dao, who has found their ‘original face’: relaxed and calm, humble and simple, yet vital and brimming with health. They will be an

‘uncarved block’ like the purest jade, and at the same time as ‘supple as an infant’. They will know who they really are. ❖

## Bibliography:

There are a great many translations of Lao Tzu’s *Dao De Jing*, as well as scholarly works about his book and Taoism in general. I have found the following books to be very useful in my study of Lao Tzu and Taoism over the years:

1. Ames, Roger T. & Hall, David L. (2003) *The Dao De Jing — Making this Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, Ballantine Books., New York, NY.
2. Cleary, Thomas (1993) *The Essential Tao*, HarperOne New York, NY.
3. Cleary, Thomas (1992) *Wen-Tzu Understanding the Mysteries*, Shambhala, Boston, Massachusetts.
4. Moeller, Hans-Georg (2006) *The Philosophy of the Daodejing*, Columbia University Press., New York, NY.
5. Wei, Henry (1968) *The Guiding Light of Lao Tzu*, Quest, Wheaton, IL.
6. Wilhelm, Richard (1987) *Tao Te Ching*, Arcana, London.

The following book is also a very good general introduction to Taoism — its history, philosophical developments and practices:

7. Wong, Eva (1997) *The Shambhala Guide to Taoism*, Shambhala, Boston Massachusetts.

All quotes used in this article are from Richard Wilhelm’s translation.

Richard Larkin works at the national headquarters as the Membership Secretary. He is also the President of the Theosophical Order of Service in Sydney.



## The Theosophical Society in Australia

### Minutes of the 2011 Annual Convention Business Meeting

The Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia commenced at 11.45 am on Friday 14 January 2011 at 484 Kent Street, Sydney.

#### CONVENTION CHAIR

The Meeting was chaired by the National President, Dara Tatrav.

#### ROLL-CALL OF VOTING DELEGATES AND PROXIES

In accordance with Rule 15(2) of the National Rules, the named voting delegates and the votes of the Lodges/Branches certified on Form 4 of the National Rules had to be received by the National Secretary two weeks prior to this meeting in order to be valid. However, due to the flood crisis in Brisbane, the Annual Convention Business Meeting was rescheduled and held at the National Headquarters in the presence of members of the national Executive Committee and members of the National Council who acted as Proxies. The roll call of the valid voting delegates was read out as follows:

New South Wales/A.C.T: Dianne Kynaston; South Australia/Northern Territory: Patricia Hale; Tasmania: Denise Frost; Western Australia: George Wester; Victoria: Ken Edwards.

This change of Voting Delegates was necessitated in view of the forced cancellation of Convention.

#### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 2010 CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING

The Meeting noted that the Lodges/Branches had voted at Lodge/Branch Convention Meetings to confirm the Minutes of the 2010 Convention Business Meeting held at the Australian maritime College, Launceston on 17 January 2010, as published in the June 2010 issue of Theosophy in Australia.

#### NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2010

It was noted that the National President's Annual Report for the Year ended 31 August 2010 as published in the November 2010 issue of Theosophy in Australia, had previously been voted on and accepted in the Lodge/Branch Convention Business Meetings. The meeting expressed its appreciation and thanks to the National President for her Annual Report.

#### NATIONAL TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2010

It was noted that the National Treasurer's Report for the Year ended 31 August 2010 as published in the supplement to the November 2010 issue of Theosophy in Australia, had previously been voted on and accepted in the Lodge/Branch Convention Business Meetings. The meeting expressed its appreciation and thanks to the National Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer and the Finance Committee for the extensive work they had done during the year.

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2010, AND AUDITOR'S REPORT THEREON

The Financial Statements, Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 August 2010 and the Auditor's Report thereon were presented for comments or questions. It was noted that the Lodges/Branches had voted to accept the Balance Sheet, Income and Expenditure Account and the Auditor's Report as published with the November 2010 issue of Theosophy in Australia at their individual Convention Business Meetings.

#### BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2010

In the absence of the National Treasurer detained in Queensland due to the flood the Assistant Treasurer reported that the National Council previously approved the Budget at its meeting in June 2010, and that the National Council had authorised the Executive Committee to approve any subsequent necessary

minor amendments after the completion of the annual accounts. The Budget for the current financial year, as published with the November 2010 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*, was received at the Meeting and discussion was invited.

### **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

The Assistant Treasurer reported that, following the recommendation of the National Council, Storey Blackwood, Chartered Accountants of Sydney, were reappointed as Auditors for 2011.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICERS** January 2011 National Council Meeting  
The National Secretary reported that at its meeting of 13-14 January 2011 the National Council had appointed the following people to their respective offices for 2011:

National Vice-President – Denise Frost  
National Treasurer – Donald Fern  
Assistant Treasurer – Beatrice Malka  
Chair of Rules Committee – Donald Fern  
Editor of *Theosophy in Australia* – Dara Tatray

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT RESULTS –State Representatives for NSW/ACT, Queensland and Western Australia:**

The National Secretary reported that as two valid nominations were received for all three States, a ballot was necessary. The following members were elected to office in the three Electoral States:

NSW/ACT: Dianne Kynaston

Western Australia: George Wester

Victoria: Georgina Fode

The results of the Election were published in the November 2010 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*.

Subsequent to this and due to the resignation of the State Representative for Queensland in September 2010, a Call for Nominations to fill a casual vacancy for that State was made. As only one valid nomination was received, no ballot was necessary. The following member was declared to office:

Queensland: Geoffrey Harrod

In January 2010, due to the resignation of the State Representative for Victoria, a Call for Nominations to fill a casual vacancy in that State has been made.

### **VOTE ON NOTICES OF MOTION**

No Notices of Motion were received.

### **PLACE AND TIME OF NEXT CONVENTION**

The Chair reported that the 2012 Convention would be held in Brisbane at St. John's College, Brisbane, between 21 and 25 January 2012. The next Convention Business Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm on Saturday 21 January 2012 during that Convention.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Executive Committee: The National Secretary reported that the following were appointed as members of the national Executive Committee for 2011: Dara Tatray - National President, Zehra Bharucha- National Secretary, Donald Fern - National Treasurer (all ex officio) together with Beatrice Malka, Dianne Kynaston, Ken Edwards, Dai Trandang and Marlene Bell.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting at 12.06 pm. 

## Calendar of Events

# National TS Centres

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

**Friday 21 October to Monday 24 October (afternoon)**

Theme : *Heaven and Earth – Change and Continuity*

*An Exploration of Taoist Thought, the I Ching and Tai Chi Chuan*

Presenters: Horacio Paz and Dara Tatray

### **Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, Tugalong Rd, Canyonleigh, NSW**

**Friday 11 November (10.30am start) to Sunday 13 November (after afternoon tea)**

Theme : *Heaven and Earth – Change and Continuity*

*An Exploration of Taoist Thought, the I Ching and Tai Chi Chuan*

Presenters: Horacio Paz and Dara Tatray

Horacio Paz is a proficient teacher of Tai Chi Chuan and a long-term practitioner. This retreat will provide the opportunity to explore Taoist thought and Tai Chi Chuan through talks, discussions and movement.

### **2012 National Convention—Brisbane**

**Saturday 21 January to Wednesday 25 January. Post-convention outing on Thursday 26th.**

Theme: The 2012 convention will cover the territory of the third Object of the Society — ‘To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being’.

More information will be available in the September issue of the magazine. Please note the date of the Convention outing.



## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF STATE REPRESENTATIVES FOR EACH OF THE ELECTORAL STATES OF Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia/Northern Territory

In accordance with Rules 17(1)(c) and 19, the current terms of office of the State Representatives for Queensland (Geoffrey Harrod), Tasmania (Denise Frost) and South Australia/Northern Territory (Patricia Hale) will expire at the appointment of new State Representatives towards the end of 2011. Geoffrey Harrod and Denise Frost are eligible for re-election.

