

PHILOSOPHY · SCIENCE · RELIGION · THE ARTS

# *TheoSophia*

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*THE PERFUME OF  
THEOSOPHY*

**THEOSOPHIA**  
*Knowledge of Things Divine*

**The Objects and  
Their Relevance**

***The Place of Beauty  
in Our Lives***

# TheoSophia



## FREEDOM OF THE SOCIETY

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

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

*Resolution passed by the General Council of The Theosophical Society in 1949.*

## THE MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Our Mission is to serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation and the Unity of all Life.

*July 2018 General Council meeting of the Theosophical Society.*

*TheoSophia* is the official magazine of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand.

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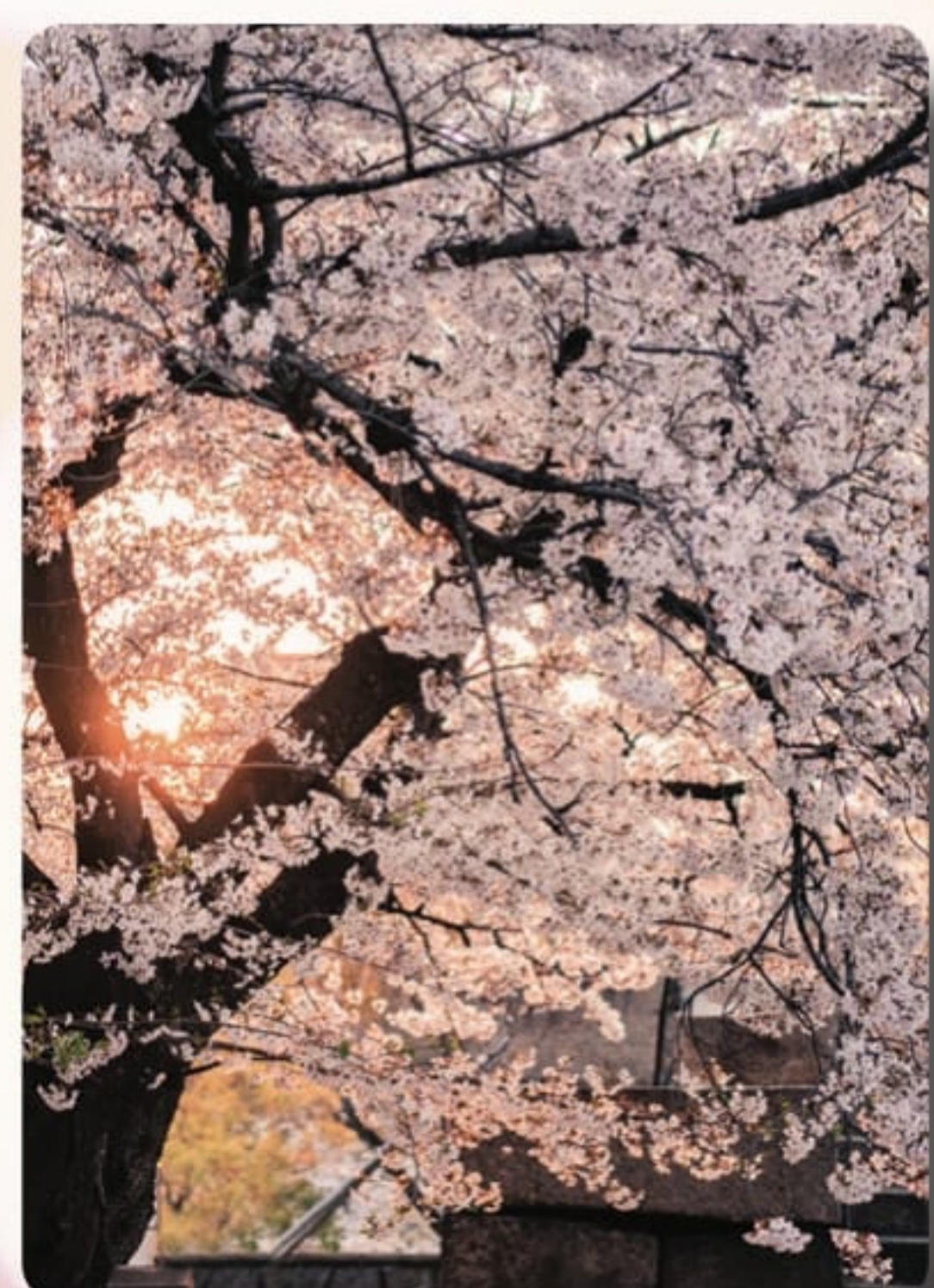
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Cover  
*Sakura*  
Satoshi Hirayama  
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THE PLACE OF  
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## 128th National Convention of the Theosophical Society in NZ Inc.

**EMBRACING WHOLENESS ~ AWAKENING OF THE HUMAN HEART**

• 16 – 21 January 2025 • Auckland Rose Park Hotel, Parnell, Auckland •

What does it mean to embrace wholeness and to experience the interconnectedness of all things? Through inspiring talks, workshops, and heartfelt discussion, we will delve into the active role the human being plays in the evolutionary journey, not just of themselves but of the whole of humanity. We will be exploring how Theosophical principles can be applied practically to everyday life, supporting personal and collective transformation. We will look at what behaviours and practices can be nurtured to enable deeper insight and understanding of our ourselves, our world and the cosmos.

**OUR SPECIAL GUEST – DR JUDE CURRIVAN**

Dr Jude Currivan is a cosmologist, planetary healer, futurist and author. She has experienced multidimensional realities since early childhood and worked with the wisdom keepers both incarnate and discarnate of many traditions.

Dr Jude integrates leading edge science, research into consciousness and universal wisdom teachings into a holistic world-view. This underpins her work aimed at enabling transformational and emergent resolutions to our collective planetary issues, raising awareness and empowering fundamental change and sustainable solutions to global problems.



Dr Jude Currivan holds a PhD in Archaeology from the University of Reading in the UK, researching ancient cosmologies, and a Master's Degree in Physics from Oxford University specialising in cosmology and quantum physics. For the last two decades she has also travelled around the world in service to planetary and collective healing, some of which is described in her books *The 8th Chakra*, *The 13th Step* and most recently, *HOPE – Healing Our People & Earth*.

**VENUE**

The 2025 National Convention will be held at the Auckland Rose Park Hotel (Parnell Room); located in one of Auckland's oldest suburbs, neighbouring the picturesque Parnell Rose Gardens and an easy stroll to the vibrant buzz of Auckland's downtown CBD. Set on a sprawling site of more than 7,000 square metres, the Rose Park Hotel features comprehensive facilities, including a swimming pool and the superb Garden View restaurant. There is ample free car parking for guests and visitors, and its central location makes it easily accessible by bus or train. Shared accommodation is also available at the Rose Park Hotel. All rooms have been refurbished and feature fully renovated bathrooms, high-quality air conditioning units and opening windows for fresh air.

**ALSO**

- Presentations from various speakers, guided meditations and workshops.
  - A special Theosophical Order of Service presentation.
    - An outing in Auckland.
  - Time to share and chat over a cup of tea.

**REGISTRATION:** see registration form in this issue.

# The Sweet Smell of Theosophy

While perfume can have a direct effect on our emotions, memories and thoughts, it can also relate to spiritual experiences that reach dimensions transcending space and time. Both Eastern and Western religions have long used frankincense, myrrh and other incense, sometimes swung from a censer. These aromas, plus cedar and rose, are linked to the Queen of Sheba in the ancient *Song of Solomon*. Thirteenth century, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad, better known as Rūmī, wrote of whirling Sufi dervishes ceremonially burning musky amber and oud incense while wearing daffodil and rose fragrances, thus creating a conducive environment for deep concentration and mindfulness. The New Testament story of Mary's seemingly extravagant anointing Jesus's feet with expensive pure nard (an act criticised by Judas Iscariot) and filling the house with fragrance, can be seen as symbolising connection with the divine, healing, blessing, spiritual generosity and awakening.

Helena Blavatsky described fragrance as a vibration of nature while in this issue of *TheoSophia*, we are considering Theosophy itself as perfume – perhaps with the attributes described above. Writing around this theme are Richard Sell (p.4), Renée Sell (p.14) and Clara Codd (p.22). James A. Long (p.9) and John Algeo (p.18) reveal deep understandings of theosophy and we have interesting feedback from Immersion Weekend (p.26).

Register early for TSNZ Convention 2025 (p.2) and enjoy spring's promise of new life as you peruse 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](http://www.theosophy.nz)

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

*The Akashic Ocean*  
 Ancient thoughts abound in the watery presence  
 Sitting dormant in the dark, deep, cold, clammy reservoir  
 Of our viscous creation  
 Within the waves of time  
 Neptune in his wisdom  
 And the goddess Eurybia  
 Residing as the restless night of the ocean  
 Rhythmically churn the waterlogged thoughts  
 And mix with the salts and minerals  
 To purify their intent  
 And to resurface as bubbles  
 When the intuitive mind  
 Is receptive to a deeper meaning.

*From sandy shore to the land-dotted horizon  
 The sun's reflection creates a flickering pattern  
 A symbol for thoughts rearranging themselves  
 Spilled forth to acquiesce the thirst  
 For greater knowing and being  
 Accentuating the high time afresh  
 That lies before us.*

*Murray Rogers*

## DIARY DATES

### 2025

January 16-21 128th National Convention in Auckland  
 January 17 TSNZ Annual General Meeting

Check for updates and details of these events: [www.theosophy.nz](http://www.theosophy.nz)

## FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2024		
December	Theosophy, a Reconnection of all Life	1 October
2025		
March	Why Are We Here?	1 January
June	Theosophy, an Impulse of the Spirit	1 April

Contact the editor at [editor@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:editor@theosophy.org.nz) or visit our website for the guidelines: [www.theosophy.nz/](http://www.theosophy.nz/)

National President of TSNZ, **Richard Sell** shares ideas about

# The Perfume of Theosophy



The theme of *TheoSophia's* spring issue conjures up mysterious images of what the perfume of theosophy might be; perhaps a swirling vapour of illumination one can fleetingly touch but cannot quite fully grasp.

