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INSIDE The Vegetarian Ethic
 Menticulture: a Key to Understanding Aboriginal Cultures
 A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Spirituality
 2016 National Convention

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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.

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The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

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

From the International President

Tim Boyd



The Vegetarian Ethic: its Effect on Inner Health

I am not an expert on the subject of vegetarian diet. Others will be more informative about the scientific and medical studies showing the health benefits of a vegetarian diet, such as lowered hypertension, cancer rates, heart disease, and so on. Others can speak on the dramatic environmental impact of changing to a vegetarian diet (substantially lessened carbon footprint and diminished pollution of air, water, and soil). My contribution will be to briefly consider the matter from the point of view of the effects of a vegetarian diet on our inner health — the condition of our consciousness.

My qualifications? I am a vegetarian and I am conscious. I became a vegetarian many years ago. Few studies had been done. Essentially, I began as an ignorant vegetarian.

There is an expression in the U.S.: ‘You are what you eat.’ We are multidimensional beings in a

multidimensional universe. We nourish or starve ourselves on many levels — the physical being only one. We feed the mind with ideas, conversations, books, even web surfing. We feed the spirit with time in Nature, sacred books, prayer, silent time alone.

In all of these the quality of the ‘bodies’ (emotional, mental, spiritual) we build will be determined by the ‘foods’ we eat. Feed the emotions with music that just excites the passions, with low quality, addictive, or abusive relationships, and our emotional nature becomes stunted. Fill the mind with pornographic images and ideas, continual distraction of web surfing, pointless chatter, and the mind’s range and flexibility diminish. Of course, the opposite is also true. Feed the emotions and mind with uplifting, purifying inputs and they become expansive and harmonious.

What is the source of flesh foods? ‘Animals’ is the easy answer, and if we do not want to become uncomfortable, our enquiry could stop there. But

what is an animal? Does it have consciousness? Does it have feelings? Does it experience pain? Does it desire safety, fellowship with its kind, happiness, and well-being? The answer to all of these questions is ‘yes’.

In Buddhism the simple definition of love is the desire for all beings to experience happiness. We do not need to be knowledgeable about the massive brutality involved in raising and slaughtering these living beings to know that in eating flesh foods we are participating in a process that brings intense suffering to millions of lives every moment of every day. The real problem that we face is that it requires us to make a conscious choice — there are consequences.

The choice we are forced to make is not merely physical. It is made at the level of feelings, thoughts, and even spirit. To continue even our small part in this suffering-creating process requires a profound denial of reality. We are obliged to refuse to consider, refuse to ask, refuse to see what is right in front of us. It is this denial that has the greatest effect on our inner health.

Our denial limits our capacity to love. It cannot grow to its full potential. Somewhere inside all of us is the sense that our capacity to love is much

greater than what we currently reveal. The global diet will change to a more vegetarian approach. It is inevitable for two reasons: (1) because the demands of a growing population — already more than seven billion — place excessive demands on the animal resources of the world; and (2) because around the world countless people are asking themselves these same questions and arriving at answers that demand responsible choices. Already the oceans are unable to replenish the fish taken away for food and fertilisers. The degrading environmental impact of cattle, chicken, and pig farms is fast becoming unsupportable.

The global diet will change because it must. The more important question is ‘Will we change?’, or will we blindly continue to follow the patterns imposed on us by circumstances.

Socrates said: ‘The unexamined life is not worth living.’ Regardless of the foods we choose to eat, let us allow ourselves the necessary effort of asking and answering the deep questions about how we can live conscientiously and consciously in the world. Only in this way can we create a condition of inner health capable of shifting the outer conditions of our times.

**Extract from *The Theosophist*
August 2015**

From the National President

Linda Oliveira



This issue includes a number of contemporary views of human spiritual life and culture such as vegetarianism; menticulture and the connection to country of Indigenous Australians; synthesising science, religion and spirituality; and becoming a centre of peace. None of these are small things, nor are they confined to our particular age. They all reflect human drives and the challenges of cohabiting on a planet replete with numerous, disparate expressions of the One Life.

In an email earlier this year, one member mentioned that applying the Three Objects of the TS appears to be the personal answer to various world problems. What if we could live brotherhood/sisterhood so profoundly that it became positively ‘contagious’? Realising deeply what is virtually a transcendental ideal, requires strong dedication and commitment during this age of material ascendancy.

Then again, our second Object points to the potential for greater tolerance of all religions, philosophies and sciences through their direct study. So much of what we learn is second-hand,

especially through the various media. But getting to know another religion through its sacred texts, for example, and through visiting some of its sacred spaces, may provide quite a different perspective from that which is routinely portrayed by the media. Similarly, the TS has received its fair share of sensationalised press in this country over the years, which has helped effectively to cloud its real purpose in the public eye, as well as the significance it has had on aspects of Australian life.

And what of the Third Object? Although our latent powers are often equated with psychic powers, the reach of human consciousness goes far deeper. Each of our principles includes various powers but perhaps those which are (still largely) latent reside within the Buddhist principle, holding the potential to heal the world of its ailments far more effectively than governments; it begins and ends with the individual – with you and me.

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

Menticulture: a Key to Understanding Aboriginal Cultures

Olga Gostin



I should like to begin this talk by acknowledging the Kaurna people on whose land we are now gathered, whose custodianship and care of country over thousands of years has left us with such a rich heritage and whose descendants today continue to engage with the land and share their wisdom with us. Specifically I should like to acknowledge my academic peers both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, as well as former Indigenous students who have facilitated the insights that I now share with you.

In the context of this Convention's theme, *Science, Society and Soul Wisdom*, I begin with a statement by Ngarrindgeri scholar and inventor, David Unaipon: 'Everything that exists has some life apart from itself.' The enigma of this quotation was put into perspective by my Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal sister/colleague when we happened to be travelling by bus north of Coober Pedy in the mid-1990s. We were exchanging family stories when

she looked out of the window and suddenly burst into song. We had just entered into her country, and the silhouette of low hills in the setting sun represented the long tail of the ancestral giant lizard – her totemic Perentie Dreaming. Thus through song did she acknowledge and give substance to the hills, and imbue them with a life apart from what met the untutored eye. Later we would experience the same engagement with country when Yami Lester (who had been blinded by the Maralinga atomic tests in the 1950s) would stop at certain spots as we were being driven around, and sing the land into being, he then being a respected elder and custodian of country.

