



AHIMSA IN PRACTICE

10



PAYING ATTENTION

12



THE THEOSOPHICAL
PATH OF MEDITATION

18



WHAT IS A HARMLESS
RESPONSE TO HARM?

22

In this issue

LIVING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

From the Editor's Desk	3
Poem: <i>Be Peaceful</i> by Clive Conland	3

FEATURES

Ahimsa in Practice	10
<i>Barbara Hebert</i>	
Paying Attention	12
<i>Betty Bland</i>	
Ahimsa and the Golden Rule	14
<i>www.theosophy.world</i>	
The Theosophical Path of Meditation	18
<i>Pablo Sender</i>	
What is a harmless response to harm?	22
<i>John Algeo</i>	
What is Our Priority?	26
<i>Radha Burnier</i>	

BOOKS

Recommended Reading	27
---------------------------	----

THEOSOPHY IN ACTION

Diary Dates	3
President's Perspective: <i>The Power of Ahimsa and Kindness</i>	4
International President: <i>The Three Pillars of Practice</i>	7
16th Triennial Conference of the Indo-Pacific Federation	15
129th National Convention of the TSNZ feedback	16
Theosophical Order of Service	28
Vegetarians Today	30
Resources	31
Directory	32
<i>Humanity</i> – words from Helena Petrovna BlavatskyINSIDE BACK COVER	

NOTICES

TSNZ School of Theosophy	2
<i>www.theosophy.world</i>	2
Theosophy and Science	26

2026 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY

2-6 May in Auckland

How to Contemplate Eternal Truths

Director of Studies – Pablo Sender from the U.S.A.

In this program, we will explore spiritual evolution through the practice of meditation and contemplation, drawing on the teachings of Blavatsky, Besant, Hodson, Jinarajadasa, Krishnamurti and others, to outline different methods and techniques for reaching higher consciousness.

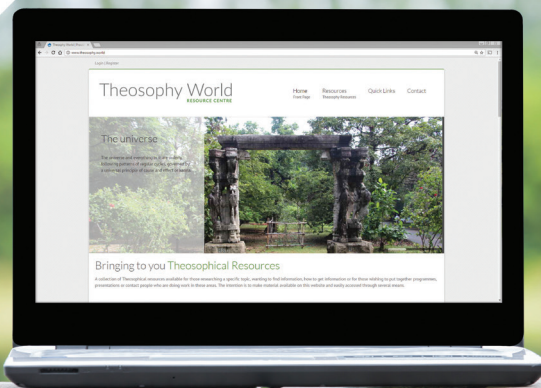
We will explore the process of contemplation and the various methods described in Theosophical literature, including:

- Contemplation of spiritual truths
- Causal consciousness
- Beauty
- Love and devotion
- Virtue
- The manifested One Life
- The Ultimate Reality



Pablo joined the Theosophical Society in Argentina in 1996, and later stayed at the International TS Headquarters in Adyar, Chennai for two years. Pablo is a Microbiologist with a Ph.D. in Biological Science. He gives lectures and conducts classes, seminars and retreats around the world, in both Spanish and English. He currently lives at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California, with his wife, Michele, where he continues to work for the TS in America and the Krotona Library.

INTRODUCING



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KINDNESS

Be kind whenever possible.
It is always possible.

Dalai Lama

No act of kindness,
no matter how small,
is ever wasted.

Aesop

In a world, where
you can be anything,
be kind.

Anon

Ahimsā

Ahimsā is a Sanskrit word meaning non-injury or non-violence as a philosophy of living. It implies the avoidance of harming any living creature by deeds, words and thoughts. In Theosophy, *ahimsa* is basic to spiritual development, in line with concepts of universal kinship and unity.

Writing around this theme of ahimsa or kindness, are Richard Sell (p.4), Tim Boyd (p.7), Barbara Hebert (p.10), John Algeo (p.22) and Radha Burnier (p.26). See also *Recommended Reading* (p.27).

TS leader, Betty Bland encourages us to stop and think (p.12) and meditation is the theme of Pablo Sender (p.18). Feedback from the TSNZ Convention (p.16) may encourage you to participate in the TSNZ School of Theosophy (p.2) and the Indo-Pacific Federation Conference in Perth in October (p.15).

May you enjoy the autumn days and this issue of *TheoSophia*.

Pamela Zane

Editor

editor@theosophy.nz

Contributions of poems or articles are welcome. Articles will be considered if up to 1,500 words, and sent as an email attachment to the editor. Note that *TheoSophia* articles will also be used in part or whole on the website: www.theosophy.nz

TSNZ YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/@theosophynz>

Be Peaceful

Be peaceful
in this turbulent world

Take strength and understanding
of the Divine Love

Which actively permeates and enlivens
this world, all worlds.

Connect with the Christ consciousness
indwelling and be in unity with all.

The more we embody with love this joyous,
active yet powerful peace of the Divine

The more we counter aggression,
selfishness and negativity.

May this "Peace of the Lord
be always with you".

Clive Conland © 5/16 February 2014

DIARY DATES

2026

May 2-6	School of Theosophy with Pablo Sender
August 8-9	Immersion Weekend
October 2-7	16th Triennial Conference of the Indo-Pacific Federation, Perth, Australia

Information can be found on our website under *events*:
<https://theosophy.nz/events>

FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2026		
June	Art and Theosophy	1 April
September	Art and Theosophy	1 July
December	Living in an Interconnected World	1 October

Contact the editor at editor@theosophy.org.nz or
visit our website for the guidelines: www.theosophy.nz

National President of TSNZ, Richard Sell considers...

The Power of Ahimsa and Kindness



*A*himsa is a Sanskrit term which means advocating a philosophy of non-violence and refraining from doing harm to any living being. This concept is found notably in Eastern religions like Jainism and Buddhism although in the West, it is rather limited to this narrow definition.

Ahimsa is much more than a mere passive state of 'non-violence'; it encompasses expressions of love, kindness and dynamic compassion towards oneself and others. This practice is engrained in the ancient wisdom of the Yoga Sutras and serves as a guide for how we can live in harmony with all living beings and nature. More than ever, it is time for humanity to wake up to the practice and healing effects of compassion and kindness.

A key principle of Theosophy is the Unity of all Life. When we first come across this principle it is hard to reconcile it with what our eyes see; a world immersed in strife, people embattled with each other, bruised and reduced by conflict. Nations, cultures, religions all demonstrate some aspect of this.

However, as a deeper enquiry into Unity occurs, we see evidence of it all around us. A study of nature clearly demonstrates the reliance of components of an ecosystem on each other so that they function as one – think of wetlands and the rainforest ecosystems. In the human body, we have separate parts but know they operate as one – our fingers, hand, arm, all operate as one unit. The arm, leg, heart, brain combine to form one entity we call a human being. They are parts with their own functions but operate as a whole and cannot function properly without each other.

Humanity is like this – separate parts, individual beings, but one human family. Past Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern voiced this fact when she said during the tragic terror attack in Christchurch mosques in 2022 that there is no

separation between peoples – of the Muslim community she said 'They are us'. From this viewpoint, we may introduce karma to the equation. Cause and effect is a natural law that has been demonstrated scientifically, morally, spiritually and philosophically for millennia.

In studying karma even briefly, it is obvious that if harm is put out, harm returns to the sender. If love and kindness is sent forth, this too, like a boomerang, returns to the sender. From an altruistic point of view, it is without doubt the right thing to do in sending kind thoughts, loving emotions and selfless deeds out into the world; to animals and people alike. Even from the selfish point of view, energy always comes full circle and so a kindly and harmless way of living will make its way back to the originating source. This will happen even if the motive is not so pure as the altruistic one.

When humankind does not practise *Ahimsa*, it leads to tragic karmic results. These energies manifest in subtler planes and eventually break out on the physical plane in wars, disease and natural disasters. It can be a Karmic reaping on a national and sometimes world scale. These effects can be seen by those trained and sensitive enough, long before they manifest physically.

In 1888, H. P. Blavatsky saw the causes and coming effects of Humanity's violation of *Ahimsa*, when she wrote of her karmic visions¹ "The whole world is hushed in breathless expectation. Not a wife or mother, but is haunted in her dreams by the black and ominous storm-cloud that overhangs the whole of Europe. The cloud is approaching... it comes nearer and nearer... Oh woe and horror!... I foresee once more for earth the suffering I have already witnessed. I read the fatal destiny upon the brow of the flower of Europe's youth [Prevision of the Great War 1914-18]. But if I live and have the power, never, oh never shall my country take part in it again! No, no, I will not see:

The glutton death gorged with devouring lives...
 I will not hear –
 robb'd mothers' shrieks
 While from men's piteous wounds and horrid gashes
 The lab'ring life flows faster than the blood!..."

Here Madame Blavatsky graphically illustrates the link between harmfulness to other beings and its unavoidable workings out as a release of destructive energy. Each person can add to or detract from this mass of thought forms and energy by taking responsibility for their own conduct – in thought, speech and action. When Humanity does this *en-masse*, the burden of world karma will be much reduced or offset. This in itself will improve world conditions immensely in the future, for yet unborn generations. These future beings will of course include future Soul incarnations of ourselves, reaping the efforts made now, when the Soul once again puts forth a finger into the waters of life on the planet.

Kindness and compassion is a human duty towards each other. The Dalai Lama is arguably the world's most known exponent of *Ahimsa* and compassion. He says that love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries, and without them humanity cannot survive. He puts it very clearly when he states, 'My religion is very simple. My religion is Kindness.'

The Dalai Lama has a lot to say on this topic, as we would expect from such an eminent religious world figure. He explains that when we feel love and kindness towards others, it not only makes them feel loved and cared for, but it helps us also to develop inner peace and happiness. This has an effect on our mental health, emotional well-being and physical health; all three are interwoven. For example, trauma from the mental and emotional aspects of ourselves can manifest on the physical plane as illness. Stress, and anxiety can cause tissue in the body to wear out, so germs can enter and thereby cause ulcers in the stomach and so forth.

