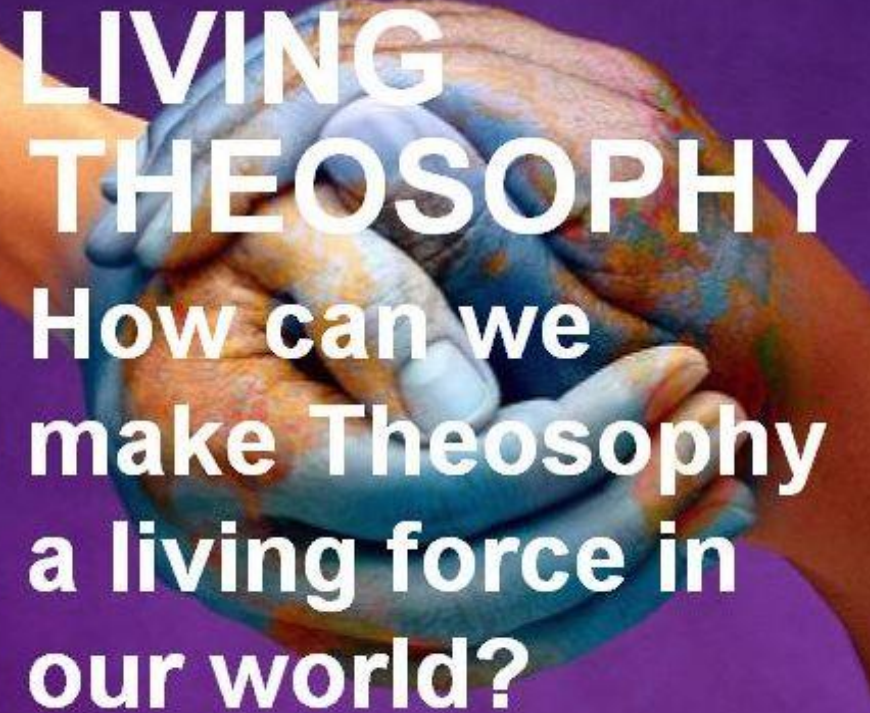



Theosophy Forward

Moving
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century


Special issue



**LIVING
THEOSOPHY**
How can we
make Theosophy
a living force in
our world?

 Theosophy Forward



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Living Theosophy

How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

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Living Theosophy

How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?



Foreword

Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our World?

Articles with this title written by twenty-four authors appeared on *Theosophy Forward* in 2010, all of them giving their own and unique view regarding this timeless subject.

The series was very successful and is now presented to the world as an E-Book.

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We should become intelligent and let the inner god shine forth from within in order to live Theosophy.
- Ali Ritsema

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Students of Theosophy often treat knowledge about the principles of human relationships as too profane for serious consideration, but at the same time we exhibit a serious inability to overcome our different points of view when we should come to some conclusion on how to promote Theosophy or even on what Theosophy actually is. Without a capacity for collaboration, all our individual efforts are almost worthless and conceal a selfishness that prevents us from asserting brotherhood as a living reality.
- Anton Rozman

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No isolated mind can produce a universal effect, but the unity of devoted and dedicated members with the one and unique purpose of serving humanity would go as long way in the right direction.
- Gaspar Torres

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To share Theosophy we, as Theosophical Society members, need to study Theosophical teachings in a serious way, trying to grasp the fundamentals, but also make an earnest effort to live according to what we study.
- Pablo Sender

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If we aspire to make Theosophy a living force in our world, let us start by having a clear idea of the purpose for which the Theosophical Society was founded: the development of a personal commitment to devote ourselves to live a life with high regard for the great Laws that govern the Universe and a sincere feeling of compassion for all living creature.
- Dolores Gago

This small booklet is most inspirational and you will enjoy reading it!

Jan Nicolaas Kind

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Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Ali Ritsema - The Netherlands

It is often said that the best way to promote Theosophy is 'to live Theosophy'. But do we know what it means 'to live Theosophy', and is it possible to do so? This short article is an enquiry into this subject.

Before we can 'live Theosophy', we need to understand what Theosophy is. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p.1), H. P. Blavatsky explains that the real meaning of the word *Theosophy* is 'Wisdom such as that possessed by the gods'. It seems to me that when the 'gods possess wisdom', they obviously know how to live their wisdom. Who then are the 'gods' that possess wisdom?

The Secret Doctrine (2:255 fn) sheds light on this question when it explains that at a certain period in the evolutionary process of humans their material development and spiritual development met. That is the period when the physical frame was ready to receive the divine Pilgrim. Only from then on were humans complete. It was at this point that humans were endowed with Manas. 'They are made "gods" for good and evil, and responsible.'

However, there is no good and evil *per se*, existing independently in nature. Therefore, no one is absolutely 'good' and no one is absolutely 'evil'. It is through the contrast that we humans can learn to discriminate between 'good' and 'evil' or between our higher and lower natures. Here lies our choice, our learning process, and our responsibility.

'[E]very man has a god within ... his "god" within, not outside, of himself' (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 52). However, this does not mean that humans are already 'gods' in the high spiritual sense one attributes to the term, as we can witness every day.

It is Manas, 'the mind', the mental faculty, which makes of humans intelligent and moral beings and thus distinguishes them from animals. It is the mind that makes people responsible. Manas is triple, says *The Secret Doctrine* (2:254 fn): 'as a principle *per se*, which gravitates, in its higher aspect, to Atma- Buddhi [our higher nature], and follows, in its lower nature, Kama, the seat of terrestrial and animal desires and passions.' This explains the good and evil.