What exactly – one may ask – is going on here? In the discussion that follows I should like to draw on the insightful commentary on Indigenous paintings edited by Hetti Perkins, in her seminal book entitled *Art+Soul*, published in 2010. Referring to country in general, Perkins observes

that sites are multilayered, with physical, geographical and ceremonial connotations, and then adds:

In the desert all the ‘action’ happens below the surface, beyond what’s tangible, what can be seen; whereas New York seems to be all about what happens on the “surface” ... Culture miraculously bridges these immaterial and material worlds.

Ricky Maynard makes the same point:

Landscape is about the stories from the land. You can never separate the landscape from Aboriginal people. They are the land. That country talks to you. (2010:83)

The Dreaming

It is interesting that some Europeans also apprehended something of what was going on. Thus in 1900 Constable Ernest Cowle commented:

I believe that every water hole, spring, plain, hill, big tree, big rock, gutter, and peculiar or striking feature of the country, not even leaving out sandhills, without any exception whatsoever, is connected with some tradition. (in Peter Latz, *Blind Moses*, 2014:85)

Academics have also sought to interpret the vibrant pulse at the core of Aboriginal thinking and have coined the term ‘The Dreaming’, to refer to it. Thus Bill Edwards (1988) identifies

Everything derives from and is informed by, The Dreaming – the spiritual core and time of creation that brought all that we know into being.

The Dreaming as the basis of all aspects of life in traditional Aboriginal societies. He represents The Dreaming diagrammatically as a central circle from which radiate all other aspects of social life: land, art, rituals, songs, people, totemic sites, animals, plants, technology and so on. Everything derives from and is informed by, The Dreaming – the spiritual core and time of creation that brought all that we know into being. Interestingly, a Tiwi colleague, Sonny Flynn, challenged Edwards’ representation by suggesting that the central circle should include ‘the indivisible trinity’ of Land, The Dreaming and People as all three are interconnected. None is viable without the presence of the other two. This triune central core then informs the social, physical and spiritual environments radiating from it.

Menticulture

The most cerebral engagement with Aboriginal metaphysics is David Hope’s concept of menticulture in which he describes a body of knowledge transformed into belief

through perambulation (walking on country) and totemic encapturement. At the core of Hope's argument is his description of natural *objects* in their four interrelated *aspects*. Thus a low range of hills is first seen as an *apprehension*: something 'out there'. The object then passes through the so-called axis of transformation and is seen as a *simulacrum* or 'looking like', say, a giant perentie. From simulacrum the object moves into its third aspect: that of essential reality – i.e. the range of hills no longer looks like but actually *becomes* the perentie, it is imbued with life and meaning at a totally different level. Finally the object passes back through the axis of transformation and emerges as a *verifiable reality* – not of a range of hills, but of a recumbent perentie encapsulating Dreaming stories, celebrated in song and activated by appropriate ritual.

To those initiated into this way of looking at an object, it never reverts to being just an apprehension 'out there'. It is something quite different. Hope summarises the process. Menticulture is:

the phenomenon of culture *being* the interaction of the environment and the human mind. The locus of culture is in the mind and it is man's unique mental faculties which explain the existence of culture ... Here the mind is conceived

of as a set of mental codes which give cultural meaning and form to all behaviour. (1983:30)

For Hope as for Flynn, 'The result of no people or no land is catastrophic: no culture'. (1983:107) Hope reiterates:

Thus the Anangu [of north-western South Australia] are not hunter/gatherers but menticulturalists, taken to connote their body of ritual practices and belief, the totality of individual perceptions of the physical world and the practices associated therewith, the dimension of spiritual events and relationships, the institutions of authority and power, and their cosmology, ontology, and epistemology – all of which are given by the environment ... Engagement with country is not like a cruise but rather like an expedition from one minefield to another. (1983:108)

Externalising Menticulture

So far so good, or so complex. Aboriginal people have gone further yet, and have imprinted their connection to country, or externalised their menticulture, through various media ranging from hand stencils on rocky outcrops, rock engravings and paintings, to bark paintings which originally formed the internal walls of initiation huts in Arnhem Land, to ceremonial body painting and headdresses, sand paintings, and in



latter times as canvases, sculptures, bark paintings and a myriad of other ‘artistic’ expressions. It was inevitable that this plethora of creativity would draw the attention of academics, scientists, art collectors – including connoisseurs, charlatans and speculators. Hetti Perkins’ *Art+Soul* addresses this huge diversity and lets the artists speak to their artworks. There lies the fascination of her book. Thus Galarrwuy Yunipingu reflects:

When we paint – whether it is on our bodies for ceremony, or on bark or canvas for the market – we are not just painting for fun or profit. We are painting as we have always done, to demonstrate our continuing link with our country and the rights and responsibilities we have to it. (2010:230)

To which Perkins adds, ‘Our culture is

not and cannot become a disembodied consumer-driven phenomenon.’ (2010:238)

Indigenous Art Forms

It is telling that Native Title claims following the landmark Mabo decision in 1992 (which recognised the primacy of Indigenous custodianship over the whole continent prior to the European invasion), are often expressed through the media of huge paintings that depict country in all its complexity. Equally telling, most of these paintings are a collaborative effort as members of different groups have custodianship over different parts of the country being claimed collectively. One may see several painters working on a single canvas, sitting in their separate corners, singing their country as they sit on the ground and bring their canvas into being. As Stephen Muecke reflects in *Tjukurpa Pulkatjura*:

When the painter says this painting is my country, she doesn’t mean it *represents* my country, she means it *reproduces* it in its singular power. The same vital essence moves between the place and the painting on the wall in the gallery. (2010:10)

This responsibility is real and articulated very clearly by artist Ginger Riley Munduwalawala:

You’ve got to know about the sort of

painting [e.g. sacred country, ceremonial objects]. I was quite frightened, you know. If I made a mistake it [could have meant] trouble for me, no good. I don't want to make a 'mistake'. (2010:244)

The duty of care involved in painting is further expressed by Gulumbu Yunupingu's comment on her father's painting:

He was a very hard working artist who spent all his time thinking about the paintings. And he painted to describe the land, what was under and within it. He was like a professor or a scientist of his knowledge of the land. And he did it for one reason only, to protect the land. To stop it from being destroyed, and to stop the people who belonged to that land from being destroyed ... to describe that law of each land. (2010:234)

Hetti Perkins takes the onus associated with custodianship a step further when she reflects on a painting by the world-renowned artist Emily Kam Ngwarray:

As custodian of country Ngwarray's responsibilities ran deep. She was part of the Earth: she was kam, the valuable root vegetable harvested by women. Her complex relationship with the land is contained in the simple but emphatic statement: I am *kam* now. (2010:147)