It is well worth stating that love and kindness is not weakness; it is strength. It takes courage to stand up for one's principles in the face of adversity. Ridicule, fear, retaliation are often the reply from an unfeeling world – nevertheless, these human essentials are the rock and foundation on which humanity is born and point the way to the future, towards which all is evolving. Those that recognise this fact have their feet placed firmly on the path towards enlightenment. Tibetan teacher and lama Rinpoche Tarthang Tulka said,

Compassion is the bridge, the spiritual foundation for peace, harmony, and balance... Once we recognise all that we have in common with others, a feeling of compassion naturally arises and we can no longer treat other people with such indifference. We more easily understand their problems, and as we learn how to heal ourselves, we begin to use our knowledge to help them as well.

And if there is any doubt as to whether *Ahimsa* and kindness really do benefit mankind or even the individual, there is plenty of scientific research that backs up this premise. In one psychology experiment, participants played an economic game in which they could donate some of their payment to another participant. Before and after each game, the participants' stress hormone, cortisol, was measured. Those who behaved selfishly had much higher stress levels, laying the foundations for increasing ill health and a low immune system than those who were more generous². This finding is part of an increasing body of research that demonstrates how kindness benefits the donor, supporting good health and even relieving depression. Acts of generosity, too, for example, can relieve melancholy and inertia, reconnecting us with life's vitality.³ I. K. Taimni explains the power of *Ahimsa* well when he wrote,

An individual who has developed *Ahimsa* carries about him an invisible aura surcharged with love and compassion even though these may not be expressed at the emotional level. Also, because love is the power which binds together in a spiritual union all the separated fragments of the One Life, any individual who is imbued with such love is inwardly attuned to all living creatures and automatically inspires confidence and love in them.

We can easily cultivate kindness and *Ahimsa* in our daily life through some simple ways of being. Here

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are five helpful suggestions:

1. **Practise mindful communication** – be conscious of words spoken, are they kind rather than harsh? Even if we disagree with someone, we can still engage in a respectful way.

“Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule” – *Siddhartha Gautama Buddha*

2. **Cultivate empathy** – Put yourself in another’s shoes, ask how do they feel? Offer service to others – this is sure to foster empathy and compassion within oneself.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” – *Maya Angelou*

3. **Foster active kindness** – create an environment around you which encourages kindness, inspire others to kindness by your own example, demonstrate *Ahimsa* and kindness in everyday living.

“Compassion is a verb” – *Thich Nhat Hanh*

4. **Personal conduct** – reflect on one’s own behaviour in all situations, correct any undesirable thoughts, emotions and deeds to that which you deem desirable, based on your understanding of ‘right conduct’ and ‘right living’.

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make” – *Jane Goodall*

5. **Extend kindness to yourself** – we are often our own harshest critic. This can lead to mental stress and negative thinking. We are divine beings, we all make mistakes, forgive yourself and move on taking the lesson with you. Be kind to your higher Self – meditate!

“The wound is the place where the Light enters you” – *Rumi*

Healer and seer, Geoffrey Hodson tells of a future for those following the pathway of *Ahimsa* and kindness; he writes in *The Initiate Life*,

Loving service and harmlessness and purity produce karmic freedom, whilst yoga as a way of life and meditation help him towards freedom of consciousness. This every Master has done, and this every aspirant to Masterhood must do.

REFERENCES

1 Karmic Visions – *Lucifer*, June 1888

2 *The Power of the New Spirituality*, William Bloom citing Elizabeth W Dunn , *On the Costs of Self-interested Economic Behaviour* in *Journal of Health and Psychology* 15, no 4

3 *The Power of the New Spirituality*, William Bloom citing Luks, *Healing Power of Doing Good: Why Kindness is Good for you*.

Tenderness and kindness
are not signs of weakness and despair,
but manifestations of strength and resolution.

Kahlil Gibran

THE THREE PILLARS OF PRACTICE

Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society, elucidates a long-standing formula.

In all traditions that aim at self-transformation, or human regeneration, there is a necessary emphasis on the need for practice. Some people might resist the discipline and time required to develop and persist in a practice, thinking of it as just another process of conditioning, which it is, but it is paradoxical. Spiritual practice is a process of conditioning that leads to the possibility of freedom from conditioning.

The preoccupation with practice in spiritual and religious circles is based on a couple of observations. The first is that whether we recognise it or not, we are continually practising something. For those living what has been described as the “unobserved life”, the training to which they submit is a constant conditioning that fixes them firmly within the limitations of the material world and that level of emotion and thought that aligns with it. Caught up in the pressing needs and wants of the body and personality for comfort, recognition, wealth, health and a happiness based on the satisfaction of perpetually renewing desires, there is little room for the “still small voice” of the soul, or Inner Self.

A second observation fuelling the need for a practice that turns one’s attention inward is the age-old truism that “Practice makes perfect”. Having spoken to groups of people around the world I have come to realise that this pearl of folk wisdom is present everywhere. However, the fact that everyone knows it and agrees does not make it true in the way that most people accept it.

Anyone who has been involved in music, sports, medicine, or any field where an ever-expanding proficiency is sought, must develop a proper practice – a regular discipline that ingrains effective habits of body and mind. Persistent repetition leads to a ‘perfection’ of sorts. However, a challenge to the belief in the infallibility of practice becomes evident in those cases where one’s diligence in practice is flawless, but one is practising the wrong things. The athlete, injured because of their persistence in improper body mechanics; the physician trained in an incorrect view of medicine; the musician whose repeated wrong practice limits their growth, all become ‘perfect’ in their imperfection. The time-honoured expression would be more correctly stated as “Perfect practice makes perfect”.

Within the theosophical tradition there is a long-standing formula for correct practice, sometimes expressed as the “Three Pillars” of practice. Briefly stated those Pillars are 1) Study, 2) Meditation and 3) Service. It is simple language expressing profoundly valuable guidance.

One of the unavoidable difficulties facing any genuinely wise, or spiritually illumined person has been how to share their level of realisation with others (us) who lack their level of experience. All the great teachers try a variety of means to communicate, but much of their contribution takes place as words that with time become scriptures. They use language in a variety of ways – as straightforward analytical explanation, poetic imagery, engaging in story-telling, and parables – in the attempt to give us some clues to the unspeakable realms of Spirit.

Historically, it has been a losing battle for the Teachers. As much as we feel that everything can and should be explained, in the realm of Spirit, ideas and language not only fall short, but often confuse more than they illumine. One problem is that words seem to convey fixed, universal meanings, but their meaning depends on consensus. Their value as tools of communication depends on a shared acceptance of meaning.

Also, over time, our use and understanding of words changes. There is an old expression that “Familiarity breeds contempt”. It is an attempt to convey the observation that with long association we lose sight of the value of things. Our tendency is to devalue things by taking them for granted. We can become inattentive and complacent in our relationships with people, Nature, with ideas, and with words. This is especially the case with longstanding ideas and words to describe them. I feel this is true for the words of the Three Pillars.

In order to resuscitate some of the slippage of meaning for the Three Pillars, allow me to reframe the language. In our normal or academic view, ‘Study’ is an intellectual process of searching out information as building blocks to larger structures of knowledge. Mostly it could be called a horizontal process because it broadens the horizons of our knowledge, linking it with other areas of study.

From the Ageless Wisdom perspective, the human being is “Highest spirit and lowest matter linked by mind”. The activity and focus of mind have the capacity to extend from engagement with ‘lowest matter’ all the way to ‘highest spirit’. Most people find themselves stuck in the cycling of thought around sensations, pleasures, pains, losses, gains, and the world of external activity, rarely allowing time for some exploration of more refined possibilities of the mind. In the context of spiritual practice study is a vertical process. It is the elevation of our accustomed centre of activity within the vast spectrum of mind. At its peak it comes so near to spirit that it becomes ‘enlightened’ or ‘illumined’ in its

Then there is
an ultimate
experience of
Quiet – Silence,
a union of the
individual Soul
or Self with
the Universal
Consciousness.

proximity. In Sanskrit it is called the *Mānasa Tajjasi* – the Radiant Mind. So, ‘Study’ I describe as the ‘Elevation of the Mind’.

For most people when they hear the word ‘Meditation’ an image of someone sitting cross-legged, eyes closed and motionless arises in their mind. Relaxation, inactivity, ‘no thought’ might also be common associations with the word. But is all or any of that what meditation is? Probably not. The practice of meditation incorporates these features in the same way that playing musical scales is a part of the practice of playing music. It is a training that allows for a freedom to arise. Actual meditation occurs when one is free from involvement and attachment to the process of thought production and movement within the stream of thought. In the profound and clever words of Lama Anagarika Govinda, “Meditation is not what you think”.

So, rather than make the, mostly inaccurate, designation of Pillar 2) as ‘Meditation’, which for most ‘practitioners’ is only an occasionally occurring experience, my preference is to refer to this pillar as “Experimenting with Quiet”. In the practice phase we do relax the body; we do attend to posture; we do (in most cases) cease from physical movement; we do pay attention to the flowing of the stream of thought. All of this has its beginnings in Quiet. But Quiet is nuanced and has progressive depths. The initial quiet of a concentrated mind alleviates distraction and uncontrolled activity. There is a further depth of quiet that expresses itself as Stillness, where the consciousness is centred inwardly, unaffected by the outer world. Then there is an ultimate experience of Quiet – Silence, a union of the individual Soul or Self with the Universal Consciousness. “I”, “me”, “my”, “you”, “them”, all boundaries and separations lose their meaning in this absorption of Union. In Yoga philosophy, these three stages of Quiet are named *Dhāraṇa*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi*.

The third Pillar of ‘Service’ is vital and often undervalued. We could describe the effects of practice in this way: Study provides the building blocks of information that form structures of knowledge. Every field of knowledge has a specific and identifiable form. Scientific knowledge is distinct in its insistence on the scientific method and, as practised currently, the material band of reality to which it limits itself. Christianity has its own form and distinguishing features. Islam, Buddhism, Theosophy, dentistry, agriculture, and all the rest also do. All of them form and develop structures as receptacles/containers for their knowledge. Spiritual study as an activity of ‘elevating the mind’ also evolves its forms, intended as containers for what we might call the “water of truth”.