Manas pure, or as a principle *per se*, is an emanation of Mahat, the Universal Mind, also referred to as Prajna, Universal Wisdom. Prajna is the key which makes a human into a god, creating a Bôdhisattva according to *The Voice of the Silence*. Such a person is one whose essence (*sattva*) has become intelligence (*bodhi*).

Being endowed with Manas as a principle *per se*, we are a ray of Mahat. Thus in our very essence, in our true nature, we are a god and we possess the wisdom of the gods. However, most

people are busy, busy, busy, running around like mad to keep up with the expectations of our worldly nature. By doing that, we forget our true nature, trample it under foot, not even aware of the fact that we are truly a god. So, what should we do?

Everything that keeps us away from expressing our true nature, the nature of the god within, should be done away with. We should let tranquillity come back into our life. We should observe our lower self in the light of our higher self. We should study, we should ponder and assimilate the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom, taking its guidelines for right living to heart. We should learn to see without eyes, to hear without ears, to sense without organs.

We should become intelligent and let the inner god shine forth from within in order to live Theosophy.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr. - Philippines

A Vision to Go Mainstream

Dear fellow Theosophists, the time has come when we must set a very bold vision for the future of Theosophy in the Philippines, namely to make Theosophy part of the mainstream of our national life.

"Mainstream" refers to "a prevailing current or direction of activity or influence." Something that is in the mainstream is something widely known, even if the practitioners are few. For example, the word "Zen" is part of mainstream thought, even if only a very, very small number of people are practicing it. A mainstream thought or practice is something that people keep in mind in their thinking, planning, and behavior. It has a direct or indirect influence because it has become a benchmark in human values and practice. Three things are needed to achieve such mainstreaming in a wholesome way.

1. *Associated Key Ideas.* We must make a strategic decision on how Theosophy will be known in the public mind. The word

"Theosophy" must be associated with several ideas (or words) that will immediately come to mind when anyone refers to Theosophy. When we mention the word "Zen," meditation is an immediate association. When we say "Yoga," it conjures up physical postures and meditation practice. What do we wish the word "Theosophy" to be associated with? Universal brotherhood? Religious unity? Esotericism? Education? Spirituality? Many of us have difficulty processing complicated and multilayered ideas. We tend to have a simple impression about things like social work, peace advocacy, conversion, ecology, spirituality, or fundamentalism, namely whether they are good or bad, honest or dishonest, genuine or fake, helpful or unhelpful. Notice our reaction when we encounter words such as Jesuits, Taliban, Carmelites, Iglesia ni Kristo, Dalai Lama, Cory, Marcos, Communists. Our reaction tends to be based on a general impression and not a set of complicated ideas. Whether we show interest or not, whether we interact with them or not, depends greatly on our initial impression.

2. *Institutionalization.* We need to institutionalize the work and mission of the Theosophical Society. The world consists of people, institutions, social systems, bodies of knowledge, structures, etc. They are, for want of a better word, the "institutionalized" reality that arises out of past knowledge, beliefs, culture, and levels of maturity, as well as the continued influence of previous experiences. These institutions, once congealed, become powerful and almost omnipotent determinants of social realities. They condition education, public opinion, political institutions, customs, beliefs, morals, etc. The Theosophical Society must take part in such an institutionalization process.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines an institution as "a significant practice, relationship, or organization in a society or culture <the *institution* of marriage>" and to *institutionalize* is "to incorporate into a structured and often highly formalized system <*institutionalized values*>." In other words, institutionalizing is translating ideas into standard practices among large masses of people.

The Theosophical Society must actively help in making the principles of the ageless wisdom become a living part of current institutions, practices, and customs. This cannot be done simply by lectures or articles. Words easily go with the wind. We must translate the wisdom into institutionalized practices. I am aware that organized or codified knowledge and practice are no longer true wisdom, but the problems of the world inevitably arise out of organized knowledge and practice, which at present are unfortunately rooted in unwholesome soil. Since conditioned knowledge and practice are unavoidable, let them at least be rooted in right knowledge and principles.

Helping to form institutions that mold the thought, practice, and customs of society has a variety of possibilities: public magazines, communication media (radio, TV, newspapers, and the Internet), schools that train the minds and behavior of young people who will become leaders of the future, youth programs that shape the lifestyles of the young, new educational initiatives, work for social amelioration to change the values and outlook of society, movements to foster compassion (vegetarianism, animal welfare, harmony among religions), and so on.

We must learn from history how religious movements have

been able to redirect the flow of civilizations and mold their cultures, institutions, and social life. Such redirection is not done simply through canons and doctrines, but through active involvement in the institutionalization process of doctrines. Church services and schools have been two powerful instruments for such institutionalization.

We must go mainstream rather than just watch and comment from the sides. We may make mistakes, but we have centuries ahead of us to learn from our experiences as well as those of others. If we wish to effect changes, we must immerse ourselves in applied Theosophy.

3. Core Body of Theosophists. But there is an absolute prerequisite in pursuing this vision - so absolute that it is better not to pursue the vision if this prerequisite is not met. That prerequisite is having enough Theosophists who know and live Theosophy. They should be people who not only can expound the ageless wisdom, but who are models of the Theosophical life.

Preparing ourselves to become worthy representatives of Theosophy does not mean that we have to live perfectly way. That is nigh impossible. What is required is a genuine earnestness of effort to address the major contradictions and incongruities in our lives. The work of the lofty spiritual teachers needs such human representatives in society. If there are too few, then the message of the ageless wisdom cannot be conveyed to the world at large. The wisdom can only be embodied through human lives, not through the pages between the covers of books. In specific terms, this call entails the following:

- Do we have an integrated and profound understanding of the ageless wisdom we call Theosophy or the perennial philosophy?
- As individuals, do others (including our family members) see in us the example of a more mature, more effective, and wiser life as a result of our living the Theosophical life?
- Have we somewhat freed ourselves from the clutches of imprisoning emotions, such as anger, resentment, depression, and fear? Is there equanimity in our lives?
- Is there a noticeable spontaneous emergence of understanding and compassion in us when we are dealing with people and the world in general? Are we service-oriented?
- In our areas of work - whether as educators, professionals, business people, house persons, workers, or volunteers - do others see us as sources of harmony, counseling, wise solutions, goodness, and constructiveness?

