

# Theosophy

in Australia

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## *Freedom of Thought*

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

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

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

## *Freedom of the Society*

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

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

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

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

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

## The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

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

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

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

## Extract - International President's Address

Radha Burnier



**In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Arjuna realises that Sri Krishna represents the Divine Life. He asks Krishna: ‘Who is the One without a second who is above all things; deign to tell me without reserve of Thine divine glory’. Then Krishna points out how he is seated at the heart of all things and there is no end to his Being. ‘Whatsoever is glorious, good, beautiful and mighty, understand thou that to go forth from a fragment of my splendour.’**

This means that the qualities mentioned by Sri Krishna exist everywhere in manifestation, both in form and in consciousness. There is increasing perfection and infinite variety in the forms which emanate out of him. Human beings can study and partly know this perfection and something of the Cosmic Order through revelations of Beauty, Intelligence, Love and other divine qualities. HPB calls this ‘the spiritual and psychic blending of man with Nature’.

The beautiful, for example, can be seen even in ordinary things, and what a man thinks below his level can be destroyed. So there are numerous people who do not hesitate to turn a part of the earth into material which will promote a large amount of money, or what people think is the equivalent of money. This is one of the important reasons why species after species disappears from existence. They are considered unimportant as living beings and that they deserve this fate. Hundreds of varieties of insects and other small creatures are put to an end in this way.

But the words of the *Bhagavadgītā* tell us that this kind of attitude is not worthy of being

regarded as spiritual. What is spiritual is to see the beautiful everywhere; the good and mighty are all around us, even in things which we may regard as dead. So the ordinary individual may go into a desert, forest or a piece of land which is nearby, and regard it all as useless or needing change. But in fact, what he sees is quite different. Everywhere in the desert and forest upon this earth the splendour and light of the divine shows itself. But we must have the eyes to see.

HPB with her extraordinary insight saw the hidden goodness even in characters which appeared crude to others. When she was asked why she met such people she replied that she could not help it. ‘The spiritual and psychic blending of man with Nature’ exists even in a person of no character and this could be seen by one who had advanced much above other human beings. It is to this hidden but essential factor that we have to look to know what our own future will be and what the Cosmic Order reveals to those who have begun to see.

Arjuna asks how a person knows that immortal existence which lies at the heart of everything, from the earth which may appear dead, to the unlimited life, God. Then Krishna says: ‘I am the self, seated in the heart of all beings.’ The whole of Cosmic Order reveals Beauty, Intelligence and Love. It is left to each one, to cleanse and uplift his nature so that he or she sees this and not the ordinary objects open to the psyche of every man of the world.

So, as theosophists, part of our work is to become aware of this glorious nature which is omnipresent.

## From the National President



Linda Oliveira



Periods of transition may easily be accepted by some, while causing discomfort to others. Yet they always perform a certain function, with the dissolution of certain forms prior to the building of new ones. Nature's cycles are a case in point. For example, leaves can change hues quite dramatically in Autumn before falling, nourishing the soil and helping to nurture new life in the future. Personal transitions in our lives more or less inevitably precede new growth opportunities. And in human society old structures (whether physical or societal) invariably give way to new ones in the course of time.

Provided that the destruction of old structures is not wanton and irresponsible, the ebb and flow of natural and societal evolution can proceed in a 'wave-like' manner, just as one image can morph into another quite effortlessly on screen. Otherwise, though, the resumption of growth can be difficult. Consider the culture of greed in society today. Greed seems to have become wanton and unchecked in the case of large numbers of individuals, corporations, governments and so forth. Taken to extremes, it results in some sort of meltdown as we have witnessed economically within the last several years, with real growth being stalled.

Perhaps not enough people have 'listened' to the pulse of what was looming, preferring to live for today without thought of consequences. An article on '*dadirri*' in this issue deals with the concept of deep listening as understood by a Northern Australian Aboriginal group. If we, too, can learn to listen deeply, then transitions in all their facets can be dealt with intelligently and wisely.

Speaking of transitions, the National Headquarters is experiencing such a period with changes in some personnel. Donald Fern has decided not to accept the office of Hon. Treasurer of the Section this year. On behalf of all the members of this Section, I would like to express sincere gratitude for his great service to the Section at the national level for seventeen years. I will elaborate more on his contribution in my Annual Report later in the year. We are currently seeking a new Hon. Treasurer.

We bid farewell to Zehra Bharucha as National Secretary and wish her all the very best for the future. Zehra has been an efficient and competent worker at the National Headquarters in different capacities during the last decade. We are grateful to Dara Tatrav who, in addition to being the Section's Education Coordinator, has agreed to take on the duties of Acting National Secretary. An advertisement for the position appears in this magazine.

A further transition already in process is the relocation of the National Headquarters office to Bathurst Street, Sydney. Our move will most likely take place during the first half of this year. (See also page 32.)

Challenges such as these must be regarded as opportunities. I am sure that with the good will of our dedicated staff in the Headquarters office, and the support of the National Council and the national Executive Committee, we will meet them with confidence and a spirit of adventure as we move further into 2012, with the various opportunities for service it will bring.

## Freedom of Thought: Is it Essential?

Linda Oliveira



*'For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.'*

*Nelson Mandela*

**A Society which holds freedom of thought as a pivotal principle, respecting each individual's thinking processes and unique approach to the sacred, is rare. And to belong to such a Society is an uncommon privilege.**

The phrase 'freedom of thought' contains a wealth of meaning which is worthy of some exploration. The term is mentioned frequently enough in the TS. But what exactly is freedom of thought? Do we understand its implications? Why was the Freedom of Thought resolution framed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society in 1924? Is freedom of thought essential to the well-being and evolution of the TS? And is it essential to our evolutionary journey? Let us reflect upon these questions, along with the relevance to this subject of a particular period during the early twentieth century history of the TS.

### Thought which is not free

As a starting point it is useful to consider the nature of thought within the ordinary, everyday mind, for to speak of freedom of thought immediately implies that there must be a form of thought which does not take place in a state of freedom. Everyday thought is closely

related to the tenacious desire nature, which frequently mingles with thought processes and scatters the mind in different directions. While this may appear in one sense to be a 'free' and unhindered mental state, as one drifts from one desire laden thought to another, there is in reality a form of slavery to *kāmā*.

While this may be a somewhat unpalatable truth, if we are honest with ourselves we may observe that thought often becomes a slave to our desires. It is frequently a slave to our ignorance, memories, anticipations, worries about the future and so forth. Perhaps most of all, it is a slave to the personal ego. When Patanjali enumerated the teaching of the *kleshas*, which are said to afflict all of us, he also objectified a number of factors which both affect and hinder thought greatly:

1. *avidya* – ignorance
2. *asmita* – egoism
3. *raga* – attraction
4. *dvesa* – repulsion
5. *abhinivesha* – desire for life

### The Yoga Sutras state:

*'Avidya is taking the non-eternal, impure, evil and non-Atman to be eternal, pure, good and Atman respectively.'*

According to this view, *Atman* or pure consciousness becomes somehow involved in the evolutionary cycle through the power of *māyā*, the Great Illusion. What happens when consciousness becomes *involved* in matter? It becomes unaware of its true nature and therefore cannot distinguish between the eternal, blissful, pure Self and the non-eternal, impure and painful not-Self. Human beings suffer from degrees of *avidya* – ignorance or non-knowing. The world around seems very real to us, yet it is incomplete; we have an imperfect understanding of Reality because of the limitations of our consciousness. It is as though we have completed only part of the enormous jigsaw puzzle of life.

Egoism, the second *klesha*, is not only common to us all – with greater or lesser intensity – but is also assiduously cultivated globally through today's modes of mass communication. If we look closely we may see that our thought, which is the movement of the mind, is largely centred on ourselves. Almost everything seems to take place in relation to 'me', and our responses may be largely based on the way in which people and events affect us personally.

The sway of attractions and repulsions, two further *kleshas*, also imprison our thought processes. Thought gravitates, and dwells upon, the things that we are attracted to as well as the things which repel us. There may be a kind of see-saw effect from one to the other at times.

The fifth *klesha* concerns clinging to life or the desire for life. We want somehow to continue to exist not only in this life, but also as we are. Human thought has consequently come up with all sorts of methods of 'self-preservation', such as the ubiquitous industry of cosmetic surgery. In extreme cases, a number of people have resorted to cryonics, hoping to be revived from death when technology has evolved sufficiently. The mind may not want to dwell much on physical death and all of its implications, because thought likes to cling to what is known and familiar.

Aside from any other factors, the effects of the *kleshas* alone upon thought can help us to understand that freedom of thought does not normally exist as an everyday fact.

### What is Freedom of Thought?

So what *is* freedom of thought? To use Patanjali's phraseology already mentioned, we can think of it as a state in which thought is not hindered by 'non-*Atman*'. It is thought unhampered by ignorance, the question of 'me', attractions and repulsions, or desire for our own preservation. In other words such a mode of thought possesses great purity.

To be free is to be unrestricted or unfettered. Free thought is unobstructed, unconditioned by preferences and prejudices, enquiry centred, and potentially deep. When accompanied by *viveka* or discernment it is a powerful force in our evolution because it helps us open up to universal Life in ways we might not imagine, distilling the consciousness. It means not to believe blindly anything we happen to be told or anything we happen to read, however eminent the author. Therefore it requires a certain independence of spirit and the courage not to be moulded by some outside agency; rather, it facilitates the creative flow of consciousness to reveal to us who we are, and the nature of the universe in which we live. For thought creates, and is a powerful force of nature.

### What are the implications of Freedom of Thought?

The workings of freedom of thought manifest in two ways – freedom *from* certain things on the one hand, and freedom *to do* certain things on the other. Let us place this within the context of the Theosophical Society. Freedom of thought implies freedom from fundamentalism, dogmatism and self-righteousness. These things may be difficult to conquer and all of them manifest at times within our membership. Freedom of thought is a state in which

fundamentalism does not exist, for there is no clinging to any one viewpoint in the search for Truth. Fundamentalists are prone to attempts to convert others to their views. If we hold on to theosophical teachings too tightly then they cannot ‘breathe’ in our lives and a kind of religious fundamentalism may occur. We may become dogmatic about our views and preferences, and self-righteously try to inflict them on others.

