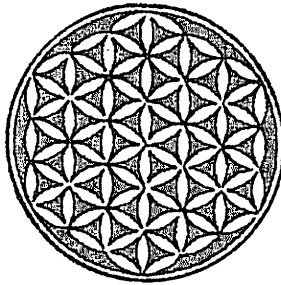


A green fern frond is the central focus, set against a blurred green background. A circular inset in the upper right quadrant provides a magnified view of the unfurling coils of the frond, showing the intricate, spiral pattern of the unfurling leaves. The overall image has a soft, naturalistic feel with a focus on the texture and color of the plant.

**Exploring the  
MYSTERIES of  
Existence**

# EXPLORING THE MYSTERIES OF EXISTENCE



The Theosophical Society in New Zealand Inc.

**This booklet has been extended and  
updated from an earlier publication by  
Jack Patterson, BA, B Arch.**

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The ideas expressed in this booklet are taken from some of the principles of the *Ageless Wisdom*. In today's world the understanding of some of these principles is widespread. Through the Theosophical Society we endeavour to explore them further so that we may come to know and live them.

**The Theosophical Society** was founded in 1875 and developed its own framework of ideas which, at that time, were completely new. Since then, many of the same ideas have been expressed by transpersonal psychologists from Carl Jung onwards, by physicists, biologists, scientists, spiritual healers and other truth seeking groups all working towards a holistic view of the universe.

At its heart the Theosophical Society is founded on the concept that there is a stream of life, energy or consciousness that connects everything. Some people call this God or Brahma, while others see it as 'intelligence'. Secondly, that everything in the universe has its own time and cycle and that our soul is on an eternal pilgrimage of continuing unfoldment.

The theosophical approach is not based on rigid belief but is rather an exploration or search for meaning in life and, as a natural follow-on, for the right ethical approach to everyday living.

The broad area of search is the body of truths known as the Ageless Wisdom which, although often veiled in symbol and allegory, forms the basis of the great religions and philosophies of humanity. These have been present throughout the ages and were taught in the scriptures of ancient India, in the Mystery Schools of Egypt and Greece and as the esoteric knowledge of the early Christians and have been handed down from master to pupil ever since.

The study of these truths has made many people aware of the depth, vastness and majesty of life and has sounded a call to the highest aspect of our being—the Spiritual Self.

Although this booklet offers only a few glimpses of how the study of theosophy can shed light on the mysteries of existence, it will be enough for you to test, with your own inner understanding, the validity of the ideas which follow.

So, please read on and enjoy your introduction to a whole new world of understanding.

# Fundamental Ideas

For thousands of years, from Egypt to Einstein, human minds confronted by the mysteries of existence, have sought a spiritual basis for the understanding of the living universe and the relationship of human consciousness to it.

In this attempt to explore the mysteries of existence, the following fundamental ideas have been used as a basis because without them the development of a spiritual point of view does not seem possible:

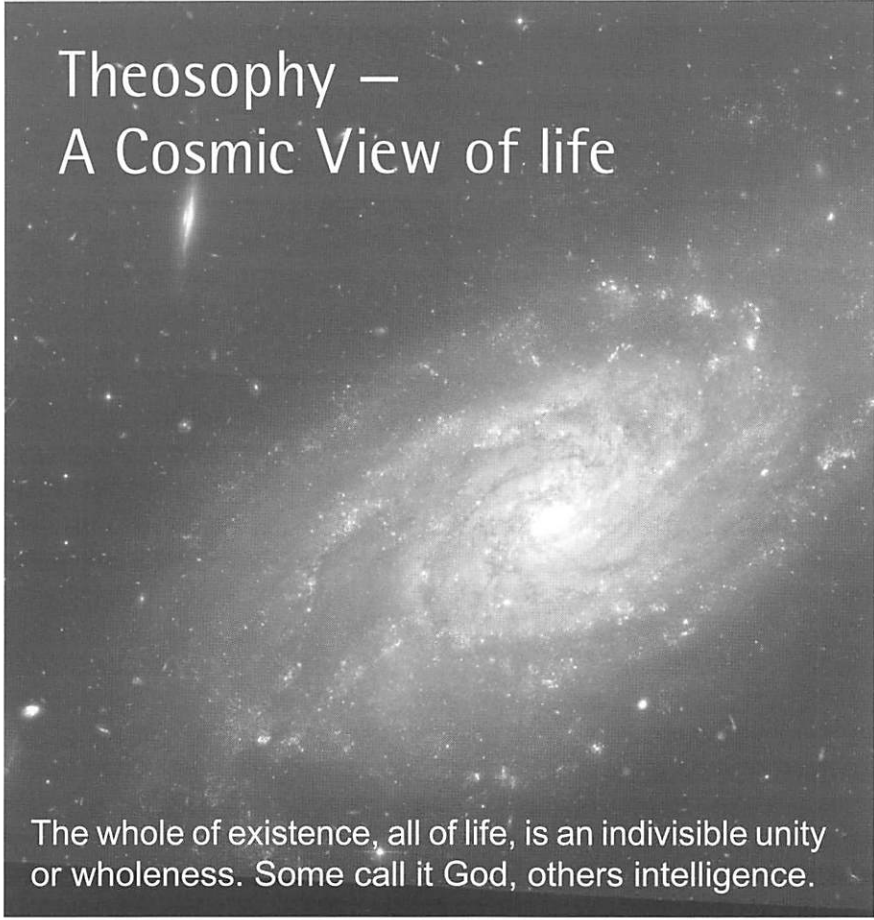
THAT matter is not limited to the perception of the five senses

THAT consciousness can exist independent of the physical body

THAT there is no proof that consciousness ends at death, and much evidence that it continues

THAT life is a continuing process

THAT all human beings have the potential to create for themselves and for humanity a future whose splendour has no limit.



# Theosophy – A Cosmic View of life

The whole of existence, all of life, is an indivisible unity or wholeness. Some call it God, others intelligence.

Today we hear all sorts of remarkable stories of people with special telepathic gifts or come across books written by mediums, stories of reincarnation, past lives we or others have had and what happens after death. The events shown seem real enough but do the explanations given by the commentators 'ring true'?

To really understand these phenomena, we have to accept that there are levels of existence beyond those generally accepted by scientists. Theosophy provides a basis for their existence, with a concept of subtle energy fields extending as a continuum beyond the known energies of the tangible world. The practice of astrology, dowsing, spiritual healing and spiritualistic seances all recognise and use these subtle fields.



Theosophical studies suggest that we humans are conscious in these subtle energy fields and that, in unrecognised ways, the fields themselves, acting as what the psychologist Carl Jung called the 'collective unconscious', radiate energies into the material world which affect all aspects of our lives.

By taking this wider view, theosophy aims at a greater understanding of what makes us and the cosmos 'tick'.

This cosmic view of life is usually covered in theosophical studies as:

### **Divine Unity**

The whole of existence, all of life, is an indivisible unity or wholeness. Some call it God, others Brahman or intelligence. This Divine Unity forms the basis of the concept of Universal Brotherhood which is the first object of the Theosophical Society.

### **Evolutionary Purpose**

All life is evolving by unfoldment which increasingly reveals this inherent wholeness. It is a return to the Source—the perfection from which all life emanated.

### **Life as the Play of Consciousness**

Divine Consciousness is in everything. It is universal in minerals and plants, but in animals individuality begins to develop.

A human being is a self conscious individual and therefore responsible for directing his or her own actions.

### **Reincarnation**

For the human soul, evolution is spiritual growth through an endless chain of experiences within a cycle of births, deaths and rebirths.

### **A Universe governed by Divine Law**

The life process is governed by the impersonal law of cause and effect, called 'karma'.

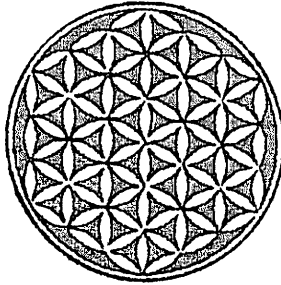
### **Symbols of Reality**

Because these ideas are difficult to express in words, they have been taught in the great religions by symbol, myth and parable.

## The Spiritual Path

By feeling love and compassion for all that lives, by practising self-awareness, by meditation and service, each of us can tread the path of self-realisation back to the Source, or God.

Self-realisation involves a direct awareness in the physical brain of the ultimate source of consciousness.



# What is it to be Human?

Theosophy endeavours to answer the following questions regarding life:

**Who am I?**

**What is it all about?**

**Why are we here?**

**Where are we going?**

In a nutshell we would say:

## **Who am I?**

You are more than the physical body, the emotions or mind. Your essential self is not the senses, the feelings, the thoughts, or the actions. The 'Essential Self' is the awareness that remains.

## **What is it all about?**

You are a focus of the One Reality. Your true self is immortal but expresses itself through a personality which is subject to death and change. Spiritual growth takes place as the personality of thought and feeling is purified and harmonised by inflow from the Spiritual Self.