But study alone does not open the flow of a higher understanding, of wisdom. The point of experimenting with Quiet is that in the experience of a deepening quiet, then stillness, and possibly silence, the flood gates of intuitive insight are opened, filling and giving meaning to the container built by persistent elevation of the mind. It is at this point that service reveals its profound importance.

In my reframing of terms, I think of ‘Service’ as “Conscious Compassionate Activity”. The emphasis is on awareness, becoming conscious in our activities of relieving the suffering of others. There are many things we all do without thought or intention that indirectly serve others. Even something as simple as breathing provides carbon dioxide that plants and trees require to live, which in turn make life on earth possible for all of us. The money one makes from employment is taxed; those taxes contribute to the operation of schools, hospitals, the building of roads, the feeding of the poor, etc. While beneficial, these are unintended collateral consequences of behaviour we engage in without thought, or with our personal benefit in mind. When it comes to spiritual practice, the primary focus is awareness and the intentionality that accompanies it.

In H.P. Blavatsky’s *The Voice of the Silence* the statement is made that “Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of Laws”. This is a very high view of Compassion. For most of us compassion is experienced as the desire to alleviate the suffering of others. Everyone with a normally healthy mind engages in it on some level. Whether it is caring for elderly parents, children, friends, or animals, we all do it both as caring actions and in thought. As a practice, compassionate activity is a powerful antidote to our ingrained and cherished sense of separateness. The simple act of acknowledging the need or suffering of another is expansive. It moves us beyond mere self-absorption to concern for another. In a very real

sense, the scope of our consciousness enlarges. It also has the effect of opening us to deeper, more potent energetic resources. As the scope of our service expands, so too does our awareness and connection to genuine power. In the case of those we regard as the “Great Ones” their awareness and inclusion has come to embrace humanity as a whole. This is the power of Conscious Compassionate Activity – that it leads to Unity, Oneness, Non-separateness, Truth.

Having built a container by Elevation of the Mind; having opened the flow of intuitive insight by Experimenting with Quiet; through Conscious Compassionate Activity, we direct the overflowing wealth of understanding and power to others – in Buddhist terminology, “to all sentient beings”.

Although any time is the best time to begin, the deeper effects of practice reveal themselves over time. Self-transformation, human regeneration, yoga are different words for one process. It is not involved in spiritualising oneself, or ‘becoming’ spiritual. In its simplest description it is the removal of the obstacles to an inherent, ever-present, indwelling spirit. Yoga is not about positions, breath, or exercises. Rightly understood and practised it is literally about ‘union’. The goal and end result of its practice is described in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali as “*chitta vritti nirodha*”, literally “the cessation of the modifications of the mind”.

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Although any time is the best time to begin, the deeper effects of practice reveal themselves over time.



Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society was born in New York City and studied at Brown University then at the University of Chicago. In Chicago Tim joined the TSA in 1974 and co-founded a Theosophical spiritual community in Chicago’s inner city. They held classes on the Ageless Wisdom, meditation and healing and formed a business which helped stabilise neighbourhoods through the training and employment of local youth and creation of affordable homes. Tim has been involved in Theosophical work at many levels: from lodge member, to TSA president and president of the Theosophical Order of Service USA. He has spoken across the USA and every continent except Africa. Tim’s articles appear in journals around the world.

Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain
before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer’s eye.

The Voice of the Silence, H.P. Blavatsky



Barbara Hebert considers the practicalities of...

AHIMSA IN PRACTICE

We are looking at
aspects of
the One Life.

Ahimsa is to have respect for all life and to avoid violence toward all others. The word *ahimsa*, familiar to many who tread the spiritual path, derives from the Sanskrit *himsa*, meaning *to strike, injure, or harm*. *Ahimsa* has the opposite meaning: to cause no harm or do no injury.

The First Object of the Theosophical Society is to encourage a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. This object, clearly defining that all are welcome to join the Society, certainly relates to other human beings. However, it also points to something much deeper: the unity of all life and the spiritual evolution of all beings through the various kingdoms of nature (mineral, plant, animal, human, and beyond). This unitive nature of all beings lies at the heart both of our First Object and of *ahimsa*.

Joy Mills, late president of the TSA, in an article published in the November 1996 *Theosophist* entitled “Purpose of the Society’s Objects”, writes: “Does not the First Object lead us to examine our own conduct, our own reactions, our own relationships with others and with all forms of life, to see whether we have come even close to the realization of the true nature of brotherhood based on an absolute knowledge of the unitary nature of all existence?”

This concept, shared in theosophical teachings, reminds us that all life is one. This is the basis for the First Object: we, and everything around us, are expressions of the One Life – or whatever we may choose to call it. Since all beings in existence in this material world are expressions of the One Life, aren’t we compelled to have an attitude of respect and non-violence for the life within those beings, whether plant, animal, human, or other? If we are to take our theosophical principles to heart, this is a subject to be contemplated deeply.

As we act in accordance with *ahimsa* toward other creatures, we are respecting and recognising the One Life that is expressed in all forms in this physical world. By doing so, we transform our consciousness. We are practising altruism and thus doing the work of this great organisation to which we belong.

Theosophical Society founder, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, writes that the true work of the Theosophical Society is altruism. In Theosophical teachings, altruism focuses on service to humanity and to all emanations of the One Life.

Because of our principle of the freedom and autonomy of all members, there is no one specific altruistic action that the organisation of the Theosophical Society will identify. Each of us must choose in our own way, guided by our own passions and interests, how we will help others. However, if we look a bit more deeply, it quickly becomes clear that one way in which each and every member of the Theosophical Society can, in addition to other altruistic acts, serve humanity is to facilitate the raising of consciousness.

In order to change the consciousness of humanity, we must first change our own. We may call it self-transformation, self-regeneration, expansion of consciousness, or anything else, but whatever we call it, we must change ourselves so that we can change the world.

These thoughts can bring us to a discussion of veganism. The Theosophical Society does not require any member to adhere to any specific practice, diet, or belief. Members have freedom of thought, belief, and action, as long as they are in sympathy with the Three Objects. Today many believe that maintaining an ovo-lacto-vegetarian diet is simply not enough and that as pioneers in the spiritual movement, we need to move away from all animal-based products.

Meanwhile, assuming that the Theosophical teachings regarding the unity of all life are accurate (and, of course, I do make that

assumption!), then it stands to reason that as one part of the whole changes, the rest must change as well, even if it is a miniscule change. It is much like putting a drop of dye into a container of water: the colour of the water changes, even if just a tiny bit. Through this process of self-regeneration, self-transformation, or expansion of consciousness, we continue to add small drops of dye until eventually the colour of the water in the entire container has been changed. In such a way, as we change ourselves, we change the world.

By undertaking this arduous process of self-regeneration, we promulgate respect for life and non-violence towards ourselves and therefore toward all beings. In this way, we are truly living a Theosophical life. Because our world is illusory, we may believe that we are separated from the Ultimate Reality, but that is not entirely true. Take a moment and look around.

Everything you see is the One Life; all of the things you see – your family, friends, strangers, trees, animals, flowers, birds, insects, rocks – are expressions of the Ultimate Reality made manifest in this phenomenal world. We are looking at aspects of the One Life. We are looking at God. And we are surrounded by it every minute of every single day, if we would only recognise it.

I wish us all well in our contemplative journeys.

From Viewpoint: Ahimsa in Practice, Quest magazine.



Barbara Hebert, Ph.D., has been National President of the Theosophical Society in America and Director of Southeastern Louisiana University Counselling Centre. A third-generation theosophist, Barbara has been in local, regional and national office. Theosophy provides guideposts through which she lives her life. She says that while Ancient Wisdom is important, it is essential to continue to evolve so that the shared Theosophy message remains clear and relevant.

*Great ideas come into the world as gently as doves.
Perhaps if we listen attentively, we shall hear,
amid the uproar of empires and nations,
a faint flutter of wings, the gentle stirring of life
and hope.*

Albert Camus

PAYING ATTENTION

Wisdom from **Betty Bland** encourages us to stop, reflect and through insight, allow healing and growth.

Although it is
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complexities.

Most of us have heard about the formation of a pearl in an oyster by an irritant such as a grain of sand. From this example, an analogy is often drawn for our own lives, in which the traumas of life can be the irritants that bring about the formation of the pearls of spirit within our own beings.

The pain and suffering of life, or *dukka*, as mentioned in Buddhist teachings, is not a favourite subject. We don't like to think of what Shakespeare called the "uses of adversity" (in *Midsummer Night's Dream*) until we find ourselves in a painful situation. Then, as we cast about for rhyme or reason, we might use the pearl analogy to find some comfort. ("This medicine tastes so terrible it is bound to be good for me.") More often, however, we tend to use this analogy when comforting others rather than applying such insight to our own difficulties.

Ah, there's the rub. It is no fun to sit with the pain with full attention; yet sitting with the problem, paying close attention to the experience and its associations with our past is the necessary elixir. When we have problems, we might do any of several things. We can pretend there is nothing wrong, but by doing so we shut out our awareness, creating a reservoir of unrecognised anguish that either explodes in our relationships with others or results in the inward implosion of depression. Or instead of blocking, we can end up obsessing over the situation, continuously rehashing and strengthening its hold on ourselves.

One of the heart's first impulses is to clamp tightly shut against the irritation. Defensive walls go up; offensive, prickly behaviour blocks out all who might support us emotionally or be a mirror through which we might gain insight. Like an earthworm reacting to a salty fingertip, the heart retreats quickly into its recesses of heavy darkness rather than facing the possibility of being brought out into the light of conscious attention. Now, for an earthworm that is a healthy fight/flight reflex, but for us two-leggeds of complex psychological nature, whose souls long for the sun, it is a tragic reaction resulting in a continuation of pain and counterproductive behaviour.

An essential element in our spiritual growth is finding a way to open the shell around our hearts – but not just any opening. The trick is to open to the light of intuition – through calm, dispassionate observation, rather than staying caught in the whirlwind of our emotional reactions. In this process we have to be careful to look with a quietly intuitive perception that allows us to see things as they really are. All too often we might mistakenly view our remembering, rehashing, and reminding others as attempts to open ourselves to clarity and awareness. But these patterns are the very substance of the tightly shut shell within which we go around and around, thinking we must be making progress.