To help prepare ourselves to become such representatives of the wisdom amidst society, the Philippine National Board has arrived at the consensus that we must have a long-term educational program on Theosophy and the Theosophical life among our members. This shall be done in two modes: through distance courses in the internet or mail, and through regular gatherings, such as retreats and trainings. We have a course on Theosophy through the Internet

<http://theosophy.ph/corrcourse.html>

By next year, more advanced courses in Theosophy will be available, covering a wide area of study and practice. This program is a long-term one, because such self-preparation entails years and decades.

If many of us respond to this call to prepare ourselves to become worthy representatives of Theosophy, Theosophy will become part of the mainstream in our society. This vision may take ten, twenty, or fifty years to realize, but when pursued properly and persistently, it will be achieved.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Mary Anderson - England

'Living Theosophy', as Dr Algeo has pointed out, can be interpreted in two ways: as Theosophy that is alive and as living in a Theosophical way.

Could we say that it is up to us to keep Theosophy alive and a living force by living it?

When we think or speak of making Theosophy a living force in our world, does 'we' mean the Theosophical Society or the members in general, or is this question addressed to each one of us? After all, the Society is not an abstraction but is made up of its members, and moreover all members are free to make their own decisions on how to make Theosophy a living force in their lives. Yet, if we are serious, our decisions as Theosophists - and also our actions and our whole attitude - will be based spontaneously on what the Theosophical philosophy means to us personally.

If we have understood Theosophical teachings - each of us after

our own fashion and in all seriousness - our lives will be affected. Indeed, Theosophy is a philosophy, a teaching, but it is also a way of life in the light of that teaching.

We are all different individuals and our understanding of Theosophy may also differ in some respects, but what is important is that, if we are serious, Theosophy should spontaneously become 'a living force' in our lives. That living force will at times be felt by others.

If we look back on our first encounters with Theosophy, perhaps it was an article or a book that awakened our interest. But for many of us it may not have been the teachings in themselves that first awakened our interest - indeed perhaps awakened memories of something familiar ('rang a bell'). It may rather have been an encounter with a Theosophist who was inspired by, and did his or her best to live according to, Theosophical principles, without wishing to impose them in any way on others.

The importance of personal encounters does not mean that we should not organize or hold lectures, seminars, discussions, etc. or write articles to explain and spread Theosophical teachings in a nondogmatic manner. Indeed, such activities are important and should be carried out, as far as possible, in an efficient, even professional, but essentially human way. But what is also supremely important is that our whole attitude in life should be affected, quite naturally, by these teachings. How do we act, as individuals, when we suffer loss, when we are disappointed, bereaved, misunderstood, or abused? People may become interested because they wonder how we manage to survive catastrophes in our lives, to take fortune and misfortune

in our stride and sometimes even, as Kipling wrote, 'treat these two impostors just the same'.

Also within the Society, we may differ in our opinions and attitudes. We may have arguments. But we can simply 'agree to differ', and perhaps it is our conception of the brotherhood of humanity that strengthens the bonds between us as members. A colleague of mine once joined us on a trip to another town in Switzerland for meetings. She did not attend the meetings but came with us 'for the trip'. She remarked afterwards how nice we all were to each other.

If our understanding of the Theosophical philosophy is deep enough (although it may or even should be simple), we shall, as individuals and also as a group, attract others, particularly those not bound by dogma or superstition and those who are seekers. After all, we are also seekers, human beings who have not yet found everything. Indeed, if we feel we have found everything, we may risk becoming dogmatic.

I have dealt with the subject of making Theosophy a living force in our own lives and not with its becoming a living force in the world. But, after all, we are all part of the world. The first step, as Christmas Humphreys is reported to have often said, is important. The first step involves our own lives. If Theosophy becomes a living force in our lives, it may become a living force in our environment. Such a living force may not yet be perceptible, but when circumstances are favourable, it may become also a force in an ever wider environment.

Of course, Theosophy will not become a living force in the world

by magic. We are still deep in *kali-yuga*. But whether we as Theosophists study on our own and thus form our own attitudes or spread such study and such attitudes in our environment, we are simply sowing seeds that somehow, some time, will produce plants and ultimately a harvest to feed the hungry.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Anton Rozman - Slovenia

Our title seems to imply that, if we are able actually to live Theosophy, we are on the way to make it a living force in our world. So, what kind of living is living Theosophy? Whether we understand Theosophy as a world view that gives meaning and purpose to life, as an Ageless or Ancient Wisdom about life, or as a way of life, we are dealing with life itself.