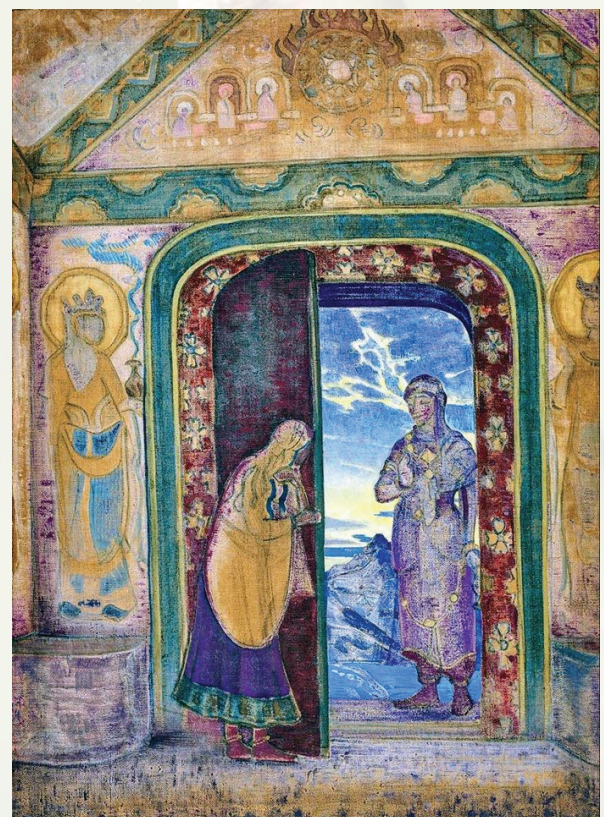
For me, in my mind's eye there are exotic smells of the perfumes in bustling bazaars in ancient Constantinople while turning back to the present moment, I see a smorgasbord of art and poetry to be experienced. Moving prose, fountains of knowledge and wisdom from great sages amidst visual wonders, provide spiritual food for the soul. All these many fragrances illumine our pathway to inner caverns within the heart which stirred by their touch, leads us to want to discover more and ask questions such as 'Why?'.

Perhaps the perfume of theosophy, which touches the soul, is directly encountered more easily through the arts and the beauty of creative expression. The arts bear their fruit by opening our eyes to the beauty of nature, the tenderness of a Madonna and her crucified child, or as an inspiration for turning towards the light by evoking love, compassion and beauty.

In the world of art, Russian painter Nicholas Roerich stands out for producing some of the most spiritually uplifting works of art in the 20th Century. He produced more than six thousand works with use of rich colour, symbolism and allegory essential ingredients. In several series, he interlaced these aspects with majestic mountains, particularly in his Himalayan paintings, such as, *Remember* (1924). *The Messenger* painting was presented to the Theosophical Society in Adyar, India in 1926 and is said to depict a young woman representing humanity, while the messenger, who enters the temple signifies HPB and the beginning of her public work in 1875. Roerich said at its unveiling amidst a group of Adyar residents, "In this home of Light, let me present this picture, dedicated to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, as the nucleus of a future Blavatsky Museum of Art, whose motto shall be: *Beauty is the garment of Truth.*"<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Roerich went in search of the mysterious Shambhala, painted the legendary Chintamani Stone and proposed the Banner of Peace with imagery in *Madonna*



*Remember* – Nicholas Roerich



*The Messenger* – Nicholas Roerich



*Madonna Della Pietà – Michelangelo*

*Oriflamma* (1932). Capping off these was *The Mother of the World*, of which he painted several versions (1924 and 1937). It represents the great spirit of the Feminine Principle, whose outward appearance is said to be that of Kwan Yin and the Mother Mary of Jesus.

Poetry views the world of spirit with a wonder and awe all its own, expressing that which is often beyond normal comprehension. It is clothed in words and meaning to be interpreted by the Soul, not the analytical mind. We are transported by the music of the poet, as poetry releases the forces of emotion and opens the heart centre within the aspirant. It speaks to something deep inside and the answering call is our buddhic nature expressing itself through these outer vehicles. Poetry stimulates creative instincts, the art of imagination and possibility of what lies beyond. We are touched by that which is unknowable and holy. Sometimes we don't understand the words fully, but we feel it directly, an experience of inspiration, by-passing the lower mind. For example, we feel the wonder in finding the divine in places unseen and unexpected in *Hidden Gems* (edited here) by American Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850–1919).

We know not what lies in us, till we seek;  
Humans dive for pearls — they are not found on shore,  
The hillsides most unpromising and bleak  
Do sometimes hide the ore.

Go, dive in the vast ocean of thy mind,  
O people! Far down below the noisy waves,  
Down in the depths and silence thou mayst find  
Rare pearls and coral caves.

Sink thou a shaft into the mine of thought;  
Be patient, like the seekers after gold;  
Under the rocks and rubbish lieth what  
May bring thee wealth untold.

Reflected from the vastly Infinite,  
However dulled by earth, each human mind  
Holds somewhere gems of beauty and of light  
Which, seeking, thou shalt find.

Some poems advise how to deal with the problems of life, coping with the turmoil and strife and still being happy and content despite it all. Consider the beautiful advice from *Desiderata*, “Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence ... You are a child of the universe ... you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.” I see theosophical principles translated into everyday living in an easy manner, delivering the Truth in beautiful prose. Scientific minds also contribute. Sir Isaac Newton famously expressed the wonderment and scale of what lies beyond: “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore and diverting myself now and then by finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

Sculpture is described as crystallised architecture. No-one executes this medium better than Michelangelo. It is said that humankind is a microcosm of God and the Universe expressed in the Bible as “Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect” and Michelangelo's 1501–1504 sculpture of David is acclaimed as a supreme work of perfect renaissance geometry and symmetry. Michelangelo believed that the artists sculpted the marble block to reveal the ideal form within, an expression of his neo-platonic belief that body and mind are separate and must work in concert, striving to attain union with one another and with the divine. This form of art brings emotion from within, out, as the natural response of the heart developed over lifetimes, expresses itself from Soul level. One has just to look at Michelangelo's *Madonna Della Pietà* – holding the lifeless crucified body of Jesus, to empathise and feel united with a mother holding her dead son in her arms.

Music is one of the sublime ways of experiencing the world beyond, where our vibration is raised and consciousness expanded while listening to uplifting pieces, whether song or symphony. Each person resonates with or has an affinity to certain melody or pitch combinations most pleasing to them. While the appeal of music is an individual liking, the response is

often similar when it fills our heart with joy or love, quickens the heartbeat or ignites a burst of energy lifting us to transcendental or higher experiences.

In his book *Music: Its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages*, Cyril Scott cited famous passages from Plato's *Republic* about the effect of music on people's moods and the value and dangers to society of certain musical scales. He also introduced the notions of deva-inspired music (written under the influence of devas, Sanskrit for 'shining ones' – something like Western muses or angels) and Buddhic music (which expresses unity and bliss, having originated in what Theosophists call the plane of *Buddhi*, Sanskrit for 'faculty of wisdom'). One of the best examples of the impact music can have, is the Prelude to Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*, a musical depiction of a vision of the Holy Grail, which acts as a sublimely aching call to higher service and which Scott said could lift the listener up to the Buddhic plane.

Russian composer Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915), was directly influenced by the writings of Madame Blavatsky. One element of Theosophical thought, especially in H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, which Scriabin read closely, was the idea of esotericism – hidden or secret knowledge which passes from age to age and from country to country. This hidden knowledge is taught in small inner circles or can be discovered through a careful study of the literature and the development of the individual's higher consciousness by meditation. For Scriabin, music of certain sorts had the power to open the door to hidden and transformative knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Another modality of music is *Kirtan*, which is Indian devotional singing of Sanskrit passages considered to have great spiritual power. A leader chants each phrase and a chorus sings it back. The repetition of the phrase drives its spiritual meaning ever deeper into the mind, while the music subtly transports us into higher states of consciousness. The popular music by Krishna Das uses this form.

Finally, I must mention the rich fragrance of some of our theosophical literature. There is the simplicity of core principles in the little book *At the Feet of the Master* by J. Krishnamurti, Mabel Collins's *Light on the Path* which opens up a vast vista of advice for the aspirant seeking to tread the path towards self-enlightenment, and H. P. Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*, her last book and gift to the world. This last mystical gem is a translation of three fragments of ancient Buddhist wisdom, sourced from the ancient *Book of the Golden Precepts*. It lights the way towards becoming a *Bodhisatva* in the most poetical language. The small aphorisms can be read, memorised or contemplated, allowing the subconscious mind to work, percolating the wisdom into waking awareness from which to draw strength and courage. This knowledge is of inestimable value in our daily living and in walking the razor-edged path.

Blended in a melting pot of art, the fabric of spirituality wraps around one's life when experienced through the lens of theosophy. You could say the perfume of theosophy can be touched and felt for a time before it recedes or slowly evaporates but hints of exotic tastes linger on, enticing the aspirant to seek out more.



## REFERENCES

1 <https://www.theosophy.world/resource/ebooks/world-roerich-alan-senior>

2 Wadlow, René: Alexander Scriabin: Music of Ecstasy and Light, *Quest* 104.1 (Winter 2016): pg. 22-23



Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society, examines the processes of learning – as a theosophist.

## THEOSOPHY AND EDUCATION

### Part 1

Since the founding of the Theosophical Society (TS) we have been deeply involved in establishing educational institutions. I am especially grateful to Vic Hao Chin Jr, for the educational efforts that have been started at the Golden Link schools in the Philippines, which we have tried to model with our current effort at the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA).

Each of us has been exposed to and has found value in the role of Theosophy, the Ageless Wisdom, and we have committed to some process of self-education. In some respects, it seems similar to the education we were exposed to in schools but in fundamental ways it is a very different approach. I consider three basic principles are involved in this thinking about education.

First, we have to establish in our minds that there is a universal and omnipresent consciousness that is always expressing itself through everything. Even with the infinite number of forms that there are in the world, this universal consciousness is still not fully expressed. In the Bhagavadgītā Krishna says: “Having pervaded this universe with a fragment of myself, still I remain.” The religiously minded tend to think in terms of God or the divine. But this omnipresent, always available, universal consciousness is the first principle.

The second principle is that this universal consciousness is not divided and cannot possibly be divided. Everywhere we look, everything we see seems to confirm that we are actually all separate from one another. Our personal experience confirms this distance and separation. This condition of our thinking was described by H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) as “the heresy of separateness”. One of the primary purposes of the TS has been to try and establish the sense of brotherhood, the actual experience of a cooperative effort to realise truth that roots us in an inherent unity.