Can we actually be comfortable with uncertainty as part of our quest for Truth? If we can hold ideas lightly then thought will not become crystallised, and we will be less likely to dogmatise. One sometimes hears unequivocal statements by TS members and wonders whether such individuals speak from actual experience. For example, some people may authoritatively list points from certain religious traditions or theosophical texts as if they are facts, without thinking about or investigating them. Others may speak about metaphysics as though they know certain cosmological matters directly. Prefacing such statements with the words ‘it is said’ – even when quoting certain illustrious writings – acknowledges that there are things we do not necessarily know with certainty. Various teachings might be taken as working hypotheses unless, or until, we have proof.

On the other hand, individuals who actively exercise freedom of thought can explore the Wisdom teachings without preconceptions, can uphold the spirit of enquiry which is inherent both in the TS and the Wisdom teachings themselves, and can readily allow others their own liberty of thought without any undue imposition. An unhindered mind is like a precious jewel which can help illumine the minds of others.

### **Why was the Freedom of Thought resolution framed by the General Council?**

Let us now turn to some practical historical facts which led to the adoption of the resolution on Freedom of Thought by the Society’s General

Council in 1924. These may not be commonly known.

In her Presidential report of 1923 Dr Annie Besant, the then International President, mentioned what she called ‘three streams of trouble, provoked by unbrotherly conduct’. The unbrotherly conduct at that time was directed towards 1. The newly formed Liberal Catholic Church, 2. The administration of the TS in America and 3. C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant. The latter attacks emanated from Australia, ultimately resulting in the cancellation of one Lodge Charter and the diplomas of twelve members in Australia, the reasons being mentioned in her report.

*“ Can we actually be comfortable with uncertainty as part of our quest for Truth? If we can hold ideas lightly then thought will not become crystallised, and we will be less likely to dogmatise. ”*

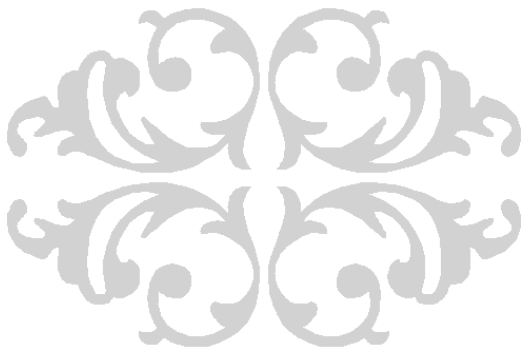
Shortly prior to this Dr Besant, Editor of *The Theosophist*, had printed as a supplement to the September 1923 issue of the journal a letter from Mr Erik Cronvall, the General Secretary of the TS in Sweden at the time, as well as her written response. Both were quite lengthy. The essence of Mr Cronvall’s letter, and a ‘programme’ he proposed, was the desire for a re-declaration from the General Council on the liberty of thought of every member of the TS. He asserted that many TS members were under the impression that the Society was just then in what he called a ‘critical condition’ and cited various reasons. Some of his claims were:

- that there was a division among members advocating the Theosophy of some favourite teacher in preference to others,
- that some members had left the TS feeling that there was not enough room for expression of their opinions,
- that liberty of thought, guaranteed within the Constitution, had been curtailed,



- that modern theosophical literature ‘overflowed with personal references to previous incarnations’ and contained ‘occult’ statements, and
- that most members at the time knew nothing but the most modern theosophical literature.

Among other things, Mr Cronvall called for agreement by theosophists about ‘an unprejudiced study of all theosophical literature, old as well as new, with eyes open and freedom to keep what is good and leave the rest’.



In her published response following his letter, Annie Besant rather eloquently refuted various points made by Mr Cronvall. The main thrust of her reply, however, was that the general principle of freedom of thought had, in fact, been supported and upheld by herself and others. She indicated that the number of people who thought that the TS was in this ‘critical condition’ was in fact very small – *but* that they should not be disregarded. This was a testimony to her inclusiveness. Further, she stated that she had earnestly urged upon every Section of the Society, and also Lodges, the duty of officials and members to guard liberty of thought, to encourage unfettered freedom of discussion, and never to use the authority of any writer or speaker as conclusive on any matter.

Significantly, in her 1923 Presidential address, Dr Besant also indicated that the Society’s governing body, the General Council, supported

the idea of a re-declaration of the liberty of thought of every member of the TS; hence the development of a statement on Freedom of Thought and its adoption as a resolution of the Council. This resolution first appeared in *The Theosophist* of February 1924, along with a note from the President in that issue indicating that it will ‘henceforth form part of the official statement of the nature of the Theosophical Society’. She also expressed the hope that all the Society’s journals would include the resolution. It is still regularly published throughout the TS world today.

### **Does the Freedom of Thought resolution assist the evolution of the TS?**

Annie Besant wrote in her response to Mr Cronvall that she had ‘frankly, officially and non-officially declared on numberless occasions, that freedom of opinion is absolutely essential to the life and progress of every human being, as well as to ... the Theosophical Society’. In other words, in her view this freedom was an evolutionary imperative.

The historical episode just mentioned is an example of how a problematic situation may result in a statement of policy which can make an institution more robust. Reasserting this essential principle has helped move the TS forward. I have never heard the resolution on Freedom of Thought challenged. It has stood the test of time for almost ninety years.

Without this resolution, or at least a good understanding by members of the Society’s platform of freedom of thought, the scope of the TS would have narrowed. Organisational ‘blinkers’ would have prevented it from fulfilling its purpose of bringing to the world the Ageless Wisdom which is not confined to any particular view. For this Wisdom is inherently expansive, unlimited and deep. One cannot capture it, like a photograph, in any one frame. Its principles may be timeless, but its form will vary in different epochs.

The onus is on each of us to discover, and re-discover, the Wisdom teachings for ourselves through various teachers and writings, without limiting ourselves to any one outlook. This is fundamentally healthy, devolving responsibility onto each of us to carve out our own quest for Truth using the Wisdom teachings as a springboard. A Society which not only permits, but actively encourages, this approach will naturally evolve because it will be collectively unhampered by restricted preferences or dogmas. Of course, meeting this organisational challenge requires awareness and vigilance in various ways. For example, it seems logical that undue emphasis should not be given by the TS, as an institution, to any one person's teachings. This also applies in cases where other organisations exist to promote a particular teacher. The Society was not formed to promote any one viewpoint although of course, individually, members are free to study as they wish.

It should be noted that well before the Freedom of Thought resolution was framed, Madame Blavatsky sounded a clarion call in this respect in her message to the second annual American Convention of April 1888:

Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable. It is diversity of opinion, within certain limits, that keeps the Theosophical Society a living and a healthy body, its many other ugly features notwithstanding. Were it not, also, for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, such healthy divergencies would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing Knowledge.

It is therefore abundantly clear that, from its earliest days, the correct direction and healthy evolution of the Theosophical Society were very much dependent upon preserving precisely this spirit. For anyone who might have thought that the General Council's resolution was a new development, it is clear that it merely reiterated and reinforced an original directive regarding the work of the TS.

### Is freedom of thought essential to our evolutionary journey?

In the writer's view, without the capacity for freedom of thought one's mental and spiritual evolution can proceed only in a limited fashion. Further, while the resolution on Freedom of Thought is important, ultimately each member shares a certain responsibility to preserve a milieu of freedom of thought within the TS. Denigrating another person's opinions, religious choices or membership of any particular school clearly works against this spirit.

The ability of the mind to think freely, and with discernment, helps open us to our higher nature. But if we set up any theosophical teacher or narrow area of thought as a final authority, then we may hinder our own evolution. Our intellectual and intuitional processes are a significant part of our unfoldment as human beings and they need to be expanded, rather than restricted, in order to flourish. We can actively induce our own evolution if these are fostered.

*“The ability of the mind to think freely, and with discernment, helps open us to our higher nature. But if we set up any theosophical teacher or narrow area of thought as a final authority, then we may hinder our own evolution. Our intellectual and intuitional processes are a significant part of our unfoldment as human beings and they need to be expanded, rather than restricted, in order to flourish.”*

Dr Besant put this sentiment well in the Society's 1923 General Report when she said:

The real remedy lies with the members themselves, if they allow themselves to be dominated by other people; they should try to develop independent thought, and a modicum of courage. At the same time, I would earnestly urge on all Theosophists,

who are strong of mind and will, to avoid all appearances of pushing their views without regard to the opinions and feelings of their fellow-members, and never to arouse the idea that they are aiming at the domination of the thoughts of others.

She was describing the process of moving from dependence and ego-centred understanding, to independence and other-centred understanding, which may be thought of as the essence of our human journey. For learning to be free, paradoxically, ultimately involves both responsibility and the utmost consideration for the other.