In her article "The Science of Life" (*Collected Writings* 8:243-9), HPB translates the following words of Count Leo Tolstoy: "The question inseparable from the idea of life is not *whence* life, but *how one should live* that life ... But how do I cognize life in myself? ... And when I speak of life, know that the idea of it is indissolubly connected in my conceptions with that of *conscious* life. No other life is known to me except conscious life, nor can it be known to anyone else." Further, "Our life, ever since we became conscious of it, is a pendulum-like motion between two limits. One limit is an absolute unconcern for the life of the infinite Universe, an energy directed only toward the gratification of one's own personality. The other limit is a complete renunciation of that personality, the greatest concern with the life of

the infinite universe, in full accord with it, the transfer of all our desires and good will from one's self, to that infinite universe and all the creatures outside of us. The nearer to the first limit, the less life and bliss, the closer to the second, the more life and bliss. Therefore, man is ever moving from one end to the other ... THIS MOTION IS LIFE ITSELF ... A man who conceives life such as he finds it in his consciousness, knows neither misery, nor death: for all the good in life for him is in the subjection of his animal to the law of reason, to do which is not only in his power, but takes place unavoidably in him ... we know naught about the death of conscious mind, nor can we know anything of it, *just because that conscious mind is the very life itself* ... The life of man is an aspiration to bliss, and that which he aspires to is given to him. The light lit in the soul of man is bliss and life."

HPB concludes that these words sound "like the echo of the finest teachings of the universal ethics of true Theosophy ... To fail to solve the problem contained in it was to be doomed to sure death, as ... [h]e who lives for Self, and only for *Self*, will surely die." In this sense, living Theosophy is therefore an ever renewing commitment that one will aspire to "seek truth for its own sake and to crave knowledge in order to benefit others" and to achieve recognition of the fundamental unity of life as "a spontaneous response of the heart" that will lead one to "build more creative relationships with all people" and to develop a greater "sense of social responsibility and empathy with all forms of life" (from the Canadian Theosophical Association's pamphlets "What Is Theosophy?" and "We Are Closer Than You Think!").

Every student of Theosophy is by necessity a solitary traveller upon the path that leads toward awakening one's higher po-

tentials of understanding, intuition, love, compassion, and creativity. It is therefore up to each of us to discover individual ways for expressing these potentials and to learn how to blend with others into a symphony of collaboration. Learning this art of collaboration is the most important ability that we, as individual students and as members of Theosophical organizations, need to acquire.

Students of Theosophy often treat knowledge about the principles of human relationships as too profane for serious consideration, but at the same time we exhibit a serious inability to overcome our different points of view when we should come to some conclusion on how to promote Theosophy or even on what Theosophy actually is. Without a capacity for collaboration, all our individual efforts are almost worthless and conceal a selfishness that prevents us from asserting brotherhood as a living reality.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Warwick Keys - New Zealand

Theosophy - the Divine Wisdom teachings - offers real hope and a way through the troubled times we are now experiencing on planet Earth. The study and teaching of Theosophy is a prime motivation for many Theosophists and Theosophical groups. This is important work. However, it is only one part of the work.

People can learn about the Wisdom teachings, study and discuss them at length, as they often do, but it is the practice that counts and makes the difference. It is practising Theosophy - living Theosophy - that will change the world, not just studying the subject.

Madam Blavatsky emphasized three important aspects of Theosophy - study, meditation and service - with all three in balance. Most Theosophists enjoy the first aspect, study. In fact many focus almost entirely on it. The second aspect, meditation, gets less emphasis than it deserves. Meditation is the basis of the way to self-realization and more. In addition to personal meditation seeking inner silence, group meditation with

a single united focus offers a way for Theosophists around the world to literally save the world in these tumultuous times. Such a meditation, focused on creating a better world, is now being actively promoted within the New Zealand section. It is an act of real service and is a practical aspect of living Theosophy.

The third aspect spoken of by HPB is service. This is where many of us do not measure up. Service is multifaceted. Service is the key to making Theosophy a living force in our world. True service means to live Theosophy, not just talk about it. We are all good at talking about such things, but how good are we at practicing what we preach?

To serve in this sense, i.e., to live Theosophy, is not an easy task. We need to transcend from where we are to another level of being to enable us to successfully accomplish this undertaking. To transcend in simple terms means 'to go beyond.' This means that we lift our consciousness and awareness to another level, a higher level. To transcend also means becoming objective rather than subjective. We see clearly when we are free from clouding emotion and personal desire or wishes. To accomplish this on a continuing basis allows us to truly serve and to truly live Theosophy.

We can work to make Theosophy a living force in our world by working toward transcendence at both an individual and a group level. To do this requires: Goodwill - the goodwill to work positively together to co-create a better world within ourselves, within our organization, and in the outer world we live in. Will - the inner will and focus to make this happen positively. Putting aside or sublimation of personal agenda and little ego for the greater agenda. Meditation - the basic tool and an essential

requirement and discipline for those who choose to live a Theosophical life. Rising to a new level of being and stepping aside from a subjective view to an objective view, allowing the blinkers to drop and see things as they really are, free from lower emotion. This is not easy. The will to serve - to be of service to divine intent - "Thy will, not mine."

As Theosophists we have the knowledge and we have the skills - or they are readily available for us to acquire - to live Theosophy personally and collectively, and to co-create a new and relevant way to live, work and co-create a new living and vital Theosophy for the twenty-first century. We can transcend to that space where as self-realised beings we are able to consciously decide to rise above differences and focus on shared values. We can rise above subjective squabbling among ourselves. We can rise above criticizing and being criticized. We can rise above our own worldly concerns. We can transcend in the highest meaning of that term.

Can we do this? We can and we will!



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

The Power Within

by James Colbert - USA

The invitation from your online magazine (*Theosophy Forward*) to ours (*International Theosophy Magazine*) for a contribution on the theme "Theosophy as a living force in the world" is itself an expression of living force. It is a connection and unity between Theosophists.

Our magazine stems from its base, called International Theosophical Conferences Inc. or what most now refer to as ITC. It grew from a few students first meeting in a small community along the California-Oregon coast. Although the initial few attendees were associated with the United Lodge of Theosophists, there were soon students coming from almost all Theosophical traditions. The interest was in Theosophy and how Theosophy was integral to the world and our lives. The individual's affiliation or Theosophical tradition became less important. There seemed to be a power in bringing together Theosophical brothers and sisters regardless of tradition.