Equally imprisoning is the pretence that there is no pain and no shell. We can say, grimacing through gritted teeth, "Everything is rosy. Can't you see me smiling?" Very often we



might not realise what this line of defence does to ourselves and to others. We might even feel quite proud of ourselves that we are such cheerful martyrs! Yet this tactic not only locks that shell down tightly, it also makes that carefully crafted shell invisible to ourselves so that we are oblivious to the hurt our reactions inflicted on others.

Have you ever had a bad day that you just wanted to be able to discuss with a friend? You didn't want them to climb mountains or slay dragons for you, but you just wanted them to pay attention to you with a sympathetic ear. In so doing, they were actually supporting you as you began processing the event and its implications in your life.

Although it is as familiar as our breathing, consciousness has many complexities. The ordinary waking consciousness in which most of us function is the level where the irritations begin and continue to grow. On the other hand, at a deeper level of our consciousness resides the watcher within, our inner or higher self. This is the level of the attention payer, the healer, the pearl maker.

The only way to open our shell is to relax our tight grip and allow it to open from within. Instead of running from the difficulty, or continuously inflicting grief upon ourselves and others, we can stop, take a deep breath, and say to ourselves, "There must be a better way." In that moment of inquiry lies the beginning of hope. Something from the depths of our being, which has been watching and waiting all along, responds with hope and assurance. At first it is only a glimmer, but with attention it will grow. Focused awareness can ferret out those seeds of distress and heal them with clear insight.

Little by little we can learn to trust the presence of this light as we walk through the inevitable difficulties. We don't have to shut ourselves tightly up, obsessively repeat the scenario, or

pretend that nothing is wrong. We can look into the difficulties until they yield a great blessing of insight. Through every difficulty we can find a tool or key that will enable us to open the door to the deeper parts of ourselves where our true nature, a reflection of the divine, abides. As it is said in the little spiritual guidebook *At The Feet Of The Master*, written by Krishnamurti when he was quite young:

You must trust yourself. You say you know yourself too well? If you feel so, you do not know yourself; you only know the weak outer husk, which has fallen often into the mire. But you – the real you – you are a spark of God's own fire, and God, who is Almighty, is in you, and because of that there is nothing that you cannot do if you will. (p. 55)

With this kind of confidence, we are able to relax our anxious minds and doubting hearts enough to allow our shells of defence to begin to open, and then to fall away altogether. The source of healing was there all along and it was only our own insecurity that kept our consciousness shut too tightly to find it. Focused awareness will gradually transform our world and our perceptions of it into an iridescent beauty. Because we dare to face a problem rather than close it out, our insight can create understanding and compassion. Our discomfort will become a pearl of blessing. May our pearls shine for the benefit of all.

Reprinted from the September-October 2003 issue of *Quest* magazine.

The source of healing was there all along...

..... ❖❖❖



Betty Bland is Past-President of the Theosophical Society in America and currently serves on the boards of the Theosophical Order of Service and the Theosophical Book Gift Institute. An active worker for the Society since she first joined in 1970, her emphasis continues to be the practical applications of Theosophical principles.



AHIMSA and the Golden Rule

The first object of the Theosophical Society (TS) may be said to have grown out of the Golden Rule in its recognition of a Universal Kinship of Humanity.

The dominant ethical injunction in Raja-Yoga puts the rule in its most succinct form as *ahimsa*, a Sanskrit word which means “harmlessness” or “non-injury.”

The Golden Rule in English, is what seems to have been, and still is, the ultimate ethical rule of behaviour; “... always treat others as you would like them to treat you ...” (Matt. 7.12). The rule is encountered, not only in the Bible, but in various forms in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, and Confucius. Lest there be doubt about this rule, it is found as a variant in Mark 12.31, “...you must love your neighbour as yourself...” (*The Jerusalem Bible*).

Apart from Western texts, the Rule is found in many Eastern scriptures and writings. In the Indian epic the *Mahabharata*, Vyasa says,

Do not to others what ye do not wish
Done to yourself; and wish for others too
What ye desire and long for, for yourself
This is the whole of Dharma, heed it well.

In the Hadis (sayings of the Prophet Mohammed) the Rule is stated as:

Noblest religion this — that thou shouldest like for others what thou likest for thyself;
And what thou feelest painful for thyself, hold that as painful for all others too.

An additional injunction is found in al-Qur'an (*The Koran*):

Noblest religion this — that others may feel safe from thee; the loftiest Islam — that all may feel safe from thy tongue and hands.

Confucius imparted the Golden Rule in *Analects*:

Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself. . . (15.23)

P.S.H. www.Theosophy.World

THE THREE OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The Theosophical Society was formed in New York on 17 November 1875, and incorporated at Chennai (Madras) on 3 April 1905. Its Three Objects are:

- *To form a nucleus of the Universal Kinship of Humanity, without distinction of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, sexual orientation, caste or colour.*
- *To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.*
- *To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.*



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INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT TIM BOYD**

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Presented by the Indo-Pacific Federation
of The Theosophical Society

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CONVENTION 2026 FEED BACK



129th National Convention of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand

A REFRESHING EXPERIENCE

Enthusiastic reports from 129th TSNZ convention.

We were blessed with two guest speakers: Dr Graham Mead who shared many insights and practical down-to-earth exercises, and Tenzing Chosang who encapsulated the essence of the Buddha's teachings. The long array of in-house speakers was very refreshing and kept me interested in the variety of subjects presented.

The outing to the Victoria Esplanade was a special event as we revelled in the display of nature, especially the flora. We were also treated to the exquisite singing of reminiscent tunes from 18-year-old Sam to round out the conference.

This was my fourth consecutive convention and it was a wonderful opportunity to continue many meaningful relationships. Much appreciation to all the dedicated organisers.

Murray Rogers

I enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and the chance to discuss all sorts of esoteric things with interested people. The dancing was the best activity but what stood out the most was the kindness shown from one to another.

Louise Black

Having been to many conventions, I thought I knew what to expect, but each year I am surprised again by the thoughtfulness, connectedness and joyfulness of each participant. I have made some wonderful friends over the years through these conventions and yet, as soon as I spent some time with another, something happened that connected my heart to them as well. Such are the lovely people who attend. Nevertheless, we felt the sadness of a few who were not there – to hug in person and share love. To those who couldn't make it, my heart expresses my love to you, too.

For me, this was an emotional time. Having personal, painful issues, I sometimes felt tense and miserable, but arriving in the hall to such love, caring and release, showed me healing truly comes from love.

Our journey with Dr Graham Mead was a discovery of mindfulness and understanding of past hurt. It not only healed my current anxiety but also helped me understand my childhood into adult life. Well done, Dr Mead!

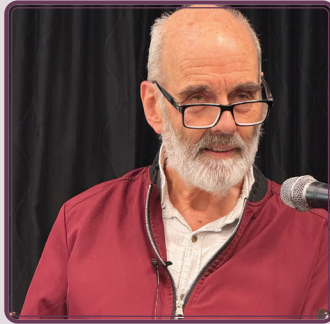
Subtle themes through multiple presentations with poetry and inspirational quotations personal to speakers, were relevant to us all. Thanks for their heartfelt authenticity, vulnerability, love and support.

Lastly, thanks also for the wonderful entertainment that had everyone up dancing and singing!

Carole Van Weede



Guest speaker Dr Graham Mead



Guest speaker Tenzin Chosang



Helen Sussmilch and
entertainer Sam Mill-Wood



Some of the participants (Mel, Spencer,
Sandra, Wendy and Suzanne)



Attendees enjoying the gardens



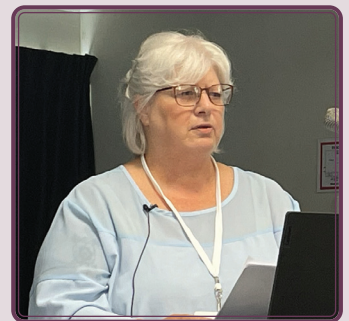
National President Richard Sell thanking and
presenting a gift to the outgoing
Vice-President Melanie Closs



Suzanne Vesty, Renée Sell
and Carol Collier



Carol Collier
during the TOS Session



Kirsty Morton



Happy TSNZ members



Group workshop with Graham Mead



Melanie Sell (HPB Branch)



Donna Willard-Moore (New Plymouth)



Paul Henderson



Helen Sussmilch and Richard Sell

THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH OF MEDITATION



International Theosophist **Pablo Sender**, soon to lead TSNZ School of Theosophy, examines this ancient practice.

PART 1

...the
Theosophical
tradition sees
meditation as
only a part
of spiritual
practice...

The Theosophical Society was arguably the first organisation in modern times to widely promote meditation in the West. Today more and more people are aware of meditation as an important aspect of the spiritual life, and when they get in touch with Theosophy, they want to know what the recommended practice is.

Although the Theosophical approach refrains from promoting any particular system of meditation for all people to follow, a wealth of teachings about meditation can be found in the Theosophical literature. In this article we will explore some of the methods recommended.

THE AIM

People come to meditation for a wide variety of reasons. Many of them see in it a relaxation technique, or a method to reduce the stress caused by daily living. Others look at it as a way to generate pleasant emotional or psychological states like peace, harmony, and joy. Others meditate in order to experience visions or to develop psychic powers. But from a Theosophical point of view, meditation has a more transcendental aim.

Although its practise may produce some of the effects described above, its real purpose is, as I. K. Taimni says, “to bring the lower personality in conscious touch with the Higher Self, thus making it increasingly aware of its divine origin, destiny, and nature” (Taimni, 320). Once that aim is accomplished, its practise can take the aspirant even further. Geoffrey Hodson says: “The second objective [of meditation] is to realise that the Spiritual Self of man is forever an integral part of the Spiritual Self of the Universe” (Hodson, 3).

If one comes to meditation simply to derive physical or psychological benefits, a fairly simple practice can bring the desired results. This kind of practice is frequently suitable for people beginning to explore meditation. Nevertheless, while it may build the foundation for a deeper approach, in and of itself it may not be enough to enable the aspirant to get in touch with his or her true spiritual Self.