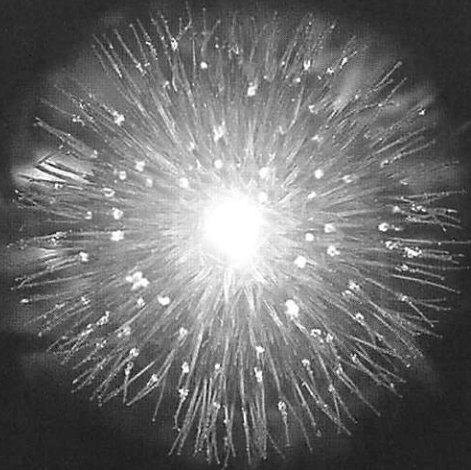
## **Why are we here?**

You are here in order to discover that in your true nature you are one with the great stream of Divine Energy and have the power within yourself to focus and express, here and now, the love and wisdom which sustains the universe.

## **Where are we going?**

You are going in the direction you have chosen, either drifting through life at the mercy of your own passing whims and moods, or taking responsibility for the whole of yourself, your character, your actions and your future. You are choosing at every moment either to waste your opportunities or to move consciously towards the goal of self-realisation which means the perfect expression of your divine nature through your personality.

# The Centre Where All Things Are One



The ancient Chinese called the wholeness we have been talking about the Tao—the centre ‘Where all things are One’. We seldom see this wholeness because our awareness is centred on the diversity of the life around us. We look upon each thing as separate from ourselves and from every other thing.

Today there is emerging a science of wholeness and many scientists and philosophers join with theosophists in recognising that the limitations of our consciousness cause us to see the world outside us as separate from our interior world. In fact, they are finding what the wisdom tradition has always asserted—the observer and the observed, the seer and the seen, are one in reality.

Albert Einstein clearly expressed his own conviction in this matter:

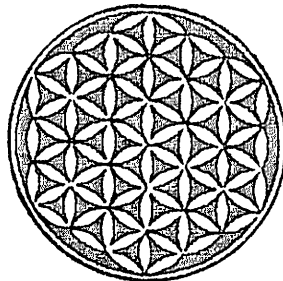
“A human being is part of the whole, called by us ‘universe’, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and

feelings as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.”

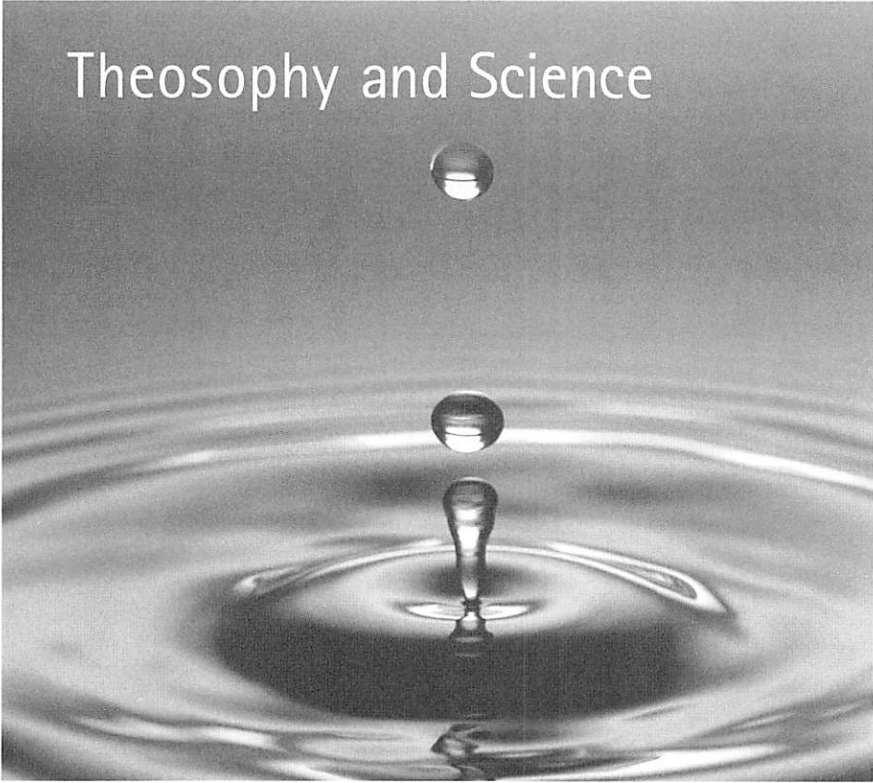
The life in every thing emanates as a ray from the One Source—the Divine Unity. As the radiations move outwards they interlock less and less until, at the darker ring, each separates and finishes at a point clearly distinct from its neighbour. This point is the consciousness which we use in everyday life. It is focused almost entirely on this world of separateness, but as all mystics have testified, we can turn inwards and centre on our true Spiritual Self, which is always one with the Divine Source.

In the image on page 12, all the rays are linked together by virtue of the One Source from which they emanate, illustrating the cosmic truth that everything in the universe is interconnected. What happens to one thing affects everything else. As the poet, Francis Thompson, expresses it:

All things by immortal power  
Near and far, hiddenly  
To each other linked are  
Thou canst not stir a flower  
Without troubling of a star.



# Theosophy and Science



The Ancient Wisdom of many cultures portrays the world as a deeply connected web of relationships, permeated by life and consciousness. The two great paradigms of the modern world, science and religion, however, are often seen to be in conflict. Science has gained much of the authority which religion once had.

Theosophy, however, as an expression of timeless wisdom, is not split in such a way. It naturally bridges the worlds of science and spirit or religion. How can it do this?

## **The Quest**

Older cultures have woven their own distinctive account of reality from the insights of wise people, shamans and prophets, along with knowledge gained by observing nature. Modern culture has added the huge input of science to all of these. The thirst for knowledge and deeper knowing is never far from human consciousness, and takes several paths in the world today.

## **The Path of Science**

Science seeks knowledge by observing the world and creating an understanding.

The following is basically the scientific method.

- (a) Gather information, ie, observe a given situation.
- (b) Create an explanation or theory for it. (Sometimes this comes first.)
- (c) Test the observations against the predictions of the theory, in an experiment.
- (d) If the actual and predicted results don't match, go back to (a) or (b).
- (e) Get other researchers to repeat the work and see how reliable it is.

Theories are not sacrosanct and are often revised or even completely scrapped when new evidence is found. They are just models of some aspect of reality; a human thought, in the same way a map is a model of its territory. There are often no final explanations in science.

Sometimes people think that science is purely logical and rational, but this is not so. Creativity and intuition are very much part of it too, when getting new theories or doing difficult experiments. Einstein released his ground-breaking Theory of Relativity in 1913, well before supporting evidence for it was found in 1919.

Science has brought great clarity and progress to knowledge, based on the use of the five senses. Indeed, many scientists refuse to accept the validity and value of going beyond them. However, a small but growing number of courageous top scientists are taking on the immense and subtle challenges of exploring other senses and energies.

## **The Path of Gnosis**

Whereas science looks outward at the world of phenomena, human beings from time immemorial have also looked inwards for knowledge and insight. This is gnosis, not allied with a specific religion, but rather an entry into the spiritually intuitive depths of consciousness, and bringing back what is found. It requires a particular clarity and openness of mind.

This is the heart and source of religion, transcending organisational matters or doctrinal beliefs. It embraces the human experience of ultimate things. By its nature, much of it is beyond the scope of a science limited to five senses.

The peak experiences of illumination described by mystics, sages and seers are often intense, with a sense of one or more of:

- (a) The oneness and connectedness of all things.
- (b) An immersion in all knowledge, beyond their capacity to recall or describe in detail.
- (c) A transcendent, unitary presence.
- (d) Unfathomable, unconditional love.
- (e) Direct intuitive or perceptive knowledge of some aspect of reality.

These kinds of experiences are sometimes called cosmic consciousness and are not nearly as rare as people may think. There is an excellent collection of accounts of them in *The Common Experience* <sup>1</sup>.

## Theosophy

'Theosophy' was coined as a generic term for wisdom considered divine in nature—beyond the ordinary—about 1800 years ago. It is a natural combination of religion and science, appearing in different forms in different cultures. Modern theosophy is a compilation and interpretation by H.P. Blavatsky<sup>2</sup> and others of the sacred wisdom of numerous cultures.

An innate feature of theosophy is that it has been gained through the refined tools of consciousness down through the ages. It is sometimes seen as a human reflection of archetypal spiritual wisdom.

This, of course, is controversial to those who don't believe in the existence of non-physical ways of knowing.

But theosophy is no playground for wishful thinking and idle fancy, as the following quote from early literature of the Theosophical Society shows:

"... Be accurate and critical rather than credulous. ... The crest wave of intellectual advancement must be taken hold of and guided into spirituality. ... The best corrective of error is an honest and open-minded examination of all facts subjective and objective."

*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, First Series, Letter 46*  
Unabridged version, published 1986

Logic and intellectual integrity are essential to theosophy as well as science.



## The Relationship between Theosophy and Science

The Theosophical Society had a relationship with science from the beginning, as the second and third objects of the society show. In those days science was much more mechanistic and simplistic than now and far from the world view of theosophy. H.P. Blavatsky wrote thousands of words railing against the shortcomings of science and scientists of her day. She made many good points and predicted in 1888 that:

“... between this time and 1897 there will be a large rent made in the Veil of Nature, and materialistic science will receive a death-blow.”