The third principle relates specifically to education and our educational process. It is that the higher, or hidden, self can be revealed. It is revealed through intelligent effort applied over time. This is the basis of our own education, process and practice. In different ways we all engage in

this type of study. For some it is the study of ideas as written in books; some throw themselves into activities that are beneficial to others; for some the focus is in stillness, meditation, or even the arts. But whatever our practice or study is, ultimately it should show some fruit. We are told that we should work without any desire for results. This is true, but should not be taken to mean that there are no results, because there are. There is a specific outcome resulting from a proper educational approach. On one occasion I was present for a conversation that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was having. Someone asked him about the results of his lifetime of Buddhist practice. He said one result is that he feels much happier. Most people involved in that conversation were probably looking for some sort of esoteric explanation, but this is what he said was so important. For us, as self-educators and practitioners, we should ask ourselves the following questions: “Over the years of my study and practice, has it made me happier? Am I freer from the burdens of a desiring mind? Am I freer from the inhibitions and problems that most of us carry?”

I had a good friend who was a past President of the American Section of the TS, Dora Kunz. She was most well known for her clairvoyant abilities and for developing a formal training in healing for nurses which was adopted by universities in a number of countries and led to 100,000 nurse healers. One of the difficulties that she often had to address with her nurses was that they were experiencing ‘burnout’ in the process of continually connecting with the suffering of others. As a healer, Dora herself was in contact with people who were in deep pain and suffering. But the training she had to communicate to the nurses was that the healing process can never be personal. The universal consciousness is presenting itself in countless forms limited by pain and suffering. The work is not with the form, however fragmented it may appear, but with the underlying consciousness, which is always whole.

We need to examine how we have been trained and conditioned. It is a process that starts at birth. Our first educators are our family and the society into which we have been born. We are educated in the process of self-

identity. From the theosophical or Ageless Wisdom point of view there is a soul that comes into the body. The soul is not conditioned by gender, nationality, or religion, or any of the things that it soon takes on in connection with the body it is working through. With the process of coming into the world a soul is identified as male or female, a certain nationality, religion, family, and so on. All these different separative identities become imprinted. From an initial state of wholeness, we become quite fragmented into genders, religions, nationalities, political parties, and so on. A great factor in our earliest education is our parents. They are the original educators in our world. However, if we are going to be completely honest, regardless of how much we may have loved and do love our parents, it would be wrong not to recognise limitations. Most children are raised by 20- or 30-year-olds who are trying to pass their 'wisdom' to their children. And frankly, there is not much wisdom to pass on early in life. So, we perpetuate a cycle, repeating the traditional things that have been handed down by generations of parents who came before us, hoping that the children will listen. One of the things we should recognise is that children have never been too good at listening to their parents, yet they have never failed to imitate them. This creates issues because the example that we give is what is communicated.

In the Buddhist way of teaching, one of the most important lessons is compassion. From their perspective, compassion is defined as the desire to relieve the suffering of others. In trying to teach the idea of compassion to others they recognise that for all of us there are people we like and others that we do not. There are people who have actively done harm to us, that we may even define as enemies; and there are others toward whom we naturally feel compassion. But for compassion to be genuine, it must be universal, it must be felt toward all beings. So, they had difficulty in developing a method of teaching, but they came up with a brilliant approach. In Buddhist cosmology the idea of reincarnation is fundamental. From that perspective we all have reincarnated countless times; so many times and in so many places and conditions that every person at some point in time has been a mother to us. So, they say that in

order to develop compassion for someone you do not care for, just think of them as someone who could have been your mother in a past life. In the Eastern world this approach has been successful because of their cultural reverence for mothers. As Buddhism came to the West many teachers found difficulties with this approach. With so many Western students there were issues from childhood of mothers who were not kind, who were not loving, who were distant, even abusive. So, when Western students tried to think of others as their mothers, it did not necessarily result in a feeling of compassion. In our self-education most of what we have to do is to unlearn much of what has been imprinted upon us.

From our parents and social milieu, we pass on to the schools. Vic Hao Chin Jr has spoken about possibilities for the educational institution, such as the Golden Link schools, but I am fairly certain that none of us had the benefit of going to such a school. Although we may have been occasionally exposed to remarkable teachers, the overall milieu was one where competition, comparison, and fear-based compliance were the norm. This is one of the major influences that has conditioned our way of thinking.

When I was in school, I was very much involved in athletics and some of my most useful training for living was passed on in that setting. Sports requires the recognition of limits and pushing beyond those limits within us and the way that sports training links the body with the mind is so important. When rightly done it is a training in positivity, positive emotions and cooperative effort; it also requires leadership by example.

During my time in the TS I have had the opportunity of studying and listening at the feet of some truly great people. From my perspective there is one common lesson that they all teach — each says it in their own way and expresses it differently but the idea is that we are much more than we have been trained to believe.

..... ❖❖❖ .....  
 To be continued in the December issue of *TheoSophia*.  
 From *The Theosophist* October 2021



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.

# THEOSOPHIA

## Knowledge of Things Divine

Theosophical Society leader **James A. Long** studied theosophy, its history and its meaning.

**T**he other day a friend suggested I look into theosophy. He said he didn't know too much about it and there were a lot of different opinions as to its merits and even some rather contradictory presentations but he believed that basically it had some good philosophy behind it. In answer to his questions, I began by going into theosophy's background.

First let us ask ourselves what we mean by theosophy. Do we mean its modern form that finds expression today in the several organisations that call themselves theosophical? Do we mean the theosophy of the Middle Ages or of the Renaissance? Or thinking still further back, are we referring to the period of Ammonius Saccas who lived in the second and third centuries of our era? Again, do we have in mind the archaic philosophy of the early Mystery-schools? Or, coming closer to our own times, are we speaking of the type of Christian theosophy that found an outlet in the life and writings of Jakob Boehme who in turn inspired the 'theosophers' of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries?

**Question:** I had no idea there were so many kinds of theosophy or that it reached so far into the past. I thought it was a modern word for a new kind of philosophy.

**Comment:** No, theosophy is not a newfangled thing, though unfortunately much that has gone under its name, in former times as well as today, concerns the husks rather than the kernel of its philosophy. The whole subject has so many ramifications that, in order to sketch even a bare outline of its development and growth, we have to research into its origins and then thread our way carefully through the tangled web of differing connotations that the term 'theosophy' has accumulated in the process of time. The word is believed to go back to the first few centuries of our era, and possibly earlier, while its usage, though limited, predates by hundreds of years the establishment of the modern organisations that bear the name and which, with

varying fidelity to its original significance, profess to follow a theosophic philosophy.

I would ask that we try to hold in abeyance any current notions we may have about what theosophy is and what it is not, so that we can more easily trace its development.

**Question:** I also thought it was a kind of new philosophy or creed. But what does the word mean?

**Comment:** It's from the Greek. Let's start with the dictionary definition: THEOSOPHY Also *theosophism* from From ML., fr. LGr *theosophia*, knowledge of things divine, fr. *theosophos*, wise in the things of God, fr. *theos*, God + *sophos*, wise. Incidentally, I don't believe the word 'theosophism' was ever used much, though it does appear occasionally in the writings of certain 'theosophers' of some 200 years ago. Note the symbols 'From ML., fr. LGr.' These, of course, signify that the word comes through Medieval Latin and from Late Greek; that is, the type of Greek spoken from the first or second to the sixth century A.D.

Right here, in a moment's time, we make a big leap in thought through the Dark Ages of our history back to those turbulent transition centuries following the beginning of the Christian era. You can see, therefore, what folly to confine our discussion of theosophy merely to modern times. But let us continue with the two definitions which follow the derivation of the word itself:

1. Alleged knowledge of God and of the world as related to God obtained by direct mystical insight or by philosophical speculation or by a combination of both.
2. (Often capitalised) the doctrines and beliefs of a modern school or sect following, in the main, Buddhistic and Brahmanic theories, especially in teaching a pantheistic evolution and the doctrine of reincarnation.

**Question:** That sounds rather complicated. How can anyone really have 'knowledge of God'? I want to know

## How can anyone really have 'knowledge of God'?

if God is capitalised there. First, we get the translation of the word as 'knowledge of things divine,' which I like. It gives one a feeling of no limits. But then we're told that theosophy means 'alleged knowledge of God.' And right away I begin to feel hemmed in by the idea of a Personal Deity about whom theosophy is supposed to tell me.

**Comment:** Yes, God is capitalised in both phrases, 'wise in the things of God,' and 'alleged knowledge of God.' Had the lexicographers translated *theos* as 'a spiritual or divine being' or simply as 'divinity,' which were its connotations in Greek times, instead of adopting the later Christian usage of 'God', they would have come much closer to the essential significance of theosophia as 'knowledge of divine things.' Nevertheless, the fact that they inserted the word 'alleged' shows that they were well aware that no human being could be fully 'wise in the things of God,' much less comprehend the boundless wisdom of a Divine Intelligence whose experience includes the alpha and omega of life itself on our planet, our solar system and indeed within and beyond our universe.

The first definition treats theosophy as variously used in preceding centuries and is written with a small 't'. But the second definition, often capitalised, pertains to the modern school of thought bearing the name 'theosophical'. To make a point of this distinction may seem somewhat irrelevant, but it is not. The history of humankind's development and progress in true spiritual insight has proven time and again that the moment we put our beliefs in capitals we specialise and become static; the moment we specialise, we limit; and when we limit, we begin to lose the very essence of that which we are seeking. In physical or administrative matters, we must of necessity, define a problem in order to focus our attention on this or that specific area of interest. But when we refer to divine things that pertain to the growing inner constitution of humankind and of the cosmos, we are dealing with non-static developing principles of truth, whether we call them Buddhism, Christianity, Neoplatonism or theosophy. By placing those principles within the framework of finality, we have limited their significance to the particular form that our definitions take.

This is the case whether we are considering the gnosis (knowledge) of gnostic theosophy, the theosophic speculations of the Hebrew Kabbalists or of the Fire-Philosophers, the Christian theosophy expounded by Meister Eckhart, Jakob Boehme or Saint-Martin, or again its modern representations. That is why I suggested we hold in abeyance our previous notions in order that we might enlarge our area of thought, and view theosophy, literally, as 'knowledge of things divine.' If we can consider it in this sense, we will realise that the essence of pure religion and philosophy – and of science too when considered as pure knowledge, which is what the word means – is theosophia with a small t, that quality of wisdom which the greatest Seers of mankind have attained through direct perception of things as they are.