Nominations are invited for the election of one State Representative for each of Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia/Northern Territory. Nominations may be made by a Lodge (Branch) in the relevant Electoral State, or by any two Members resident in the relevant Electoral State who have been Members in Good Standing for the last two years prior to the nomination.

To be eligible for election as State Representative, the candidate must be resident in the relevant Electoral State, must have been a Member in Good Standing for the last three years, and have served for at least one year on the Executive Committee of a Lodge (Branch) by the time of the election.

The State Representative elected in each State will represent the Lodges (Branches), Groups and Members in that State in all meetings and affairs of the National Council. They shall also liaise with all Lodges (Branches), Groups and National Members in their Electoral State and shall represent their views to the National Council and to the National Society Officers, as appropriate. As well, they shall receive and deal with representations from individual Members within their Electoral State, and shall refer the representations where requested or deemed necessary.

A photograph of the candidate, a curriculum vitae, relevant biographical data, and a personal statement by the candidate, which may be edited as necessary for distribution in consultation with the candidate, must accompany all nominations. All nominations should be on Form 8, endorsed with the consent of the Nominee, and reach the National Secretary by close of business on 21 September 2011. Copies of Form 8 can be obtained from the National Secretary, The Theosophical Society in Australia, 4th Floor, 484 Kent St, Sydney NSW 2000, or from your Lodge/Branch President or Secretary.

## Reviews



*On Having No Head — Zen and the Rediscovery of the Obvious*, Douglas E. Harding, Inner Directions Publishing, 2002.

This book, originally written in 1961, makes a unique contribution to the collected works of spiritual ideas in the world today. It is based on an inspired moment that Douglas Harding had while walking through the Himalayas as a young man. His quite simple and very obvious realization was that, without using a mirror, we can have no visual experience of our face or any part of our head. Instead, where the head should be, we experience an empty space and on closer examination, we can see, in fact, that this space has no limits, boundaries or edges. It is the space that contains all we see when we look out at the world; at least theoretically, a space that holds the universe.

This is the essence of Harding's remarkable vision and, as he says in Chapter 4, it is a vision that we are all born with, but lose gradually as we grow to adulthood and learn to see ourselves as others do.

For years after this experience, Harding explored the ancient wisdom traditions and discovered very similar descriptions given by sages in all the mystical traditions, from Zen to Sufism, Taoism to Christianity.

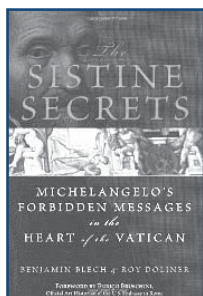
For Harding, the beauty of this path as a way to become "self realized" is its obvious simplicity and its effortlessness, allowing us to practise this method anywhere in our busy lives. He does warn, however, that this very simplicity could be a hindrance for many people, especially those who are more intellectually inclined. They may really struggle with the significance of this vision. I suspect that there is some truth in this and that this path would be most suited to those who have had some exposure to the non-dual teachings of Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Advaita Vedānta or Buddhism.

Still, this book remains a brief and easy to read introduction to Harding's vision. Due to its brevity, it only hints at various techniques and exercises that can be used to enhance the experience, and readers are encouraged to refer to other books for this information. A list of such titles is given at the end of the book. For more practical ideas, I would also recommend a book called: *Seeing Who You Really Are* by Richard Lang, a student of Harding's.

Despite its simplicity, *On Having No Head* does touch on some of the deeply profound implications of this shift in perception, such as creation itself and the nature of God.