*The Secret Doctrine, Volume I, p 612*

Seven years later, X-rays were discovered by Wilhelm Röntgen, then radioactivity soon after in 1896 by Henri Becquerel, and the electron by Thomson in 1897. These led to a huge upheaval in science that continued for another three decades and more. Ideas of matter became vastly more subtle, from seeing atoms like little hard billiard balls, to a new paradigm of energy fields, waves and particles.

Today, then, we see matter as energy concentrations in relationship with each other; a dynamic process, not just a collection of things. Space is filled with zero-point energy, pregnant with the possibility of creating physical particles when energy is supplied. Non-local interactions and particle entanglement in quantum physics reveal an interconnectedness that would have been astonishing only a few decades ago.

Quantum physics, in fact, brought us face to face with the realisation that consciousness is deeply connected with the physical universe. So there was a death-blow in a very real sense. Despite all these changes, however, mainstream science still tends to see consciousness as a by-product of chemical and physical processes in the brain. The irony is that science is a process that takes place within human consciousness.

There are still many areas where statements in theosophical books and science don't agree or simply can't be compared. In retrospect both sides have made errors. But overall, there has been a major shift of science towards the outlook of theosophy. In its human expressions theosophy should not be considered a fixed revelation, however, and needs to be allowed to evolve as well.

The paths of religion and science are natural partners despite their historical clashes. It is possible to hold awe and reverence for nature while uncovering its principles and structures. Conflict, when it arises,

is usually due to a rigidity of attitude on one or both sides. For example, insisting on taking a scripture literally with respect to physical events, or insisting on a material explanation for everything.

Science has been for some of the greatest scientists a spiritual path, a way to connect with and serve the Sacred. Rightly understood and oriented, it can be so again. The best of the scientists have always approached science as a sacred activity—an activity that could yield “the secrets of the Old One” as Einstein put it.<sup>3</sup>

Science is by no means a faith-free zone by the way; it has a profound faith in the unity of things. Faith and knowledge can coexist in harmony as we heal the historical divisions between them.

### **Keynotes of Theosophy**

Some of the following main points of theosophy relate to science.

- (a) There is a unitary origin of all things. In science, it is the Big Bang. In theosophy, it is the One Life or the Absolute.
- (b) Everything is embraced within an ultimate unity, connected in a seamless web of relationships.
- (c) Consciousness is as fundamental as matter and energy, each interacting with the other.
- (d) The ultimate causes of phenomena are within. The material world is an expression of deeper, conscious, realities. Your consciousness can affect your world.
- (e) There are many kinds of energy subtler than physical energies. Consciousness can be present in subtler energy-matter forms, distributed through space; not just the brain.
- (f) Cycles are an all-pervading fact of nature, from the millions of years for the sun to go round the galaxy, to the high vibratory rates of electromagnetic radiation, and beyond.
- (g) Humanity is in a vast evolutionary process, containing cycles within cycles, stretching into the future as far as into the past.
- (h) Evolution is an expression of embedded creative intelligence spread throughout nature, including non-physical energies.

Points in common between science and theosophy are (a), (b), (f) and (g).

The embryonic idea of interaction of matter and consciousness in quantum physics is much more fully developed in theosophy.

### **Forefronts of Science**

A small but growing number of highly qualified scientists are investigating fields that the mainstream does not accept, but relate closely to theosophy, such as:

- **Reincarnation** - children who appear to remember a former life, hypnotic regression.
- **Near Death Experiences** - thousands of cases from different cultures.
- **Prayer** - effects being documented by several workers/ organisations.
- **Distant Healing** - significant case data being gathered.
- **Religious Experiences** - cosmic consciousness experiences gathered and categorised.
- **Morphic Fields** - Sheldrake's proposals being tested, evidence gathered.
- **Global Consciousness** - evidence suggesting non-physical emotion-related fields.
- **Psychic Archaeology** - several clairvoyants including Geoffrey Hodson of the Theosophical Society.
- **Micro-Psi** - clairvoyant observation on the atomic and sub-atomic scale.
- **After-Death Communication** - consistent features and cases being collected.
- **Brain research on effects of meditation** - showing definite, beneficial changes.
- **Psychokinesis** - non-physical interaction of mind with matter.
- **Telepathy and precognition** - several significant sets of experiments.

Taken together, this work is creating a body of evidence that is harder and harder to dismiss. The pathways are converging, as Lynne McTaggart says:

"There need no longer be two truths, the truth of science and the truth of religion. There could be one unified vision of the world."<sup>4</sup>

## Converging Paths

The pathways of science, religion and theosophy are different in many ways and are converging to what looks like a remarkable synthesis.

For some final theosophical insights: the inner and outer worlds we experience are one; we live in one universe as expressions of one underlying, all-embracing consciousness; the self in each of us is ultimately one with the Self in All; knowledge of the universe is knowledge of our home and greater body of being.

We live in the 'Dance of Life', so make sure you dance!

## Recommended Reading

*Intelligence Came First*

E. Lester Smith (Quest)

*The Looking Glass Universe*

Briggs and Peat

(Cornerstone Library)

## References

- 1 *The Common Experience* J.M. Cohen and J-F. Phipps, (Quest Books), USA, 1992
- 2 Mme Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831 - 1891) founded the Theosophical Society with American lawyer Col. Henry Steel Olcott and others in New York in 1875. She was born into Russian aristocracy, had a keen intellect and travelled widely in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, including the Himalayas. Her psychic abilities helped gain understanding of the Ageless Wisdom and she became a prolific writer on comparative religion, mythology and esoteric subjects, including *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. HPB as she was often known, was also accomplished as a linguist, pianist and artist.
- 3 *Science and the Sacred* Ravi Ravindra (Theosophical Publishing House), USA & India, 2000; p. 126
- 4 *The Field – the quest for the secret force of the universe* Lynne McTaggart, Element (HarperCollins) 2003; p. 296

# The Plan and Purpose of Life

## **Striving for Perfection**

In spite of seeming chaos, there is a most wonderful plan and purpose in life and the tragedy is that humanity is almost totally unaware of it.

That there is no such thing as dead matter is a basic theosophical concept. There is awareness in the plant world – growing things respond to ‘green fingers’ and loving care. We cannot deny that animals, especially our pets, have thoughts and feelings. Life or consciousness is inherent in everything.

We have seen that the innate perfection of everything exists in the ‘Mind of God’ and the life force, the Divine Will, is the drive to express that perfection as fully as possible.

In the acorn is the model of the perfect oak tree, and the tree which comes from the seed conforms to this model within the limitations of genetics and natural conditions such as soil quality, prevailing winds, etc. Everything is striving to live in harmony with the ‘Song of Life’ in which the perfection of each individual note is necessary for the perfection of the whole.

Life is like a great river, moving relentlessly and purposefully, and individual units of life are the eddies and whirlpools, always one with the river but having an illusory life of their own. The life in plants and animals seems to be guided largely by Divine Intelligence which we recognise as instinct.

But humans are highly developed animals and less dependent on instinct. We are self-conscious beings with a sense of self-identity and I-ness, responsible for our own decisions. The purpose of existence for us can be seen as spiritual, intellectual, cultural and physical growth towards perfection.

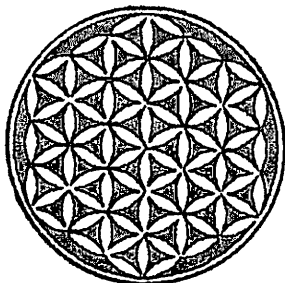
## **Be Ye Perfect**

The spiritual self is like a seed – it is planted on earth, it puts forth shoots, stems and leaves and eventually it flowers. It is, as it were,

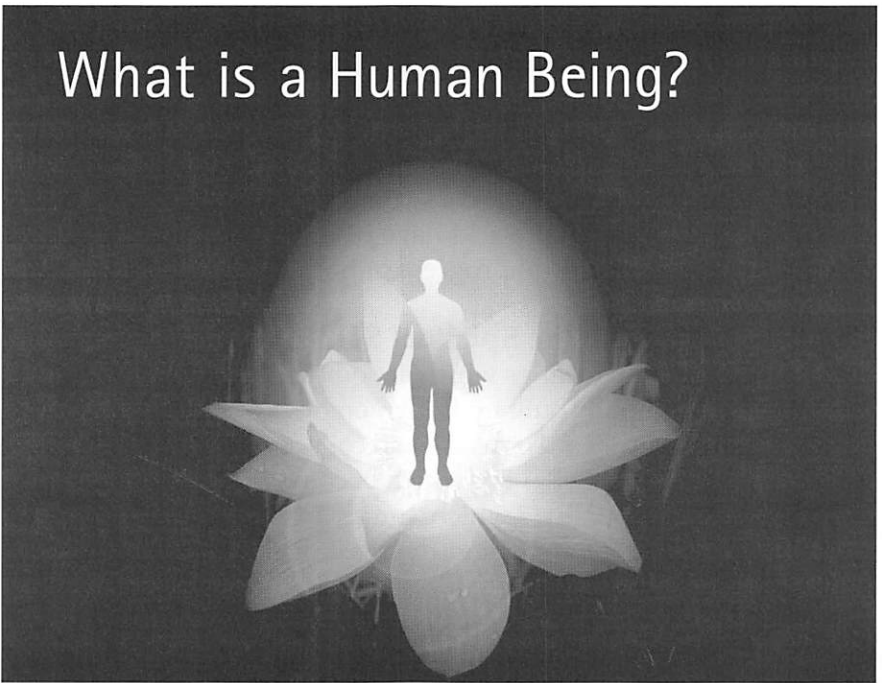
strengthened by the winds of adversity, purified and refined by the rain of sorrow, beautified and expanded by the sunshine of happiness and love. Eventually, we reach the fully flowered state.