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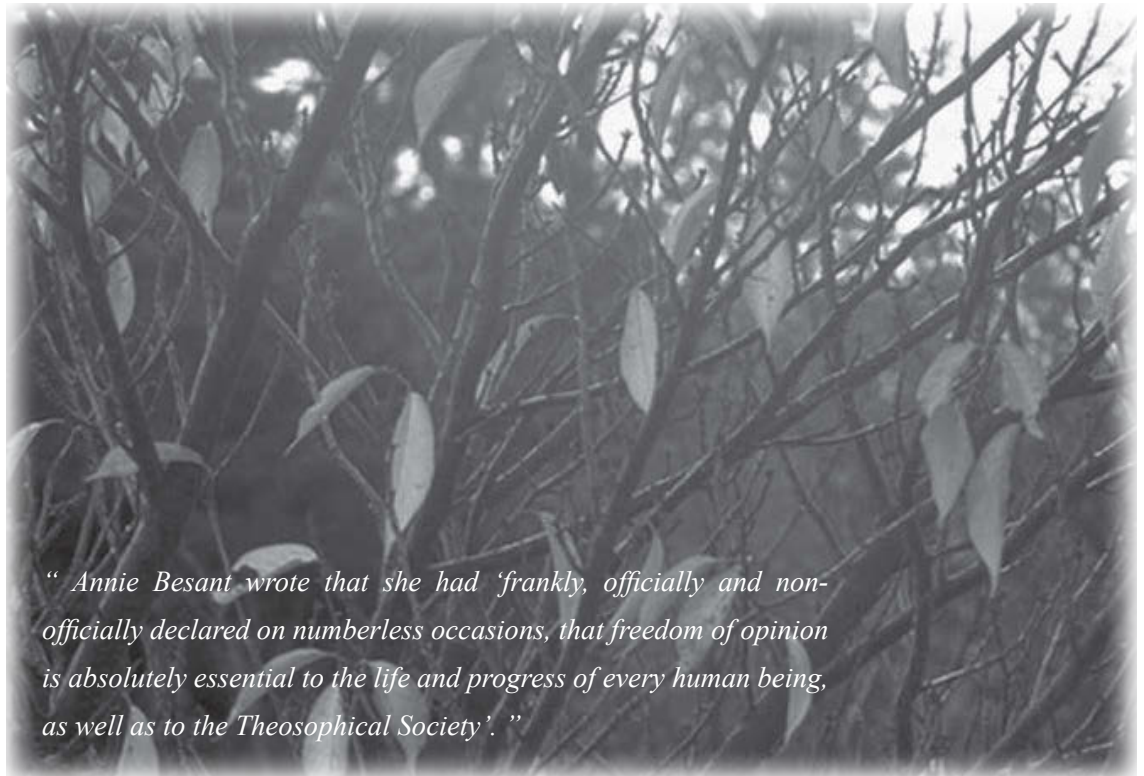
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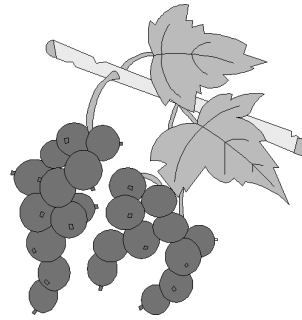
**Linda Oliveira is a past  
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of the Theosophical Society.**



*“ Annie Besant wrote that she had ‘frankly, officially and non-officially declared on numberless occasions, that freedom of opinion is absolutely essential to the life and progress of every human being, as well as to the Theosophical Society’. ”*

## The Gospel of Mary Magdalene

Richard Larkin



**Out of the sands of Egypt have come many wonders, not least long forgotten ancient writings that are now revolutionising our understanding of Jesus Christ and the early Christian church. These writings are throwing a spotlight on both the nature and ministry of Jesus but also on the relationship he had with his disciples, including Mary Magdalene.**

Many of us are familiar with the Gnostic Gospels discovered near the village of Nag Hammadi in 1947, now published and much studied by both scholars and laymen all over the world. Less known, however, have been other discoveries made since the nineteenth century, one such being the Gospel of Mary Magdalene.

### The Gospel

Known as the 'Berlin Codex', this Gospel came into the possession of scholars in Cairo in 1896, in a book combined with three other Gnostic texts. Written in the ancient Coptic language of Egypt (a direct descendant of Ancient Egyptian), the text is unfortunately damaged, with just over half of it missing, notably the beginning and parts of the middle passages. Later this text was supplemented by discoveries of other fragments in the Greek language in the 20th century.

Taken together, this Gospel gives us some amazing insights into some very early Christian views of Jesus and his disciples, especially when you consider that it was probably written in the early second Century

CE, just after the four Canonical Gospels are thought to have been committed to writing.

Mary's Gospel is built around dialogues – firstly between the resurrected Jesus and his disciples, and then later between Mary Magdalene and the other disciples, notably Peter. It is made obvious throughout the dialogues that of all the disciples, only Mary fully comprehends exactly what Jesus is trying to teach them. Not only that, but she also takes the lead in these debates, explaining to the other disciples the meaning of Jesus' words (to the clear annoyance of the male disciples, who do not like a woman even being involved in these discussions with their Saviour).

At one point early in the Gospel, there is an account of a visionary experience Mary has of the Risen Christ, who both blesses her and acknowledges her advanced spiritual state. Here there is the implication that it is she who has the closest intuitive connection to the Risen Christ and is thus the 'beloved disciple' mentioned in the Canonical scriptures. Certainly she is shown much favour and encouragement from Jesus in this scripture.

Unlike the Canonical Gospels, the major emphasis in the Gospel of Mary Magdalene is not on the crucifixion and resurrection as a culmination and validation of Jesus' ministry, but on Jesus' teachings of inner spiritual development. In this scripture Jesus appears as an almost Buddha-like figure, offering wisdom teachings and salvation – Salvation not from sin,

but salvation from ignorance and the trap of the material world. Throughout this scripture, there is an emphasis on inner spiritual transformation through spiritual knowledge and ascetic living rather than through external morality, coupled with an actual rejection of the concepts of judgement and sin. It is precisely because of these characteristics that many scholars consider this gospel to be part of the Gnostic group of scriptures. Up to a point this is true, though there is more to it than that.

## Themes

There are four main themes in the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, covering such topics as

- a) the body and soul
- b) sin and the Law
- c) the concept of the ‘Son of Man’
- d) the rise and liberation of the soul after death

The first theme definitely shows Gnostic aspects. The material world is seen as impermanent and of little spiritual value, if not necessarily evil or fallen as some Gnostics considered it to be. Only the divine realm is permanent and free of limitation, suffering and evil. Likewise our bodies, being composed of matter, are also seen as impermanent. Therefore we are advised to devote our energies to spiritual purification and growth, as well as a life based on ethical living and faith in the Risen Christ (this last point demonstrates a difference from other Gnostic writings, which devalued faith as a baser form of understanding).

The second theme, of sin and divine Law, again displays those Gnostic attitudes that infuriated the more mainstream Christian communities of that era. ‘Sin’ as a concept regarding transgressions of moral or divine law is rejected. In this scripture ‘sin’ is rather seen as indulging our earthly desires instead of developing our spiritual natures through a disciplined way of life and non-attachment to the physical world. This attitude seems almost Buddhist, especially when it is remembered that our earthly existence and desires are seen as impermanent. Hence the ‘sin’, it seems, is the wasting of our time and

energy on things that will not last, rather on the thing that will – our spiritual essence.

Likewise, this Gospel places less importance on the system of Jewish Law, which even gentile Christians of the day adhered to, at least to some degree. The divine Law is important for living an earthly life, but obeying ‘the Law’ will not lead to spiritual Liberation, which must always come from within oneself. The Gospel emphasises the importance of spiritual freedom as well as self-discipline in the search for salvation – too much externally imposed Law will lead to tyranny and the opposite of spiritual development.

*“In this scripture ‘sin’ is rather seen as indulging our earthly desires instead of developing our spiritual natures through a disciplined way of life and non-attachment to the physical world. This attitude seems almost Buddhist, especially when it is remembered that our earthly existence and desires are seen as impermanent.”*

The third point, the ‘Son of Man’, does not refer to the Messianic role of Christ as in the Canonical scriptures, but is a phrase describing the Truth within ourselves. Here it is portrayed as a divine image or archetype that all people have within themselves and which can be cultivated by spiritual living, faith in Christ and knowledge of the divine Way. Once again, the emphasis is on inner spiritual development and Enlightenment rather than on an external description of Christ’s role in the world.

Finally, the fourth theme concerns the rise of the soul after death to Heaven. This section takes up a large portion of the surviving text and is probably the most Gnostic component of all. Here, the soul has the task of bypassing four malevolent powers to reach Heaven. These four powers are named by order Darkness, Desire, Ignorance and Anger. These powers can be

outmanoeuvred so long as the ascending soul understands its true spiritual nature. This section is obviously both mythic and allegorical. These powers were thought to represent both the darker aspects of our own natures and, simultaneously, real forces that control our world (there is a hint of political criticism here levelled at the Roman authorities who persecuted Christians). At this point the Gospel ends, with the promise of eternal salvation for those willing to practise and believe.

## **Background**

By the time this Gospel was written down about a century after Christ's crucifixion, the Christian movement had already blossomed into a number of independent assemblies and philosophical positions spread over most of the Roman world and beyond. It would take a few centuries to organise a Catholic church with its centralised hierarchy and established scriptures.

Meanwhile, these early Christians held a wide variety of beliefs, especially those revolving around the nature of Jesus and the meaning of his ministry. Even in the Canonical Gospels Jesus can be seen as a Jewish Messiah, the unique Son of God, a social reformer and political activist, as well as a mystic with possible Gnostic tendencies.

After the crucifixion, there very quickly arose a range of local groups throughout the eastern Mediterranean, each with their own traditions about the life and teachings of their Master. Many scholars now believe that these early traditions were passed on orally before being committed to writing. This would go some way to explaining the contradictions and inconsistencies within the New Testament – each group received their teachings from different disciples or other followers of Jesus, and each moulded their received traditions to suit the needs of their local group. (Some scholars believe that as little as fifteen per cent of the total writings from early Christians have survived – and that includes all the newly discovered texts.)

The Gospel of Mary Magdalene appears to have been the favoured scripture of a Greek

speaking group, living in what is today modern Turkey or Syria during the early decades of the 2nd century CE. As noted above, the text shows some themes from Gnostic thought but also others, such as an emphasis on faith and visionary experience which were more typical of the charismatic Christian groups of that time (as indeed they are today). In other words, this scripture is a bit of both and reflects the fluid nature of Christian belief at that time, before categories became hardened.

## **Who was Mary Magdalene?**

In the Canonical Gospels, Mary Magdalene is recognised as an important figure, having been present at Jesus' crucifixion, burial and a witness to his resurrection. Yet she is never called an Apostle in these scriptures. Indeed in later Church lore she is seen as a reformed prostitute, although there is no evidence in the New Testament to support that belief.

To the Gnostics and many charismatic groups however, she is not only recognised as one of the Apostles, she is often seen as the most spiritually advanced. As demonstrated in the Gospel of Mary Magdalene she is also seen as a leader and visionary prophet. Some Gnostic texts tell us that there were a number of female Apostles, for example the 'Sophia of Jesus Christ', and even declare that there were seven female Apostles as well as the twelve male ones!