What is particularly interesting is that Indigenous art forms are not restricted to traditional themes. The same menticulture that imbues country

with meaning, embraces the reality of history, interprets it and commits it to memory. Thus according to Hetti Perkins: 'Land is the silent witness to the hidden histories of Australia's colonial experience – it becomes a vessel of memory.' (2010:41) Any contemporary exhibition of Aboriginal art will include paintings on themes of dispossession, alienation, loss of country and identity, almost always rooted in a specific place. These are not idle rants against a colonial oppressor, they are also statements of survival against the odds, searches for meaning and attempts to communicate and educate. At one end are canvases that engage with Christian (and Old Testament) themes with varying degrees of syncretism and reworking within an Indigenous context, while others deal starkly, powerfully and bluntly with the clash of cultures and the policies of dispossession, segregation and child removal. Thus Richard Bell who famously painted a semi-geometric, semi-graffitied canvas stating: 'Australian Art - It's an Aboriginal Thing', comments as follows:

Art is multi-layered. It is about getting ideas out and making them palatable while not losing the power, the directness. They appear to be direct, whereas they're layered with meanings. They're not what they seem. That's a deliberate

strategy and I love seeing people fall for it. (2010:255)

As a non-Aboriginal person who regularly frequents the many exhibitions run by Aboriginal cultural centres like Tandanya in Adelaide, and mainstream exhibitions of Aboriginal art during the Festival of Arts, I am constantly reminded that art is a dynamic thing, challenging us to delve honestly and humbly below the surface meaning or apprehension of the object painted. Above all I am reminded of David Hope's comment on menticulture:

What we call belief, the Anangu call knowledge. Menticulture is the [symbiotic] relationship of people and the environment: a man-land federation. Menticulture requires people to be always on the move in order to receive culture, and it requires land to hold and receive it. (1983:128)

What richness, what potential is there for all Australians, if only we had the hearts and the minds to engage with the First Australians. It is appropriate to end this excursion into menticulture by reminding the reader of the 1975 iconic photograph by Aboriginal photographer Mervyn Bishop showing the then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pouring a handful of soil into the cupped hand of custodian-elder Vincent Lingiari. The gesture, we now understand more fully, stood for

much more than the mere restoration of land to the Gurindji people of Wave Hill Station. It was the key to opening up the treasures of country, of making possible the renewed interface between people, the land and their Dreaming.

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Born in Brussels, Dr Olga Gostin completed her first degree in South Africa, majoring in Social Anthropology. After completing her PhD in Australia, Olga joined Australia's founding programme for Aboriginal tertiary students at the University of South Australia, where she is currently adjunct senior lecturer. Olga has been a member of the Theosophical Society for many years. She gave this talk at the January 2015 National Convention, Adelaide.

A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Spirituality

David Allan



The theme of this Convention seems to touch on synthesis so I thought I would share a few thoughts on a big subject we tend to ignore: the respective roles of science, religion and spirituality in human development and our own lives in particular. Why are these three so important? It is because they are more than just concepts – they are three fundamental urges of humankind which have always competed for dominance.

Religion has had a pre-eminent position since the days of Ancient Egypt and has never lost it in one form or another – you only have to read the current newspaper headlines. The separate paths of science and spirituality were formalised in Ancient Greece by the great philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, who were contemporaries.

But this talk is more than a discussion on these three, it is an opportunity for us to think about ourselves. Are we

focussed in one or two directions, or are we balanced and, indeed, is it necessary or possible to be balanced? I will use much of this discussion to answer the last question – that individuals can integrate the concepts of religion, science and spirituality in their lives, but in very different ways – and I will give two prominent examples. But firstly I will explore a bit further the concepts of science, religion and spirituality as we tend to use them blandly.

Firstly, Religion:

I can still recall clearly an experience many decades ago when I was in the Carnarvon Gorge National Park in Central Queensland. It is a beautiful but eerily isolated place and was even more so then. Walking through the magical atmosphere of the gorge I had this vivid experience of utter loneliness and can remember an intense feeling that is best expressed in the words,

‘Now I know why mankind created a God’.

But what is religion? One of the traditional definitions I found in an earlier edition of the *Oxford Dictionary*, is that religion is ‘Human recognition of superhuman controlling power and experience of a personal God entitled to obedience, the effect of such recognition being on conduct and mental attitude’. Religion nowadays has a definition issue. In the Internet age it can be defined almost as broadly as you like. It has also taken on a sinister overtone, as exemplified by ISIS, and received bad press by writers such as Richard Dawkins.

Whatever the definition however, religion broadly seems to mean belief and respect for a personal God or guiding entity to which one is profoundly responsive. For the two persons I will be discussing shortly I will defer to the traditional religion of the Western World, Christianity.

Secondly, Science or the World of Ideas:

Philosophically science is a strong engagement and thirst for knowledge about the material world. When physical science can land a satellite on an asteroid and send back images it is easy to believe that science must be the backbone of all knowledge. This is

unhelpful and risky, when such belief extends beyond the physical sciences. Science’s legitimate role is to provide a rational knowledge of the material world, so our feet are firmly anchored and we are not prey to deluded concepts and the superstitions of past ages.

Another major role it plays is to improve our material and even spiritual lives. Our very presence at a Convention is made possible due to the advances in technological science, while still in contact with home on our mobile phones.

Its other role, often ignored by mainstream science, but highlighted in the third Object of the TS, is to challenge us to investigate the unexplained material phenomena it is continuously uncovering. Science also facilitates this by providing illuminating Internet sites for us to explore.

Thirdly, Spirituality:

If the concept of religion has become elastic in the twenty-first century then spirituality has become more so. I will refer to the ‘fount of all knowledge’, Wikipedia, for some current thinking. Wikipedia commences by stating there is now no single widely agreed definition of spirituality. The traditional meaning is:



globular star cluster Source:NASA

A process of reformation which aims to recover the original nature of a man or woman as the image of God through one of the great religions of the world.

In more recent times, however, it includes a range of other practices including what Wikipedia calls ‘neo-Vedanta’ in which the Theosophical Society is identified as a major influence. Steiner’s Anthroposophical Society is also mentioned, as is the so-called Perennial Philosophy, of which Aldous Huxley was a major spokesman. Other recent non-religious spiritual movements are broadly grouped under New Age, which even includes populist authors such as Shirley MacLaine. So in our times, it appears, the bottom line is that, like beauty, spirituality can exist and is in the eye of the beholder.

Returning to my topic again, the fundamental urges of science, religion and spirituality have been with us from time immemorial, occasionally in alliance, often in competition and sometimes in bitter conflict. However individuals can integrate the concepts of religion, science and spirituality in their lives in very diverse ways.