**Question:** If we follow out that last thought, would it mean then that all the Saviours or world teachers, such as Buddha and Jesus, and I suppose men like Plato and Pythagoras, taught a kind of theosophy?

**Comment:** Let's not make a new dogma out of this and say that every religion and philosophy is theosophy; we could as easily say they are all Buddhism or Christianity or Islam, and so forth. Nevertheless, because no matter what system of thought we consider, if we can discern its eternal and imperishable quality we will arrive at one central point – truth. Their differences lie only in their external wrappings, which most of the time tend to hide rather than to reveal their essential worth.

This brings us to the second definition, which is capitalised and refers to the modern organisation founded in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky and which attempted to carry on the work originally started by Ammonius Saccas in the third century of our era. Just as he tried to show that truth was one and that all religions originally sprang from a common wisdom of antiquity, so her thought-provoking work, *The Secret Doctrine*, was written with that in mind. However, during the succeeding years, the term 'theosophy' has suffered considerably by misuse. There exist several organised bodies that attempt with relative success to disseminate its philosophy. But there are also a few dubious cults using the literature to promulgate a type of teaching which is nothing more than a deviation from the original doctrine, with glamorous emphasis on fringe aspects such as psychism and other unhealthy brands of phenomenism – all of which are highly dangerous perversions of spiritual values.

**Question:** Isn't the very type of mixed-up knowledge current today in our philosophical and religious outlook and particularly in regard to these psychic matters, almost a replica of what was happening in Alexandria when Ammonius lived? Even at an earlier period the Romans had to enact laws against the practice of mediumship, divination and the making of horoscopes; in fact, against anything that tended in the slightest degree toward the use and development of the occult arts.

**Comment:** To fix the exact date when the term first came into currency is difficult, though I believe the word 'theosophos,' or 'wise in divine concerns,' is found occasionally in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and possibly others of that time. Some authorities, however, lean to the view that it was Ammonius Saccas who more specifically grounded his pupils in theosophic principles.

**Question:** I read somewhere that he taught a kind of eclectic philosophy by combining ideas from different sources ... by skimming off the cream of the various religions and making a sort of spiritual pot-pourri. I don't like the word 'eclectic' because how can you arrive at a sound philosophy by artificially building it up from bits and pieces?

**Comment:** I agree with you that we will never find truth by arbitrarily collecting pieces of it and tacking them together. To interpret the word 'eclectic' in that sense is legitimate but that is far from what Ammonius Saccas did. While his system of instruction is modernly referred to as 'eclectic', in reality he followed a threefold method of arriving at truth: analysis, synthesis and interpretation. With Plato as the foundation, he was able to distil the essence of *sophia* or 'wisdom' from the seemingly conflicting elements in the conglomerate of mystical and religious traditions then current in Alexandria. That is why he is considered the inspiring genius behind the extraordinary revival of interest in the Platonic philosophy, which as Neoplatonism was later so strongly to influence not only Christian psychology but even church theology through St Augustine. But that is another story!

I think it is difficult for us to realise what that teeming metropolis was like in those early centuries. Here was a thriving centre of commerce and trade between the Orient, Asia Minor, Africa and Rome but it was also the seat of the highest culture and learning; the Museum with its Library being famed particularly for its hundreds of thousands of priceless manuscripts (a goodly portion of which was later destroyed by fanatics). Hindus, Buddhists, Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, Romans and Arabs, as well as the growing body of Christian converts mingled, each eager to sell his wares, material or so-called spiritual. And it was here, in protest against the superficiality of life in general and the hollowness of much that was expounded as truth, that Ammonius founded his school in which he demanded of his disciples the highest reverence

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for truth. He was called theodidaktos or god-taught, because it was believed that he had experienced the sacred union of the soul with its divine source. Certainly, the nobility of his life acted as a constant reminder to his pupils that if they faithfully lived a self-disciplined life they too, in time, might become *theosophos* or 'wise in the things of God.' However, he wrote nothing down, any more than did Jesus or Buddha or Socrates.

**Question:** Then how do we know what he taught?

**Comment:** In the same way that we know, to a fair degree at least, what all the world teachers, including Jesus, taught: by reading between the lines and behind the words of their followers. Ammonius, in accord with the archaic practice of the Mystery schools (even though in his time they had become very much degraded) exacted a solemn vow from his disciples never to commit to writing what they would learn. After his death however, two of them circulated some manuscripts, giving their interpretation of his doctrines. Fortunately for posterity, one very remarkable individual called Plotinus, came to study under Ammonius and later wrote several books giving the essence of the teachings imparted. Plotinus had been searching everywhere among the many philosophical schools in Alexandria for genuine spiritual instruction but finding nothing but husks and had become despondent. Then a friend told him about Ammonius. As Porphyry, the beloved pupil of Plotinus records it, as soon as he heard Ammonius, he exclaimed: "This is the man I have been seeking." So, he stayed with him for ten years and it is said that he too attained moments of union with his 'Father within'.

We have Porphyry to thank for persuading Plotinus that it was his duty, now that these imperfect and incomplete accounts had come out, to preserve in written form a true interpretation of Ammonius's teaching. It would have been a terrible loss otherwise, for Plotinus seems to have outshone even Plato in his exposition of the ancient theme that everything flows from divinity or theos, and that all souls and forms and phases of manifestation must in time consciously strive to return to their divine source. There is much more but it is easy to see why the theosophia of Neoplatonism again and again has tried to find expression in succeeding centuries.

**Question:** I'm trying to link up the definition of theosophy as 'alleged knowledge of God' with the fact that Ammonius apparently achieved divine insight.

**Comment:** Let me reread the definition: 'Alleged knowledge of God and of the world as related to God by direct mystical insight or by philosophical speculation or by both.' If we rephrase this from the vantage point of what we have just discussed, we will see how remarkably apt it is: theosophia, or knowledge of divine things concerning the cosmos and humankind as expressions of divinity, attainable through direct spiritual perception or by study and reflection, or by a combination of the mind illumined by intuition.

**Question:** That's wonderful, but who can attain that outside of people like Ammonius or the great teachers?

**Comment:** Didn't Plato say something about the soul having been impressed at the dawn of time with knowledge of the 'great Idea,' by which he no doubt meant sophia or wisdom and that it was up to us to 'recollect' that knowledge during our lives on earth? And didn't the Master Jesus say that it was the Father within him that was performing the so-called miracles and that what he did we could do also?

**Question:** I like that because during the war years I met individuals of entirely different religious

backgrounds and while I didn't have the opportunity to investigate their beliefs, I became convinced that spiritual worth was no respecter of skin, country or religion. That is why I am so interested in Ammonius's hope to show that there was but one truth. I feel there must be, even for us ordinary people, a kind of natural wisdom we can find.

**Comment:** Isn't it perhaps that natural wisdom within all of us that we are trying to recollect?

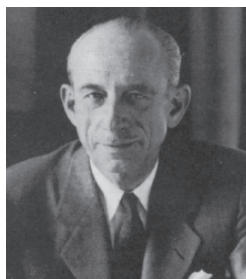
**Question:** I've often wondered why there isn't a common pool of knowledge from which we could all draw. I can't see why there have to be so many religions and so many different types of philosophical speculation about how our world came into being and what we as humans mean in relation to it.

**Comment:** The traditions of antiquity confirm that at one time in the early history of mankind there was One Wisdom known to all the nations of earth but gradually so many false interpretations of this or that aspect of truth gained supremacy that it was deemed necessary for Saviours or Avatars periodically to incarnate among humankind in order to restore the ancient values. They did not come to found a new religion; their followers did that, with a zeal not always matched by fidelity to the spirit of the message. It is the same sad story of human nature seeking to preserve the words of truth by getting them so neatly inscribed into a book or manuscript that once this occurs there is nothing left to do but to store it away carefully! All too soon, not only have we lost the key to it but we have also forgotten its original high purpose. Before we know it, we are taking someone else's say-so as our authority for what is true or not true!

Truth is one, but there are as many truths or expressions of divine things as there are human beings to reflect their insight through the prism of their own individual consciousness.

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.....◆◆◆.....  
Taken from *Expanding Horizons*, by James A. Long, Theosophical University Press.



James A. Long (1898-1971), a businessman who later worked in the U.S. State Department, became an advisor to the 1946 U.S. delegation to the United Nations. Long joined The American TS in 1935, becoming leader of The Society for ten years from 1951. His administration had an emphasis on practical expressions of theosophy in daily living. As a writer and editor, Long founded *Sunrise* magazine offering theosophic perspectives on science, philosophy and religion, plus studies of ancient and modern theosophy.

Renée Sell writes with wisdom and fine understanding

# Reflecting on the Perfume of Theosophy

## We may discover the light in our own hearts!

The fragrance always stays in the hand that gives the rose.

Hada Béjar

Stepping out of bed this morning, I wondered what the day would bring and decided to create a spiritual atmosphere in the home to be receptive to the theme: What is the perfume of theosophy?

This day happened to be a 'seven' in numerology, a good day to turn attention inward, not too much on the calendar, family scattered around the globe at this time and very quiet on the home front, making the perfect space for contemplative pottering, all-day mindfulness and freedom to create an atmosphere of beauty both within and without. These days are rare in our modern world and it feels like this has been a long time in coming – a space opening of my choosing while asking: what to fill it with?

Pondering on the many magnificent ideas theosophy offers for consideration, from reincarnation to karma, the ideal of the Path of Hastened Unfoldment and the Unity of all Life, are but a few. There amidst these ideas are the lofty teachings of the Masters of the Wisdom, known by many names, such as Mahatmas, great souls, adepts etc. These great souls are masters of the hidden science or esoteric philosophy. My curiosity was peaked from when I first read about them in such books as: *The Key to Theosophy* by Helena Blavatsky, *The Masters and the Path* and Geoffrey Hodson's spiritual diary, *Light of the Sanctuary*. Additionally, within the Society's history are woven the teachings of the Masters, which are both fascinating, helpful and inspiring. It seemed just plain old common sense to me, that there must be wise beings who know what life is about, where it is leading us and how we follow this path.