Just as the power to grow is inherent in every seed, so in the highest aspect of our consciousness, 'the Immortal Spark of the Divine Fire', the powers which will lead us to perfection, are present from the beginning. Experience brings out these powers. All experience is valuable; nothing is wasted even if it appears so, for silently the seed is developing. The life force impels us on to our destiny—perfection.

The command "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) will literally be obeyed by the Spiritual Self of every human being. There can be no lost souls. We are spiritually immortal, eternal and indestructible. Moreover, there is nothing to be saved from. God is eternally beneficent. There is nowhere to be lost – God is omnipresent.



# What is a Human Being?



## **A Spiritual Being**

The supreme truth which was taught in all the Mystery Schools is that every human is essentially a spiritual being whose highest aspect of consciousness is one with the Universal Consciousness which is our concept of God.

We are being made in God's image. The will, wisdom and intelligence of the Supreme Deity are reflected in the spiritual nature of each of us. Although imprisoned in the personality and physical body, all the Divine Powers are latent in us waiting to be unfolded in the evolutionary process. We are 'Gods in the Becoming' and our future splendour, wisdom and power are entirely without limit.

## **The Thinking Mind**

The importance of the human mind in the evolutionary process is explained by the theosophical writer, Dr Annie Besant, who stated that humanity "is that being in which highest spirit and lowest matter are united by intelligence".

The mind is, therefore, the link between the spiritual nature (sometimes called the Higher Self) and the personality self, where

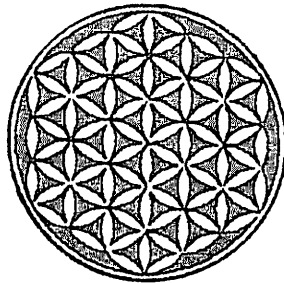
consciousness is limited in the physical body. But when its restless activity is stilled, the mind can always open to the spiritual levels of consciousness which are its essential nature.

Through the 'bridge of mind' we can break through to creative ideas and inspiration from a realm beyond our normal experience. Poets, philosophers, seers, inventors, composers and artists by making this link with the spiritual world have been, throughout the ages, a driving force in the cultural progress of humanity.

### **The Personality and the Spiritual Self**

The thoughts and feelings which are our waking consciousness in everyday life are largely built up from memories of sense impressions – what we have seen, heard or read – and collectively form the habitual ways of thinking and behaving which become our personalities.

The word 'personality', which comes from 'persona' meaning 'mask', implies falseness. Behind the mask is the true Spiritual Self but its reflection into the thought feeling worlds of limitation is usually distorted. However unaware we may be of the Spiritual Self, its life force is, nevertheless, the power within our personality which ceaselessly strives to express its higher level of understanding in the confusion of our ever changing thoughts and feelings. Sometimes it is called 'conscience'.





# Human Consciousness

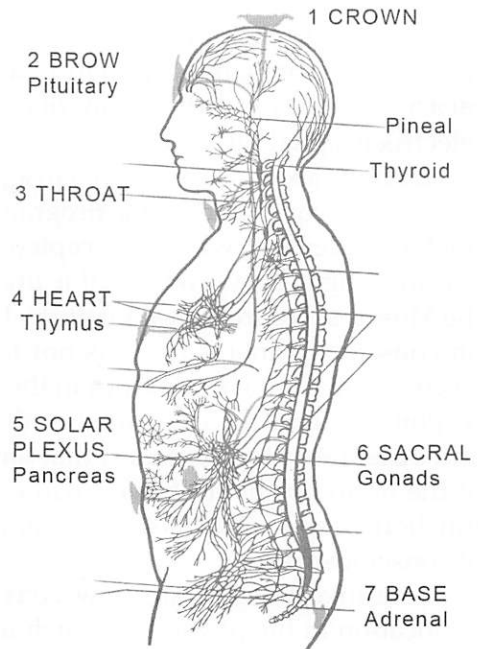
## Vehicles of Expression

The Spiritual Self requires vehicles or 'bodies' in order to express itself as thought, feeling and action within the limitations of a personality tied to the physical world. The most subtle of these vibrates with the speed of thought and the densest with the inertia of 'solid' physical matter. In fact the human being can be seen as consisting of at least seven vibratory systems. Throughout this booklet we have suggested that the energy systems of the human being which vibrate at frequencies higher than those of the physical body, continue to survive after its death and disintegration.

## The Physical Body

Since physical matter is the densest and furthest from the Divine Source, it is not surprising that our physical bodies are the heaviest and least responsive instruments of awareness and action. Yet they are capable of dealing with a stable exterior world in an exact and precise manner.

However, the physical body is not as stable as it seems. Almost all its billions of cells are replaced within seven years. The replenishment of these cells and the whole repair and maintenance of the physical body is the result of the operation of the energy field at the next highest level of vibration – the etheric.



**The seven main spinal chakras and corresponding endocrine glands.**

## **The Vehicle of Vitality**

This is the vehicle which, by energising the senses, gives awareness in the physical body. It is sometimes called the etheric or pranic body and its energies are the 'chi' of the Chinese and the 'prana' of the Hindu. It is most important to our health because it energises the whole nervous system, the meridians and energy points used in acupuncture, the endocrine (ductless) glands which control body functions, and the seven main centres or chakras (energetic vortexes of the body) which link with the superphysical.

This etheric counterpart also provides an archetypal growth pattern for the whole body. When a group of cells depart from this life-giving pattern, distortions such as cancers result.

When the vital body is withdrawn from the physical at death, decomposition inevitably sets in.

## **The Etheric Brain**

The brain provides a link between physical and superphysical consciousness. The etheric energies in the brain which provide this link are electromagnetic in nature and although very weak can be measured in hospitals by means of an instrument known as the EEC (electroencephalograph).

The complex of neurones, synapses and nerve ganglia in the brain works like a computer but the programmer, mind or consciousness, is not there. Memory, which is accepted as a function of consciousness, was investigated by a remarkable brain surgeon, Wilber Penfield of the Montreal Neurological Institute. Performing open brain surgery on conscious patients (pain is not felt in the brain) he used mild electric stimulation to produce in the patients a reaction or memory response to find the exact area of the brain to be operated on. He and other neurologists found that large sections of nearly any part of the brain can be destroyed without disturbance of the memory function. In spite of a lot of trying they were unable to locate a centre of consciousness.

Some investigators are now convinced that consciousness has no location in the physical – which indicates (as theosophists have always suggested) that it functions in superphysical energy fields which, however, have the power to affect the physical through the etheric link.

## **When Memory Fails**

Our thought and feeling activity in these superphysical worlds is far more extensive than in waking consciousness because the brain transmits selected information only. We can see this happen in the case of memory which, except in the short term, is stored in the superphysical. You cannot remember a well known telephone number but later recall it clearly. It was in your mental vehicle all the time but in the brain the lines got crossed and the information did not come through.

## **The Vehicle of Feeling**

The vibrational field of emotion and feelings, sometimes referred to as the 'astral' body, automatically responds to our environment. We often feel an atmosphere of peace in a church or a hostile atmosphere somewhere else. Both the feeling and thought vehicles also reflect internal changes. Those gifted with extrasensory perception see them as emotions being experienced.

Our consciousness is always active in the vehicles of thought and feeling and when we go to sleep or are unconscious under anaesthetics it withdraws temporarily to the freedom of that subtler world, leaving the body to look after itself. However, if during sleep there is an emergency, it returns and we wake up.

## **Balancing Thought-Feeling**

The emotional nature provides the drive while the mind organises memories and ideas. But they interact closely with one another. When emotionally disturbed you cannot think through a problem until you quieten your feelings. This balancing of thought-feeling is essential in any spiritual endeavour.

## **The Vehicle of Thinking**

The high vibrational rate of this vehicle explains the speed of thought. How easy it is to cut the lawn in our imagination!

Free of the physical brain consciousness at this level, we can expand into a world not limited by time and space. From here come our dreams which, although usually distorted, can sometimes be meaningful and even prophetic. The occult tradition (hidden, secret or mystical tradition; the Ancient Wisdom) asserts that the powers of the human mind are seemingly endless – a view which is supported in the next chapter.

# The Limitless Powers of the Human Mind



## **Mental Telepathy**

When you pick up the thoughts of another person you are using a subtle form of communication which is quite different from the normal physical senses. Today, mental telepathy is becoming widely recognised and practised. The major world powers have researched this subject and although results are generally classified, it is known that there has been a substantial measure of success.