In order to attain such a high aim, the practice of meditation has to fulfil certain conditions, as will be presently discussed. In addition, the whole life of the aspirant has to be gradually brought in tune with this lofty purpose.

This is why the Theosophical tradition sees meditation as only a part of spiritual practice, which must be accompanied by study, service, self-knowledge, and a general effort towards self-transformation.

FOUNDATIONS

The first thing that most people ask when approaching this subject, is what technique of meditation they should practise. This may not be the best place to begin. Before starting to walk, one should make sure that one is heading in the right direction. Hugh Shearman wrote: “The question, then, is not what technique of meditation is being used, but who is using it, what motivating selfhood has activated this process” (Shearman, 143).

Theosophical meditation aims at transcending the personal self. If it is used as a means for personal aggrandisement, it may produce some results at this level, but it is unlikely to have any transcendent effect. It is important to give some thought to this question because spirituality is frequently approached like mundane life – as a process of acquiring. One may not be accumulating objects, but all the same one is trying to acquire virtues, peace, happiness, etc., as personal possessions.

While it is true that the development of virtues is necessary at a certain stage of our spiritual growth, virtues can flower only when they are pursued not for our personal enjoyment but because they are doors through which our real

spiritual nature can express itself.

Most people do not realise that the personal self is the real source of conflict. Letting go of it and discovering the true Self is the only way to real happiness. In fact, spiritual meditation begins when one is able to leave the personal self behind. Techniques are merely preliminary means to get to this point.

One will never be able to reach that point if one comes to meditation trying to acquire something. As Annie Besant said: “Meditation means this opening out of the soul to the Divine and letting the Divine shine in without obstruction from the personal self. Therefore, it means renunciation. It means throwing away everything that one has, and waiting empty for the light to come in” (Besant, *The Building of the Kosmos*, 119). Thus, in the Theosophical approach, the practice of meditation aims at leading the aspirant to a state where he or she must leave behind the personal self and all mental processes to get in touch with his or her spiritual nature.

All serious spiritual traditions talk about the need for physical, moral and mental preparation to be able to meditate effectively. The Theosophical tradition also emphasises as part of spiritual practice the gradual adoption of a pure and healthy lifestyle; the development of emotional maturity, which comes from moral living and lessening our attachments, passions and lower desires; the cultivation of an understanding of oneself and the universe; and the development of an unselfish attitude.

This, of course, does not mean that one cannot meditate starting right from where one is at this moment. On the contrary, when the approach is holistic, the practice of meditation will aid the efforts in these areas, and vice versa.

METHODS

Meditation on Spiritual Concepts

In this approach, the practitioner chooses a relevant spiritual subject and employs all his or her mental powers to deeply ponder, inquire and reflect on it.

When a process of inquiry takes place with a very

...you can meditate on how this virtue would express itself in your life...

Remember that
the universal
Self is always
perfect, pure,
and divine...

focused and calm mind, there is the possibility of awakening spiritual intuition. But for this to happen, there has to be an effort to grasp the truth of the subject in its more universal aspect. C. Jinarajadasa said: "As the mind contemplates the facts which have been brought into a framework of unity, there dawns on the mind the new faculty of intuition. Consciousness then understands the true and inner nature of all that is present before the mind" (Jinarajadasa, *The New Humanity of Intuition*, 23).

This is a good method for beginners. This deep inquiry stimulates the higher or abstract mind, which perceives spiritual realities and receives the flashes of intuition. Thus, meditation on spiritual concepts provides insights into the reality of life and into oneself, gradually producing wisdom.

Some central Theosophical themes to meditate on are the unity of all life, the law of karma, spiritual evolution as the purpose of life, the power of thought, and the real Self beyond the temporary vehicles of consciousness. One can also meditate on spiritual aphorisms. A collection of them may be found in books like *Thoughts for Aspirants*, *Gifts of the Lotus*, among others. There are also inspirational books like *At the Feet of the Master*, *Light on the Path*, and *The Voice of the Silence* that can be used for this purpose.

Meditation on Virtues

Theosophical literature explains that every thought and feeling one entertains attracts subtle matter that builds one's emotional and mental bodies. Through these bodies one thinks, feels, perceives the world, and reacts to it. Meditation on a virtue will gradually purify the subtle bodies and enable them to vibrate in response to higher and more refined emotions and aspirations. In addition, this type of meditation helps expand consciousness through insights into the nature of the virtues. Remember, however, that when we meditate on a virtue, we should do it with humility – out of love of and devotion to that particular expression of Truth and not out of greed to acquire it.

For this type of meditation, you may choose any virtue that attracts you – a quality that you believe a spiritual aspirant should have. Alternatively, you may examine your character to identify a distinct shortcoming you want to be free of. In this case,

you should not meditate on the weakness itself but on its opposite virtue. Thus, if you are irritable, you may meditate on patience. But you must examine yourself and try to go to the root of the problem. For example, if you are not truthful, you would naturally think you should meditate on truth. But if you are not truthful because you are anxious about being accepted by others, you may want to meditate on courage or on self-confidence.

Once you choose the virtue, you can meditate, first, by trying to realise its essence. Then try to perceive this virtue inside of you as well as the inner obstacles that are hindering its expression. Finally, you can meditate on how this virtue would express itself in your life, in general or in specific situations.

In addition to the above technique, there is a different approach that involves the use of imagination. Here, you visualise yourself as the embodiment of the virtue. Annie Besant describes this process:

One favourite way of mine – for I was very irritable in my younger days – ... was making myself an embodiment of patience; you never saw such a saint as I was in my meditation; whatever I might have been outside of it during the day, I was absolutely, completely, and perfectly patient in it! Then I brought up round me mentally all the most unpleasant and provoking people that I knew, and I heightened their power of provocation as much as I increased my own power of patience; and so I made a little mental drama, in which they provoked me in every possible way, and I answered as a modern Griselda. (Besant, *Man's Life in This and Other Worlds*, 61).

As Besant indicates, this technique requires that one strive to express that virtue as much as possible in daily life, so that the process of building the subtle bodies is not undone during the rest of the day.

Meditation on the One Life

One of the central concepts in Theosophy is that ultimately there is only one life and one Self animating everything in the universe. Although consciousness in most people is constrained to

work through what they call ‘me’, this limit is not intrinsic to consciousness itself. It is perfectly possible to perceive the one life as it manifests in any creature because there is no real boundary to consciousness, as many mystics have said.

At the beginning of the practice, the perception of unity may be mainly at an intellectual level, or at the level of the imagination. Gradually, this perception becomes more and more intuitive until an actual expansion of consciousness may be experienced.

A typical approach to this meditation involves an expansion of mind, in imagination, in all space, embracing larger and larger areas. As the mind expands, one tries to conceive and feel the unity with all, including every manifestation of the divine life.

You may start by imagining that you are looking at your house from above while trying to feel unity with all people that live there – whether you feel affinity for them or not. You can then include those who frequently visit the house, as well as other forms of life there, such as pets, birds, insects and plants. Do not focus on the forms, but think of the divine life that is animating them all.

Take your time in this step until you feel ready to go further. Then, as if zooming out, go higher, above the town you are in. Try to feel unity with everything that is there; with good people as well as with the ignorant, the unhappy and the criminal; with both beautiful and ugly places. Again, disregard the outward appearances and try to identify with the one life that is struggling to express itself through all these different forms. As C. W. Leadbeater wrote: “During meditation one may try to think of the Supreme Self in everything, and everything in it. Try to understand how the Self is endeavouring to express itself through the form” (Leadbeater, 142). Remember that the universal Self is always perfect, pure and divine, even if the form obstructs and distorts its manifestation.

In this same way, go higher until you include your country, then the whole world, then the solar system, and finally the entire universe. But remember not to hurry through the different steps. You do not need to go through them all. It is more important to do your best to realise the unity at each step, including in your consciousness all the different elements that belong to each stage.



Pablo Sender joined the Theosophical Society in Argentina in 1996, and later stayed at the International TS Headquarters in Adyar, Chennai. Pablo is a microbiologist with a PhD in Biological Science. He gives lectures, classes, seminars and retreats around the world, in both Spanish and English. Pablo is visiting New Zealand to lead the TSNZ School of Theosophy this May – see page 2; also: <https://pablosender.com>



A challenge to contemplate the deeper implications of a topical subject by
famed Theosophist, John Algeo.

WHAT IS A HARMLESS RESPONSE TO HARM?

How do Theosophists view war and violence? Or, perhaps more telling, how do Theosophists respond to war and violence? It may seem that such a question is needless. After all, the first of the eight parts of yoga is *yama* – a list of five moral prohibitions; and the first of those five is *ahimsa* – harmlessness, non-violence. Theosophy is the yoga of the West, and the very first step in yoga is non-violence. That would seem to take care of that. But does it?

When two Theosophists meet, there are likely to be at least three opinions between them. What exactly is a non-violent response to violence? What is a harmless response to harm? Is it doing nothing? If not, what do we do? How does non-violence apply in specific cases?

Consider the following hypothetical, but by no means impossible, situations and decide how you think you would respond in each situation, given a very limited range of possible responses. Place yourself imaginatively in these circumstances and answer honestly. First, let's suppose that you are walking down the street in a big city late at night. You are alone. Suddenly out of the shadows steps a very large man who shoves you against the wall of a building and says with a threatening tone of voice, "Give me your money. All of it." You instinctively take a few steps to the right to get away, but he follows and pulls a knife, saying, "Now!" As you are fumbling for your wallet, suddenly you realise that now directly behind the man is an uncovered manhole. If you quickly give him a push, he will fall into it, and quite likely be badly hurt. What do you

do? a) Do you give the mugger your money? b) Or do you push him into the manhole?

Second, suppose you are a policeman walking down that same city street at midday when you see a chimpanzee that has escaped from a local pet shop. The street is full of pedestrians, and the chimpanzee – obviously in a state of intense agitation – is attacking some of the people. It has already bitten several of them. What do you do? a) Do you get on your walkie-talkie and call for the animal detail to come with tranquilliser darts? b) Or do you pull out your revolver and shoot the chimp?