Teilhard de Chardin

So now to the first of the two individuals I wish to talk about. The name of Teilhard de Chardin, at least, would be familiar to many of you. He was a Jesuit Priest and a renowned palaeontologist who did most of his scientific work in China in the decades prior to World War II, where he was involved in the excavation of the so-called Peking Man. His main objective in life, however, was to pursue scientific evidence to demonstrate the presence of God within the material world. His message can best be described by phrases such as, ‘Mankind is Evolution becoming Conscious of itself’. The concept is not original to Teilhard as both he and his Asian contemporary, Sri Aurobindo, had been influenced by earlier post-Darwinian thinkers such as Henri Bergson.

Unique about him, however, are his writings with their positive and uplifting

messages. The way he expresses his assimilation of religion, science and spirituality is best illustrated by some of his quotes. (If you Google the phrase ‘Pierre Teilhard de Chardin Quotes’ you will find several sites containing his inspirational messages.) These seem to be a mix of Christian sayings, everyday spirituality and his overriding belief in evolution as a spiritual driving force. Let’s first quote a poetic example of this:

Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability – and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually – let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don’t try to force them on, as though you could be today what time ... will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing

that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

And of everyday spirituality, science and living:

‘Matter is spirit moving slowly enough to be seen.’

‘We are not physical beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.’

‘The whole life lies in the verb seeing.’

‘The universe as we know it is a joint product of the observer and the observed.’

‘Science cannot alone discover Christ. But Christ satisfies the yearnings that are born in our hearts in the school of science. Science will, in all probability, be increasingly impregnated by mysticism.’

‘It doesn’t matter if the water is cold or warm if you’re going to have to wade through it anyway.’

‘Growing old is like being increasingly penalised for a crime you haven’t committed.’¹

While inspirational, it is only fair to mention that Teilhard’s positive view of human progress is not universally

shared. Some spiritual thinkers such as the Traditionalists propose a cyclic movement in human consciousness. Also, Anne Bancroft's anthology on *Twentieth Century Mystics and Sages* ² points out that while Teilhard's passion to link evolution with Christianity gave him great spiritual energy, it blinkered him to other contemporary forces including, strangely, Eastern cultures and philosophies.

He also formulated three spheres in the structure of the Universe, the geosphere, the biosphere and the noosphere, that of the mind and spiritual energy. Unsurprisingly such ideas were not well received by the Vatican on one side and by the broader scientific community on the other. But that is another story and anyone reading his book *The Phenomenon of Man* will be inspired with his personal synthesis of religion, science and positive spirituality. As a footnote, in 2008 a leading U.S. spirituality magazine, drawing on the results of an earlier survey, rated him alongside Carl Jung in terms of his influence on twentieth century spirituality and psychology.

Rudolf Steiner

My second example of someone integrating these three concepts into

He was in many ways a puzzle, however – a person who on the one hand could write the coldly objective classic, *The Philosophy of Freedom* and, on the other, devise a spiritual world populated with a multitude of etheric beings.

his personal life is very different. Rudolf Steiner would be known, at least by name, to most of you as a dynamic theosophist and occultist of the early twentieth century, and as the originator of Anthroposophy and the founder of the Anthroposophical Society. He was in many ways a puzzle, however – a person who on the one hand could write the coldly objective classic, *The Philosophy of Freedom* and, on the other, devise a spiritual world populated with a multitude of etheric beings. His master work, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, is a great read, but a difficult one to assimilate, and reminds me of the message Krishnamurti was later to deliver. It is published nowadays as *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*. ³

He was so multi-faceted it is easy to forget that he was also a fervent Christian. This was not in the traditional sense of Teilhard, but just as powerful. His strong belief in the Christ figure resulted in him separating



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Rudolf Steiner 1905

from the TS in 1912 with most of the German Section, and founding the Anthroposophical Society. This was because Annie Besant, in one of her less fortuitous moves, had founded the Order of the Star in the East, with the young Krishnamurti as ‘the vehicle of the World Teacher’, perceived by Steiner as promoting Krishnamurti as a new Messah. Steiner in his individual way had a fervent belief in Christ as the world redeemer and demonstrated this during his life by writing and lecturing on the esoteric meaning of the Gospel of St. John.

In his early years Steiner had graduated from the Technical University of Vienna in mathematics and science and edited the scientific works of his lifetime idol, Goethe. He was subsequently a pioneer in diverse sciences of his

times such as innovative architecture, natural medicine, childhood education and organic farming. His spiritual and occult output was enormous and included early classics on Theosophy before he broke away.

However Steiner’s core goal was to form a bridge between spirituality and science (what he called spiritual science). So strong was his belief that spiritual experiences can only be fully understood through the world of ideas that in his autobiography, Steiner devotes a whole chapter⁴ downplaying, even dismissing, the subjective mystical experience as he saw it, calling it an inner world devoid of ideas in which, to quote him, he could see no road to light but rather a way to spiritual darkness. This is an unusual call by Steiner, who would be regarded by many as a mystic, but it illustrates his strong commitment to science or the world of ideas and also the concepts he expresses in *The Philosophy of Freedom*.

Where do we stand personally?

I will return now to the start of my talk in regard to where we might stand personally. We are not Teilhards or Steiners, however; and probably do not wish to be. But do we consider that religion, science and spirituality

should march together in our personal lives and, if so, to what extent? We can legitimately say that our personal lives are just that and there are as many paths as people; in one life we may follow one path and in a subsequent incarnation another.

In the sceptical Western world today, traditional religion may be difficult for many, but it has also been said that if we do not have some firm cosmological belief in a higher meaning to everything in this life, then our efforts to awaken shall come up against a barrier. I have also come across agnostic spiritual writers who have uncharacteristically drifted to orthodox religion late in life. So we are strange creatures and changes in our perspectives can occur at any time.

But also, as Steiner emphatically maintained, we cannot reach spiritual reality by escaping from the world of ideas.

So I am inclined to say in conclusion that the three primal urges of religion, science and spirituality are analogous to a three legged stool, all three legs ultimately needing to be intact for the stool to be stable. If this is the case then I think my seat could be a bit firmer – what about yours?

Endnotes:

1. Pierre de Chardin Quotes – Goodreads www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/5387.Pierre_Teilhard_de_Chardin and <http://teillarddechardin.org/index.php/teillard-quotes>
2. *Twentieth Century Mystics and Sages*, Anne Bancroft, Arkana, Great Britain, 1989.
3. *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press, New York, 1995.
4. *Rudolf Steiner: An Autobiography*, Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1977.