It may be simply written but it provides much food for thought and I recommend this book to anyone who is fearlessly open to exploring new ideas or new ways of seeing the world and our place in it. ✦

**Review by Bernard Michel**



*The Sistine Secrets* Michelangelo's Forbidden Messages in the Heart of the Vatican **Rabbi Benjamin Blech and Roy Doliner Harper Collins, USA, paperback, 2009.**

**M**ichelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) needs little introduction; he was revered in his lifetime and admired by popes who sought his talents and immortalised themselves on earth. In *The Sistine Secrets* Rabbi Blech and Roy Doliner (a Vatican tour guide) set out to convey hidden meanings Michelangelo inserted into the frescoes he painted in the Sistine Chapel — which seemingly reflected his ideals of universal tolerance — ‘a lost mystical message of universal love, contrary to the Church doctrine in Michelangelo’s day, but true to the original teachings of the Bible’.

The excellent foreword by the Art Historian, Professor Enrico Bruschini, reminds us of Michelangelo’s strong connections to Neo-Platonism and Humanism, his interest in Judaism and Kabbalah, and the influence on him of Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and Poliziano.

The pictorial language of encoding had been used previously in the Chapel, when Botticelli painted the oak tree, the family symbol of Pope Sixtus IV, above the heads of the pagans being driven out by Moses — a rather unflattering allegory. According to Blech and Doliner, Michelangelo took this technique to greater lengths to promote understanding between Jews and Christians; and between reason and faith.

Directly above the papal throne the artist depicted a rather angry-looking Amminadab, with the recent cleaning process revealing a bright yellow circle on his left arm — the badge of shame forced upon Jews after the Fourth Lateran Council. With Amminadab sitting twenty metres above the Pope’s head, it would have been difficult for the pontiff to detect this jibe.

In the *Creation* fresco a young woman looks directly and intently at Adam — the left arm of God draped around her shoulder as His right hand is about to connect the divine spark to Adam. Opting away from the popularly held opinion that she is Eve, the authors interpret her as Sofia, by quoting the Kabbalistic view that man was created through Chochmah, Wisdom, or Sofia.

*The Last Judgement* on the altar wall, showing the myriad of souls rising or descending to their fate, also gives up some of its secrets. Contrary to Church teaching of the time, which denied that Jews could be part of the Elect, among the Righteous Souls are two distinctly Jewish men, identifiable by their caps. An angel indicates them with his outstretched finger, lest we miss the point. This was a daring stand in the sixteenth century.

Though their interpretations are intriguing, there is much speculation by the authors, with little direct evidence to support their theories. This book does, however, demonstrate the deep roots of Neo-Platonism and Humanism within what we consider to be mainstream history. I liked its message to view things deeply, to be aware of what we see, as we are encouraged in the Theosophical Society to examine everything freely for ourselves. The authors claim that the artist was representing an idea of universal love, with many messages necessarily hidden, in order to preach reconciliation between reason and faith — ideals which definitely incorporate all three of the Society’s objects. ❖

**Review by Janice Scarabottolo**



## NEWS and NOTES

### Former National President Visit

We were delighted to enjoy the company of our former National President, Linda Oliveira, and Pedro Oliveira, while on their brief holiday and family visit in Sydney. Other welcome visitors to the national headquarters recently were George and Gailene Wester from Perth.

### Art, Love and Life

Sorry to disappoint, but this notice merely concerns an art exhibition at the Queensland Art Gallery in South Brisbane (16 April – 7 August 2011) showcasing the works of Ethel Carrick and E. Phillips Fox, both of whom were TS members. Ethel Carrick-Fox lived at the Manor in Sydney for some time after her husband's death, and worked at the Garden School run by members of the Theosophical Society.

### Evidence for Biological Life on Other Planets

The *Journal of Cosmology* reported in its 5 March 2011 issue that fossils of ancient bacteria, originating from comets and other planets, have been discovered in Antarctica. Some species of this blue-green algae are related to the Earth's generic species, but others appear to be completely alien. These findings suggest that life (read, biological life) is not restricted to our planet but is to be found elsewhere in the solar system, and beyond. These findings do not prove that life on Earth came from other planets, but they are certainly consistent with that claim, originally forwarded by Chandra Wickramasinghe and Fred Hoyle. The article

may be accessed at <http://journalofcosmology.com/>. Please note: this does not necessarily mean that human beings are cloned aliens!