It may well be that the early Catholic church felt affronted by the number of women who held positions of influence in the Gnostic and charismatic groups, none of whom were believed to inherit the apostolic succession which was claimed for the Pope. If the tradition of Mary as a reformed prostitute was an attempt to downgrade her image with the people, then it had decidedly mixed results. In later centuries she attracted a following precisely because she stood for the redeemed sinner, giving hope to ordinary people that they too could achieve redemption.

Will we ever know who Mary Magdalene was, and what position she held in Jesus' movement? At this point I feel that we can only conjecture,

although the Gnostic Gospels give us a glimpse into the thinking of many Christians about her in the first centuries after the life of Jesus. Now more than ever, the status of Mary seems to have become a lively debate in the world and of concern to many people searching for new interpretations of Jesus' life and teachings.

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“But sir, where is the silence and where is the place where the word is spoken?” As I said just now, it is in the purest thing that the soul is capable of, in the noblest part, the ground – indeed, in the very essence of the soul which is the soul’s most secret part. There is the silent ‘middle’, for no creature ever entered there and no image, nor has the soul there either activity or understanding, therefore she is not aware there of any image, whether of herself or of any other creature.”

Meister Eckhart, *Sermon One*

## Our Attitude and Debt to Science

### Chewing the Mental Cud Over the Tension between Science and Occult Science

Edi D. Bilimoria



**U**pon slowly digesting the rich and varied scientific and spiritual fare now available to all of us both within and outside the Theosophical Society, I am left with three indelible impressions about the apparent dichotomy between science and Occult Science.

#### Potential Anomalies between Classical Theosophical Literature and Modern Science

*Observation:* Those who intentionally set out to disprove the assertions made in classical theosophical literature (*The Secret Doctrine*, *The Mahatma Letters*, et cetera) will find plenty of anomalies between the latter and modern science. At the same time, those who are bent on vindicating Occult Science in the light of modern science will also succeed in doing so, because what they discover will mirror back what they have set out to do in the first place. The English natural philosopher, theorist and experimenter John Michell pointed out how the universe (all too) obligingly reflects back to the unwary whatever beliefs he projects into it, supplying him with proofs of his own conjectures in a closed feedback mechanism – karma may indeed have an ironic sense of humour. So a measure of the mettle and calibre of the true researcher is his ability to break out of this closed loop by constantly questioning his pet assumptions, his psychological dependence on familiar ideas or

personalities, and his belief systems. However, those who investigate *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Mahatma Letters*, et cetera, with an open mind plus a motiveless passion for Truth may well find eternal verities that sometimes appear inaccurate and imprecise (to the scientist) because of the necessity of having to re-present and express abstruse ideas

- (a) using the concepts of our four-dimensional space-time physical world; and
- (b) in terms of the language, mental culture and scientific knowledge prevailing in the nineteenth century when the vast outpouring of this literature took place.

The eternal truths about Deity, Cosmos and Man have had to be

- (a) ‘flattened down’ to suit our limited faculties and understanding, and
- (b) filtered through ‘blinds’ to guard against revealing too much to the unprepared multitudes.

Therefore, misunderstandings, distortions and inaccuracies are bound to occur just as a three-dimensional object is re-presented as the digital information constituting its two-dimensional photograph.

*Conclusion:* Errors of fact must not be confused with inaccuracies that inevitably appear in any attempt to capture the ineffable in thought and language. For this reason, *The Secret Doctrine* and other great works of that period, for example *The Ancient Wisdom* by Annie Besant, must be read, in large measure, as a vast symbol with a range of meaning



and – as HPB makes very clear – as a sort of abstract algebraic formula. Those who take them literally at face value, like an icon, are doomed from the start. The occult doctrines must be appreciated in their overall, panoramic aspect – for it is easy to exaggerate the minor errors (supposedly) discovered by science, at the expense of the grander truths undiscovered, and not amenable to investigation, by such science.

“ Science is but one method (the ‘horizontal’ dimension) for investigating truth. There are other ways of substantiating ‘evidence’ that may not satisfy the methodology of Western science, but are nevertheless self-consistent and valid in themselves (the self-consistent mythologies of races the world over, to name but one). ”

That said, it is deplorable to lap up, uncritically, every word of original theosophical writings (so-called First Generation), whilst denigrating the entire worth of later writers (so-called Second Generation) and others outside mainstream Theosophy; along with the attendant tendency to deify HPB and the Masters with unimpeachably infallible omniscience. This attitude shows neither devotion, nor reverence to the Founders, least of all a love of Truth, but merely immaturity and idolatrous fanaticism born of egoism.

### Scientific Scrutiny – its Limitations and Context

*Observation:* It is indispensable for us to pour the corrosive acid of critical scientific ratiocination upon what we sometimes glibly take to be ‘fact’. However, acid is only meant to eat away at the rust; if it also attacks the pure metal underneath, then it has overstepped its useful purpose.

*Conclusion:* Scientific scrutiny and experimentation are vital – but within their appropriate boundaries and context. Whereas *The Secret Doctrine* does contain statements

of hard, scientifically testable information (mainly in the Addenda on Occult and Modern Science), much of the material is simply not amenable to the methods of Western science; and concerning the former, as stated above, it is easy to become obsessed about minor errors of detail, whilst missing the truth of the grand, overall panorama presented. However, meeting science on its own terms, by what methodology does science propose that we gather evidence on the validity of, for example, the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha, or for that matter, the Three Fundamental Axioms in the *Proem* of *The Secret Doctrine*? Can science verify the Law of Karma, or that Compassion is the Law of Laws, or the role of the Manasaputras in awakening the sleeping mind of third Root-race man? Is modern plate tectonics sufficient grounds for researching whether or not the continents of Lemuria and Atlantis existed? If (in all seriousness) science still has difficulty in explaining how corn circles occur nowadays, can it be so confident about disproving the existence of the lost continents of millions of years ago?

Even more, how do we demonstrate to science that the occult system is no fancy of man, but the uninterrupted chronicle of Adepts tested by them over centuries of experience using their internally perfected mental, psychic and spiritual faculties as the instruments of investigation, rather than the external, physical laboratory apparatus of the scientist?

Science and intellect cannot tell us what things are in themselves – rather they tell us what they are not. Science is but one method (the ‘horizontal’ dimension) for investigating truth. There are other ways of substantiating ‘evidence’ that may not satisfy the methodology of Western science, but are nevertheless self-consistent and valid in themselves (the self-consistent mythologies of races the world over, to name but one). Furthermore science in the full sense of that term derived from the Latin *scire*, meaning ‘to know’, must not be equated exclusively with the methodology of Western science. So it is perfectly meaningful to talk about the science of yoga, the science of astrology, or the science of religion, even though the modus operandi of yoga, astrology and religion will hardly appease

the current paradigm police of mainstream ('normal') science.

### The 'Boon' of Mainstream, Materialistic Science

*Observation:* I have pondered much over why there seems to be a patently deliberate attempt by Nature (the Powers that be, if you prefer) to block the general public from having access to knowledge about super-physical (para-normal) phenomena. Why do the scientific institutions governed by the priests of scientism achieve so much success in discrediting what is not mainstream, materialistic science?

One only has to look at the recent Viagra craze to understand why (I still get an email per fortnight in my junk box from some outfit purporting to sell the 'wonder-drug'). Then look at what I call 'vanity or glamour engineering', namely, those aspects of genetic engineering and experiments involving immense cruelty to animals to appeal to man's sense of vanity. The latent powers and psychic abilities, once they become public property, are far more likely to become a curse in the hands of the selfish than a blessing, as when applied altruistically for humanity as a whole with no thought of personal gain. Misuse of Viagra is one thing – misuse of *siddhis* could lead to consequences far more appalling. Therefore, 'Occult Philosophy divulges few of its most important vital mysteries. It drops them like precious pearls, one by one, far and wide apart...' (see 'The Coming Force' in *The Secret Doctrine* describing the etheric force discovered by Keely).

Nature therefore seems to be working through the agency of mainstream science and the instrumentality of the various scientific establishments to inhibit general public dissemination of that higher knowledge which, if it were freely available and generally authenticated by science, would do far more harm than good, given the current state of humanity *en masse*.

*Conclusion:* We owe a perverse debt of gratitude to mainstream Western science for safeguarding humanity until it is, as a whole,

better prepared to receive secret knowledge. So without a true Brotherhood of Humanity in deed as much as in thought (see *The Maha Chohan's Letter*), and a firm grip over the personal self, psychic knowledge, et cetera, will ever remain the property of isolated individuals and groups, but not become integrated into the common human mind. The success of our Third Object is therefore critically dependent upon the success of our First Object; otherwise the Theosophical Society would indeed descend to 'an academy of magic, a hall of occultism' (to quote the Maha Chohan again).

(What cannot be explained in a few words is the fact that, notwithstanding the enormous contributions of mainstream science towards the physical welfare of humanity, this science, at one and the same time, both creates some of the problems for us, and then protects us from the worst effects of what it has so created.)

*"The latent powers and psychic abilities, once they become public property, are far more likely to become a curse in the hands of the selfish than a blessing, as when applied altruistically for humanity as a whole with no thought of personal gain."*

In essence the underlying theme of our Springbrook exploration could (for me at least) be expressed by two passages of seminal importance from the Blavatsky Lecture by Professor Arthur Ellison exhorting us to do some independent thinking in order to become practising Theosophists, rather than erudite, esoteric bookworms (emphasis in italics mine):

A Theosophical study course *must* involve critically reading *other* books written by thinkers and investigators outside the Society, and comparing and contrasting the different points of view. 'Comparative religion, philosophy and science' [as stated in our Second Object] could hardly be clearer.

To proclaim one person as an infallible authority on a subject unknown to the proclaimer, is to show fanaticism rather than reason. The

Theosophical Society may be injured by the blind zeal of those who pin their faith to any one investigator and denounce all the rest, as mentioned by Annie Besant.

But that said, an even more fundamental consideration remains ...