Dr David Allan joined the Brisbane Lodge in 2002, has served on its Committee and coordinates its Science Group meetings. Following a career as an engineer and manager in the electric power industry he works in an honorary position at the University of Queensland and pursues his interests in amateur astronomy and the philosophy of life.

A Living Centre of Peace

Sara Cohen



Our capacity for inner peace is universal and innate. One need only reflect on the sacred texts of many great spiritual traditions to recognise that inner stillness and peace are closely aligned with our core nature. Yet for most of us, division and inner disharmony appear to embody our natural state, and our lived reality can feel far removed from peace within the self. Even when inner conflict is relatively absent, we might still create division internally by projecting our thoughts in time, thereby compromising our capacity to be fully present in the moment. In the collective arena where conflict and tension play out between people, races and nations, even more configurations for disharmony exist.

How then, can we as individuals, become a ‘living centre of peace?’¹ How can we cultivate the willingness to radiate peace ‘powerfully’ and ‘ceaselessly’ within ourselves as well as in our relationships? Such a grand

gesture would place the individual in a position to offer humanity what it lacks and needs most of all.

Italian born psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974) had a lot to say about such matters. With a medical degree from the University of Florence, he completed his doctoral dissertation in psychoanalysis, and subsequently pioneered psychosynthesis, a psycho-spiritual, holistic framework that offers a deep understanding of the human condition and psyche. Central to his model, and consistent with a common thread shared by philosophical and spiritual traditions in both the East and West, is the idea that there exists a core, unifying centre of self within each of us – the existential experience of our inherent wholeness and a reflection of our essential, spiritual nature. Within this inner space, we are receptive to ethical insight, artistic inspiration and higher aspirations that embody qualities like love, wisdom, freedom

and peace. Assagioli posited that in order to experience this psychological reality, it is our responsibility as individuals, to arouse our will, and integrate and synthesise the often conflicting psychological traits and forces within us. Such an undertaking grants us the possibility of realising our true human potential and deeper self, and the creation of a different reality for ourselves and the world.

Broaching the Subject of Peace

To begin with, let us first present a more affirmative description of peace, one that moves beyond what is commonly defined and confined to the *absence* of conflict, violence or war both at an individual and a collective level.

The discipline of linguistics offers us a useful starting point to do this. Consider the word *shalom*, which has the same linguistic derivation as the Arabic word *salām*, and which is commonly translated as peace. Founded on three consonants in the Hebrew language – *shin-lamed-mem* – the word *shalom* traces its roots to, and has close associations with *wholeness*, *completeness*, *harmony*, *welfare* and *soundness*. It describes an end point as a noun as well as a movement towards an end point as a verb. It is both ‘whole’ and at the same time, has

the action of ‘restoring and making something whole.’

In a world filtered and structured through language, we begin to appreciate that *shalom* has application in all spheres of life and human activity be it physical, mental, emotional or spiritual, and all levels of human relations including individual, community and global. By implication, it cannot be separated from notions of the harmony, welfare and wellbeing of humanity. Moreover, this representation of peace, with its subtle change in focus, affirms what *is* rather than defends what *isn't*, or what is absent (i.e. conflict).

Psychosynthesis and a Model of Peace

Psychosynthesis offers us a framework for applying these principles to our minds in an effort to restore a sense of peace and wholeness within our inner world. Specifically, Assagioli’s (1965) map of the psyche can be used as our internal navigation system, guiding us to the coordinates of peace that reside within the vastness of our consciousness.²

When we set out on this path, we discover that our mind excels in being constantly occupied, and an array of internal voices immediately make

themselves known to us. A multitude of drives, an endless stream of thoughts, conflicting desires and a range of bodily sensations all vie simultaneously for our attention and expression. They exist, side by side, some less conscious than others, precluding any sense of unity in service of the whole of the self, and where any semblance of balance stands hiding in a concealed corner.

A number of fundamental psychological laws are at play here, one of which becomes immediately self-evident. Namely, unless we have invested time in its training, the mind can be an unruly vehicle of our will; consequently, inner peace will lie beyond our grasp.

A number of fundamental psychological laws are at play here, one of which becomes immediately self-evident. Namely, unless we have invested time in its training, the mind can be an unruly vehicle of our will; consequently, inner peace will lie beyond our grasp. We may find that we lack the capacity for self-direction and that we feel constrained by a limited perception of who we are and what we are capable of (Assagioli, 1965).

This experience reflects that we have aligned ourselves with the ever shifting

content of our mind. I know myself as joyful one day and sad the next, peaceful in one moment and conflicted in another (Assagioli, n.d.-b). We find ourselves *subject to* inner and outer forces rather than *active agents* who have the capacity to make choices about how we wish to express ourselves in our world. We are thus held captive and lack a sense of inner peace that would otherwise exist in a state of freedom.

Assagioli's map of the psyche holds a psychological reality and view of human potential and human experience that is far more expansive and optimistic than this. Essential to Assagioli's understanding of our nature is the awareness that within us is an integrating centre point which brings balance to all the forces that are at play in our inner world. This propensity towards synthesis is inherent in each of us, so too a deep longing for unity that drives us towards bringing about the harmonious integration of all our constituent parts (Assagioli, 1965; Whitmore, 2004).

Assagioli (1965, n.d.-b) described this unifying centre as the inner space which our true self inhabits – the self that is whole and does not change with the changing states of our minds. Here we discover through direct

experience, that we are separate from, and independent of, all that which we observe in our consciousness. We become aware of the observer within, the one who is aware and can say: ‘I have a mind, body and emotional nature and at the same time I recognise that I am *not* this – I am *more* than this.’³

Assagioli taught that this awareness is a reflection of our essential, spiritual nature transmitted from a source which is the spiritual essence that we are.⁴ When we are in contact with this source within us, we come home to ourselves and are receptive to higher ideals like love, freedom and peace (Assagioli, 1973b).

The Act of a Peaceful Will

Aligning ourselves with this sacred space requires conscious, deliberate effort. We will need to actively step away from all the elements in our psyche that are impermanent, overcoming both internal and external forces that may pull us off course (Assagioli, 1959, 1965). Assagioli highlighted the importance of arousing our will to harness and direct our energy to do this, explaining that the will occupies centre space in our psyche, and that an act of will involves making decisions and taking action from the clarity

and wholeness of this centre.⁵ In this capacity, our will is an agent of the self that can direct all our constituent parts towards any consciously chosen goal (Assagioli, 1972, 1973a, 1974), and it is this function that we can draw on to maintain our commitment to our desired path to peace.