### Call for Help

This is not a call for donations, but an equally urgent call for written contributions to *Theosophy in Australia*. We need new writers, as well as good students who may not see themselves as professional writers but are nonetheless willing to spend a little time putting pen to paper for the sake of the TS in Australia. We have all benefitted a great deal from our membership in the Society, but without a steady exchange of ideas and communication of the same, the Society will not continue to flourish. An article does not have to be the definitive, last word on a given subject. It doesn't have to come to firm conclusions. It is just as valid to explore and to wonder, and that may in fact be more inspiring to the readers. This is not an academic journal.

There is a maximum word length of 2,500 but much shorter pieces would also be welcome. Even 500 words or so on a suitable subject would give food for thought. The decisions of the editorial committee as to whether to publish a submission or not, are based on a number of factors, especially: suitability of subject-matter; whether or not the piece is the author's own work; whether or not quotations and ideas have been properly attributed to their source; and to a lesser extent how well written or polished the article is. Minor editing, and even slightly more than minor editing, are just two of the services we offer in return.

## A Few Tips on Writing for the Magazine

Your life as a writer will be much easier if you gather material over the long term, recording interesting quotations, anecdotes, facts and so on in a notebook, diary or computer file; for ready reference when you are called upon to write. This is in any case quite an enjoyable occupation and a great way to keep one's thoughts in order. You may also like to review your life and write down any situations or experiences which might serve as good or bad examples to others, or as interesting illustrations of something you might end up speaking about. It is also a good idea to write down your insights either in a journal or some other form. Having a good stock on hand of things to draw on when writing a talk or an article helps; especially if you don't live close to a good library.

When preparing an article there is no need to aim too high. A few key points looked at from different angles or explored deeply are more than enough. Ideally there should be one main theme, supported by evidence or teachings from the relevant literature, as well as interesting points to draw interest and hold attention. One science lecturer has said that when asked how many main points we could hope to get over in a lecture spanning an hour, he would say 'one,' adding that if the average member of the audience can remember with interest and enthusiasm one main theme, the lecture has been a great success (Lawrence Bragg, 'The Art of Talking about Science', *Science*, 30 Dec 1966). The same would most likely apply to an article. In this as in so many areas of life less is more.

Once you have your article pretty right you may like to consider giving it another polish. There shouldn't be any padding, so ask yourself at every point whether it is an interesting point to make and one which supports the overall theme. If not, then throw it overboard. It is very easy to

go off on a tangent without realising it (in fact almost inevitable). Putting your first or second draft aside for a few days will enable you to take a more objective look at it. Very few writers of even great ability can submit a first draft to a publisher. It is, however, equally important to know when to stop. We live in a realm of imperfection. Nothing will ever be "finished" so we need to know when enough is enough. Try to avoid the tendency to work on an article or a talk until it is overcooked.

## Very simply

Pick something that you are passionate about, or wish to bring to your fellow members' attention, do a little research and then present your findings in as clear and concise a manner as you can. If you follow the formula of laying strong foundations in the beginning — with a clear introduction or a clear indication of what you are going to say; then present your supporting arguments or the results of your research in the middle; and finally reiterate the key themes at the end, then you can't really go wrong. Of course writing is a highly personal affair and you need not stick to this formula at all; but it is not bad advice if you do not know how to begin.

## Remote Viewing Tips

The International Remote Viewing Association has a tremendous website, with a wealth of historical material and tips on remote viewing (<http://www.irva.org/>).