One of the Masters has indicated that we cannot have the masters' help unless there is unity within and between

Theosophists. The living force of Theosophy may first have to come from the power within ourselves, as well as within and between our traditions, which can lead to Theosophy's taking its full place on the world's stage.

How do we do this? Two examples provide an approach. One is from eighteenth-century Tibetan Buddhism, and the other from the lore of Australian Bushmen.

Tibetan Buddhism has what is called the "Rimé [non-partisan] movement." "Rimé was initially intended to counteract the novel growing suspicion and tension building between the different [Tibetan] traditions, which at the time had, in many places, gone so far as to forbid studying one another's scriptures."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rime_movement

Many view the founder of this movement to be Jamgön Kongtrül, who said, "In summary, one must see all the teachings as without contradiction, and consider all the scriptures as instructions. This will cause the root of sectarianism and prejudice to dry up, and give you a firm foundation in the Buddha's teachings. At that point, hundreds of doors to the eighty-four thousand teachings of the dharma will simultaneously be open to you." Rimé can be applied also to respect for the differences between Theosophical organizations, as well as to most paths winding their way up the spiritual mountain.

Most of us rest upon the shoulders of H. P. Blavatsky, but also on those of other incredible ancestors as well. About our ancestors, more than one Australian Bushman tribe holds the

belief that a flaw may be passed down through the generations. Only the generation now alive can heal that flaw. It is their responsibility. Once it has been healed, the generations behind can have peace, and only then can they rest. Until then they wait.

Our flaw has been disunity among Theosophists, and perhaps this flaw may have limited the power of Theosophical ideas to take firmer roots. Today seems to be a new time, with a new spirit bringing Theosophists together. One can read sadly of the many attempts towards greater unity in the past and the many plausible reasons it never took hold. Why our time is different is not clear. But it is. There is no doubt that electronic communication is helping our global connections to become ever closer. Maybe we are reaching a level of greater maturity. It does seem to be our responsibility to help establish a nucleus of universal brotherhood. Perhaps our ancestors can begin to rest.

The conference we are having in the Netherlands this coming August (12-15) has as its theme "Making Theosophy a Living Power in the World"

www.theosconf.org

The primary sponsoring group this year is the Theosophical Society - Point Loma. Others from the United Lodge of Theosophists in Greece will be helping. Members of the Theosophical Society Adyar and the Theosophical Society in America will also participate. Some of us would like to see India hold our conference for 2011. Our board of directors of the International Theosophy Conferences Inc. is composed of members from many Theosophical traditions. Perhaps this unity can assist Theosophy to become a living force in the world.

Any organizational structure works well when the inner spirit and purpose is felt by all of its members; and the reverse is true when it is not. Organizational togetherness is not necessary, but spiritual connection resting on Theosophical ideas is vital.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Gaspar Torres - Cuba

Living Theosophy is a difficult task in view of the average evolution of humanity. Moreover, we are in a particular cycle, known in India as Kali Yuga, in which the worst conditions for the spiritual life prevail, and the Divine Wisdom, or Theosophy, is left unattended and unknown by the majority of persons.

In *The Work of the Theosophical Society*, Annie Besant stated: 'Those who can read the signs of the times will understand the vital importance to the future of Theosophy, of the direction now given to the work of the Theosophical Society. We are treading a cycle similar to that trodden by Christianity in its early centuries, ...' (reprinted in *The Theosophist*, March 2010). She also pointed out (1) that past efforts of Neoplatonists and Gnostic Christians failed in their task to pass on to a new civilization the fundamental principles that support a faster progress of the Evolutionary Plan; (2) the similar conditions of the present cycle; and (3) the duty of the TS in relation to this situation.

The world is in a miserable state, and the degeneration of human relations, ethics, and so on, is a fact that cannot be

ignored if we are to improve this state of affairs. It is not easy to know what we can do in order to accomplish this huge task. In the first place, human beings cannot be changed for the better by outward means. An individual alone can change him or herself. This change is not in the capacity, the will, or determination, of someone else. Each person is responsible for his or her own self-transformation and development.

The Masters wrote extensively about the requirements for discipleship, which allow for self-transformation and self-realization. No one can meet them for another, but each one of us is responsible for changing his or her own being. The only possible help we can receive is the inspiration found in the teachings of this Divine Wisdom, and by the example of the lives of those who dedicate themselves to disseminating it.

Everyone who understands Theosophy must make it a living force within him or herself and try to demonstrate the effect of the inner peace and true happiness that it conveys. The determination to attain this inner state is the first step. Only afterwards can we think about conveying it to others. If we are unable to attain this state, it is impossible to be of any real help to the world at large.

The Theosophical Society (and all its members who wish to serve humanity through its agency) has the duty of disseminating its Highest Object: discovering, without any doubt, the One Life in the innermost centre of every human being's consciousness. The pursuit of spirituality is completely different from the many worldly pursuits, and it is impossible to mix the latter with the only pursuit capable to unite the human soul to the Supreme Being. Many personal and transitory interests drive our

lives, wasting the energy necessary for pursuing the only real goal.

It is important to take note of the profound changes we need to bring about in ourselves, because the human mind is not suitable to carry out this transcendental task. We need to go beyond to develop the higher faculties at the spiritual level of consciousness. The unity needed between all members shall be impossible to attain unless first we have right understanding, the right attitude and behavior, essentially in accordance with this higher task. We can only do this and wait for the results, knowing that no effort is ever lost, that once right energy is set in motion, the Law will do the rest. We do not need to wait for any direct answer from others, as this would imply a personal motive and would place our task in the sphere of the egoistic and material world.