Assagioli demonstrated an act of will towards his vision of peace in his response to being imprisoned in solitary confinement for a month by Mussolini’s fascist government.⁶ Assagioli (1972) told his friends that his imprisonment offered him the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the internal resources that required him to accept his predicament:

I was free to choose an attitude: rebellion, or sour submission, or indifference or cheerful acceptance. Nobody could interfere with my *inner* reaction ... I chose acceptance and asked myself what use to make of the opportunity ... The central experience can be summed up: freedom in *acceptance*.

Adopting an attitude of equanimity in commensurate circumstances would perhaps be exceptionally challenging for most of us. Nonetheless, Assagioli’s example highlights both the importance of choice, and the principle that when we act in alignment with the whole of the self, we are able to arouse and

strengthen our will to maintain our vision, whatever it may be, in the face of any perceived setbacks. Becoming aware that we have a will, and can engage our will, and that we have the power to create change in our world, can provide us with a direct experience of faith in our own potential as well as the potential that is inherent in the flow of life itself.



Concluding Reflections

In modern times we observe that war and violence are not confined to one region of the planet. The psychological and social reality of such widespread and severe conflict has resulted in individuals and whole communities that have been traumatised, shattered and fragmented. The extensive

impact of such devastation cannot be underestimated: terror, despair, depression, dislocation, loss of meaning and destroyed faith in others and even life itself. Such trauma is the very definition and source of dis-unity, and these deep wounds require healing in order to restore unity and *shalom* in the world around us.

Assagioli dedicated his life's work to promoting unity and synthesis at all levels – within the individual, between individuals, communities and nations. Just as we need to honestly and courageously meet the disparate parts within ourselves to experience unity and balance, he said that equally we must listen deeply and lovingly – bearing witness to the pain and suffering of our fellow humans. We will have to empower our most compassionate instincts to help restore wholeness to ourselves and others, and we will need to draw on our tolerance and goodwill to support this gesture (Assagioli, n.d.-a). In *all* that this demands of us, we are called to arouse our will and have faith in our potential for bringing forward the *shalom* that we desire.

Let us remember that the mind separates and the heart connects and so it is the spirit within – the essence of who we are – from which bridges

Let us remember that the mind separates and the heart connects and so it is the spirit within – the essence of who we are – from which bridges of peace and unity can be made where legal measures and treaties have failed.

of peace and unity can be made where legal measures and treaties have failed (Assagioli, n.d.-a). That we are interconnected with, and interdependent on each other, and that we necessarily and inevitably radiate what we are (Assagioli, 1968), undoubtedly means that becoming a ‘living centre of peace’ will affect the world around us.

Endnotes

1. In his book, *Transpersonal Development. The Dimensions Beyond Psychosynthesis*, Assagioli asks this question before formulating a response that draws on psychological and spiritual principles that reflect his understanding of the human condition.
2. Assagioli’s map of the psyche is referred to as the Egg Diagram (Assagioli, 1965). It is interesting

to note that a number of authors including Alyce Tresenfeld (1995) and Jean Hardy (1987) have highlighted parallels between this Diagram and the Kabbalah’s Tree of Life.

3. Psychosynthesis offers various techniques to encourage this awareness including a range of meditative and visualisation practices (Assagioli, 1965).

4. Assagioli’s Egg Diagram differentiates between our conscious self that holds this awareness, and our higher, transpersonal self that is the spiritual source of this awareness. He explained that they are not independent or separate entities but rather, reflect different degrees of self-awareness and self-realisation (Assagioli, 1959, 1965).

5. Assagioli’s notion of the will is very different to the Victorian concept of will power which *imposes* rather than *directs*, and which is often associated with self-restraint or self-denial.

6. Assagioli was imprisoned for his Jewish heritage and internationalism in 1938 before fleeing underground after his family’s farm was destroyed in the war.

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Sara Cohen is a trained psychologist who works in private practice, and she is a member of the Melbourne Lodge. She is a Universal Peace Federation Ambassador for Peace and Peace Council member, and a member of both the Women's Federation for World Peace Australia and Psychologists for Peace (Australian Psychological Society Interest Group). Sara holds a Master of Psychology (Counselling) degree from Monash University and a combined Bachelor of Arts (Honours, Psychology)/Commerce degree from the University of Melbourne.

R We There Yet?

Milan Sejka



Most people who have decided to embark on the path of spirituality eventually come across the term ‘mindfulness’. They may have encountered this term during their study of Buddhism and learnt that it is an essential part of Buddhist meditational practice.

The word ‘mindfulness’ has its origins in the Pali word *sati*, which has its equivalent in the Sanskrit word *smṛti*. It literally means ‘recollection’ or ‘to remember’. However, what this actually signifies is the presence of mind and the absence of confusion. Practising traditional Buddhist meditation can lead to mental clarity and wisdom that may be difficult to acquire by other means. However, most of us do not live our lives isolated from everyday demands and pressures. Therefore I would like to concentrate on the idea of daily mindful existence; a state of ‘awakened presence’.

This is a thoughtful approach to life, but I don’t think that achieving

the awakened presence requires an intensive reasoning and rationalisation of our daily actions. I actually believe that it can be achieved by letting go of the constant stream of thoughts and developing full trust in ourselves. Some may see this as being able to apply our Higher Self, or resorting to intuition. It requires an understanding that our natural actions are not just a simple reaction to circumstances. Rather, as I see it, our actions are guided by the accumulated wisdom and understanding of our internal and external worlds. In this way, we can give our daily activities a proper focus and an aspect of quality. As a result, we will end up with a level of fulfilment and satisfaction which will then be reflected in the quality of our lives, and the lives of those around us.

I suggest that we approach everyday life with acceptance, enjoyment and enthusiasm.

Approaching life with *acceptance* means to be at peace with whatever we

do. This is particularly important for the tasks that we don't necessarily like to do, whether it is our daily commute to work or washing the dishes; or, as our Buddhist friends would say, 'chopping wood and carrying water'.

Even better, though, is to do things with *enjoyment*. We can find things we enjoy doing, but better still is to find enjoyment in whatever we do. As an added bonus, we are likely to become creative while doing so.

However, we can also approach our daily life with *enthusiasm*. In my mind, this is the highest form of mindfulness. It is highly creative, and it combines goals and visions with a deep enjoyment and satisfaction. So, for me, being guided by these principles means living a mindful life, living in

an awakened presence. After all, it is not about doing, it is about *being*.

Thank you for your awakened presence.