Some time ago the U.S. Navy carried out successful tests of thought transmission from shore to the submarine Nautilus submerged 1500 miles (2414 kms) away. It has also been reported that telepathic messages have been received from astronauts far out in space.

## **Extra Sensory Perception (ESP)**

There are indications that in the former Soviet Union, ESP in all its forms was being studied extensively, probably for military purposes. Investigations carried out in the laboratory by Dr J.B. Rhine, Professor of Parapsychology at Duke University, North Carolina, and others have achieved a limited but growing acceptance of ESP in the scientific world. They have shown that some of the persons tested could identify unseen cards, receive telepathic messages or precognise the fall of dice with a success rate far above normal chance.

## **Extra Sensory Powers**

Many sensitives have demonstrated the powers of ESP successfully when in a sympathetic atmosphere, but with less success under rigidly controlled scientific conditions. This is to be expected because the higher mind ability being used is very different from the down-to-earth analytical mind of the scientist which tends to inhibit psychic faculties.

The American artist and psychic, Ingo Swann, has, however, been successful under test conditions in reproducing accurately a drawing hidden from view at the ceiling of the room. It is claimed Uri Geller has this power also and, like the Russian woman Nelya Mikhailova, has demonstrated psychokinesis, the movement of solid objects by the power of the mind.

The yogis of India and the 'wisemen' of many races, including the Maori, have used the powers of ESP and there are people in every country who have successfully used precognition to predict the future.

## **The Power of Thought**

Apart from ESP, the mind has the even greater power of positive thought. Theosophy suggests that thoughts exist for a time period in proportion to the power used in their creation and that thoughts affect other people, other things, and the thought atmosphere of the world – which Jung calls the 'collective unconsciousness'. We are also affected by our own thoughts – we become what we think – so that we are creating our own future all the time.

# Health in Body, Mind and Emotions

## **The Human as a Power Unit**

We have already seen how every human is a power unit and relays through his or her being the life force from the inexhaustible Universal Source. In good health this life force flows freely to vitalise and if necessary heal the organs of the body. But negative thoughts and feelings cause distortions and blockages in the flow which result in illness.

How can we prevent this disease? By living in accordance with natural law. Natural law is equilibrium. So, to prevent disease we need to learn to create and maintain a natural equilibrium in our selves, in our lives. This can be achieved, for example, by right thought, right action, right food, right breathing. Learning to maintain equilibrium in our lives is a gradual process of unfolding awareness and the practice of right living.

## **The Holistic View of Health**

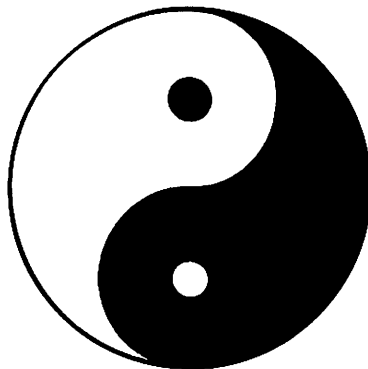
The holistic view of health, which is widely accepted today, aims to heal the whole person rather than just the physical body. Practitioners using various forms of spiritual healing, colour and sound therapy, and meditation techniques, recognise that body, mind and spirit are interconnected.

Many healers like Edgar Cayce, Carolin Myss and theosophists Dora Kunz, Geoffrey Hodson and Phoebe Bendit, who understand the human vehicles or subtle forms, have successfully used clairvoyance to diagnose illness by seeing blockages and distortions which occur in the human energy field. Research by Kirlian photography has reinforced the idea that incipient disease shows up in the vital etheric field before it affects the physical body.

## **Balancing the Energies**

Healing is also seen as a process of balancing the human energy field at all levels so that it is in harmony with the world in which we live.

The ancient Chinese were aware of two great forces in the universe and in humanity which they called the Yin and Yang. When these were in equilibrium, human beings enjoyed health, but when there was a lack of balance between them disease set in. In the practice of acupuncture this balance in the etheric life force, or 'chi', is achieved by the insertion of needles at centres called acupuncture points. This allows the unimpeded flow of 'chi' energy, or prana, which restores the health.



### **Thinking Affects Health**

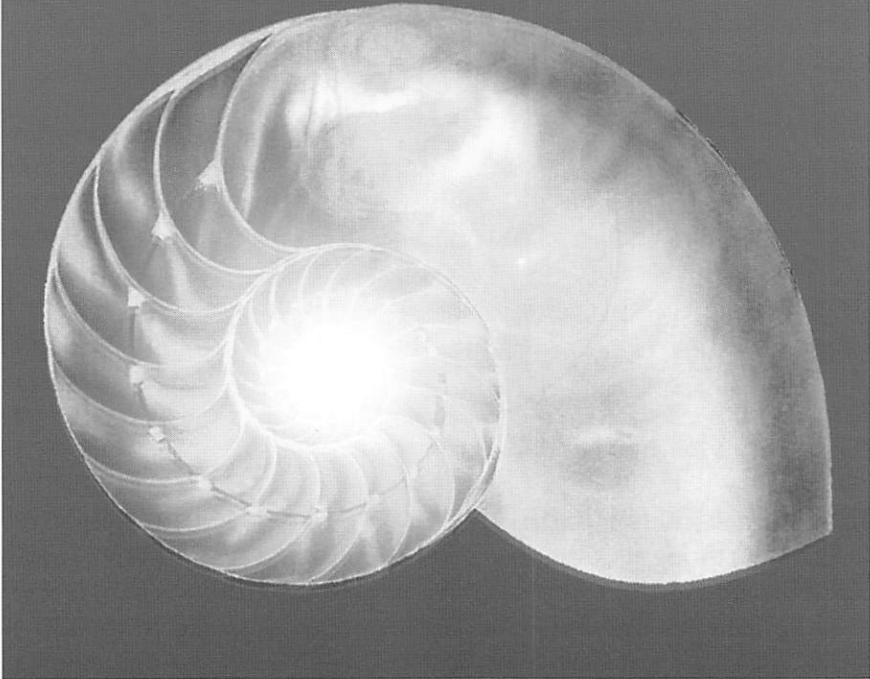
Our own thoughts, other people's thoughts and the collective world thought, all affect our health because these vibrations resonate into the etheric field. For good health we need a positive and constructive outlook on life and a quiet mind which does not react strongly, is open to new ideas and free of fixations and conditioning. In other words, don't waste time worrying.

### **Recommended Reading**

*Healers and the Healing Process*  
Books by Carolyn Myss

G.W. Meek (Quest)

# Life as a Self-Correcting Process



## **Guided by the Unlimited Self**

Shirley Maclaine has written in *Dancing In The Light*, "Our higher unlimited Self, which has been a child of God from the beginning of time, is with us every instant, silently (and sometimes not so silently) guiding us through events and experiences which we elect to have for ourselves in order to learn more fully who we are and what the God energy is. That energy is totally aware and the more we listen to it, the more aware each of us become."

Life therefore is a self-correcting process. Life provides the experiences which we need to learn and if we do not learn the experience is repeated until we do.



## Cause and Effect – the Everyday Experience

Everything we do or think comes under the great impersonal law of cause and effect called in Eastern philosophies 'karma', which simply means *action*.

This quotation is from the book *Karma* by Bo Lozoff.

"In the Bible this law is stated as 'As you sow so shall you reap'.

In plain English, if you plant beets you can't expect to harvest tomatoes. Every thought, word, and deed in our lives is a seed which we plant in the world. All our lives, we harvest the fruits of these seeds. If the seeds are full of anger, fear, greed, desire and doubt, then so will our lives be. If the seeds contain love, kindness and understanding then our lives will as well. This is not a moral or philosophical teaching, it is simply a law of energy like gravity. Karma is the way the Universe works.

Karma is often easy to see ... For example, you step on a banana skin and you fall. It's not good or bad, it happens that way; it's just the way things are. It's just karma.

At other times karma is also immediate but not so obvious. You flip a switch on the wall and a light goes on over your head. Direct cause and effect, but the wires are hidden. Well most often in our lives the wires are hidden. Does this make sense?

More often karma is harder to follow because times go by between action and karmic reaction. The cause may even be carried over from a previous life on earth. If you set an alarm clock for ten hours from now, you may forget all about it and be startled when it finally goes off. Yet you set it with your own hands.

Throughout our lives we're either slipping on banana skins, flipping switches with unseen wires or setting alarms that we forget about or don't even know about as we're setting them—a kindness that we think went unnoticed, or something rotten that we hoped would disappear. No cause is ever without its effects.

## Understanding Karma

As we have already seen, all beings in the Universe are interconnected — even if we can't see the glue. Because this oneness of all things is true or real or natural, then any thought, word or deed which tends to create a feeling of separateness, creates more karma; it creates falseness and perpetuates separateness. Working out karma is simply the process of undoing this falseness to return to the Truth. For example, let's say I make fun of someone who's ugly or crippled, I may be setting my karmic alarm for some time when I become like that, or marry or give birth to someone like that. Not as a *moral punishment*, but simply because I would need that experience in order to get beyond the feeling of separateness from those characteristics.