Third, suppose you are a physician. One of your patients is a young woman who is pregnant, in her fifth month. Earlier in her pregnancy you prescribed a drug which she took for some time. Now you have discovered that the drug has side effects, hitherto unknown, that can damage a fetus. Tests reveal that the fetus is indeed malformed. The woman requests an abortion. What do you do? a) Do you refuse to perform the abortion? b) Or do you perform the abortion?

Fourth, you are still a physician. A woman in her mid-twenties and in excellent health comes to you. She is in her fifth month of pregnancy, but unmarried. She says that she is unwilling to have a child and requests you to abort the pregnancy. She is sexually active, uses birth control only sporadically, and has had abortions before. What do you do? a) Do you refuse to perform the abortion? b) Or do you perform the abortion?

Fifth, you are driving your automobile in very heavy

traffic. You are stopped at an intersection by a red light. There is a long line of cars behind you. Another car from the rear of the line drives forward on the shoulder of the road and pulls up on your right. That car edges forward, and the driver clearly intends to cut in ahead of you. The light turns green. What do you do? a) Do you let the other driver cut in ahead? b) Or do you step on the gas in your car to prevent the other car from cutting in?

Sixth, you are the President of the United States. The Island of Guam has been attacked and captured by a Far Eastern power which claims it has rightful title to that island on historical grounds. The present inhabitants of the island overwhelmingly want it to remain an American protectorate, but the Far Eastern power is on the island and in military command of it. They have also rejected any discussion of the sovereignty of the island and have declared that the only issue they will discuss is how to evacuate those islanders who want to leave. What do you do? a) Do you begin setting up evacuation procedures? b) Or do you order the U.S. military forces to prepare for an invasion of the island?

Seventh, you are Director of the FBI. A terrorist has hidden an atomic bomb on the island of Manhattan. It is set to detonate within a few days unless he is paid several million dollars, ten friends of his who are in jail for terrorism are released, and safe passage to Libya is arranged for all of them. The FBI has the terrorist in custody, but has no leads on the location of the bomb. One of your subordinates suggests that there is only one way to discover the location of the bomb: subject the terrorist to physical torture. What do you do? a) Do you wait, hoping that the terrorist will have a change of heart? b) Or do you tell your subordinate to try physical torture?

Eighth, you are the mother of a newborn child. Your child has been kidnapped by a terrorist group and is being held hostage for the release of political

prisoners – other terrorists in jail. The leader of the terrorist group has been caught, but refuses to reveal the whereabouts of the others or of the baby. The FBI tells you that they have no clues, but are considering the use of “pressure” – that is, physical torture – to discover where the kidnappers have the baby. What do you do? A) Do you ask them not to use violence on the kidnapper? B) Or do you tell them you hope they will do whatever is necessary?

Ninth, you are a member of a branch of the Society to which a new person has applied for membership. The person is a member of the Ku Klux Klan and of a political party organised along Nazi lines and affiliated with the Klan. He says he intends to continue his membership in the Klan and the neo-Nazi party, but that also he is in sympathy with the Three Objects of the Society and sees no conflict between these memberships. You are asked to vote on his admission to the Society. What do you do? A) Do you vote to admit him? B) Or do you vote to deny him admission?

Tenth, you are a member of a jury that must sentence a convicted murderer. This is his fifth conviction of murder. Twice he killed during the course of armed robberies. Once he was a hired killer. Once he killed a fellow inmate in prison. This time he murdered a kidnap victim. Your choice is to vote for life imprisonment, with automatic review for parole in ten years, or for the death penalty. What do you do? A) Do you vote for life imprisonment with possibility of parole? B) Or do you vote for the death penalty?

Although these problems vary greatly in seriousness and in their possible consequences, none of them is necessarily a clear-cut moral issue. They are concocted (some more than others) and the possible responses were deliberately limited to two for each problem – an unreal limitation in most situations. However, not all Theosophists agree on how they would, or should, respond in such

If life is a banquet, too often we find that the menu consists only of dishes all of which give us indigestion...

dilemmas. These problems, like most of those we face in day-to-day life, are not simple choices between right and wrong, between the good and the bad, but are rather choices between two or more options, none of which is clearly satisfactory.

If life is a banquet, too often we find that the menu consists only of dishes all of which give us indigestion. There is a newspaper cartoon called *Kudzu*, about a teenaged boy in a small Southern town, who is trying to find his way about in a confusing and frustrating world. His chief advisor is a preacher of uncertain denomination who aspires to be spiritual counsellor to the rich and powerful, but hasn't made it. One day young Kudzu, as the boy is named, complains, "Life is hard, Preacher!" The preacher responds, "Kudzu, son, life is a test and you've got to be prepared." "Oh," answers Kudzu, "I'm prepared for the test, Preacher... but I prepared for true-false and it's turning out to be multiple-choice!" That is exactly our problem.

We would prefer that our tests in life all be true-false, with a clear choice between good and evil, right and wrong, peace and violence. Instead, the tests are all multiple-choice, with directions that read: "Choose the best response." Only none of the options seems quite right. How does theosophy help in such dilemmas? How does it help us to see problems of war and violence?

In H. P. Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy* (section 3, pp. 48–49), the inquirer asks, "Have you any ethical system that you carry out in the Society?" and the Theosophist answers that the ethics are there, ready and clear enough for whosoever would follow them. They are the essence and cream of the world's ethics, gathered from the teachings of all the world's great reformers. Therefore, you will find represented therein Confucius and Zoroaster, Lao-tze and the Bhagavad-Gita, the precepts of Gautama Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth, of Hillel and his school, as of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato

and their schools.

The ethics of all the great reformers and schools can be summed up simply in the Golden Rule. In whatever words it is expressed, it is the basis of ethical action and hence also of our response to violence: Deal with others as you would have them deal with you. (The Rule is sometimes phrased in the negative – Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you – and is then called the Silver Rule. People have argued about which form of the Rule is better. There is also what might be called the Brass Rule – Do unto others before they do unto you.)

The Golden Rule is usually expressed in some such exoteric form. The esoteric form of the rule, however, might go something like this: There are no others, so whatever you seem to do to another you actually do to yourself. That esoteric form of the rule follows from the third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*: "the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul."

If you and I are indeed one, identical with each other through our identity ultimately with the Ground of all being, then how could I ever want to harm or do violence to myself? All beings desire their own well-being. I must therefore wish for you what I wish for myself, since we are one.

The Golden Rule can also be summarised in the single word *ahimsa*. In dealing with our fellow beings, who are ourselves under another guise, we must be harmless, non-violent – that is, deal with them as we would have them deal with us, or as we would deal with ourselves. But does non-violence always mean doing nothing, just passively observing what others do? Not necessarily.

There are times when *ahimsa* must be very active. Indeed, there are times when it is required to do what might look like violence and harmfulness. Think about children. Being kind to a child is not

One of the fundamental rules of Theosophy is, justice to oneself – viewed as a unit of collective humanity...

necessarily permitting it to do whatever it likes, whenever it likes. A child who has no restrictions, no rules, no penalties for infringements is not a happy child. In fact, it will be an emotionally disturbed, ill-behaved, and thoroughly unhappy child. Children want and need to know the limits of acceptable behaviour, and they will test those limits to discover them – to find out what they really are, as opposed to merely what they are said to be. The parent who punishes a child that has violated the limits of acceptable behaviour is not engaging in an act of violence, but on the contrary is practising the Golden Rule, and thus *ahimsa*, at a higher level.

In *The Key to Theosophy* (section 12, p. 238), H.P.B., while discussing self-sacrifice as the highest standard of behaviour, added that self-sacrifice has to be performed with discrimination; and such a self-abandonment, if made without justice, or blindly, regardless of subsequent results, may often prove not only made in vain, but harmful.

One of the fundamental rules of Theosophy is, justice to oneself – viewed as a unit of collective humanity, not as a personal self-justice, not more but not less than to others; unless, indeed, by the sacrifice of oneself we can benefit the many. It is the same with *ahimsa* and the Golden Rule. They have to be applied with discrimination, to be sure that one is truly being non-violent and is truly dealing with others as one would actually want to be dealt with.

Haridas Chaudhuri (*Mastering the Problems of Living*, pp. 138–139) tells a story that illustrates the need for discrimination in the practice of *ahimsa*: One time a holy man was passing through a village. Some youngsters warned him not to go too near a particular old tree in the hollow trunk of which a giant serpent lived. Every now and then the serpent would come out of its dwelling place and wreak havoc by killing a goat or biting an unwary child. To the amazement of the children, the holy man headed right toward that very tree. He bent low and seemed to whisper something to the serpent. As he resumed his journey, the youngsters gathered around him and wanted to know what he had told the serpent. The holy man said that he had given the serpent the motto of love (*ahimsa*). He said to the serpent, “Look,

you monster, you have been committing terrible sins by killing and poisoning sacred living things. If you want to be saved, you must start practising, right from today, the motto of non-violence.”

The holy man left the village, and the news of his visit spread. The next day the youngsters found the serpent meek as a lamb. Pretty soon they gathered courage and began to handle him roughly. One day they played tug-of-war with him, pulling at two ends. Once, they twisted him around a stick like a rope. Then one naughty boy swirled the snake and forcefully dashed him against the tree. After that they did not see the snake any more. Two weeks later when the holy man came back to the village, the boys reported to him the apparent death of the snake. When the holy man peeped into the hole of the tree, the coiled serpent, terribly emaciated, complained, “Look, sir, what your gospel of love has done to me. I am badly bruised and mutilated, and am about to die now.” The holy man chided him by saying: “I told you not to bite any living creature. But why did you not hiss when you were attacked?”

There are times when we need to hiss, and perhaps even times when we need to bite.

Published in *The American Theosophist*, Volume 70, October, 1982.



John Algeo (1930 - 2019) was President of the Theosophical Society in America from 1993 – 2002. He then served as Vice President of the International Theosophical Society in Adyar, Chennai, India until 2008. John had a distinguished academic career at the University of Georgia as a Professor of English language and linguistics, then Professor Emeritus. In 2014, Dr Algeo was awarded the Subba Row Medal for his significant contributions to Theosophical literature.