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Milan Sejka is a member of Sunshine Coast Lodge. He gave this talk at the 2015 School of Theosophy.



Trust the wisdom that guides, despite our blunders. Trust the Will that shapes, despite our errors. And above all trust the Love which ensouls and protects whatever weakness there may be in any one of us, and know that, as the watchman said of old: 'All is well.'

The Theosophic Life
Annie Besant

Viewpoint



What Creativity Means in a Non-Dual Reality

Creativity has the ultimate effect of enriching the human spirit; of bringing light into the darkness. Teachers, sages and great communicators have also achieved this same effect.

In terms of ‘non-duality’, it could be said that these people are inevitably destined to achieve this greatness. They have been singled out in some mysterious way to be the messengers who are able to enhance the collective development of the whole human race. However, although their given task may be to help us see the world in new and beautiful ways we should not, then, hold them up as the source of all possible wisdom. We know of many great artists and communicators whose personal lives have descended into chaos, and whose opinions in areas outside their own vision or expertise, cannot be relied upon as being helpful in any way.

In a sense, these specific gifts come to us through these people as individuals, but they are given by the universe

itself, which really translates as the universal consciousness that we all are. These gifts are freely given for us to receive, provided we can maintain our ability to discriminate between beauty and mediocrity. In this way, it can be seen that we create these works of art, or these teachings, just as much as we receive them.

We can reward, and show our gratitude to, the great artists and teachers of the world but, in a sense, that gratitude and reward should also be directed to ourselves, for being able to appreciate these gifts; gifts that finally must come only from deep within the collective psyche, the consciousness that is the true reality of our own existence.

The Canadian folk singer, Joni Mitchell, hinted at this truth when she said recently in an interview:

If you listen to my music and you see me, then you’re not getting anything out of it. If you listen to the music and you see yourself, then you’ll be getting something much more worthwhile from it.

Bernard Michel
Toowoomba Group

From *Paracelsus*

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may
believe.

There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception – which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error: and, to KNOW,
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may
escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

Robert Browning



National Convention January 2016, Perth



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Theme: 'Today's World Problems:
Insights from the Wisdom Tradition'
Dates: Sat 16 Jan (arrivals) -
Sat 23 Jan (departures)

Guest Speaker:
International President, **Tim Boyd**



TS members from Australia and elsewhere are warmly invited to join us for this special event in Perth.

Venue: University Hall, Perth
Cost: \$95/night **SINGLE ROOMS ONLY AVAILABLE**

Registration: \$40

Registration Forms: www.austheos.org.au/what's on

Deadline for live-in registrants (venue requirement): Fri 10 October

Enquiries to: Jennifer Hissey, Convention Secretary
email: catalogue@austheos.org.au

Register soon to attend this special event. Tim Boyd will have a limited time in Australia.

We look forward to seeing you in Perth.

National Calendar of Events



Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh, NSW Sunday 8 November 2015 10.30am-3.30pm

Theme: 'Visions of the Eternal'

TS members and friends are welcome.

For this one day event participants are invited to bring along a piece of poetry, prose or music that inspires the soul and reflects a deeper insight or mystical experience of its composer, e.g. from ancient texts, modern thought, poets and musicians. Intending presenters are asked to forward their request to participate, and the item they wish to present, to the coordinator, **Dianne Kynaston**, well before the event so that a formal programme can be planned.

Registration cost: \$10 per person, *catering not provided*

Bring: vegetarian food to share for lunch and drinks

Enquiries to: Dianne Kynaston, diannedeva@gmail.com or 02 9969 1087 (after 7.30pm Mon-Thurs)

Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook, QLD Thursday 29 October – Sunday 1 November 2015

Theme: 'Rumi's Mystical Poetry: All Life is One'

TS members and friends are welcome.

Facilitator: Education Coordinator, **Pedro Oliveira**

Short talks will be given and some participants will be invited to read excerpts of Rumi's mystical poem, *Masnavi*. The programme will be varied, including exercises in listening and observation, journalling, music, DVDs and writing our own mystical poem.

Cost: \$150 Members / \$180 non-members (includes registration, accommodation, meals and all sessions)

Enquiries to: Pedro Oliveira, edcoord@austheos.org.au or 02 9264 7056

Registration forms and further information about all events organised by the National Headquarters are at: [www.austheos.org.au/what's on](http://www.austheos.org.au/what's%20on)

Education



Featured Study Course: Meditation – A Practical Study by Adelaide Gardner

Today meditation is a multimillion dollar industry which attracts thousands of customers worldwide. A number of meditation techniques being sold today promise the actualisation of a number of personal ‘powers’, thus enhancing the capacity of the individual practitioner to achieve, virtually, anything.

The book on which this study course is based on derives from a completely different premise. This sees meditation as a progressive alignment and harmonisation of the personal self so that a greater consciousness, called *Buddhi* in Sanskrit, or intuitional wisdom, can manifest in our lives, bringing us closer to the profound purpose of existence.

The contents of the book include a very useful historical survey; meditation and its purpose; essential background; various methods; progressive stages: concentration; progressive stages: meditation, contemplation; obstacles and aids; group meditation; helping others by thought and meditations.

In chapter 1, Gardner states:

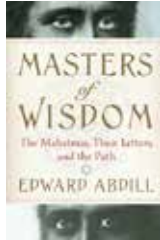
The goal of meditation is not, however, merely personal self-development. The ultimate purpose is to prepare the personal nature so that it is able to reflect and express its relationship with the Universal Self. And once this inner relationship is established, the aspirant can become of real use in the divine plan, for he is then able to bring spiritual wisdom to bear upon daily life.

Cost: \$10.00, including postage.

Enquiries/Orders to: Education Coordinator
edcoord@austheos.org.au or (02) 9264 7056

Reviews

***Masters of Wisdom:
The Mahatmas, Their
Letters and the Path,*
Edward Abdill,
Jeremy P. Tarcher
/Penguin, New York,
2015**



This up to date presentation of certain core teachings of Theosophy is a welcome addition to Theosophical literature. Following a well-rounded introduction Ed Abdill addresses two main topics: ‘The Mahatmas and Their Letters’ and ‘The Path’. He finishes with Appendices on ‘Meditation’ and ‘The Masters and the Path’ by Dora Van Gelder Kunz.

Ed Abdill comments:

The Masters appear to have decided that 1875 was the right time and New York City the right place to launch their experiment. and

[They] ... wanted an organisation formed that would spread their knowledge around the world ... [its] central purpose ... was to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity.