The beneficent impact we can have on the world can be strengthened, of course, when a large number of members is able to attain this unity between them and is profoundly interested in discovering their Real Being. It is important to remember HPB's last words: 'Keep the link unbroken.' She knew that only a real nucleus of radiant spiritual energy may generate a vortex that can attract the souls at a high enough level to awaken them at their point of return in the evolutionary cycle.

No isolated mind can produce a universal effect, but the unity of devoted and dedicated members with the one and unique purpose of serving humanity would go a long way in the right direction.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

Theosophy as Spiritual Practice

by Pablo Sender - Argentina and the USA

Since its inception, the Theosophical Society has been actively engaged in spreading the esoteric philosophy. This knowledge was conveyed to the public primarily by means of informative lectures and written material, a method that worked fairly well in the past. Today, however, we are no longer reaching the public in an effective manner. The causes for this deficiency are complex but include the fact that, during the last forty years or so, our culture has changed in two important ways.

First, during the early decades of the Society, esoteric philosophy was little known in the West, so our organization was the most important source of knowledge about it. People who were looking for a spiritual approach other than the religious one were attracted to these "new" Theosophical ideas. In time, chiefly as a result of the Society's work, the main topics of esoteric philosophy became more and more accepted, and an ever-growing number of organizations were created to promote these ideas. Unfortunately, this later popularization was done at a rather superficial level and did not create a deep understanding of the tenets. Nevertheless, today esoteric

philosophy is no longer perceived as a novelty, and the Theosophical Society is seen as one organization among many dedicated to the spreading of these teachings.

Second, another change has also taken place in our culture, affecting the way Theosophy is received. When the Theosophical Society was founded, science was at a peak of influence, creating a general thirst for its knowledge. Access to it was not as easy then as today, so any public avenue to that knowledge attracted interest. Today, since the dawning of the information age, people have become relatively saturated with knowledge. They no longer look for new theories, but for the means to cope with the pressures and stresses that modern life imposes upon them. In consequence, informative lectures no longer quench people's thirst or even attract their attention.

How should we address these changes? Some members think that Theosophy is too complex and that we should adopt a more New-Age approach in order to attract a larger audience. But that will not work because it would cause the Theosophical Society to lose its distinctive nature and be placed on the same level as hundreds of other organizations in an already overpopulated market. But most importantly, people attracted by the New Age are generally neither willing nor able to take the serious approach to spirituality that Theosophy really represents. After some time, they become disenchanted and eventually leave the Society. We need to take full advantage of the depths of Theosophy by refocusing the way we relate to the teachings and how we present them to the public. If we want Theosophy to become a living force in our world, we have to present it, not merely as a philosophy, esoteric or otherwise, but as a spiritual path. We should present Theosophical teachings, not as

abstract philosophical concepts, but instead as tools to help people face today's challenges and enable them to lead their daily lives spiritually.

To achieve such a presentation, whatever we convey through our lectures and writings should aim at throwing light on the path of spiritual development. If we are talking about karma, for instance, we should not focus on the details of how the law works. After having given the basic technical information on the subject, we need to show how knowledge of karma can help us live differently.

For example, we could talk about the equanimity we get when we deeply feel a sense of justice, of purpose, in everything that happens to us. Such equanimity is essential to spirituality, as a way to go through life with inner peace. We could also talk about the need to develop a perception of the spiritual order behind life, and then point out basic practices to develop that perception. Such presentations should be our first approach to the public. In a couple of articles published in the *Theosophist* I have tried to examine some teachings from the *Secret Doctrine* in this way; see my website (pasender.tripod.com). More technical information about the workings of karma may be important for a deeper understanding of it, but that can come later, after the person has had an insight into the more spiritually relevant aspect of the subject.

To share Theosophy in this way we, as Theosophical Society members, need to study Theosophical teachings in a serious way, trying to grasp the fundamentals, but also making an earnest effort to live according to what we study. In doing so, we will discover how Theosophical teachings can help us in our

daily lives. Without this effort, our approach will be superficial and our answers to people's questions and problems will not carry the living force of our own realization.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Dorothy Bell - Australia

In the context of the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition, we can make Theosophy a living force in our world by walking the talk, living the truth as we see it, in other words, by being who we already are. The challenge is there, waiting for us to move through all the blockages that the mind has created to prevent the acknowledgment and outward expression of our divine nature, which is our spiritual birthright. In a world increasingly engulfed in negativity and darkness, where true compassion and respect for fellow travelers is rarely seen, the need is urgent.

So what does this mean? My mind wandered to the trail-blazing H. P. Blavatsky, who, in a world so different from our own, brought the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom out of the East and into the West and onto the turf controlled by the churches. I recall words from a popular English ballad by Alfred Noyes: "And the highwayman came riding - / Riding-riding - / The highway-man came riding, up to the old inn door."

Those words repeated themselves until an image slowly formed in my mind, which they triggered. The night was dark; the road

paved with cobblestones glistened in the moonlight. Out of the night came the sound of hoof beats, closer and closer, until the outline of the horse and rider came into clear view - a dashing and powerful figure in a thick velvet cloak and hood. The rider was HPB, a young and strong HPB. She called far into the night, "Wake up! Wake up! The time is nigh." Her voice penetrated the darkness. "Wake up! Wake up! Sluggards all, lulled in sleep on a cushion of comfort. Clear the decks! Be ready. Your service to humanity is nigh." Like Paul Revere, warning Americans that the British were coming, she rode on into the night, calling to unseen and unknown listeners, but with a parting shot, "Those with ears ready to hear will hear." The image faded. Why the subconscious brought this image to the surface did not really matter. It gave focuses for thought: the symbol of the highway-man, waking up, the impediment, preparation for service, and urgency.