Western science and Occult Science cannot be *directly* compared. It is only meaningful to compare those things that are within context or on the same plane, so to speak. To give a musical example, you can compare Artur Rubinstein with Vladimir Horowitz playing, say, Chopin – both were virtuoso pianists of supreme calibre and of the same generation. But you *cannot* compare even an amateur pianist with the world's most skilled office typist, *even though both ultimately manifest the mechanical aspects of their craft by using their fingers on a keyboard* (comparing the speed of finger movements on their respective keyboards is the only comparison that is viable in this case, however meaningless it may be). So for example, comparing Big Bang (i.e. scientific accounts of cosmogony) directly with Occult cosmogony (without qualifying statements) is to make such an error. All you can do is to compare the *physical plane* aspects of Occult Science with science; for this is where they meet and where they are both in context – and that is all.

Whenever the Greater is compared with the lesser, many dimensions are lost, or rather, hidden: for what is explicit and objective in the former becomes increasingly concealed and implicit (enfolded) in the latter. Hence the perceived differences between the two schemes are a result of this loss of subtle dimension. The lesser can never 'understand' the Greater, even though the latter has infinite patience for the former. Which means that science has to wind itself up to intuit Occult truths – not drag down the latter to its own level, whereupon many dimensions of subtlety are lost by virtue of being 'flattened down' to suit the confines and context of physical science.

That said, do not think for one moment that *The Secret Doctrine* is a book cast in stone. In a work of such vast dimensions, there are indeed bound to be some errors and inaccuracies. The TS needs the spirit of energetic regeneration and a lot of that comes from science – not Theosophy! I cannot imagine anything worse than theosophical fundamentalism, which, (in my opinion) does exist, but mercifully, in sufficiently small measure that it does not dominate the Society (yet).

1. A very long-standing and loyal member of the Theosophical Society in England, Arthur Ellison was Head of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at City University, London. He was President of the British Society for Psychical Research for two terms. Ellison was also a leading scientist at the Theosophical Research Centre and several of his articles can be seen in the *Science Group Journal* and *Research Centre Journal*. Latterly he was a leading contributor to the Scientific and Medical Network in England.

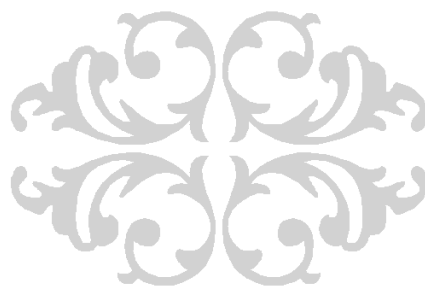
This article is from a presentation at the Section's Springbrook Centre in October 2010.

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## Dadirri — the Art of Deep Listening

Olga Gostin



**This short paper is presented in two, complementary, sections. The first outlines the concept of *dadirri* as understood by a northern Australian Aboriginal group, while the second attempts to apply *dadirri* to the broader theme of this gathering, namely ‘Varieties of Meditation’.**

In her 1988 seminal article simply titled ‘Dadirri’, Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr <sup>(1)</sup> speaks of connection to the land and a strong sense of community as two major Aboriginal cultural attributes. But the most important and unique gift of her people along the Daly River, she says, is the quality called *dadirri* that she defines as ‘inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness’. Ungunmerr continues: ‘Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call “contemplation”.’

Elaborating on the concept, Ungunmerr explains that while *dadirri* is contained within the sacred stories that have been passed down the generations, and is expressed in ritual celebrating the sacredness of life (especially smoking ceremonies), the core of *dadirri* is listening. She then explains what listening entails:

In our Aboriginal way, we learn to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened. This was the normal way for us to learn — not by asking questions. We learn by watching and listening, waiting and then acting.

She continues:

Quiet listening and stillness — *dadirri* — renews and makes us whole. There is no need to reflect too much and to do a lot of thinking. It is just being aware. My people are not threatened by silence. They are completely at home with it. They have lived for thousands of years with Nature’s quietness ... [They] recognise and experience in this quietness the great Life-Giving Spirit, the Father of us all. It is easy for me to experience God’s presence ... ‘We all have to try to listen — to the God within us — to our own country — and to one another.’

At this point Ungunmerr moves to the concrete application of *dadirri* — the quiet stillness and the waiting — to real life situations, whether accepting and heeding the pulse of nature, the growth of children, or the longing for respect and understanding. She observes that ‘we cannot hurry the river’ and so it is in real life.

To be still brings peace — and it brings understanding. When we are really still in the bush we concentrate. We are aware of the anthills and the turtles and the water lilies. Our culture is different. We are asking our fellow Australians to take time to know us; to be still and to listen to us... [C]ome and learn, and listen and wait with us. This will encourage us and lighten our burden.

Where properly attuned, stillness and quiet awareness extend beyond the mundane: ‘[T]here are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of the Deep calling the Deep’. For Ungunmerr, a professed Catholic, the sound of the Deep is the Word of God as incarnated in Jesus. Others will interpret the sound according

to their own light. The important thing is to be still enough, quiet and aware enough to hear the sound of the Deep calling the Deep. That is the essence of *dadirri*.

I should now like to apply *dadirri* to the broader theme of meditation that concerns us today. Specifically, I should like to take up Ungunmerr's very specific injunction that we 'all have to try to listen to the God within us — to our own country — and to one another'. It is to the latter that I wish to turn. How does listening quietly and mindfully to another constitute contemplation or meditation? The proposition is almost counter-intuitive. We have tended to associate meditation with generated stillness, withdrawal from the hubbub of everyday life, and as an intensely personal engagement even in the context of group meditation. I must admit that I was somewhat mystified by this notion of *dadirri* as applied to 'listening to one another'. I put my problem to my adopted Yankunytjatjara sister, Mona Tur, asking her whether her Desert people had any equivalent concept. She responded without hesitation.

Our people speak of 'pulkara kulini' which means thinking and listening deeply. It means to understand clearly and completely — to be in tune with happiness and sorrow, whether your own or that of another. It's very simple really — you just have to listen totally, to be fully aware.

Awareness seems to be the common theme underlying *dadirri*, *pulkara kulini* and meditation generally. Awareness is also at the heart of Krishnamurti's teaching when he states that true perception is only possible when there is neither the perceiver nor the perceived, neither the observer nor the observed. It is through a philosophy of dynamic silence that we achieve right perception and then only can we proceed to right action.

Krishnamurti elaborates further:

A living mind is a still mind ... a mind that has no centre and therefore no space and time. Such a mind is limitless and that is the only truth, that is the only reality. Meditation is not control of thought, for when thought is controlled it breeds conflict in the mind ... [U]nderstanding of the

structure of thinking is its own discipline, which is meditation ... silence is meditation in which the meditator is entirely absent, for the mind has emptied itself of the past.

*“ Awareness seems to be the common theme underlying, dadirri, pulkara kulini and meditation generally. Awareness is also at the heart of Krishnamurti's teaching when he states that true perception is only possible when there is neither the perceiver nor the perceived, neither the observer nor the observed. ”*

How does one achieve this exquisite state in these times when we are so bombarded with news, advertisements and media-driven hyperactivity? Recently I was reading *Cave in the Snow* — the extraordinary biography of Tenzin Palmo, an ordinary English middle class woman who lived in seclusion in a remote cave in the Himalayas for twelve years, seeking to perfect the art of meditation and who never once stretched out to sleep during that period but remained sitting upright in her three feet by three feet prayer box. With disarming frankness the Buddhist nun tells us that

meditation is not just sitting in a cave for twelve years. It's everyday life ... You can meditate walking down the corridor ... at the traffic lights, standing in a queue, going to the bathroom, combing your hair. Just be there in the present without the mental commentary ... be really there. It's all habit. At the moment we've got the habit of being unaware. We have to develop the habit of being present. Once we start to be present in the moment everything opens up. When we are mindful there is no commentary — it's a naked experience, wakeful, vivid.

Awareness and mindfulness are key concepts in Tenzin Palmo's thinking and she applies these to our interaction with one another.

When we experience anything we do so through the filter of ideas, preconceptions, judgements. For example, when we meet somebody we don't

see them as they actually are. We see them in relationship to what we're thinking about them — how much we like or dislike them, how they remind us of somebody else, what sort of qualities they have. We're not experiencing them in themselves.

Tenzin Palmo urges us to engage with others as a baby would — unjudgementally, with a fresh mind. 'That's the state of mind we have to bring into our everyday life. If we can learn to do that, without doing anything else, it will transform the situation automatically.'

*" If we approach meditation from the brain only we inevitably have duality: the subject and the object. The practice has to come down into the heart; it has to go somewhere deep within us [where] there is no subject (me) and object (the meditation). We become the meditation. " Then there is a transformation at a very profound level. "*

To practise this, the nun continues, does not mean that one no longer feels or becomes emotionally flat. One still has one's identity, one's personality — it's just that one no longer believes in it ... Taken to its logical conclusion and perfection, the more open and empty the quality of our consciousness, the more attuned we become to the interconnectedness of all human beings, indeed, of all things. At this level there is no 'I' and there is no 'other'. There is then no duality, no separation, which in the final analysis are at the root of all our human problems.

Christian de Quincey in his seminal *Radical Knowing: Understanding Consciousness through Relationship* (2005) makes the same point in a particularly effective way when he stresses the importance of relationships and interconnectedness in our everyday lives. He warns us not to focus on the I-thou relationship but on the hyphen between, that which connects us. Relationship is all about consciousness and consciousness is all about relationship. The study of consciousness, de Quincey continues, cannot rely exclusively on rational coherence,

on connections between concepts and ideas. It must also involve the ineffable, the pre-verbal, the pre-rational process that he describes as 'feeling our way into feeling ... as *experiencing* experience'.

Tenzin Palmo follows the same line of reasoning or intuition when she notes that we have to change our meditation practices. If we approach meditation from the brain only we inevitably have duality: the subject and the object.

The practice has to come down into the heart; it has to go somewhere deep within us [where] there is no subject (me) and object (the meditation). We become the meditation. Then there is a transformation at a very profound level. What we need to do is to learn to come down into the heart, the seat of our true self.

To do this, says our indomitable sage, we do not need to depend on gurus, find a cave or join a retreat. All we need is to 'just to get on with it'.