They needed a ‘clear psychic link’, and H.P. Blavatsky was chosen for



this monumental task. As the story of the Masters and their Letters unfolds the reader learns more about these ‘amazing men’ and the contents of the allegedly ‘precipitated’ Letters.

Koot Hoomi writes:

The adept is the rare efflorescence of a generation of enquirers; and to become one, he must obey the inward impulse of his soul irrespective of the prudential considerations of worldly society or sagacity. (ML 2)

Author Ed Abdill is a well-known speaker and student of Theosophy. Quoting liberally from the Letters and other primary sources, he uses a keen sense of purpose to select relevant passages, enabling the reader to feel connected to each theme. Characteristically, the book is interesting and easy to follow, yet the depth is there.

Among the teachings discussed in Part I are Karma, Occult Philosophy and From Death to Rebirth. In Part II subjects include The Golden Stairs, Chelaship and Pitfalls on the Path.

Patricia Ossenber

News and Notes



Two Stories about Members

Blue Mountains Group

The Coordinator of the Blue Mountains Group, Donald Fern, has shared an story of dedication and inspiration demonstrated by one of the Group's regular attendees. Long-time TS member and octogenarian, **Wolo Gueltling**, joined the Theosophical Society in 1963. He travelled from his home in Sydney to the Blue Mountains once a month, for a number of decades, during the previous incarnations of the group in Springwood and Lawson. However, in the last few years he has travelled even further, to the Group's latest meeting place at Katoomba, near the top of the range. Wolo's preferred mode of transport? His faithful old Volkswagen beetle.

Karma in Action?

TS members Cecily and David Dynes, who live in the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales, have shared a story about **Joyce Murdoch** (nee Kennedy, who joined the TS in New Zealand).

They report that Joyce arrived in Sydney in the 1940s from New

Zealand. As a teenager, she became an active member of the then thriving Young Theosophists group. After her marriage and subsequent divorce from Hugh Murdoch (who was to become the National Treasurer of the Australian Section), she lived for years in India. During this time she took down in shorthand the 'Talks in India' by J. Krishnamurti, which have been read by many people all over the world.

Joyce moved to Switzerland where she worked for the United Nations Disaster Relief for some years. Then, with the money saved from this well-paid job, she moved to Dharamsala in North India, where she worked without pay for H.H. the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugees until her death. After an earthquake demolished her small hut she survived, with some injury. It was Spartan living on the hillside and over the years her health deteriorated, but she remained steadfast. She died in India and the Dalai Lama paid for her hospital treatment and cremation.

[Joyce Murdoch's date of death has not been obtained - Ed.]



A visit to Far North Queensland in June:
the National President with members and friends, Atherton Lodge

Madras Week - Alfred Deakin

The National Headquarters was pleased to assist the Australian Consulate in Chennai (formerly Madras) with an unusual request recently, forwarded by the International Secretary, Marja Artamaa. The Consulate organises an activity every year which highlights the long-standing history of relations between Australia and Madras/Chennai as part of the annual Madras Week Celebrations. This year an exhibition is planned for September to focus on Australia's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, and the fact that he was a TS member for a brief period. We were pleased to send several articles about Alfred Deakin, as well as an extract of a book about him, to the Consulate, and hope to receive some relevant memorabilia for the Section's Archives in due course.

Sunshine Coast Lodge

As part of our outreach to our community, we are quietly excited to have begun planning for our

inaugural Sunshine Coast Theosophy Festival in March 2016. If you would like to be involved in any way we'd love it! – e.g. volunteering, giving a talk, being included in our updates. Please contact us by email: theosunshinecoast@gmail.com or sms/ph 0416 442962.

Janet Blake, President

School of the Wisdom, Adyar

Information on forthcoming classes were included in the last issue. See also: <http://www.ts-adyar.org/content/school-wisdom-classes-2015-16>

Note to applicants: Please **contact the National President**, whose signature is required on the application form.

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 this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

Section Directory

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President: Simon O'Rourke
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:

Meet: Charlestown Community Centre,
Charlestown Square, 81/30 Pearson Street,
Charlestown NSW 2290
8.00pm 2nd Friday each month
(excluding January)
Study group (members) confirm dates
with Lodge
<http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/>
President: Melanie Ball
Tel: 02 4948 1733 - please leave message

Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: Senior Citizens Meeting Rooms
Upper level, Central Arcade
81-83 Katoomba street, Katoomba
Meetings every Monday, 2.00pm
1st Monday of month - Public Meeting
Subsequent Mondays - *Secret Doctrine* Study Group
Coordinator: Donald Fern
Tel: 02 4757 1910

Gosford Group:

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

Northern Beaches Group:

Postal address: c/- The Manor,
2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088
Meet: c/- 22 Laitoki Road
Terrey Hills
NSW 2084
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month
Coordinator: Dai Trandang
Tel: 0438 357 522

Queensland

Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,
Atherton QLD 4883
Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services
Tablelands, 38 Mabel St, Atherton
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.
President: Max Brandenberger
Secretary: Chris Pang Way
Tel: 07 4091 5156

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000
Tel: 07 3839 1453
Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au
www.theosophyqld.org.au
Meet: 7.30pm Fridays
President: Brian Harding
Secretary: Phoebe Williams

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
7.00pm Thursdays
RSL/CWA Hall, 123 Poinciana Drive, Tewantin
7.00pm Fridays
President: Janet Blake
Tel: 0416 442962
Email: theosunshinecoast@gmail.com
Secretary: Joyce Thompson

Toowoomba Group:

Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba
1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday at 2:30pm each month
(Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)
Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter
Coordinator: Barry Bowden
Tel: 0427 751 464

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

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

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

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
www.theosophicaltas.websyite.com.au
Meet: 8.00pm Mondays
President: Helen Steven
Secretary: David Giffard
Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:

Until further notice meetings are being held at:
The Harry Abbott Scout Centre,
1 St George's Square,
East Launceston (off High Street)
email: rmholt@gmail.com
www.austheos.org.au/launceston
Meet: Wednesday — for timings
please see programme at above url

President: office vacant
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@bigpond.com.au
Meet: Saturdays
President: Harriet Cornfeld-Fraser
Secretary: Edward Sinclair

Mornington Peninsula Group:

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month 11.00am - 3.30pm
(meditation - lunch - Theosophy)
Coordinator: Daphne Standish
Tel: 03 9589 5439
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

Wodonga-Albury Group:

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

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

21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104
Email: tspert@iinet.net.au
<http://www.tspert.com.au>
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
President: Harry Bayens
Acting Secretary: Anne Bower

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:

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

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

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

Freedom of Thought

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

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

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



Freedom of the Society

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

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

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