Why did HPB appear as a highwayman? Perhaps this symbol represents the "pirating" of some of the flock from the control of the Western patriarchal churches. The highwayman also represents nonconformity with the prevailing law and order of things; and HPB, in being true to herself, was certainly non-conforming. By "unveiling Isis," she brought the power and balance of the divine feminine - missing so long from the collective mindset - back onto the turf of religion.

What was the call to "Wake Up" from sleep? Our journey with Theosophy brings a realization that a radical shift is required in our consciousness of our identity and our reality. The Theosophical worldview is opposite to the social programming that manipulates the everyday thoughts and actions of the materialist's mindset. And that difference of worldview is

perhaps the essence of the message in the wake-up call. It brings to mind HPB's words about historical and social conditioning:

"... You must remember that all our members have been bred and born in some creed or religion, that all are more or less of their generation, both physically and mentally, and consequently their judgment is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences. If, then, they cannot be freed from such inherent bias, or at least taught to recognize it instantly and so avoid being led away by it, the result can only be that the Society will drift off on to some sandbank of thought or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and die" (*Key to Theosophy*, p. 305).

The wake-up call is to realize that, since our birth, the brain-mind like a computer has programmed us away from who we truly are, and unfortunately there is no "delete" button. It has manufactured a personality that blocks the true Self, the spiritual entity within ourselves, from expressing itself outwardly. False beliefs and illusions created in the mind, based on the great heresy of separateness, operate in a false paradigm of reality and identity. As HPB wrote in *The Voice of the Silence* (verse 4): "The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real."

It is difficult to realize that we have been controlled into believing that we are not who we are. The personality that we are portraying has been programmed into us, into separation, judgment, fear, and negativity; and the challenge is to "know thyself" and not to be a victim of that personality in our daily actions and emotional reactions. To "wake up" is to see anew, to train ourselves to see with the eyes of Wisdom and of spirit,

and to respond to the world with that new sight. In knowing and feeling oneness with all that exists, we are the truth of who we are; we are wisdom, love-compassion, and peace, which already exist in our inner divine nature at the core of our being.

Why did HPB urge us to "clear the decks" and "be ready"? She urged us to respond to the opportunity for serving humanity in whatever battles lie ahead, to free ourselves from the mind of illusions, antagonism, and negativity that block the flow of being who we are. HPB described Theosophy as altruism, which is of the spirit. With our minds centered in the divine field of operation, we can be instruments of such great service.

What is the "cushion of comfort" on which we sleep? Although intellectual contemplation of the human journey is comforting and comfortable, we can get lost in accumulating intellectual knowledge. The effort and discomfort involved in breaking through the mold of illusion is far less appealing and comfortable to the controlling mind. Perhaps the intellectual comfort of Theosophical teachings, such as substituting reincarnation for heaven, gives the personality relief from the all-encompassing fear of death and annihilation.

Our state of consciousness, whatever it may be, results from karmic law. We are all on a huge learning curve. And in whatever lifetime, with whatever catalyst or trigger, when we finally clear the decks and break through illusions of our identity and reality, the freedom of Self-expression awaits: awareness of the god-energy, the Krishna-Christ consciousness, that we already are. As children of the collective Elohim or spiritual parent, we will be outward expressions of the true Self's living power and force of universal, unconditional love, with its

wisdom-compassion and peace. Its power is beyond comprehension, being the power that created the universe. It is of itself; it fulfils itself; it loves through us; it never judges; it casts out all fear; it is the only power existing in the world. This is wondrous and awesome.





Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Ed Abdill - USA

Each of HPB's major works has a dedication page, but only *The Voice of the Silence* is dedicated "To the few." Who are those few?

At the very beginning of fragment one of *The Voice*, we read: "Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the rajah of the senses, the Thought Producer, he who awakens illusion. The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer."

Would many care to read further? Moreover, would more than a few understand and try to do what is asked, especially when we are told of the dangers and self-sacrifice required to reach the goal?

Theosophical theory suggests that there is an evolutionary process going on in three different states: physical, mental, and monadic (or spiritual). Many of us may assume that physical evolution has more or less come to an end. We do not see any new and more highly developed creatures evolving out of human

beings. When it comes to mental evolution, the theory is speaking of the human mind, called the human soul by HPB. In the third fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky tells us that before the human state, evolution proceeds passively. No individual effort is required for plants and animals to evolve. However, we human beings do not evolve further without "self-induced and self-devised efforts." If we do not have an "indomitable determination" to discover the source of our own being, and if we do not have a heart full of compassion, we are doomed to live many lives walking a metaphorical tread mill that takes us nowhere.

Reading Theosophical literature and believing it to be true may be comforting, but that will not move us forward one inch. What is required is direct insight into the truth beyond the words. It is what Blavatsky calls "spiritual intuition." When we get an insight into a truth, we have what has been called the "ah-ha" experience. One moment we do not understand, the next moment we do, and there is no measurable time between not knowing and knowing. In the moment of understanding, there is no "me." There is only the truth. The knower and the known have become one. Once we understand, we are changed forever. Even if only slightly, our way of life changes. It is when we understand, and only then, that we begin to live Theosophy. As HPB said, "Theosophist is who Theosophy does."

The primary purpose of the Theosophical Society is to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity. We can do that only if we realize human unity within our own heart and mind. By believing it without knowing it, we are not living it.