It wasn't long before I was in deep thought about the Masters and thinking back to the profound effect this particular teaching had upon my life, especially with the outlook on life and discovering the purpose of life. I realise there are those who don't think we should speak about the

Masters openly, but imagine holding a torch in the dark, unable to turn it on to light the room for others. A comment by previous International President C. Jinarajadasa confirms these sentiments when he says, "as if when the sun rises the flowers should refuse to open!"

At the inception of the Society back in 1875, foundational teachings on the Masters and key theosophical principles through co-founder Helena Blavatsky and her teachers, were conveyed to the world – particularly to those seekers and explorers that were and are receptive of an inner wisdom and knowledge of the existence of perfected or enlightened human beings. This idea of the Masters needs to be seen as an integral part of the whole Theosophical worldview and not on its own. Some of the fundamental key ideas are:

- **The Unity of all Life**, rooted in the ultimate reality, as a unified whole – absolute, impersonal, unknowable and indescribable.
- **This Ultimate Reality** gives rise to an evolutionary cycle of becoming and in the human stage is self-directed and self-consciously chosen.
- **The Evolutionary journey** by means of which humanity grows in the unfolding of consciousness toward full self-realisation or enlightenment.
- **The pivotal doctrine of the esoteric philosophy** is that there are no special gifts in the human being, save those won by his/her own Soul throughout a long series of reincarnations and metempsychosis (awakenings). It is important to note that transformation occurs from here.
- **A Master or great Soul** is a person who has moved beyond our present age of understanding toward a wider/deeper knowledge. These individuals are from many different traditions, whatever you may call them – saints, seers, bodhisattvas, liberated ones, great souls, Mahatmas.

They may be revered as founders of a particular religion – Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad and so on.

- **There is a Knowledge** in terms of principles and laws that underlies existence.
- **Workings of this law** through the tools of karma and reincarnation.
- **Only in the human stage** does consciousness become reflective upon itself and therefore self-conscious decisions and effort are our privileged choice. **We choose** here, that is our responsibility.

Considering the idea of a Master or Great Soul, this is not a new idea but an ancient one. This concept is in every sacred religious tradition and this Knowledge, Helena Blavatsky has spoken of as follows:

Knowledge comes in visions, first in dreams and then in pictures presented to the inner eye during meditation. Thus, have I been taught the whole system of evolution, the laws of being and all else that I know – the mysteries of life and death, the workings of karma. Not a word was spoken to me of all this in the ordinary way, except, perhaps, by way of confirmation of what was given me – nothing taught me in writing. And knowledge so obtained is so clear, so convincing, so indelible in the impression it makes upon the mind, that all other sources of information, all other methods of teaching with which we are familiar, dwindle into insignificance in comparison with this.

Regarding this Knowledge and discovering there are individuals on the further shore who embody this, questions arise such as, what is the pathway to them? How best to understand deeply what theosophy itself is, this living tradition? And how do we come to this knowledge that is spoken of, this interior transformation? This brings us to enquire of the true life of any spiritually awakened person. It is not the external life but the internal life that is truly different. It is important to understand, the inner life is a mode of thinking and feeling and everything else is external, temporary and will pass. I am reminded of the Buddhist saying, 'Everything Arises, everything passes!' It can help us begin to see that what we experience most of the time is the changing condition of our minds and not the True Self. This is worth reflecting upon, as a movement in our perception is required for another way of thinking. Our current International President Tim Boyd speaks of the potential here:

**There is the potential for a new mind within us** – a mind open to the understanding that comes from inspired living. It is not the mind of any individual, but that greater mind within which we all 'live, move, and have our being.' Just beyond the walls of self-absorption that form the boundaries of our normal world, lies something greater, a new world whose expanse and openness embrace all beings. It is our job to remove these barriers.

The teachings and messages from Helena Blavatsky, in the last few years of her life, were very much dedicated to the seeker of true knowledge and leading toward a deeper aspect of theosophy – a direct interior knowing or experience of the divine wisdom itself. This experience can only be achieved through meditation and choosing to work on the project of ourselves. Master K.H. in the Mahatama Letters, spoke of the type of mind required for this Knowledge:

It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that visions gathered from the invisible find a representation in the visible world.

Furthermore, Dr Franz Hartmann shared a poem that illustrates the double nature within each of us:

Two natures are within each human being  
 One is a child of the clear light of day.  
 In it is nothing dark, but all is seeing,  
 There is all sunshine, nothing hid away.  
 Its innermost thy eye may penetrate.  
 There is no secret and no mystery;

... a movement  
 in our  
 perception is  
 required for  
 another way of  
 thinking.

In it rule wisdom, justice, love and faith,  
Spotless as crystal is its purity.

The other is a being born of night.  
Fill'd with dark clouds that change and  
Change again.

It baffles reason and ignores the light:  
It is a stranger in its own domain.  
Intangibly it fills our daily life.

With mocking goblins; its discordant reign  
Begetting errors and discordant strife:  
Tangling the threads and spoiling the design.

We all have within ourselves, an external and internal life or a terrestrial and celestial life and my question to you would be, in light of what is more permanent, 'How is your Inner life?'

There are those, whose interior life has awakened and who find this life the Real one and the earthly life is the illusion or temporary part of us. There is often a lack of knowledge about the higher aspects of reality and this makes us see things from an incorrect perspective. If we want to gain knowledge of what is Real or more permanent, both within ourselves and the universe as a whole, then it is time for a regular holistic spiritual practice that includes the three pillars of theosophy: study, meditation and service.

The light that theosophy shows us in all its aspects is varied and is like the light of the north star showing the wayfarer the way home. I find myself walking often with a smile on my face, thankful for theosophy and the big questions it answers, along with an inclusive, broad view of life. Showing me that we have opportunities to not just study but also to understand and embody the theoretical side of theosophy. The choice is ours what we do. During this process something happens, something changes – we discover the Perfume of Theosophy. Truth is within ourselves and not somewhere else. We discover a light hidden within our own hearts. Hada Béjar's beautiful quote is truly meaningful here, 'The fragrance always stays in the hand that gives the rose.'

As the days, months and years go by, I can only feel gratitude for a tradition that is rich with profound teachings, so broad and deep as to shed a light that opens the heart chamber to strengthen connections to ALL BEINGS. Love is a Light in the Heart and Master K.H. captures well the part we are to play: "you alone, have to weave your destiny."



SOURCES AND RECOMMENDED READING:

- The Light of the Sanctuary*, The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson
- The Initiate Life, A Guide to the Path of Hastened Unfoldment* compiled from the Talks and Study Notes of Geoffrey Hodson
- The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, from the Mahatmas M. & K.H. transcribed and compiled by A.T. Barker in Chronological Sequence arrangement and edited by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.
- Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom* by Joy Mills
- The Master* by C. Jinarajadasa
- From inner to outer Transformation* by Joy Mills – Lectures on 'The Voice of the Silence'
- H.P.B. In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky* by some of her pupils.

Truth is within  
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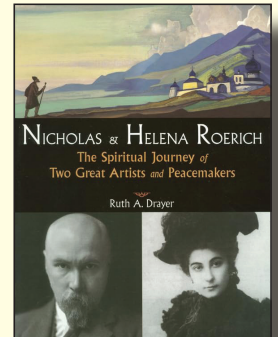


Renée Sell is an active worker for the Society since joining in 1998. Her emphasis continues to be on the practical application of theosophical principles. Renée brings a balance of head and heart to her role of assisting people in theosophy on the journey of understanding who they truly are. Renée is past TSNZ National Vice-president, retired National coordinator of the Theosophical Order of Service NZ, after 19 years, and is President of HPB Lodge, Auckland.

# Recommended Reading

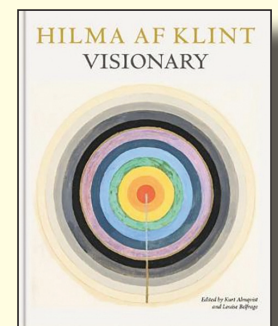
## NICHOLAS and HELENA ROERICH – THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF TWO GREAT ARTISTS AND PEACEMAKERS by Ruth A. Drayer

Published in 2005 by Quest Books, this book describes the remarkable spiritual and artistic journey of Nicholas and Helena Roerich across multiple continents. Containing a series of colour plates, as well as precious photographs of the Roerich family and companions, the book draws the reader into a remarkable world, where the veil between the material and spiritual world is thin. Synchronicity guides the events and meetings of the Roerichs as they leave Russia for Finland to escape the Revolution, and subsequently travel to such diverse locations as America, India, Tibet, Ladakh and the Gobi Desert. Reading this book is an immersive experience and worth a visit to the Geoffrey Hodson Library at Vasanta House. This book is part of our Reference Section and therefore not available on loan.



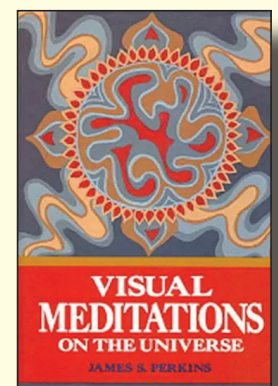
## HILMA AF KLINT: VISIONARY by Kurt Almqvist and Louise Belfrage

Another extraordinary book you may want to spend time exploring in our Reference Section is this beautiful volume on Theosophist Hilma af Klint and her Visionary Art. Published by Stolpe Publishing in 2020, this beautiful production showcases the work of the artist as well in the context of her links to Theosophy and the Esoteric. Hilma's abstract art predates the work of Mondrian, Kandinsky and Malevich, and takes the reader into her world, inspired by her spiritual journey and the wonder of the natural world.



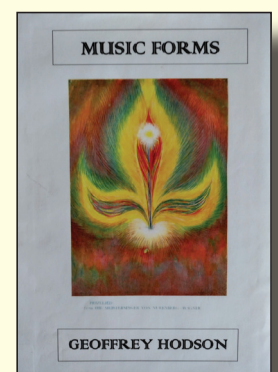
## VISUAL MEDITATIONS ON THE UNIVERSE by James S. Perkins

Published by The Theosophical Publishing House (1984), this Reference Library book consists of colour illustrations which are visualisations of the insight gained by the author when meditating on fragments of spiritual text. The illustrations capture the essence of Theosophy, while the texts meditated on include *The Secret Doctrine*, *Light on the Path*, the *Rig Veda*, the *Bible*, as well as quotes from individual Theosophists such as Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater. Spending time contemplating the illustrations and text is a unique experience.