Radha Burnier wrote with clarity and style about things that really mattered in our lives, as in these extracts from an article penned for *Quest* magazine.

What is Our Priority?



His Holiness the Dalai Lama has clearly stated that it is essential for everyone to learn to live the right kind of life rather than attempt to reach nirvana. Without learning to have relationships of compassion, integrity, unselfishness, friendliness, and care for others, mentally projected 'spiritual' aims lead nowhere. The Dalai Lama points out:

There are many different philosophies, but what is of basic importance is compassion, love for others, concern for others' suffering, and reduction of selfishness.

I feel that compassionate thought is the most precious thing there is. It is something that only we human beings can develop. And if we have a good heart, a warm heart, warm feelings, we will be happy and satisfied ourselves, and our friends will experience a friendly and peaceful atmosphere as well. This can be experienced nation to nation, country to country, continent to continent...

No one is likely to dispute that the idea of trying in every way to promote the Brotherhood of Humanity is a good thing, and that to form a nucleus of that Brotherhood is a step towards greatly increasing its influence... But being good has very little to do with

the form of our belief. It has to do a good deal with putting it fully into practice... Let brotherly love guide you. You may differ as much as you like in opinions, but you must not let it lead to any sort of ill feeling or any sort of conceit in your superior discernment in being able to see what to you is the right path... Let us stand together in Brotherhood and carry on our work, whatever work that may be... Left to their own understanding, people will come to the truth about everything in due time; nobody can be truly converted or changed by force. Only the light within each person can illumine the path.

Thus, compassion cannot be reserved for those we think are good people. It must be universal, not a matter of choice. When priority is given to universal brotherhood and understanding others, we may witness real progress on this earth. Towards this end, we study, listen to discourses and meditate. Otherwise, what is the purpose of such activities?

From an article originally printed in the November-December 2004 issue of *Quest* magazine.
<https://www.theosophical.org/publications/quest-magazine/what-is-our-priority#>

Radha Burnier (1923 – 2013) became the seventh International President of the Theosophical Society in 1980. Holding a Master's degree in Sanskrit from the Benares Hindu University, she was an honorary Doctor of Literature degree from Nagarjuna University who lectured all over the world and wrote on Theosophical and cultural topics. In her youth, she trained as a classical Indian dancer and appeared in the 1951 film *The River* by French director Jean Renoir.



THEOSOPHY AND SCIENCE



THEOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

The motto of the Theosophical Society is "There is no Religion higher than Truth", a sentiment to which a scientist can equally well subscribe. The scientific and mystical modes of search are complementary rather than antagonistic. Physicist Fritjof Capra has said that science does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science but we humans need both.

For more, see: <https://theosophicalsociety.org.au/statics/theosophy-and-science>

RESEARCH RELEVANT TO THEOSOPHY

*Jacques Mahnich is editing a new series of Quarterly RRT (Researches Relevant to Theosophy) publications, starting January 2026. Vol. V N° 1 is devoted to a collection of research in the sciences and humanities. Future topics include: * Anthropology * Archaeology * Biology * Chemistry * Earth Sciences * Education * Health & Medicine * History * Philosophy * Physics * Psychology * Religion * Social Sciences * Space Sciences * Technology*

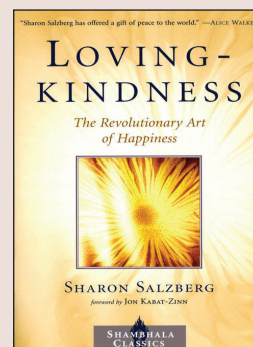
See also: <https://theoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/RRT16.pdf>

Recommended Reading

With the theme of *ahimsa*...

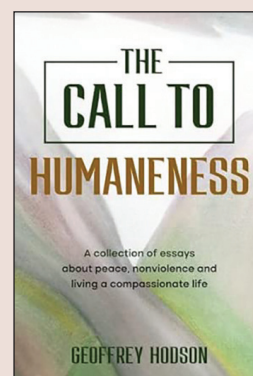
LOVING-KINDNESS: THE REVOLUTIONARY ART OF HAPPINESS by Sharon Salzberg

Longtime meditation practitioner and teacher Sharon Salzberg draws on Buddhist teachings, wisdom stories from various traditions, her own experiences and guided meditation exercises. Sharon highlights our desire to love ourselves more deeply and to find a greater sense of connection with others and our fear of intimacy, both with ourselves, as well as in relationship with others. A very practical book, with exercises to help us find acceptance and forgiveness of ourselves and others and to cultivate compassion, equanimity and generosity.



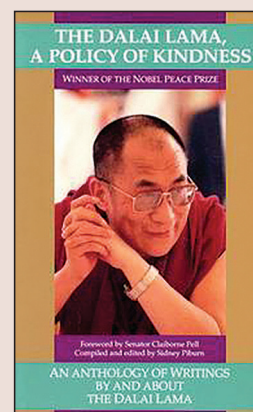
THE CALL TO HUMANENESS: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS ABOUT PEACE, NONVIOLENCE AND LIVING A COMPASSIONATE LIFE by Geoffrey Hodson

These writings of the great teacher and humanitarian Geoffrey Hodson, shine the light of *ahimsa* into the world. Although some date from the 1940s, they remain as timely as ever. Humanity is experiencing tremendous challenges due to war, terrorism, environmental destruction, climate change, racism, economic disparity and more. It is during such periods of darkness that we need to shine the light of *ahimsa*, compassion and humaneness to help heal our planetary home and especially our relationships with our fellow humans and other living beings that help make up the world's vast network of life. Geoffrey claims the cause of human sorrow originates in a lack of understanding of *ahimsa* and ignorance of the workings of the Law of Cause and Effect (Karma). He emphasises the need to spread greater awareness of the Oneness of all life, to remedy this.



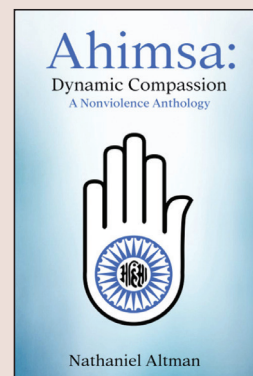
THE DALAI LAMA: A POLICY OF KINDNESS

Comprehensive insight into the views of the Dalai Lama is gained through his own articles and through others' writing about him in this penetrating look at his personal life and philosophy, along with his thoughts on issues of global concern. Beginning with the Nobel lecture which presents the Dalai Lama's policy of kindness, this book contains chapters on cooperation among world religions, connections between reason, science and spiritual values, human rights and responsibilities and an ethical approach to environmental protection.



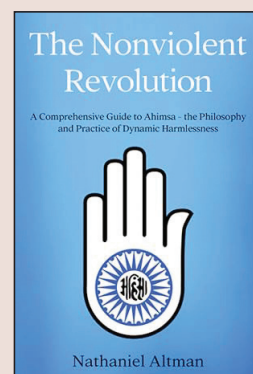
AHIMSA: DYNAMIC COMPASSION, A NONVIOLENCE ANTHOLOGY by Nathaniel Altman

This updated and expanded edition of the original book published in 1980, is a unique anthology of essentially psychological study that transcends our ordinary understanding of human nature. It brings to light that long-silent and long-hidden inner consciousness that depth psychologists, spiritual leaders, political figures, scientists, philosophers, environmentalists, animal rights advocates and nonviolence activists have sought to bring to our awareness over centuries. Featuring quotes from Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Peace Pilgrim, Dorothy Day, Joanna Macy, Thomas Merton, Albert Schweitzer and more, *Ahimsa: Dynamic Compassion* is both a testament to human possibility and an inspiring tool for change.



THE NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO AHIMSA – THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF DYNAMIC HARMLESSNESS by Nathaniel Altman

In this revised and updated edition of the original book published in 1988, Nathaniel Altman provides a thorough grounding in the philosophy practised by such notables as Thomas Merton, M. K. Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Peace Pilgrim and Martin Luther King Jr. He shows how *ahimsa* can be applied in our daily lives, our personal relationships, business affairs, politics, religion and our attitude towards the environment. Nathaniel Altman believes that *ahimsa* offers genuine hope for both the present and the future, despite the challenge of living in a world that seems bent on violence and destruction.



To borrow any of these books, please email library@theosophy.nz or call/visit the library from 10am-3pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The online catalogue can be accessed from the library page on the TSNZ website www.theosophy.nz



'A Union of those who Love, in the service of all that suffers'



Carol Collier, TOS New Zealand's National Director recommends meditative practice to heal the world.

These pages are dedicated to Annie Besant, founder of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) and to the role of invocations; healing, love, and peace. These three (there are many more) are deeply rooted in altruism, 'the selfless concern for the well-being of others' which epitomises the cornerstone of the TOS. Caring about the welfare of others, expressed as 'theosophy in action', is a foundation for a life lived more fully and understood at deeper levels. Through the care and welfare of human beings, the animal kingdom and all of nature, which are not separate from us, and cultivating a wider view, an expansive view of the unity of all life, we may come to realise that there is no other way to go. In 1923 Annie Besant penned words known as O Hidden Life, that have become very familiar to TS members throughout the world. She wrote these initially for daily meditation, morning and evening:

O hidden Life, vibrant in every atom;
O hidden Light, shining in every creature;
O hidden Love, embracing all in oneness;
May all who feel themselves as one with thee,
Know they are therefore one with every other.

O Hidden Life has come to be known as a Universal Prayer or Universal Invocation recited by members and groups throughout the world. She further added that it sends forth waves of colour pulsing outwards from the speaker if rhythmically intoned or chanted, whether by the outer or inner voice, and if some thousands would send these out over successive areas, we might create a very powerful atmosphere. These lines seem simple yet have a depth of inner meaning that may escape us if skipped over too quickly. Let us not take for granted this beautiful gift given as a daily practice, it is as relevant today as it was in 1923.