I would need this experience to help me see that there's no 'them'. We're all just 'us'.

When we realise this deeply we can understand why the great Indian sage, Mahatma Gandhi, as he was shot in the head, turned to his assassin and said sincerely "I'm sorry my son"<sup>1</sup>. Or why Christ on the cross said "Forgive them Father, they know not what they do".

People who understand karma simply don't hurt other people; that's all there is to it. And people who don't understand karma, need all our compassion and forgiveness. When they hurt others, they're really just knocking their own heads against the wall; they're setting so many alarm clocks that will painfully awaken them at some later time.

## **The Golden Rule**

Karma is more like the law of gravity — it's the way energy works. The Golden rule 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' is really more of a scientific truth than a moral preaching. When Christ says "Love thy neighbour as thyself", He's simply telling it like it is; we're all connected, and He can see the glue.

## **Don't Blame Karma**

We tend to blame other people for what happens to us, forgetting that karma gives us back the actual consequences of our own actions. Karma is what a person does; not what is done to him or her.

The circumstances in which we find ourselves are self created and provide us, at all times, with the very best opportunity for learning by experience the lessons allocated to us for this lifetime.

What really matters is our reaction to those circumstances. The test is can we accept our karma without shame, regret or bitterness?

## **Reducing our Karmic Burden**

We all carry with us a karmic load but we can reduce this burden by living in harmony with the Karmic Law; by actions which produce no reactions; by acting with love in our hearts and full awareness of the welfare of others. Each of us has the full responsibility for lightening the karmic load of the whole planet.

The end of our karmic journey — when we've lightened our karmic burden totally — is called enlightenment. Then every thought, word and action is in harmony with the whole and creates no sense of separateness in the world. Beings like Christ, Buddha and Mohammed, and many others, have reached that state. They became so united with God, or if you like with 'Tao', 'Dharma' or 'Truth', that they ceased to create personal

karma. We will all reach that goal some day when all our karma is worked out. Until that time we must come back into the physical world and experience in it the joys and suffering which teach us to harmonise with nature's law and the purpose of life."

## Recommended Reading

*Karma*

*Karma : Universal Law of Harmony*

*Look at Your Karma*

*The Doctrine of Karma*

*Karma and Creativity*

Annie Besant (Quest)

edited by Hanson & Stewart  
(Quest)

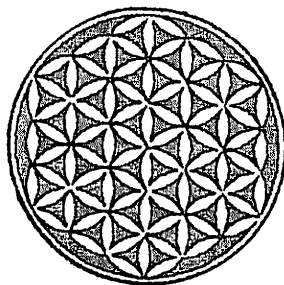
Arthur Robson (T.P.H)

G. Van Pelt (Point Loma  
Publications)

Christopher Chapple

## Footnote

<sup>1</sup> This quotation has been mistranslated here. No certainty exists but many accept that Ghandi's last words were "He Ram"/"He Rama" (Oh God) or "Rama Rahim" (*Rama*, God; *Rahim*, compassion or a synonym for Allah). The latter is an inter-faith expression — Ed.



# The Cycle of Birth, Death and Rebirth

I hold that when a person dies  
His soul returns again to earth;  
Arrayed in some new flesh disguise,  
Another mother gives him birth,  
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain  
The old soul takes the road again.

John Masefield—in *A Creed*

## Reincarnation

The doctrine of rebirth, or as it is commonly known, of reincarnation, is one of the major keys to understanding the spiritual basis of existence.

The concept of reincarnation is based on two important conclusions:

(1) The human soul exists before birth and will continue to exist after death. Consciousness is a continuum and its development extends over an enormous period of time.

(2) The spiritual self is always seeking for a more perfect expression through successive personalities. Each life is another step on the pilgrimage back to the source – back to God.

To clear away any misconceptions let us state that the idea that human consciousness can return to earth to inhabit the body of an animal is not compatible with our concept of reincarnation. This would be a retrograde step and against natural law. We have seen that we humans are in reality spiritual beings who in each successive life require a physical body and nervous system at least as sensitive as the previous ones to make the most of the experiences of the new life. Shakespeare apparently shared this view when he wrote in *Twelfth*

*Night*, "What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl? That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird. What thinkest thou of this opinion? I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve of his opinion."

However modern research has shown that he is wrong in attributing such a belief to Pythagoras.

### **Not a Fresh Creation**

The soul therefore does not enter this life as a fresh creation. It is the result of a long series of previous existences in which it acquired its present peculiarities.

The infant child is not like a blank sheet of paper for, even if the ink appears invisible, history from a remote past is written there.

The newborn child does not bring with it a conscious knowledge of its past but a memory of the heaven world just left lingers and gives the quality of innocence we so often see in very young children.

These ideas and the way this innocence is lost as the child grows older, are expressed with uncanny insight in the following poem.

### **Trailing Clouds of Glory**

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting, And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
and not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy.

Wordsworth - in *Ode,  
Intimations of Immortality*

Reincarnation can offer an explanation, too, for those infant prodigies such as Mozart who started composing minuets at the age of five and at 12 wrote his first opera. Plato, who believed wholeheartedly in reincarnation, asserted that “knowledge easily acquired is that which the enduring self had in an earlier life, so that it flows back easily!”

### **Balancing Inequalities**

We have seen that the law of cause and effect balances the result of our actions and if we add the continuity of consciousness provided by the concept of reincarnation, we get some understanding of why there are obvious inequalities and injustices in life.

During the period between lives (usually a few hundred years) the soul extracts and assimilates the essence of its experiences in the life just past for use in incarnations to come.

Understanding this process we realise that the qualities we now possess of body, mind and soul, are the result of our use of opportunities in previous lives and the use we make of our present opportunities will determine our future character and capacity.

### **Evidence for Reincarnation**

Proof of reincarnation in the judicial sense is difficult to establish as the memory of a past life does not normally carry over to the present one. The new brain in this body, which governs our present behaviour, is quite distinct from that which governed the behaviour of the previous body and we are probably fortunate that this is so. It is often difficult enough to face up to our current problems without remembering all those of our previous incarnations.

But many do remember – especially young children who, as Wordsworth reminded us, are close to their spiritual selves in their early years.

### **“Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation”**

In the book with the above title Dr Ian Stevenson has carefully tabulated many such memories with names, dates and signed testimonies from witnesses.

One of the best documented cases is that of a young Indian girl, Shanti Devi, living in Delhi (born 1926) who at the age of three began to recall details of a former life in the town of Muttra 80 miles away. She said she had married a cloth merchant, given birth to a son and

died ten years later. Her claims continued and when she was nine years old her family wrote to her claimed husband who visited her home unannounced and was immediately recognised by Shanti Devi. A committee was set up to witness her visit to Muttra and testified that she did in fact recognise other relatives, knew the way to her former house, which she recognised, and in fact revealed that money had been hidden in the house. The hiding place was found and her former husband admitted he had removed the money.

### **The Pollock Family**

Another well recognised case is that of the two little girls of the Pollock family who were killed by a runaway car in the town of Hexham in Northumberland. Twin girls born two years later to the same parents claimed dolls of the former children as their own. One said, "That's my Mary"; the other girl said, "That's my dolly that we had a long time ago!"

### **The Bloxham Tapes**

Arnell Bloxham, when president of the British Society of Hypnotherapists, used hypnotic regression to record patients' memories of what could be previous lives. In one case a Welsh housewife, Jane Evans, remembered being a twelfth-century Jewess in York. She described how they were persecuted and took shelter in the crypt of a small church just outside the copper gates. The church was identified as St. Mary's Castlegate, but it did not have a crypt. However, some years later workmen found a crypt under the altar.

### **Reincarnation Novels**

Some novels appear to be based on memories of past lives. Joan Grant's *Winged Pharaoh* for instance reveals detailed knowledge of life in Egypt three thousand years before Christ, as does Elizabeth Haich's *Initiation*.

### **They Believed in Reincarnation**

Many great thinkers past and present have accepted the idea of reincarnation: Plato, Dickens, Tolstoy, Kant, Aldous Huxley, Browning, Sibelius, the list goes on.

**Carl Jung** (psychologist): "I can well imagine that I might have lived in former centuries ... that I had to be born again because I had not fulfilled the task given to me."

*Memories, Dreams and Reflections*

**Henry Ford** (car manufacturer): "I adopted the theory of reincarnation when I was 26 ... it was as if I had found a universal plan."

*San Francisco Examiner*, Aug. 26, 1928

**Salvador Dali** (painter): "I am not only a mystic. I am also the reincarnation of one of the greatest of all Spanish mystics, St John of the Cross. I can remember vividly experiencing divine union, undergoing the dark night of the Soul ... I can remember the monastery and many of St John's fellow monks!"

*New York Herald Tribune*, Jan. 24, 1960

**David Lloyd George** (British Prime Minister): "The conventional heaven with its angels perpetually singing etc. nearly drove me mad in my youth and made me an atheist for ten years. My opinion is that we shall be reincarnated."

*Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary*

**John Buchan** (novelist): "I find myself in some scene which I cannot have visited before and which is yet perfectly familiar; I know that it was the stage of an action in which I once took part and am about to take part again."