## MUSIC FORMS by Geoffrey Hodson

This book, published by The Theosophical Publishing House in 1979, contains photographs by Dr Hans Jenny of the effects of vibration on physical substances, followed by Geoffrey Hodson's clairvoyant observations of elemental responses to music. Eight compositions, including Wagner, Haydn, Handel, Mozart and Bach were studied for this book, and the results recorded in words with accompanying colour illustrations by Barabara Sellon and others. This book is available for loan through the lending library by emailing [library@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:library@theosophy.org.nz)



# THE OBJECTS

## and their relevance to the theosophical life

Theosophist and scholar, **John Algeo** shared his mastery of this crucial subject.

**T**he Objects of the Theosophical Society, like all great statements, can be understood in more than one way. Moreover, they become the richer as we understand them more fully in various ways. [See *The Three Objects of the Theosophical Society* on inside back cover of this issue of *TheoSophia*.]

### THE OUTER AND INNER SENSE OF THE OBJECTS

The Objects have their literal, surface, outer meaning, which is perfectly valid. Indeed, the outer sense of the Objects is the organisational foundation of the Society, the basis of our corporate unity. However, just as H. P. Blavatsky distinguished between members of the Theosophical Society and theosophists, without in any way disparaging or belittling either group, so we may distinguish between the outer sense of the Objects, which applies to the corporate organisation and their inner sense, which is a way theosophists may understand them and live them.

In speaking of the Objects' inner sense, we need not (and indeed must not) suppose that there is either some secret interpretation not available to all members or a single underlying meaning to be substituted for the outer sense. In the first place, the inner sense of the Objects is an 'open secret' available to all. It is simply how the objects apply to one's personal theosophical life, as distinct from the corporate functions of the Theosophical Society.

In the second place, the inner does not replace the outer sense, nor is there a single inner sense. Rather the Objects' inner sense is what we as theosophists make of them as we live theosophy. Consequently, the inner sense will vary to some extent with each theosophist. The exploration of inner meaning that follows is thus only one person's ruminations about how the Objects seem to apply to the theosophical life, and nothing more.

### THE FIRST OBJECT

The first Object is often understood as an affirmation of 'brotherly' behaviour. That is, it is seen as affirming the value of treating all human beings as members of the same family and as equals within that family. It is such an affirmation, and we are such members.

However, the Object actually says something different, even on the literal, outer level. It assumes that we are by nature siblings in the same human family; but specifically, it proposes that we form a nucleus within humanity – something that does not already exist naturally. The nucleus referred to in the first Object can be seen in several ways.

In one view, it is 'the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity,' of which the Maha-Chohan spoke. [Maha-Chohan is described as a high Adept superior of the Mahātmas. [www.theosophy.world](http://www.theosophy.world)] It is the core or centre around which other elements form. We are all members of one human family, but one aim of the Society is to bring that theoretical fact into actual practice.

Another way of seeing the first Object is in the light of the 'band of servers' that second-generation theosophists were very conscious of. Those wise elders forming the guardian wall of humanity, whom we call 'the Masters', need humble co-workers to help carry out their purposes. Such co-workers are comparable to the teaching and research assistants who do some of the grunt work for a research professor at a university. The work they do is not romantic, but it is necessary, and it frees the elders for the sort of work that only the elders can do.

Theosophists can be thought of as those who have accepted the call to become part of the band of servers. That band is the nucleus spoken of in the first Object, understood in an inner sense. It is not an exclusive body, but one whose membership is available to all who are willing to dedicate themselves to it. It has no dues. It has no membership cards. It is an inner reality. But it is a reality.

#### THE SECOND OBJECT

The second Object speaks of studying religion, philosophy and science. That is what many of our lectures, discussions, books and articles are concerned with doing. But the actual wording of the Object is worth observing. It does not say that we will study those subjects, but rather that we will encourage study. The Society is not, after all, a college that carries on scholarship as its mission. It is, however, a body that encourages its members and others to study.

The thing studied is also worth considering. There are two possible groupings, or grammatical description, of the words in the second Object. They may be understood as the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science, comparative religion being a study that looks at how various religions are alike and different. Or the words may be understood as study of comparative religion, philosophy and science in which case 'comparative' goes with all three following nouns rather than the first only.

Grammatically, the second Object can be described either way. When it has been translated into languages other than the 19th-century British English in which the Objects were expressed in 1896, it has sometimes been rendered as 'the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science,' which is clearly the second way of understanding its literal meaning. That second understanding is strongly supported by the subtitle of H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*.

That second understanding of the grammar of the second Object also leads to a view of the Object's inner meaning. One of our aims as theosophists is to encourage the comparative study or the synthesis of religion, philosophy and science, which are the major forms of human understanding of ourselves, the universe and our grounding in reality. That synthesis is the Secret Doctrine or Theosophy.

Theosophy as such is not mentioned in the three Objects, doubtless for the very good reason that, if it were, the Society would have to define Theosophy. How does one define the Divine

Theosophists can be thought of as those who have accepted the call to become part of the band of servers.

...the study  
and teaching of  
Theosophy must be  
of central concern...

Wisdom? Better not try, because defining it outwardly and officially could only lead to the sort of narrow sectarianism that HPB and her teachers repeatedly warned us against.

On the other hand, there is a Divine Wisdom or Theosophy and it is what the Theosophical society is named for. Therefore, the study and teaching of Theosophy must be of central concern to us. Although not mentioned explicitly, Theosophy is implicit in the second Object, for it is the Secret Doctrine or the synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy.

#### THE THIRD OBJECT

The present-day third Object is a development of the 1875 statement, 'The objects of the society are, to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe.' The laws which govern the universe also govern us and our latent powers, so that the first statement of objects in 1875 can be seen as equivalent to the current third Object. The third Object is then chronologically the first one the Society enunciated, although not necessarily the first in the minds of the inner founders, who always emphasised the centrality of brotherhood in the Society's mission.

The third Object is often understood as applying to clairvoyance and psychic powers of various kinds. Such abilities are certainly not excluded by it. But what most people think of as clairvoyance and psychic powers are what *The Voice of the Silence* speaks of as the lower *iddhis* or *siddhis*, and warns students against as possessing dangers for the ignorant. Similarly, the Master M. warned that Sinnett should 'also try to break through that great *maya* against which occult students, the world over, have always been warned by their teachers – the hankering after phenomena' (*Mahatma Letters*, 3rd edition, p. 258). The lower *siddhis*, or psychic phenomena, cannot be the subject of the third Object.

In addition to the lower *siddhis*, however, there are also higher *siddhis*, the powers awakened by the realisation of our unity with all life, that is, by enlightenment. The third Object thus calls us to find out about the laws of Nature not explained by science and the highest spiritual powers within ourselves.

In an inner sense, the third Object is about understanding the great mysteries of the universe and developing ourselves accordingly. It is a call to the practice of a spiritual discipline that leads to such understanding and development. It is about yoga, the process of unitive transformation.

#### THE INTEGRATED MEANING OF THE OBJECTS

Considered outwardly, the three Objects of the Society are about rather different and seemingly unrelated things: forming a nucleus of universal kinship; encouraging the study of intellectual disciplines; and investigating unexplained laws around us and the latent powers within us. Those are good things to do. They are the corporate purposes of the Society.

Considered inwardly, however, the three Objects are about something more personal, and all three are about very much the same thing. In their inner sense, the Objects are calling us to join the band of servers by seeking to assist in transmitting the Divine Wisdom of Theosophy to the world by understanding its mysteries and by transforming ourselves. In that inner sense, the Objects are not about different activities, but rather about three aspects of one activity:

acting out the bodhisattva vow or living altruistically.

Not all members of the Theosophical Society will or should look past the outer sense of the Objects to find an inner one. The outer Objects are good and useful. But for those who hear the call of an inner reality, the inner meaning of the Objects awaits their exploration. Those who look to the inner sense will not all find the same meaning, or at least will not articulate it in the same way. The inner sense is highly personal. Each Theosophist will perceive it in a unique way that is individually applicable. Yet, however it is perceived and however it is articulated, the inner meaning of the three Objects is a call to live the theosophical life.

The Objects are not just about forming groups, encouraging the study of human learning, and investigating the unexplained. They are about *doing* Theosophy. That is their enduring relevance.

The Objects...  
are about *doing*  
Theosophy. That  
is their enduring  
relevance.

Published in *The Theosophist*, Volume 118, November 1996



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

Clara Codd, famous suffragette, writer and theosophist,  
drew on Greek philosophy to define this wonder.

## THE PLACE OF BEAUTY IN OUR LIVES

People have tried to define beauty. The poet Wordsworth described it as “multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a constituent whole.” Coleridge says something similar: “The old definition of beauty, in the Roman School, was ‘multiplicity in unity,’ and there is no doubt that such is the principle of beauty.” But third century Greek Platonist philosopher, Plotinus says that this will not explain simple beauty, as that of the sunshine and the stars. He says:

It is the general opinion that a certain commensuration of parts of each other and the whole, with the addition of colour, generates that beauty which is the object of sight, and that in the commensurate and the moderate alone the beauty of everything consists... But from such a definition it follows the beautiful colours and the light of the sun ... are simple, and do not receive their beauty from commensuration, must be excluded from the regions of beauty... In like manner the simplest musical sounds will be foreign from beauty, though in a song wholly beautiful every note must be beautiful, as necessary to the being of the whole.

The Greeks sought the essential unity. To them beauty lay not in the form, which was but an epiphany, but in the incommensurable idea and finally in the all-pervading life. Says Plotinus again:

Beauty, for the most part, consists in objects of sight; but it is also received through the ears, by the skilful composition of words and the consonant proportion of sounds; for in every species of harmony beauty is to be found. And if we rise from sense into the regions of the soul, we shall there perceive studies and offices, actions and habits, sciences and virtues, invested with a much larger proportion of beauty. But whether there is above these a still higher beauty, will appear as we advance in its investigation.

There are three stages in the perception of beauty: sensuous, idealistic, and spiritual. Each is reached by the understanding and transcending of the inferior stage. In the teachings of the priestess Diotima to Socrates, she says:

The true order of going, or being led by another, to the things of love, is to begin from the beauties of earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty, using these as steps only and from one going on to two, and from two to all fair forms and from fair forms to fair practices and from fair practices to fair notions, until from fair notions one arrives at the notion of absolute beauty and at last knows what the essence of beauty is.