When the TOS was founded, Annie Besant sighted a two-fold purpose: 1) The unselfish service of the needy and suffering and 2) The inner transformation of the server. In carrying out the first purpose, TOS workers around the world work in several areas, from education, peace, social services, healing, art and music, to animal welfare, care for the environment and emergency relief. As we work and serve, whether in our family or community, we build connections both without and within and this changes something within us, like an interior action. The heart expands unconsciously and naturally as we engage in the doing. We feel something deep within us change, as if our Soul's yearnings are being met as we too are receiving something. This second purpose, the inner transformation of the server is a true gift indeed! One of the Masters of the Wisdom expressed this as follows: 'Forget Self in working for others and the task will become an easy and a light one for you.' What starts as one thing, to serve or help, finishes with joy in the heart of the server. The Theosophical Society's mission statement

encapsulates this well: 'To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the unity of all life.'

When we hold joy in our hearts, it increases the value of all work, it becomes not a burden, but a way to live. Theosophical writer and seer Geoffrey Hodson reminds us that the devas or angels teach us a wonderful lessons here: Whatever the work the devas do and however intent they may be upon it, they are always radiantly happy. This happiness comes into our lives and will shine through our work and give to it a beauty and effectiveness.

MEDITATION

When we are looking to meditate, it is important to first bring about a condition of relaxation and peace within ourselves. There is great value in group meditation because more power is generated by a group than by individual meditation. This is because of the operation of natural law whereby we can reach levels of consciousness normally outside our range to produce results of radiating power and blessings upon the world, which are more far reaching than meditating by ourselves.

PEACE

After having found a measure of peace within oneself, one may gradually include within it an increasing number of people, until the whole world is envisaged as being in a state of peace. One may begin with the Christ, for example, thinking of Him as the Prince of Peace (followers of different religions can substitute the name used for the Source of healing life and power, whether universal or individual, solar or planetary; for example, 'The Lord of Loving Kindness' known in both Buddhist and Hindu traditions). Then draw round Him the peoples and nations of the world until all people are bathed in His perfect peace. This meditation will help the student to develop serenity of mind. Great help may be rendered to individuals, as well as to nations, by including within the meditation those at variance with each other and in whose hearts, there is no peace. If we know anyone in need of help, who is agitated or distressed, we can direct our meditative thought towards them, surrounding their physical, astral and mental bodies with an atmosphere of peace; the person may not be aware of our activities but gradually, quiet will descend upon them in which the light of the Higher Self will assist in leading to peace. Once more practised in meditation, we find an immense field of service and a sure way of helping the world.

LOVE

This meditation may be used to help others by filling oneself with the highest feelings of love and drawing into the influence of that love all those whom we desire to help; at the same time radiating streams of rosy light upon them until they glow with this colour.

A method of developing this supreme qualification and of expanding the consciousness, is to mentally divide the world which we desire to help into six parts: North, South, East, West, the Zenith and the Antipodes and then to radiate love into each of these six divisions in turn, including all manifested life, human, animal, vegetable, mineral and elemental. After we have become efficient in this exercise, we may try to send the forces into the six divisions at once; the power and value of this act will be enormously increased if, in addition to pouring out the fullest possible measure of our love, we aspire to serve, at the same time, as a channel for the love of God. As a daily practice this is of the very highest value, and it is strongly recommended to all those who aspire to the higher life.

HEALING

A successful method of spiritual healing with angelic cooperation consists of dwelling in concentrated thought upon (for example) the Lord Christ, the great Healer of the World. Reverently entering His presence in thought and seeking to touch the ‘hem of His garment’, meaning the fringe of His consciousness, the sufferer is then drawn mentally into His Presence, being visualised as radiantly healthy and flooded throughout their whole nature with the golden, glowing, healing Life of God. The following or similar prayer may then be uttered with powerful intent and a pause between each sentence: ‘May the healing power of the Lord Christ descend upon (First and surnames of the selected suppliants). May the healing angels encompass them.’ After a pause of some minutes, during which the thought is powerful yet reverently centred upon the Lord Christ, His outpoured healing power and the healing angels, the meditation may be closed with the words: ‘May the light of His love enfold them for ever. Amen’. Healing angels have been found to be continuing their ministering function for at least 24 hours after such an invocation. For further details on this meditation, I recommend reading ‘Three Healing Angels’ from *The Kingdom of the Gods* by Geoffrey Hodson.

STILLNESS

Repeat slowly and with full realisation, the following:

Stillness, stillness, stillness;
Peace, peace, peace;
Quiet, quiet, quiet;
Rest, rest, rest.

This last invocation is one I have found to be very effective in bringing about an immediate change within oneself, instilling a sense of peace and stillness as the words are chanted and then resting in the stillness. I encourage you to try these various invocations as part of your daily practice and hope you find them helpful.

Invocations and meditations here are from the works of Geoffrey Hodson with references below.

REFERENCES

First steps on the Path by Geoffrey Hodson
The Kingdom of the Gods by Geoffrey Hodson
Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition by Geoffrey Hodson



Part of display at Vasanta House library of Angelic pictures, these depict Geoffrey Hodson's clairvoyant vision, portraying healing angels. The artist was Ethelwynne M. Quail.

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Vegetarians Today



From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, **Margaret Johns** has ideas to reduce carbon footprints and enhance health.

New year, new start, even though it's nearly three months into 2026! So, if you haven't given much thought to reducing your footprint on this wonderful planet of ours (and even if you have), for most people, reducing consumption of animal products and increasing the diversity of plants in the diet is the best way of reducing their impact on the world. A big part of the economy of NZ is based on animal products but we need to encourage diversity in horticulture and the production of fruit, grains and vegetables.

The Summer issue (Vol.82 No.2) of the Vegetarian Living NZ magazine, apart from featuring a piece on *18 Power Foods Every Vegetarian & Vegan Should Know* by Catherine Lofthouse, dietitian, also contains an interview with Amber Bremner who recently published her first cookbook, *Simply Veg*. For the last ten years, she has had a blog: <https://quitegoodfood.co.nz/> Amber maintains that the single best way of reducing our impact on

the world is by cutting down on eating animal products and that because food is for enjoying, she wants people to feel inspired and confident to try new meals without feeling like they're missing out on anything by eating veg meals. Her book is packed full of information and delicious recipes to inspire everyone.

Challenge yourself this year to try new plant-based recipes from different sources, cultures and countries and share them with your family and friends, and know that not only will you be helping with everyone's carbon footprint but also helping them on their journey towards a more compassionate and healthy way of living. Remember the 21-Day Plant-based Challenge available on the website <https://www.vegetarian.org.nz/> which gives great support, along with the huge variety of veg-n recipes.

Here to help you on your way is a tasty recipe from Amber's book *Simply Veg*:

MUSHROOM & LENTIL VEGAN SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE Serves 6-8

- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and finely chopped
- 3 sticks celery, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 8 button or brown mushrooms, finely chopped (about 120g/¼lb)
- 1 red capsicum, (bell pepper) cored and finely chopped
- 1 tsp dried sage
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ cup red wine (optional)
- 2 cans chopped tomatoes in juice
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- ½ cup dried red lentils
- ¼ tsp liquid smoke (optional)
- 1 tsp raw sugar, or sweetener
- Salt and pepper, to season

To Serve: 500g regular or gluten free spaghetti noodles; 2 Tbs finely chopped parsley

1. Heat olive oil in a wide, deep saucepan or frypan (skillet). Add onion, carrot and celery and cook over a low-medium heat until softened, then add garlic, mushrooms, red capsicum, sage, oregano and smoked paprika. Season with a small sprinkle of salt to help the mushrooms release their juices. Continue to cook, stirring often, until golden and fragrant. This stage should take about 20 minutes in total.

2. Add the red wine, if using, and stir for a minute to allow it to evaporate off. Add the canned tomatoes, vegetable stock, lentils, liquid smoke and sugar, along with a little more salt and pepper. Bring to a gently blipping boil, or fast simmer, and leave to cook over a low heat for 45-60 minutes, stirring occasionally. From about 30 minutes onwards, I start to check more often and add more water here and there to stop the mixture from sticking or becoming too thick before the lentils and vegetables have cooked through. The amount of water you need will vary – I usually use about 2 cups of extra water in total.

3. When the sauce is done, it will be thick, glossy and richly flavoured. The lentils will have almost disappeared into the sauce, and the vegetables will be tender. Taste and adjust the seasoning with more salt and pepper if needed.

4. Cook spaghetti noodles according to packet directions, drain and serve with a generous ladle of bolognese sauce and a sprinkle of chopped parsley.

Note 1: Nutrition information is available on: quitegoodfood.co.nz

Note 2: Optional in summer – add courgette (zucchini) finely chopped and in winter add handfuls of finely chopped spinach towards the end of the cooking time.



More recipes, information and the NZVS revised and updated *Home Tried Favourites* recipe book, are now available from www.vegetarian.org.nz

Vasanta House Library



Books can be ordered from the lending library at TSNZ national office by contacting the librarian by email: library@theosophy.nz or telephone (09) 523 1797. The library is open on Wednesdays or by appointment on a Thursday.

Cost to members is the return postage of books. Non-members may join the library for a joining fee of \$50.

Vasanta House Accommodation

Short stay accommodation is available at TSNZ National Section, Vasanta House in Epsom, Auckland. Rates vary for members and non-members. The house requirements are vegetarian, smoke-free and alcohol-free. At certain times of the year Vasanta House is closed for events, Board and Management meetings etc. For bookings and more information please email the office at: office@theosophy.org.nz

*Kindness is a language
which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.*

Mark Twain

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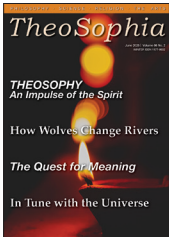
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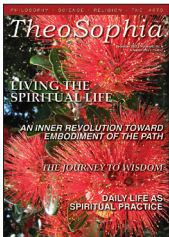
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Theosophy

Theosophy is the body of truths which form the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guides its evolution.

Theosophy puts death in its rightful place as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the science of the spirit, teaching one to know the spirit as oneself and the mind and the body as one's servants.

Theosophy literally means divine wisdom: *theosophia*. Theosophy illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions, by unveiling their hidden meanings; thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone who is willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high and to work perseveringly, is welcome as a member and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

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