*Memory Hold-the-Door*

**Rudyard Kipling** (poet): "They will come back – come back again – as long as the red earth rolls. He never wasted a leaf or a tree. Do you think He would squander souls?"

*The Sack of the Gods*

**Benjamin Franklin** (American statesman): He is quoted by the poet and philosopher Emerson as saying, "I look upon death to be as necessary to the constitution as sleep. We shall rise refreshed in the morning."



At 22 he wrote his famous epitaph: "The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer (like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding) lies here, food for worms; but the work shall not be lost, it will appear once more in a new and more elegant edition ... revised and corrected by the author."

### **Recommended Reading**

*Reincarnation: Fact or Fallacy*

*Reincarnation: An East West Anthology*

*Reincarnation*

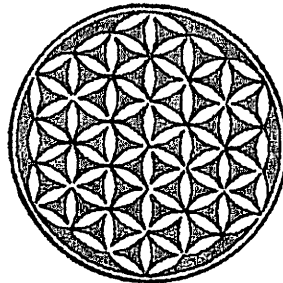
*Reincarnation Explored*

Geoffrey Hodson (Quest)

Head & Cranston (Quest)

Leoline L. Wright (Quest)

John Algeo (Quest)



# Transcendent Unity of All Religions



It is the contention of theosophy that all the major religions of the world stem from one Universal Source, and that periodically there appears among humanity a Divine Teacher to re-establish aspects of the timeless wisdom which are suited to the needs of the age.

To the ardent believer in one faith, be they Christian, Jew, Moslem, Buddhist or Hindu, such a suggestion may at first be unacceptable. However on close examination of all the great religions we do see a common thread which underlies them all. Theosophy can count

among its members people of all faiths. Their bond of union is a search for truth.

By investigating the Ancient Wisdom with an open mind we will find that much of it is expressed in only slightly different ways in other religions.

The Christian Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for instance, is exactly paralleled in other faiths. In the Jewish *Kabbala* the deity is expressed as a triumvirate known as Chesed, Tiphareth and Geburah, whereas in Hinduism it is Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma. Even the ancient Egyptians knew their deity as the trinity, Osiris, Horus and Isis.

### **More than One Immaculate Conception**

When we look to the stories of the founders of these faiths, we find the Biblical report on the immaculate conception of the Lord Jesus by the Virgin Mary, is exactly paralleled in Buddhism by the immaculate conception of the Lord Buddha by his mother Maya. It is more than coincidence that in Hinduism, Sri Krishna, the Christ of the Hindu faith, is miraculously conceived by his mother Devaki. This is surely most remarkable, as both Hinduism and Buddhism long predate Christianity.

### **More than One Massacre of the Innocents**

The Biblical story of the Massacre of the Innocents by King Herod is paralleled in the Hindu faith where Kansa, the tyrant, believing his throne was threatened by Krishna, ordered all children to be killed. In Zoroastrian faith Durasroba, the chief wizard, tried repeatedly to kill the infant Zarathustra (the Christ of that religion).

### **Earlier Foundations**

These similarities indicate that Christianity has been built on the forms and teachings of earlier faiths. In the next chapter we shall see that the theosophical concept of death was clearly stated in several earlier religions.

### **Recommended Reading**

*The Transcendent Unity of Religion*  
*The Religions of Man*

Frithjof Schuon (Quest)  
Haston Smith (Harper Colophon)

# A New View of Death

## **The Traditional View**

The ancient Egyptians depicted the soul as a bird with a human face free of the physical body. This traditional view of death is found in both the early *Egyptian Book of the Dead* and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* written thousands of years ago.

It is this same view that has been presented to the public by the Theosophical Society for over 130 years. The theosophical and traditional view both see death as an incident in an ever-changing life; there is really no death, only changing states of consciousness.

At death the spiritual nature, or soul, is withdrawn from the transitory physical body taking with it the thought and feeling aspects of this personality consciousness which survives with full memory of the experiences of the life just finished. Consciousness freed from the limitations of the physical body and its senses, after a period of refocusing, moves away from the physical and enters a world of light and bliss. Here the soul works through all experiences of the life just past until only its essence, which is love and joy, remains.

## **The New View is a Vindication of the Old**

Recent advances in medical technology have made it possible for patients declared clinically dead to be brought back to continue their earthly existence. Some remember what happened. The actor, Peter Sellers, who had a massive heart attack, remembered following his body on the trolley to the operating room and in a disinterested way watching the doctors' resuscitation attempts. He said afterwards he would never again be afraid of dying. Those who have had a near-death experience usually do not mention anguish or pain; on the contrary they recall a strange, unfamiliar feeling of tranquillity and peace.

## **Modern Investigators**

Today there are many investigators in the field of near-death experiences. Dr Elizabeth Kubler Ross, Dr Karlis Osis and Dr Kenneth Ring are probably the best known. Another investigator, Dr Raymond Moody, found the experiences described by thousands of patients to be very consistent and clearly described them in his book *Life After Life*.

# Near-Death Experiences

## Death is a Withdrawal

The experiences of Dr Moody's patients are similar to those described by theological writers. The dying person hears a ringing noise (*The Tibetan Book of the Dead* refers to alarming sounds!). The cause is the concentration of vital energies in the brain—up to ten times normal.

Theological author Geoffrey Hodson writes:

“We shall see the life-forces of the body being withdrawn from the extremities and centred in the heart as a golden light. As death draws nearer the life forces are withdrawn still further into the middle of the head ... When the life force is entirely centred in the brain it finally leaves as a shaft of light through the top of the head!”

As the consciousness withdraws some felt they were passing through a dark tunnel. Spiritualists describe this as ‘coming through a veil’, or ‘coming out of the mist’.

Dr Moody reported that patients who had just died found themselves in another dimension, in a different ‘body’, surrounded by an “unearthly luminosity which they later found difficult to describe”. They became aware of the physical world and knew what people were saying but could not communicate with them.

## Surrounded by Love

In the near-death experiences investigated by Dr Moody, patients reported that the ‘spirit’ of friends came to meet them, exactly as described by C.W. Leadbeater in his book *Invisible Helpers*.

It was also reported that after an incredibly rapid but vivid review of the life just past, they were helped to evaluate it by a loving warm spirit—a being of light which was probably their spiritual self. They recognised that they must return to complete unfinished work on Earth and reluctantly reunited with their physical body. Their whole lives were changed. They now wanted to work unselfishly for the good of others.

The investigator, Dr Karlis Osis, concluded, “I cannot call this proof in the scientific sense, but the pattern of near-death experiences convinces one that there is life after death.”



**The Silver Cord breaks and the physical body is dead.**

**Recommended Reading**  
**Theosophical Society Authors**

*The Life After Death*

*Through the Gateway of Death*

*The Transition Called Death*

*Through Death to Rebirth*

*Our Last Adventure*

C.W. Leadbeater (Quest)

G. Hodson (Quest)

Charles Hampton (Quest)

J. Perkins (Quest)

Lester Smith (TPH)

**Other Authors**

*Life After Life*

*On Death and Dying*

*Life, a new Dimension of Death*

*Heading Towards Omega*

*A Matter of Personal Survival*

*Twenty Cases Suggestive of  
Reincarnation*

Raymond Moody

Dr Elizabeth Kubler Ross

John Muntz

Dr Kenneth Ring

Michael Marsh

Ian Stevenson

2nd ed., rev. and enlarged,

# Meditation



*The lower self can find peace only as it merges into and becomes a reflection of the higher. N Sri Ram*

## **The Moving Mind**

It's been called the 'Monkey Mind' or the 'Butterfly Mind'. It is that stream of consciousness which keeps flitting like a butterfly from one thing to another or like a monkey jumping from branch to branch. Even when we concentrate, the mind drifts off to fantasise about something we are going to do or some unresolved problem.

But we have the power to stop the antics of this monkey mind and achieve the 'still' mind which is essential for anyone who is interested in the development of their spiritual nature. Meditation is the method by which this control can be exercised.

## **An Inner Centre of Peace**

Many people today are using meditation to bring greater clarity of mind and quiet strength into their lives.

But true meditation is a spiritual journey to the inner centre of our being. With consciousness focused on this centre of stillness we can release the power of our true spiritual nature.



Most of us, engrossed in the activities and self-centred endeavours of everyday life in the physical world, shut out our spiritual nature and the light which flows through it from the One Energy Source. It is natural law that our attachments and our constant 'busyness', our fears, desires, habits, doubts and judgements severely limit the amount of power which flows through us.

By meditation we can open the door to that spiritual level of consciousness which is our deepest natural state. To experience this, our minds must stop being busy. This is difficult for us because it is really doing 'nothing' – it is just being what we are.

### **The Practice of Meditation**

Although each individual will find their own way of meditating, certain procedures have been found necessary for success in achieving the necessary preliminary concentration and ultimately the 'emptying' of the mind.

1. Meditate regularly at the same time each day in a private place.
2. Sit in the lotus position or erect in a chair.
3. Relax the whole body using deep diaphragm breathing.
4. Release emotional tension and slow down the thinking process.
5. Turn inwards to the silence, throwing out thought whenever it intrudes.
6. After 15 to 30 minutes quietly return to normal consciousness.