The Eternal Beauty is the Eternal Life. Says the beloved Plotinus yet again:

Let us, therefore, ascend to the good itself, which every soul desires; and in which alone it can find perfect repose... Those who penetrate into the holy retreat of these sacred mysteries ... having dismissed everything foreign from the God, by themselves alone, behold the solitary principle of the universe, sincere, simple and pure, from which all things depend, and to whose transcendent perfections the eyes of all intelligent natures are directed, as the proper cause of being, life and intelligence. In itself perfectly pure, not confined by any corporeal bond, neither existing in the heavens, nor in the earth, not to be imaged by the most lovely form imagination can conceive; since these are all adventitious and mixed, and mere secondary beauties, proceeding from the Beautiful itself.

The priestess Diotima said:

But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty – the Divine Beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life – thither looking, and holding converse with the

## Desire is the cosmic urge to Unity.

true beauty, simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue, to become the friend of God, and be immortal, if mortal man may.

Beauty is an eternal Divine Principle, and it always evokes Love. The second Person of the Hindu Trimurti or Trinity, is Vishnu, the god of Love, and his “shakti” or wife is the goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of happiness and joy. And it too is a creative power.

When God as Narcissus beheld his image mirrored in the waters of space, he fell in love with it and created the universe. Diotima says that men love the beautiful that it may be theirs. And when she asked Socrates what is given by the possession of beauty he could not answer, so she changed the word “the beautiful” for “the good.” Then he knew that the possession of the Good gives happiness and that people desire its everlasting possession, because they desire birth in beauty either of body or soul.

Strength and grace in humans, says Diotima, creates bodies, desiring immortality. But souls which are pregnant create as poets, artists, inventors. “Who,” she asks, “when they think of Homer and Hesiod and other great poets, would not rather have their children than ordinary ones?” Desire is the cosmic urge to Unity. So, Plotinus says: “Indeed, whatever is desirable is a kind of good, since to this desire tends.” Therefore, there is a universal desire for happiness, for it is Beauty calling.

There are some lovely words in King Solomon’s Song of Songs: “My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.”

Aengus was the god Eros of the Celts, and his dwelling place was the Tir-na-nÓg, the land of the Ever-Young. What is our way to this supreme Beauty? In the 19th century, Thomas Taylor wrote:

But here it is requisite to observe that our ascent to this region of Beauty must be made by gradual advances, for, from our association with matter, it is impossible to pass directly, and without a medium, to such transcendent perfection; but we must proceed in a manner similar to those who pass from darkness to the brightest light, by advancing from places moderately lighted to such as are the most luminous of all.

This reminds us of Plato’s allegory of the men gazing at shadows on the wall of a cave, who, when they turned their faces to the light were at first blinded.

Plotinus says the same, that the pristine beauty of our eternal selves has become clouded and defiled by its contact with matter and that in order to become able to perceive true beauty we must learn to divest ourselves by degrees of this impurity, since “it is necessary that the perceiver and the thing perceived should be similar to each other before true vision can exist... Everyone, therefore, must become divine, and of godlike beauty, before he can gaze upon a god and the beautiful itself.” Only the pure can see the Pure. He says that we see what we can respond to. “Thus, to the good man, virtue shining forth in youth is lovely because consonant to the true virtue which lies deep in the soul.”

So, the Way is an ascent in response. And this is the method in the words of Plotinus: “It is now time, leaving every object of sense behind, to contemplate, by a certain ascent, a beauty of a much higher order; a beauty not visible to the corporeal eye, but alone manifest to the brighter eye of the soul, independent of all corporeal aid.”

The aspirant has already realised that all beautiful things are stages of the manifestation of beauty and has tried to love and serve them. Diotima says that a person should begin in youth to visit and admire beauty, then to love one fair form only and out of that to create fair thoughts. Then seeing that Beauty everywhere is one and the same they will become a lover of all beautiful forms. Then

...all things are beautiful because a portion of the Beautiful itself supervenes and irradiates them.

they will love the Bust of Plotinus, beauty of the mind, and toward one who has it they will be content to love and tend them. Instead of being like a servant in love with one person or institution, they will draw toward and contemplate the vast sea of beauty, creating many fair and noble thoughts in boundless love of wisdom; till at last the vision is revealed to them of a single science which is the science of beauty everywhere. "Thine eyes shall behold the King in His Beauty and the land which is very far off." Plotinus says that whoever would behold this beauty must learn to withdraw their view from the fairest corporeal forms and, convinced that these are nothing more than the images, vestiges and shadows of beauty, should eagerly soar to the fair original from which they are derived, as if they would say, "Let us depart from hence, and fly to our father's delightful land."

Plotinus recommends a system of meditation, which consists in recalling the thoughts inwardly, and trying to perceive the Beautiful within ourselves. We must divest ourselves of all that is not beautiful until we perceive the true light and that alone, everywhere immeasurable and excellent. We now require no guide, for we must now fix steadfastly our mental views, for with the mind's eye alone can such immense Beauty be perceived. Plotinus warns us that if our mind's eye is not thoroughly refined and is yet infested with any sordid concerns, it will be immediately darkened and incapable of intuition, for the perceiver and perceived should be similar to each other before true vision can exist.

And then he will perceive that all things are beautiful because a portion of the Beautiful itself supervenes and irradiates them. We can see because God has planted His image within us. As Greek philosopher, Proclus said in the fifth century:

The author of the Universe has planted in all beings impressions of His own perfect excellence ... and by this mystical impression which corresponds to His nature they become united with their original, divesting themselves of their own essence, and hastening to become His impression alone.

Here again Love is drawn by Beauty and Union is Bliss. "With what ardent love," cries Plotinus, "with what strong desires will he who enjoys this transporting vision be inflamed whilst vehemently affecting to become one with this supreme beauty ... What must be the condition of that being, who beholds the Beautiful itself?" "A beauty if you once behold," said Diotima, "all other beauty fades."

We should cultivate the response to beauty in ourselves. Then we would never be cruel. I once knew a man who had no ear for music. He religiously took himself to concert after concert and tried to 'listen'. He became the finest appreciator of music I ever met. Beauty in our souls makes for grace and graciousness. To quote Plotinus again: "Bodies themselves participate of beauty from the soul, which, as something divine, and a portion of the beautiful itself, renders whatever it supervenes and subdues, beautiful as far as its natural capacity will admit... For such beauty, since it is supreme in dignity and excellence, cannot fail of rendering its votaries lovely and fair."

The evidence of beauty in the soul is love, joy, faith, long-suffering. By the banks of the Ilissus, Socrates, after he had told young Phaedrus of the chariots of the soul, prayed: "Beloved Pan, and all ye deities that haunt this place, give me inward beauty of soul, and may the outward and the inward man be at one."

The love of Beauty is essentially religious. Nobel prize winner, Dr Alexis Carrell said: "The love of beauty leads to mysticism. Song easily becomes transformed into prayer." He said also: "Ministers have rationalised religion. They have destroyed its mystical basis. But they have not succeeded in attracting modern man."

A great German sage said that the basis of true religion is a sense of the Holy, the sense of Wonder. That is the essence of the new religion which is dawning in the world, the Religion of Life Itself, holy, wonderful, lovely, inviolate. We too may see the King in His Beauty, but the eyes with which we shall see Him are not the eyes of earth, but the opened eyes of the spiritual intuition, as Plato expressed it, "Beholding the Beautiful with that eye with which alone it is possible to behold it."

Let me quote once more the beautiful priestess Diotima:

He who has been instructed so far in the things of love, and who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes toward the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty, a nature which in the first place is everlasting, not growing or decaying, or waxing or waning; secondly, not fair in one point of view and foul in another, or at one time, or in another relation, or in one place fair, at another time, or in another relation, foul, as if fair to some and foul to others, or in the likeness of a face or hands or any other part of the bodily frame, or in any form of speech or knowledge, or existing in any other being, as for example, in an animal, or in heaven, or in earth, or in any other place; but Beauty absolute, separate, simple and everlasting, which without diminution and without decrease, or any change, is imparted to the overgrowing and perishing beauties of all other things... He who, from these ascending under the influence of true love, begins to perceive that Beauty is not far from the end.

When I was at Adyar, in India, I used to hear the fishermen singing always the same song. One day someone told me the free English translation of their song: "O my Beautiful, come into my heart. What is the song without the singer? And what is the singer without thee? O my Beautiful, come into my heart, and set its music free."

There are very few of my own words in this chapter. I have let my beloved ancient Greeks speak for me, for their words are far more beautiful.



This excerpt was taken from *Trust Yourself to Life* by Clara Codd and edited by the Department of Education, Theosophical Society in America.

The evidence of  
beauty in the soul is  
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Clara Margaret Codd (1873-1944) was a British writer, suffragette, socialist, feminist and theosophist. She went to jail for the suffragette movement, then devoted her life to the Theosophical Society, living and working for a time in America.

# FEEDBACK FROM IMMERSION WEEKEND



## TSNZ members share memorable experiences

The Immersion Weekend (3-4 August) *Exploring the Peaks & Valleys of Spiritual Life* was a wonderfully inspiring experience. Listening to and being with such interesting people was a special treat which I will remember fondly. It was lovely to feel so welcome and to be so well looked after on all levels. I have come away with a joyful heart, new friends and a mind filled with fascinating information to explore.

*Brena Smith*

*Our Immersion Weekend in Auckland was a wonderful time of learning, being with old friends and appreciating our time together at Vasanta House. Most of us out-of-towners stayed upstairs in the beautiful accommodation provided. Nearly all of us agreed that it was like coming home there. Vasanta House has a special spiritual significance for us. Throughout the weekend we listened to the most amazing lectures with reference to HPB and The Secret Doctrine, elucidating her writings even more.*

*As usual the food and refreshments were delicious and in abundance. We felt spoilt. Our morning sessions ended with Qi Gong Exercises which I found most useful and invigorating. Thanks Peter. On one of the evenings, we saw a film on the dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. What a privilege to hear light hearted banter between two great friends who laughed and joked throughout, two giants of compassion and inspiration to humanity in our time.*

*Savita Bhana*

Such a wonderful weekend – a great selection of speakers whose inspirational presentations took us through the highs and lows of spiritual life. Presentations complemented each other while taking us on a journey of connection and self-realisation. The beauty and authenticity of Suzanne’s art also moved us all.