Which brings me back full circle to *dadirri* — the art of inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. This, as I now see it, applies equally to the sound of the Deep calling the Deep, the heartbeat of the country on which we live, and/or our engagement with our fellow human beings. True listening and still awareness are indeed a form of meditation or contemplation. Thank you for listening and doing so quietly.

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This article is based on a presentation at the Mt. Helena Retreat Centre of Theosophy, Perth Branch, August 2011.

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## Thoughts on a Meditative Life

When we practise the qualities of care and judgement in our daily lives a new energy is generated in the mind, because of the self-discipline, concentration and the endeavour to develop deeper insight into the particular nature of the work. In this way, a steady and gradual development will take place in our character and mind and, as time progresses, we shall be enabled to meditate better and with greater ease and we shall also gain a better insight into the truth of things.

If we give proper thought to the matter, we shall come to see that a great number of improvements can be made in the way we live and that we could make better use of our time so that the energy and time we spend on prayer, meditation and so-called religious activities and disciplines will not be wasted.

Our energy should be used in a deliberate manner so that every drop of it achieves something useful. We should always try to conserve our energy because then we can

gradually achieve some sort of meditation. Even though we do not meditate sitting down in a certain posture or practise in a set manner, there is the other way of practising it at every moment of our life. If we follow the latter method we can look forward to the development of an insight and wisdom which will transform and enlighten us.

I think that the simplest and easiest way to apply our minds to meditation is, first of all, to collect the mind, gather it in such a way as to keep away all kinds of thought. Then, concentrate it and make it one-pointed in comprehending the misery which is experienced by all living beings in the universe, remembering that as we ourselves do not like misery, so other living beings do not like it either.

Never forget to send out the force of loving-kindness to all sentient beings.

from *Buddhist Meditation*,  
Ven. Samdhong Rinpoche

## Practical Ethics for Contemporary Society

Tony Fearnside



**Few of us would disagree that the levels of public debate in Australia's federal politics and, from what television has shown, in the USA, have descended to low levels, where truth is less important than showing the Opposition in a bad light and hypocrisy is expected. The behaviour of some big overseas lending institutions, elements of the national press and of some multi-nationals are what most of us would regard as worse than impolite and distinctly unethical: behaviour which conflicts with our own standards but may not be unlawful.**

Over the course of time, it has been found useful to have sets of guidelines for conduct that lie between good manners on the one hand and the law on the other. At a time when technological change moves quickly, far more quickly than the law can keep up, codes of ethics/conduct are more important than ever.

Consideration of ethics often begins with Aristotle's views which he taught in the 4th Century BCE, whereby actions count as virtuous when a person habitually chooses a right action, discarding less worthy alternatives. An Aristotelian virtue might be selected by using a spectrum of characteristics ranging from abject cowardice to foolhardy heroism. Theosophists might use Blavatsky's septenary principles of human nature, choosing that which appears to be most appropriate to the higher *manas*.

Codes of ethics can be aspirational or specific (measurable). Thus a person selecting a

tradesperson will not do so on the basis of an aspiration to 'remember that I remain a member of society with special obligations to all my fellow human beings' preferring the more specific, e.g. 'a member shall observe the highest standards of honesty in all of his transactions'.

Codes are usually created by professionals for professionals and as such should be powerful determinants of professional behaviour, but one wonders if some characteristics or tenets of the professions override community expectations. Thus while the Hippocratic Oath is famous for 'do no harm', in the journalists' codes the need to avoid presenting a true story in a way that cannot hurt other people seems to be overridden by the perceived right to claim freedom of speech. Extremists have defended political cartoonists who portray religious icons in ways that insult others by the need to allow free speech, and doctors' codes may not refer to the necessity of remaining uninfluenced by the marketing efforts of multinational drug companies.

While transgressions against 'good manners' can ultimately be ignored as they do not cause actual harm and transgressions against the law can usually be dealt with, it is harder to counter what may be considered to be unethical behaviour by an individual. The code of ethics for that organisation or profession may be silent on the point in question, representations to the particular group may go unanswered or be ineffective (professionals are notoriously reticent when it comes to dealing with one of their own) or the miscreant may simply not



be a member of a professional organisation. Worse, the code of ethics may not be publicly available. In some cases these problems have been overcome by making it a legal requirement to follow codes of conduct (e.g. for public servants) or developing regulations (e.g. for building construction).

Turning to religious ways of guiding behaviour, few would not argue that the wording of the Christian Ten Commandments seems quaint nowadays or that some aspects of Sharia Law appear more appropriate to societies other than our own. Both have difficulty in remaining relevant in a secular society dominated by capitalism and growth, characterised by rapid technological change.

So where does this leave the theosophist? For a start the First Object, 'to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity

...', gives a good basis to reject racial and social prejudices. But perhaps the aspirational presentation of the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path is more useful to the person who (in the Aristotelian sense) strives to be virtuous because she/he believes that there really is a purpose in life.

### **Recommended Reading:**

Coady, M. and Bloch, S. (eds), *Codes of Ethics and the Professions*, Melbourne University Press, 1996.

Sachs J., 'Aristotle: Ethics', 2001, available at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>

### **Tony Fearnside is a past President of Canberra Branch.**

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## **POSITION OF NATIONAL SECRETARY**

Applicants are sought for the position of National Secretary, among members of the Society in Good Standing for the past three years. A broad outline of the duties and responsibilities may be obtained from the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia (21B), available on our website.

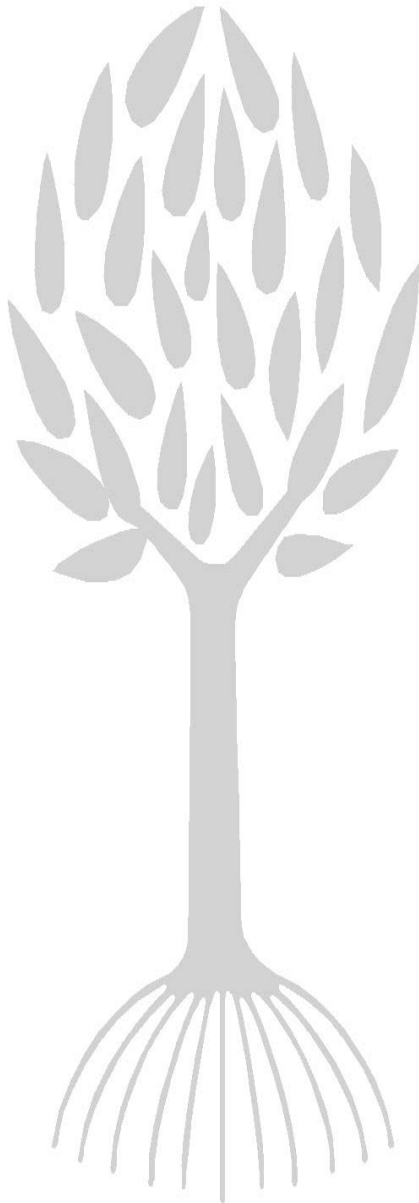
The position of National Secretary also entails being Secretary of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd, and Secretary of the Australian Section Theosophical Trust. At present the National Secretary is also the in-house building manager, and effectively the administrator of Trust properties such as Springbrook and Canyonleigh. Duties include attending to routine correspondence; preparing agendas and taking minutes for the national Executive, the National Council, The Theosophical Foundation and the Theosophical Trust; supervising the receipt of all monies; supervising the payment of wages; conducting all elections in the Section in accordance with the Rules; ensuring that all the statutory obligations of each entity are met; maintaining and managing the Section's insurance policies; supervising the work of National Headquarters staff.

We are looking for someone with good communication skills, high level administrative skills and the ability to work harmoniously with staff and volunteers of many different backgrounds. Residence in Sydney is essential.

For a more detailed job description, or to apply for the position with your curriculum vitae, please contact the National President by 31 May 2012: (02) 92647056, [natpres@austheos.org.au](mailto:natpres@austheos.org.au).

## In Praise of Trees

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“ Sky, earth, sea were expressionless once, lacking the festival magic of the seasons. Your branches offered music its first shelter, made the songs in which the restless wind – colouring with kaleidoscopic melody her invisible body, edging her shawl with prismatic tune – first knew herself. You were first to describe on earth’s clay canvas, by absorbing plastic power from the sun, a living image of beauty. You processed light’s hidden wealth to give colour to light. When celestial dancing-nymphs shook their bracelets in the clouds, shattering those misty cups to rain down refreshing nectar, you filled therewith your vessels of leaf and flower to clothe the earth with perpetual youth.

O Profound,  
silent tree, by restraining valour  
with patience, you revealed creative  
power in its peaceful form. Thus we come  
to your shade to learn the art of peace,  
to hear the word of silence. ”

Rabindranath Tagore  
(extract)

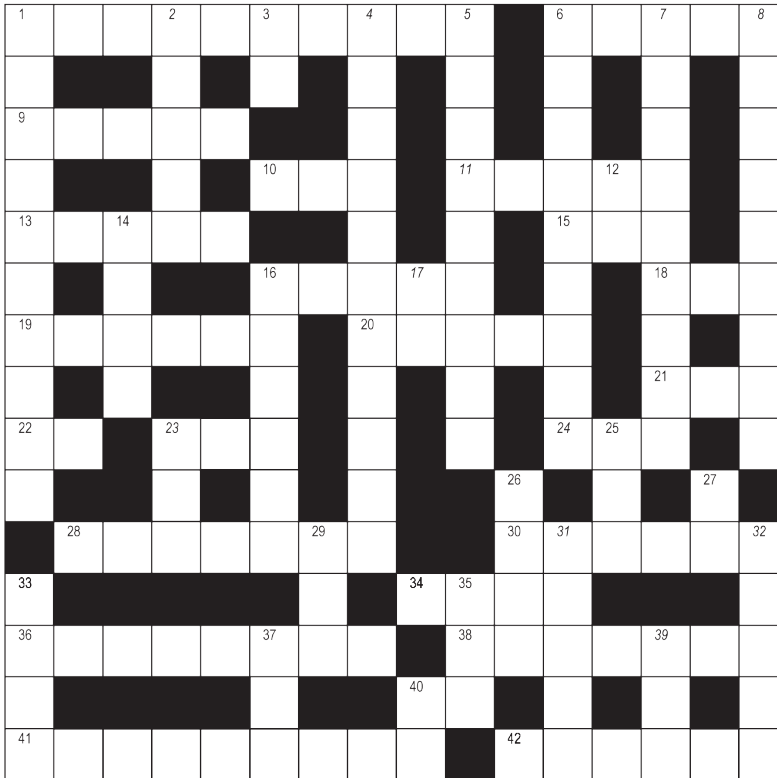
“ There is no reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached,  
it would mean that the Self is not now and here,  
but that it should be got anew. What is got afresh,  
will also be lost. So it will be impermanent.  
What is not permanent is not worth striving for. So I say,  
the Self is not reached. You are the Self. You are already That.  
The fact is that you are ignorant of your blissful state.  
Ignorance supervenes and draws a veil over the pure Bliss.  
Attempts are directed only to remove this ignorance.  
The false identification of the Self with the body,  
the mind, et cetera, must go and there remains the Self. ”