### **The Aims of Meditation**

The truth of the philosophy of life expounded in the previous chapters of this booklet can be experienced through meditation. Four specific aims in meditation are now listed with an affirmation appropriate to each.

- **To discover one's Spiritual Self as distinct from the personality self:**  
 I am not this body which belongs to the world of shadows  
 I am not the desires which affect it  
 I am not the thoughts which fill my mind, I am not the mind itself  
 I am the Divine Flame within my heart, eternal, immortal, ancient,  
 without beginning, without end.
- **To realise that the spiritual Self in every person is forever one with the Cosmic Self of the Universe:**  
 More radiant than the Sun is the Spirit within my heart.  
 I and my Father are One.
- **To harmonise our minds, emotions and physical body to the inflow of spiritual forces experienced progressively during purposeful meditation:**  
 In Thy Presence Thy Love floods my being, Love which is gentleness, kindness, helpfulness.
- **To visualise ourselves as a body of light and use an appropriate affirmation, for example the Living Light affirmation:**

### **LIVING LIGHT**

I am whole...I am filled with the Light.  
 I am perfect...I am filled with the Light.  
 The Light fills every cell of my body.  
 Every cell is a dynamic centre of intelligent  
 essence and Light force.  
 The Light surges into and through my blood,  
 making it a fountain of Life,  
 bringing purity, vitality  
 youth and beauty into my being.  
 I am in the Infinite Light,  
 and the Infinite Light is in me.  
 I am surrounded by the pure  
 white Light of the Christ.

Nothing but good can come to me.  
 Nothing but good shall go from me.  
 I give thanks! I give thanks! I give thanks!  
 Aum, Aum, Aum.

The insights and uplifting experiences of meditation should extend into all the activities of daily life and reduce our self-centred attitudes so that we care more for the welfare of others.

### **Other Forms of Meditation**

Sometimes **mantras** such as OM or AUM (AMEN is the English equivalent) are chanted during meditation because their vibratory quality links with spiritual levels of consciousness.

**In healing meditations**, visualisation and positive thought is used, or love energy is generated by meditation in the heart.

**Group meditations on peace** can alter the psychic atmosphere of the world and neutralise fear and hatred.

### **Affirm with strong intent:**

May the spirit of peace guide the nations of the world so that we may learn to live together in harmony and goodwill.

May the whole of humanity become spiritually enlightened and realise oneness.

### **O Hidden Life**

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

Annie Besant

### **Recommended Reading**

*A Yoga of Light*

*Meditation-A Practical Guide*

*Why Meditate?*

*Finding the Quiet Mind*

Geoffrey Hodson (Quest)

Adelaide Gardner (Quest)

Vicente Hao Chin Jr.

(TS in Philippines)

Robert Ellwood (Quest)

# Return to the Source



## **Yoga Means Union**

Many Western people practising yoga today do not realise that contortionist postures and strange methods of breathing are just preliminaries to the true spiritual yoga, which is an attunement of every aspect of one's nature – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

The word itself gives us a clue to what yoga is really about. Like the English word 'yoke', yoga comes from a Sanskrit root word meaning 'union'. It is the union of body and mind with the Spiritual Self and finally the ultimate union of the individual Spiritual Self with the One Supreme Self. The end of the evolutionary journey is a return to the Source.

## **Many Paths to the One**

The ancient Eastern science of yoga teaches that there are many paths on this journey but each has the same goal – union with the One.

**Hatha Yoga** emphasises the training of the physical body.

**Mantra Yoga** uses the power of sound by chanting sacred phrases or words.

**Jnana Yoga** emphasises knowledge of the laws of the universe.

**Bhakti Yoga** is the way of devotion used by the Christian mystics.

**Karma Yoga** is the way of balanced or karma-less action.

**Raja Yoga** – the kingly science – embodies disciplines and practices to bring the whole of one’s being under the control of will.

By the practice of yoga, identification with the personality is reduced and there is a growing realisation of oneself as always One with the Divine Life of the universe.

### **Some Have Experienced Unity**

The Punjabi Indian, Gopi Krishna, describes his experience in his book *Kundalini, The Evolutionary Energy In Man*, and the Canadian, Dr R. H. Bucke, in *Cosmic Consciousness*, describes how, driving home from a poetry reading evening in London, he had an expansion of consciousness:

“All at once I found myself wrapped in a flame coloured cloud. For an instant I thought of fire, an immense conflagration in that great city. The next I knew the fire was within myself. There came upon me a sense of exultation followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe. I saw the universe as a living presence. I became conscious in myself of eternal life.”

But the best description is given by a Zen Buddhist quoted in *The Spectrum of Consciousness* by Ken Wilber:

“I was intensely aware of my body yet I felt suspended bodiless in a new height. Everything within me seemed to vibrate gently in golden light. There was utter stillness. I did not feel the self fuse with the absolute. I felt the whole universe—everything that is—was in me, was me, for a fleeting forever.”

# Beyond Humanity



## The Ultimate Experience

The experience of Oneness, which may be a brief life-changing flash or a sustained and controlled expansion of consciousness into realms very difficult to describe, has been called by different names in different religions:

- The attainment of Christ-consciousness
- Enlightenment
- Self-realisation
- Cosmic consciousness
- Nirvana
- Liberation.

All these are the same experience – the fusion of the personality self into a world of light and bliss where the Divine Reality, ‘the centre where all things are known’, is experienced. Paradoxically, it seems that the liberated individual retains uniqueness and the beautiful ending to Sir Edwin Arnold’s *The Light Of Asia* quoted below, could also mean that the ocean is poured into the dewdrop:

The dew is on the Lotus;  
Rise, Great Sun and lift my leaf and mix me  
with the wave.  
Om Mani Padme Hum, the Sunrise comes  
The dewdrop slips into the Shining Sea.

### **Those who Guard and Guide Humanity**

With the experience of oneness, humans reach a level of consciousness beyond that of the normal person. Their personality selves are now completely surrendered to the Divine Purpose and they exist solely to help humanity. Some of these great beings are known to us as the founders of religions—Jesus the Christ, Krishna and Buddha. But the Buddhist tradition also acknowledges the Bodhisattvas, who on reaching this stage of perfect wisdom, voluntarily renounce their well-earned bliss to remain and help humanity.

In the theosophical tradition they are known as adepts or Masters of the Wisdom who, with superhuman wisdom and compassion, work ceaselessly — sometimes in the world but mostly from superphysical levels of consciousness — to guide humanity and to protect it, as far as they can, from its own inhumanity. Several of these Masters aided Madame Blavatsky in founding the Theosophical Society, and the original letters written by two of them to A. P. Sinnett in the 1880's are now in the British Library. You may read them in the book *The Mahatma Letters To A.P. Sinnett* and judge their authenticity by the quality of their message.

### **Recommended Reading**

*The Masters and the Path*  
*Masters and Men*

C.W. Leadbeater (Quest)  
Virginia Hanson (Quest)

## Further Exploration

After reading about these concepts, it is hoped your interest has been sparked into further investigation into the 'Mysteries of Existence'.

This glimpse into some of the principles studied in the Theosophical Society is intended to awaken or enlarge awareness of the amazing expanse of all life, all existence. We hold this life, this consciousness, is unified—from the universal macrocosm to the most minute, microcosmic, subatomic particle. All this has a largely unseen vibratory existence which the Ageless Wisdom identifies as the spiritual. Of this humanity is an evolving part.

Acceptance of these ideas is, however, your own decision and part of a personal journey. Your right to freedom of thought and belief is important.

Many Theosophical Society branches have libraries with books and audiovisual disks which can assist study and shine further light on the ideas explored in this booklet. For further information contact the Theosophical Society in New Zealand at its national centre:

18 Belvedere Street  
Epsom  
Auckland 1051

**Phone:** 09 523 1797  
**E-mail:** [hq@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:hq@theosophy.org.nz)

There are also branches and study groups around the country. We encourage your exploration of theosophy.







# THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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## Application for Membership

### Objects

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

**Second** - To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

**Third** - To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

Having considered the three objects of the Theosophical Society, and being in sympathy with those objects, I hereby apply for admission as a member of the society and agree to abide by its rules.

I wish to be a member of:

- the \_\_\_\_\_ Branch or  
 a Headquarters member.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name in full)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If a minor, give birth date \_\_\_\_\_

with signature of parent or guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been a member of this society? \_\_\_\_\_

If so when? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

(For office use only)

**DIPLOMA**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Receipt** \_\_\_\_\_

**National President** \_\_\_\_\_

This booklet offers a few glimpses of how the study of Theosophy can shed light on the mysteries of existence.

Theosophy is a body of ageless wisdom that helps us understand life and the cosmos. It demonstrates the underlying unity of all great religions when they are stripped of their superstitions and dogmas. It offers a philosophy of life that enables individuals to integrate the material, emotional, mental, social, moral and spiritual aspects of living.

The term Theosophy comes from the Greek words *theos* which means divine, and *sophia* which means wisdom. It is a wisdom that is derived from transcendent insights into nature.