Much gratitude goes to National Section, the Speakers, and Peter (the Qi Gong was fun) and thankyou to all the other participants, it felt like home away from home!

*Sue Mitchell*

*It is with a heart full of gratitude that I pen a few words about the Immersion Weekend in Auckland.*

*On rare occasions, divine timing brings into alignment energies so in sync with one another, that inspiration, sharing and love flow from the heart into a misty-eyed place of peace and Oneness. This was just such an occasion. Thank you.*

*Helen Dynes*



Immersion Weekend presenter, Wendy Rapp from Auckland.



Presenter, Kirsty Morton from Whanganui.



Participant Valentina Teclici from the Hawke's Bay chatting with National President, Richard Sell.



Intuitive artist Suzanne Vesty (L) with Wendy Rapp after a beautiful presentation incorporating Suzanne's invocational paintings.



Participants enjoying the Saturday evening supper after a very special night.



Suzanne Vesty (L) with Renée Sell from Auckland.



## Carol Collier, TOS National Director

provides thoughts on service for us to ponder...

Looking at the important role of Service in the spiritual life, we are drawing from the works of *Dr Annie Besant... on Service, Duty and Sacrifice...by which fullness of life is made possible*. These extracts were compiled by Dorothy Bell to celebrate the Centennial of the Theosophical Order of Service. In this issue extracts specifically on Service, self-training and the theosophic life are offered for consideration.

### SERVICE, SELF-TRAINING AND THE THEOSOPHIC LIFE

*[Upon recognising the central role of service in living the theosophical life, Dr Besant urges those who hear her words to train themselves in the daily habit of service – the first step being to see through the external form of those they contact and to recognise the SELF that is seated in the heart through all the outer casings. This challenging advice implies a shift from intellectualising, to feeling the reality of the action – a shift in consciousness, a soul-to-soul connection.]*

#### From: SERVICE TO ALL LIVING THINGS

How can I best serve the world? Begin with your own family, those who are nearest to you, whom you see day after day, to whom you can continuously practise service; extend it then gradually from the family circle, to those who are your nearest comrades in your ordinary life and so by embracing circle after circle, each extending further than the last, you will approach more nearly to the ideal of world service, although that is an acquisition beyond the powers of all save the most highly developed of our race, the great rishis who form the inner government of our world. Looking at it from that practical standpoint, we are able to form the habit of love and service.

You want not simply to perform a great service now and then – for great service comes but seldom in the lives of most of us – we want to build that habit of service which can only be achieved by daily continual practice until the spontaneous impulse to think and act in a particular way becomes the most useful and the most noble that we can compass in our mortal lives. There is always a danger for us that we wait until a great opportunity offers. I am entitled to say great opportunity will never come to you unless you practise every little opportunity that comes in your everyday life...

#### From: THE THEOSOPHIC LIFE

The Theosophic life must be a life of service. Unless we are serving, we have no right to live. We live by the constant sacrifice

of other lives on every side and we must pay it back; otherwise to use an ancient phrase, we are but thieves and do not repay the gift. Service is the great illuminator. The more we serve the wiser we become, for we learn wisdom not by studying but by living. There is a sense in which the saying is perfectly true: "He who doeth the will shall know of the doctrine." To live the life of service clears the mental atmosphere of the distorting fogs of prejudice, passion, temperament. Service alone makes the eye single, so that the whole body is full of light, and only those who serve are those who truly live.

That Theosophic ideal is one which must permeate the being of every one of us, for on the amount that we give in service to others can we claim the service of Those who are higher than ourselves. They who serve humanity serve in proportion to the services given. They are bound to send out life into pipes that will carry it everywhere and distribute it, and They seek in order that They may serve humanity, those whose lives are one long service to the race.

I do not mean by service only those great acts of service done by the martyr or the hero. Whenever you serve one man or woman in love, you serve the race... We serve the race in serving our nearest neighbour and we may glorify every pettiest act of service by seeing behind the recipient the great ideal: "In serving you I serve the race, and you are the race's hand."



Dr Annie Besant

#### From: THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEART

To reach this power of service is a matter of self-training in daily life. First, we need to recognise that the SELF in all is one, so that in each person with whom we come into contact, we shall ignore all that is unlovely in the outer casing, and recognise the SELF seated in the heart. The next thing is to realise – in feeling, not only in theory – that the SELF is endeavouring to express itself through the casings that obstruct it and that the inner nature is altogether lovely, and is distorted by us by the envelopes that

surround it. Then we should identify ourselves with that SELF – which is indeed ourself in its essence, and cooperate with it in its warfare against the lower elements that stifle its expression.

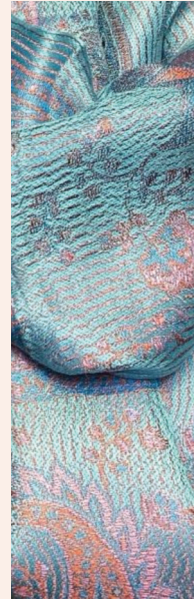
And since we have to work through our own lower nature on our brother the only way to effectually help is to see things as that brother sees them, with his limitations, his prejudices, his distorted vision; and thus seeing them, and being affected by them in our lower nature, help him in his way and not in ours, for thus only can real help be given. Here comes in the occult training. We learn to withdraw ourselves from our lower nature, to study it, to feel its feelings without being thereby affected, and so while emotionally we experience, intellectually we judge ...we must use our disengaged 'I' to judge, to advise, to raise...

Nor let us forget that the person who happens to be with us at any moment is the person given to us by the Master to serve at the moment... We often miss this immediate duty by absorption in other work, failing to understand that the helping of the human soul sent to us is our work of the moment; and we need to remind ourselves of this danger, the subtler because duty is used to mask duty, and failure of insight is failure in accomplishment. We must not be attached even to work of any particular description; always at work indeed, but with the soul free and 'at attention', ready...

The sternness to the lower self, spoken of above, is a condition of this helpful service, for only the one who has no cares for his own, who is for himself indifferent to pleasure and pain, is sufficiently free to give perfect sympathy to others. Needing nothing, he can give everything. With no love for himself, he becomes love incarnate to others...

To serve for the sake of service, and not for the pleasure we take in serving, is to take a distinct step forward... When we have succeeded in dominating the personality... the next step is to do it as heartily and fully when this pleasure disappears and all the joy and light are clouded over. Otherwise in serving the Holy Ones we may be serving self – serving for what we get from them, instead of for pure love's sake.

So long as this subtle form of self-seeking prevails, we are in danger of falling away from service... We have to bear in mind that all our actions are more or less the result of two factors, a desire for self-gratification, and a wish to benefit the world – and our constant effort should be to attenuate as far as is possible the former element, since it may not, till the germ of personality ceases to exist, be completely eliminated...A combative loyalty to any person or cause is hardly commendable in a disciple, and is certainly no indication of spiritual progress...



Authentic Turkish scarf to be raffled for the TOS. \$5 per ticket.

See full document (the above is taken from pages 5,6 and 7) at:

<https://international.theoservice.org/members/innergrowth/AnnieBesant-on-Service-Duty-Sacrifice.pdf>

TOS in NZ

To help contact:  
CAROL COLLIER

Phone:  
027 668 4554

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# Vegetarians Today

From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, Margaret Johns reports on work to make healthy eating easier.

The NZ Vegetarian Society runs various programmes to help would-be vegetarians and vegans to eat healthily and enjoy their food. Among them is the Trademark programme – Vegetarian Approved and Vegan Certified – which show that the product using the trademark has been checked thoroughly and really is okay for vegetarians and vegans to purchase and use.

With the proliferation of “plant-based”, “vegetarian friendly” and “vegan friendly” labels on foods, the NZ Vegetarian Society and the Vegan Society of Aotearoa have combined to set up a petition to send to the Ministry for Primary Industries requesting proper standards and criteria be set up for use of such labels. (See: Ban Misleading Labelling for Vegetarian and Vegan Products/OurActionStation). These labels are very confusing for consumers so, if you want to be sure a product is safe for you to use, look for the products which have been approved by the NZ Vegetarian Society with our registered trademark logo and likewise the vegan trademark logo.



See [www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz) for information on approved products and if you’re already a member of the Society, you will have received the special discount booklet!

The Society is also partnering with the 2024 New Zealand Food Awards, aiming to promote sustainability and showcasing the diverse range of plant-based options available in the food industry as well as raising awareness of our Vegetarian Approved and Vegan Certified product certification, emphasising health, ethical and environmental benefits of vegetarian and vegan products.

Remember that World Vegetarian Day is coming up on 1st October and the winners of the *Think Kind* Competition for school students will be available for voting on the website during October. Join us in celebrating World Vegetarian Day, share some veg~n food with your friends and neighbours during October and try this burger recipe. Check out more recipes at: [www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz)

## TOFU BURGERS (makes 8)

- 300g tofu (preferably firm)
- 1 medium sized onion
- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 1 Tbsp dark soya sauce
- 1 Tbsp water with a squeeze of lemon in it
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- 1 Tbsp nutritional yeast
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds (or ¼ cup walnuts chopped finely)
- ¼ cup wholemeal flour
- Black pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Rinse the tofu.

Dice the onion and garlic very finely.

Crumble the tofu into a bowl, add the onion and garlic, then the remaining ingredients.

Mix together well. If too wet to hold together add a sprinkle of breadcrumbs.

Using hands, form eight patties.

Cook for five minutes each side or until burgers are golden brown.

Fill a burger bun with your favourite fillings plus the burger and enjoy!



More recipes, information and the NZVS revised and updated *Home Tried Favourites* recipe book, are now available from [www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:office@theosophy.org.nz)

*Each of us carries a unique spark of the divine and each of us  
is also an inseparable part of the web of life.*

Viktor E. Frankl

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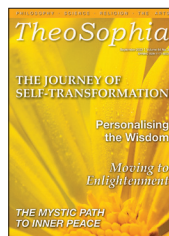
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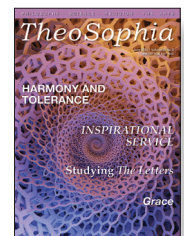
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# Theosophy

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.

From *Exploring the Mysteries of Existence* published by The Theosophical Society - <http://theosophy.nz>

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# The Three Objects of

THE

HEOSOPHICAL

SOCIETY

in New Zealand 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.



In order to improve the mind,  
We ought less to learn,  
Than to contemplate.

*René Descartes*



September 2024