Sri Ramana Maharshi



# Crossword

Tina Fiedler



## Clues

### Across

- 1 The 'Soul of the World' (Latin).
- 6 One who has reached stage of initiation.
- 10 A symbol of universal importance, the emblem of silence among the ancient nations.
- 11 The 'High' priest of the Druzes, an Initiator into their mysteries (Arab.).
- 13 A holy sage of the second root-race beguiled by a nymph sent by Indra.
- 15 An ancient dialect used in Ceylon (Sri Lanka).
- 16 Causation operating on the moral, as well as physical and other planes (Skt).
- 18 Short version for name of boy king in ancient Egypt.
- 19 The same as the 'astral body' or 'Doppelganger'.
- 20 The wife of Pandu and the mother of the Pandavas.

- 21 Sacred tree to the Druids and ancient Greeks.  
 22 The pernicious evil currents in the astral light personified by the Hebrews as a Spirit e.g. 'possessed by the Spirit of ..'.  
 23 Fire, whether physical or symbolical fire.  
 24 Number of Commandments given to Moses.  
 28 Divine Work (Gk.).  
 30 Ancient Greek God of light and the sun.  
 34 Unfavourable destiny.  
 36 One who believes nothing which cannot be demonstrated by the senses (Grk).  
 38 The Boundless or Limitless; Deity emanating and extending (Heb.).  
 40 A mystic syllable, the most solemn of all words in India.  
 41 A force in nature and in the human being.  
 42 Word coined by theosophists to render more accurately the essential meaning of the untranslatable word Sat.

### Down

- 1 Archetypal Man; Humanity; The 'Heavenly Man' (Heb.).  
 2 The reincarnating unit of the human soul (Gk.)  
 3 Literally means 'five'. A name of Lakshmi (Sk.).  
 4 Original Headquarters of the Theosophical Society.  
 5 The cause of suffering.  
 6 One who studies the chemistry of nature.  
 7 The development of higher orders of animals from lower.  
 8 Name of the Buddhist cannon.  
 12 This deity-name is commonly translated 'God', meaning mighty, supreme and is in the singular form. Can also start with another letter as in 27 down (Heb.).  
 14 Platonic term for higher mind or soul (Grk).  
 16 The Crown, the highest of the ten Sephiroth; the first of the Supernal Triad (Heb.).  
 17 The mystic word (or a portion of it) in Northern Buddhism. It means the 'destruction of temptation' during the course of Yoga practice (Senzar).  
 23 The length of time someone or something has been in existence.  
 25 'Self' the consciousness in man 'I am I' (Lat.).  
 26 The triadic goddess, with Anouki of the Egyptian god Khnoum (Egyptian).  
 27 This deity-name is commonly translated 'God', meaning mighty, supreme and is in the singular form. Can also start with another letter as in 12 down.  
 29 The name of Hell in the Talmud – hyphenated word '...-hinnom' (Heb.).  
 31 Greek word meaning five.  
 32 The Logos; the good serpent of Agathodaemon (Grk.).  
 33 American Theosophist who infused his famous 1939 movie with timeless truths that illustrated the teachings of Theosophy: L. Frank ....  
 35 A name for the god Tem, regarded as a form of the sun god (Egpt.).  
 37 An Egyptian symbol used as an amulet. It represented the two principles of creation, male and female and related to nature and the cosmos (Egpt.).  
 39 A single unit or entity.  
 40 A mystic syllable, the most solemn of all words in India.

### Answers on Page 28

# Crossword Answers

Tina Fiedler

1A	N	I	2	M	A	3	M	U	4	N	D	5I		6	A	D	7	P	8	
D			O		A			E		G			L		V		R			
9A	E	O	N	S				W		N			C		O		I			
M			A		10	K	E	Y		11	O	K	12	A	L		P			
13	K	14	A	N	D	U			O		R		15	E	L	U		I		
A		O				16	K	A	R	17	M	A		M		T	U	T		
19	D	O	U	B	L	E		20	K	U	N	T	I		I		A			
M		S								C				S		21	O	A	K	
22	O	B		23	A	S	H		I		E		24	T	E	N		A		
N				G	E				T				26	S		27				
	28	T	H	E	U	R		29	G	Y			30	A	P	O	L	L	32	
33	B									34	A		35	F	A	T	E		P	
36	A	G	N	O	S	T		37	I	C		38	A	I	N	S	O	P	H	
U							A			40	O	M		T		N		I		
41	M	A	G	N	E	T	I	S	M			42	B	E	N	E	S	S		

## ANSWERS

### ACROSS

- |    |             |    |        |    |         |    |           |
|----|-------------|----|--------|----|---------|----|-----------|
| 1  | Anima Mundi | 15 | Elu    | 22 | Ob      | 36 | Agnostic  |
| 6  | Adept       | 16 | Karma  | 23 | Ash     | 38 | Ain Soph  |
| 9  | Aeons       | 18 | Tut    | 24 | Ten     | 40 | Om        |
| 10 | Key         | 19 | Double | 28 | Theurgy | 41 | Magnetism |
| 11 | Okhal       | 20 | Kunti  | 30 | Apollo  | 42 | Beness    |
| 13 | Kandu       | 21 | Oak    | 34 | Fate    |    |           |

### DOWN

- |   |               |    |           |    |        |    |       |    |     |
|---|---------------|----|-----------|----|--------|----|-------|----|-----|
| 1 | Adam Kadmon   | 6  | Alchemist | 16 | Kether | 27 | El    | 35 | Aam |
| 2 | Monad         | 7  | Evolution | 17 | Mu     | 29 | Gai   | 37 | Tat |
| 3 | Ma            | 8  | Tripitaka | 23 | Age    | 31 | Pente | 39 | One |
| 4 | New York City | 12 | Al        | 25 | Ego    | 32 | Ophis | 40 | Om  |
| 5 | Ignorance     | 14 | Nous      | 26 | Sati   |    |       |    |     |

## Calendar of Events National TS Centres...



### Springbrook School of Theosophy Fri 20 – Thurs 26 April 2012

#### Theme: Seeking Wisdom

Presenters: **Linda Oliveira, National President**  
and **Pedro Oliveira, Supporting Lecturer.**

The morning sessions of the School will be based on the book *Seeking Wisdom* by the fifth International President of the Theosophical Society, N. Sri Ram. His observations in the book have a perennial relevance to our lives, being both deeply insightful and inspirational. Afternoon sessions will deal with aspects of the TS and its work. Opportunities will be provided for interaction during all sessions in the uplifting natural environment of our Springbrook Centre.

Students will be asked to give a five-minute talk at the end of the School, on a topic of their choice from a range of subjects related to the morning sessions.

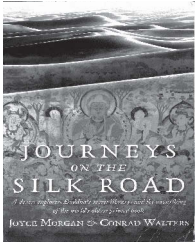
Some places are still available for the School and **registrations will close on Friday 6 April.**

Please register soon to ensure a place.

Registration forms were provided with the November 2011 issue and are also available online at [www.austheos.org.au](http://www.austheos.org.au)

Other events will be announced in the June issue.





### ***Journeys on the Silk Road***

Joyce Morgan and  
Conrad Walters, Picador,  
Pan/Macmillan, 2011

*Available through online  
bookstores and select booksellers*

On attending the launch of this book at the Art Gallery of New South Wales I bought a copy as I have a great interest in the Silk Road and its history. The book is not about the full length of the Silk Road, but a specific portion – the area of Turkestan and the Taklamakan Desert in the very West of China. In fact the major portion of the book is about the incredible journey of Hungarian/British explorer and archaeologist, Sir Marc Aurel Stein, in the early 1900s, that took him from India, over various mountain ranges and across the wild desert in search of artefacts, particularly in reference to the journey of Buddhism from India into China.

The great prize he gathered for the British Museum was an incredible cache of scrolls in ancient Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan and other languages, as well as silken banners and other artefacts that had been kept walled up in a hidden cave within the complex of the Mogao Caves (known as the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas) near Dunhuang. It was not until the scrolls were properly examined back in London that one turned out to be one of the most valuable artefacts of Buddhist and Chinese history. This was a block print of a Buddhist text, *The Diamond Sutra*, its Chinese dating being equivalent to the year 868 CE. This makes it the oldest printed book in the world – printed hundreds of years before Guttenberg developed the printing press in Germany.

Stein was able to obtain his treasure from its guardian, a monk named Abbot Wang, through their mutual interest in the Chinese monk, Xuanzang, who travelled to Gandhara in the 7th century to obtain Buddhist Teachings, and left a detailed account of his journey. Xuanzang was the model for the monk Tripitaka in the novel

*Journey to the West* (known also as *Monkey*), written in the 13th century by Ch'eng-en Wu and known in modern times through the Japanese cult television series, *Monkey*, made in the 1970s.

Nowadays the role of the European explorers who gathered ancient artefacts for the museums and collectors in the West is looked upon with some disdain, though the defence given for these acquisitions is that it helped to save such items from further destruction. The last chapters of the book look partly at the history of Stein's collection once established at the British Museum, and how it was protected during the destructive bombing of the Second World War.