For any reader alarmed at the prospect of TS members intentionally developing psychic powers, I might point out a wonderful insight of Russel Targ's, quoted in a previous issue:

... our experience with remote viewing shows without a doubt that we can learn to expand our unconditioned awareness through all of space and time — to directly explore the timeless experience described by the mystics. ❖

# 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  
Email addresses:

National President: pres@austheos.org.au  
National Secretary: natsec@austheos.org.au  
National Treasurer: treasurer@austheos.org.au  
General: tshq@austheos.org.au  
Editor TinA: pres@austheos.org.au  
Education Coordinator: pres@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: Senior Citizens Club 10 Watson Street, Turner ACT 2612

8.00pm 1st Tuesday 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 & 7.00pm Wednesdays  
Members Meeting: 2.00 pm 2nd Saturday each month

President: Ruth Keenan  
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

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

Meet: Carrington Community Centre, Carrington NSW 2294

8.00pm 2nd Friday each month (excluding January)

Study group (members) confirm dates with Lodge

President: Danny Boyd  
Tel: 02 4937 4225

### *Blue Mountains Group:*

Meet: Springwood NSW  
11.00am 1st Tuesday each month  
Coordinator: Kirk Holst  
Tel: 02 4759 3160

### *Gosford Group:*

Meet: The Neighbour Centre, Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250  
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month

Coordinator: Marianne Fraser  
Tel: (02) 4339 7118  
E-mail: marifraser256@gmail.com  
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard  
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

## *Northern Beaches Group:*

Postal address: c/ Mina Singh Batra, 22 Woodland Street, Balgowlah Heights, NSW 2093  
Meet: c/- above address  
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month  
Coordinator: Patricia Witts  
Tel: 02 9450 1362

## *Queensland*

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

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd, Atherton QLD 4883

Meet: Meeting Room, Atherton Neighbourhood Centre, Mabel St, Atherton, 2nd Saturday of month

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  
http://www.theosophyqld.org.au

Meet: 10.00am & 12.00 noon Wednesday and 7.30pm Friday  
President: Phillipa Rooke  
Secretary: Angela Read

### *Caboollure Group*

Meet: Caboollure Senior Citizens Hall  
Hasking St Caboollure 7.00 pm Mondays  
Coordinator: Position Vacant

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

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club, Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556 7.00pm Thursdays

President: Jean Carroll

Tel: 07 5443 4733  
Email: oneness@tpg.com.au  
Secretary: Penny Houghton

### *Toowoomba Group:*

Meet: Laurel Bank Park Hall, 50 Hill St, Toowoomba

1st Wed at 7pm and 3rd Sunday at 2:30pm of each month (Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)

Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter  
Coordinator: Barry Bowden

Secretary: Julie Murphy  
Tel: 0418210350  
Email: murphyj@usq.edu.au

## *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 1.00pm 4th Friday of every month. Please contact Lodge for additional meeting dates.  
President: Sheryl Malone  
Secretary: Audrey Brimson

## *Tasmania*

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

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000  
www.theosophicaltas.websyte.com.au

Meet: 8.00pm Monday  
President/Secretary: Helen Steven  
Tel: (03) 6228 3048

### *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

Library open Wednesdays from 2 pm

President: Jenny Haslem

Secretary: Ruth Holt

Tel: 0448 397 246

## *Victoria*

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

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624

email: meltheos@netspace.net.au

Meet: 2.30pm Saturday & 6.30pm Tuesday

President: Dorothy Darby

Secretary: Ken Edwards

### *Mornington Peninsula Group:*

Coordinator: Daphne Standish

Tel: 03 9589 5439

Meet: Mt. Eliza Neighbourhood Centre,

Canadian Bay Road first Sunday of the month

11am-3.30pm (meditation - lunch -

Theosophy)

Email: 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 Tuesday

President: Harry Bayens

Secretary: Deborah Weymouth

### *Mount Helena Retreat Centre:*

1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082

Tel: 08 9572 1513

Caretaker/Manager: Elizabeth Collins

## *Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre, Springbrook*

2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook QLD 4213

Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211

email: bhora@bigpond.net.au

Caretaker: Barry Hora

Administrator: Zehra Bharucha

Tel: 02 9264 6404