The authors also explore the emergence of the Buddhist religion during the last century, including the influence of Sir Edwin Arnold's epic poem, *The Light of Asia*, and the writings of D.T. Suzuki. A brief reference to the Theosophists mentions 'an influential and at times eccentric group of thinkers and mystics, who took an interest in the world's religions, including Buddhism'.

Ironically the main feature of this book is the scroll of *The Diamond Sutra* which is about the illusory nature of Life, and yet this scroll has survived for well over one thousand years, and is now available, as the authors express it, on the 'Heavenly Library that exists in the cloud of the internet'. They end with these words:

Of all the paradoxes associated with *The Diamond Sutra*, none is greater than the endurance of this text about impermanence. Having survived its elemental trials, *The Diamond Sutra* has fulfilled a 1300 year old promise that it be freely available for all.

Stein's incredible journey which resulted in the discovery of this ancient scroll does not reflect a 'treasure hunter' but the efforts of a man driven to gather the wisdom of the past so that it would be available for the minds of the future, which can be seen as a noble theosophical endeavour. The authors of this excellent book have not only researched their subject well, but have also provided deep insights into Buddhist teachings and history.

Dianne K. Kynaston

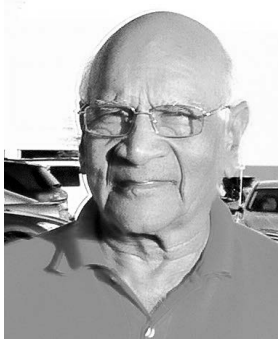


## News & Notes

### New International Vice-President

The Theosophical Society has a new International Vice-President as from December 2011, Mr Mahendra Prakash Singhal from India. Holding degrees in science and civil engineering, at one stage Mr Singhal supervised railway consulting projects in the Middle East and North Africa. After his retirement he continued to work as advisor and consultant to the Urban Transport Division for planning and developing metro projects in New Delhi, part of Rail India Technical and Economic Services.

From 1985 until 1992 he was the National Secretary of the TOS (Theosophical Order of Service) in India.



Between 1992 and 1998. Mr Singhal held the office of General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in India, based in Varanasi, and travelled widely in that country. In 1994 he acquired a Masters degree in Environment and

Ecology. After retiring in New Delhi, he was nominated as National Director of the TOS in India from 2001 until 2004. Latterly Mr Singhal has been the President of the TS as well as the TOS in New Delhi. His interests extend to the study of subjects relating to religion, philosophy and science, as well as project planning and management pertaining to environmental topics.

We wish him well in his new role.

### Annual Appointments

The annual appointments made by the National Council at its January 2012 meeting were as follows:

National Vice-President: Geoffrey Harrod

National Secretary: The position was declared vacant. Dara Tatray was appointed as Acting National Secretary, with the position to be advertised according to Section Rule 21B(1) (see also page 23).

National Treasurer: The position was declared vacant (see also page 3).

Assistant Treasurer: Beatrice Malka

Executive Committee: the three ex-officio members (National President, National Secretary, National Treasurer), Beatrice Malka, Ken Edwards, Marlene Bell, Dianne Kynaston and Dai Trandang.

Education Coordinator: Dara Tatray was appointed by the National Council at its 2011 mid-year meeting as Education Coordinator for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

### Perth Branch – Spare Copies of *The Theosophist*

Skip Pry of Perth Branch has prepared a spreadsheet showing spare copies of *The Theosophist* in Perth Branch's Library. The Executive Committee of the Branch has decided to make them available to other Lodges/Branches which may wish to replace damaged

copies in their archives or Libraries. In order to obtain a copy of the spreadsheet, please email Skip Pry at the address shown on the opposite page. Lodges/Branches are asked to cover postage costs if they are significant.

### Relocation of the National Headquarters and Blavatsky Lodge

Due to recent financial challenges, the members of Blavatsky Lodge in Sydney made a number of decisions at their Annual General Meeting in December 2011, resulting in the Lodge's pending move of premises. The Lodge and the National Headquarters have both been housed in the same building, Theosophy House in Sydney city (pictured bottom right), since December 1986 and February 1987 respectively. The building is owned jointly by Blavatsky Lodge (75%) and the Australian Section (25%). The National Headquarters occupies the fourth floor, and Blavatsky Lodge occupies the remaining three floors. Agreement has been given by both parties, as well as the relevant bodies within The Theosophical Society in Australia, for Theosophy House to be sold. Therefore with some sadness, but due to practical necessity, preparation for the sale of the building has now commenced.

Another decision made by Blavatsky Lodge at its Annual General Meeting in December was to close down the Adyar bookshop, again for financial reasons, at the end of January. The bookshop has served the community for several decades. It has had a well-known reputation for a long time and no doubt will be missed by many.

After discussions with Blavatsky Lodge, agreement has also been given by the relevant bodies within the TS in Australia for the premises formerly occupied by the Adyar bookshop in Bathurst Street, Sydney, to be sold by Blavatsky Lodge to The Australian Section Theosophical Trust, for the purpose of housing the National Headquarters. Once Theosophy House has been sold, hopefully within the first half of this year, both the Headquarters and Blavatsky Lodge will therefore be moving to separate locations.

The Lodge will be seeking to purchase another property which is suited to its needs and is more financially viable and the National Headquarters will give the Lodge as much support as it can during the coming period.

### Transitions

News has come to hand of the recent passing of several long-time members:

19 December 2011: Audrey Halsey (National Member, joined 1947)

9 January 2012 : Jean Clarke (Brisbane Lodge, joined 1934)

10 January 2012: Doris Clarke (twin of Jean Clarke, Brisbane Lodge, joined 1934)

15 January 2012: Florence Shaw (Melbourne Lodge, joined 1975)

They are remembered with affection.



The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

## Section Directory

### *Australian Section National Headquarters*

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

### *Australian Capital Territory*

*Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:*  
Postal Address: PO Box 7418,  
Fisher ACT 2611  
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent &  
Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612  
8.00pm 1st Monday of month  
(Please confirm by email or telephone)  
President: Peter Fokker  
Tel: 02 6236 3170  
Email: fokkerbakker@gmail.com  
Secretary: Tony Feamside  
Telephone: 02 62887656  
Email: janton@netspeed.com.au

### *New South Wales*

*Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:*  
2nd & 3rd Floors, 484 Kent Street, Sydney  
NSW 2000  
Telephone: 02 9267 6955 Fax: 02 9283 3772  
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au  
www.tssydney.org.au  
Meet: 2.00pm & 7.00pm Wednesdays  
Members Meeting: 2.00 pm 2nd Saturday  
each month  
President: Stephen McDonald  
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

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

Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,  
Mayfield NSW 2304  
8.00pm 2nd Friday each month  
(excluding January)  
Study group (members) confirm dates with  
Lodge  
President: Danny Boyd  
Tel: 02 4937 4225

### *Blue Mountains Group:*

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

### *Gosford Group:*

Meet: The Neighbour Centre,  
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250  
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month  
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser  
Tel: (02) 4364 0088

E-mail: marifraser256@gmail.com

Secretary: Roni Ostergaard

Telephone: 02 4358 1413

### *Northern Beaches Group:*

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

### *Queensland*

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

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd, Atherton  
QLD 4883  
Meet: Meeting Room, Atherton  
Neighbourhood Centre, Mabel St, Atherton,  
2nd Saturday of month  
President: Max Brandenberger  
Secretary: Chris Pang Way  
Tel: 07 4091 5156

#### *Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:*

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000  
Tel: 07 3839 1453  
Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au  
http://www.theosophyqld.org.au  
Meet: 10.00am & 12.00 noon Wednesday  
and 7.30pm Friday  
President: Phillipa Rooke  
Secretary: Angela Read

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

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club, Syd Lingard  
Drive, Buderim QLD 4556  
7.00pm Thursday  
President: Penny Houghton  
Tel: 07 5453 7595  
Email: penny26@tpg.com.au  
Secretary: Joyce Thompson

#### *Toowoomba Group:*

Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba  
1st Wed at 7pm and 3rd Sunday at 2:30pm  
of each month (Meditation 1pm & Study  
Group at 1:30pm)  
Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter  
Coordinator: Barry Bowden  
Secretary: Julie Murphy  
Tel: 0427 751 464  
Email: murphyj@usq.edu.au

### *South Australia*

#### *Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000  
Tel: 08 8223 1129  
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au  
http://www.austtheos.org.au/adelaide  
Meet: Members Meeting 1.00pm 4th Friday  
of every month. Please contact Lodge for  
additional meeting dates.  
President: Sheryl Malone  
Secretary: Audrey Brimson

### *Tasmania*

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

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

Meet: 8.00pm Monday

President/Secretary: Helen Steven

Tel: (03) 6228 3048

#### *Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:*

54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston, TAS 7250  
Postal address: 66 Flinders Street, Beauty  
Point, TAS 7270  
email: rmholt@gmail.com  
www.austtheos.org.au/launceston  
Meetings: Wednesdays commencing  
7.00 pm for meditation, followed  
by meeting at 7.30 pm  
Library open Wednesdays from 2 pm  
President: Jenny Haslem  
Tel: 02 9264 6404  
Secretary: Ruth Holt  
Tel: 0448 397 246

### *Victoria*

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

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624  
email: meltheos@netspace.net.au  
Meet: 2.30pm Saturday & 6.30pm Tuesday  
President: Dorothy Darby  
Secretary: Ken Edwards

#### *Mornington Peninsula Group:*

Coordinator: Daphne Standish  
Tel: 03 9589 5439  
Meet: Mt. Eliza Neighbourhood Centre,  
Canadian Bay Road first Sunday of the  
month 11am - 3.30pm  
(meditation - lunch - Theosophy)  
www.austtheos.org.au/centres/mpg

#### *Wodonga-Albury Group:*

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

### *Western Australia*

#### *Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*

21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000  
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104  
Email: tsp Perth@inet.net.au  
http://tsp Perth.inet.net.au  
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesday  
President: Harry Bayens  
Secretary: Deborah Weymouth

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