It would indeed be heartening if Theosophical principles were

taught in our schools and eventually became embedded in our government and social institutions. In time that may be possible, but I fear it is a very long way off. Evolution grinds exceedingly slow, individual by individual. Yet each individual can make a difference in the world. Every thought, every feeling, and every action affects the whole. We can be ever mindful of that sacred place within us that is one with the Eternal. We can be a beacon of light in our own community. We can even make every effort to influence our legislators, educators, and even our religious leaders in positive ways. In some cases we will succeed. Yet in the end, to make Theosophy a living force in our world, we must attempt to do the most difficult thing of all: we must change ourselves.





Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Marie Harkness - Northern Ireland

Ten years ago we entered a new century and a new millennium, the Aquarian Age, no doubt attended by a flux of higher forces and energies. This promises to be an era of noble aspiration and focus and the developing use of higher mind. Life today is moving at a frenetic pace, with greater expectations and ever new advances in science and technology, such as the Web, now providing us with fast and immediate worldwide communication.

For Theosophy to continue as an effective force, we must constantly keep in touch with the initial impetus given at the inception of the Society, of the Masters' strength and full blessing through their instruments H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott. The precious nuggets given out then are as important to us now as they were then - even more so: first, the realization that "There is no religion higher than truth"; second, the three Objects, which are to be understood and practiced; and third, but especially important, freedom of thought.

In their letters, the Masters and the Mahachohan have stressed

the need for cooperation, harmony, and true practical brotherhood among both members and non-members. They called for "a great mutual toleration and charity for each other's shortcomings," the importance of being nonjudgmental, the purpose of the Society as not for self-seekers wishing to pursue occult studies for their own ends, and the essential value of all members to the whole as all willingly give according to their time and capacity. Master KH has pointed out, "We refuse no one. 'Spheres of usefulness' can be found everywhere." He also wrote, "Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathizing individual may help you magnetically" and "Those who try in their walk in life to follow their *inner light* will never be found judging, far less condemning, those weaker than themselves."

HPB has written, "Theosophist is who Theosophy does." For Theosophy to remain a vital living force, we must give of our hearts, our time, and our talent as much as we can. We must also cherish and keep in mind a vision of a nobler, more peaceful world, where humanity is becoming more compassionate with ever-growing graciousness and thoughtfulness, opening up to higher forces and thereby increasingly contributing towards the upliftment and spiritualization of all beings on this planet. Members, attached and unattached, can greatly assist in this important work by projecting ennobling thoughts into the atmosphere, and by transmitting their ideal vision for the future, thus greatly aiding the devas and Masters by providing them with material to work with. This mental work, alongside Lodge meetings and performance of duties, may be given more emphasis in the future, so everyone can be of service and be encouraged to

partake in a tremendously vital mental work, irrespective of physical capability.

The Master M referred to the Society as 'our Theosophical ship' and the Masters have reassured us that "though separated from your world of action, we are not yet entirely severed from it so long as the Theosophical Society exists." It behoves all members to remain on board this ship - a ship steered by greater wisdom, foresight, and guidance than any of us possess. By aligning with the Masters, by surrendering ourselves and our energies to their great cause, we are essentially co-workers at whatever level, each absolutely essential in bringing to fruition their plan for this planet. They chose the Society as their instrument gradually to release knowledge and higher energies on earth. As Theosophical workers, we have to stand on our own two feet while the Masters oversee the work, but they will not coerce or interfere with personal decisions because the resulting karma belongs to the doer and free will can't be interfered with. We grow inwardly by our own efforts and decisions. That said, the constant inspiring and uplifting thoughts of our elder brethren can be picked up by the receptive and can be utilized to enhance the work.

In the future, the dissemination of the tenets of Theosophy worldwide will use new technological advances, as has happened with the Web. Also HPB has recommended a balance of study, meditation, and service if we are to serve effectively.

With increasingly stronger spiritual energies flooding the earth,

gross materialism will lose its grasp and everyone will be more open to altruism and higher thought. Today, as students of occultism, we are expected to remain where we are, in the midst of the fray, and to progress onwards by selfless dedicated service, in a sense by "retreating within" while "advancing boldly without."

Well-chosen music can affect the psyche positively. Music can also be an effective medium for transmitting creative higher thought and noble ideals, particularly when it is composed and at live performances.

By dwelling upon and living the dream of a universal human brotherhood, reflecting a much greater brotherhood, that dream *will* become a reality. As Gandhi said, "Be the change that you want to see in the world."



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Halldór Haraldsson - Iceland

Besides the two classical definitions of the word "Theosophy": the absolute and the relative, it seems to me that this question indicates a practical meaning. The former refers to theosophy as the living reality, the ultimate goal for each individual: a transformation of consciousness, and the latter to theosophical teachings: knowledge sometimes referred to as the Ancient Wisdom. In the very first object of the TS from 1875 the emphasis is on knowledge, but when the objects became three in 1896 the first one added great importance, both in regard to the brotherhood of man and to human rights "without distinction to race, creed, sex, caste and colour." Although stated so long ago this was ahead of its time and is now of paramount importance in the situation of the world we live in today.

Now the brotherhood ideal seems far away and there does not seem to be much understanding and tolerance between people of various cultural and religious backgrounds. Still, there are many positive powers at work. At the same time their work is reaping more understanding, unity and peace, the powers of

fundamentalism increase in their fanatic attitudes when they realize they are losing their grip. As has been pointed out, we don't find the roots of the difficulties in what appears, but in the mind of every human being. Here we come to Krishnamurti's words: "You are the world and the world is you." The real root is to be found in the 'I-process.' As Robert Linssen said: "All our social, religious and moral structures are based on the reality of the 'I-process' whose expression in all domains they encourage. The fundamental notion of the impermanence of the 'I-process' leads man to an attitude of detachment, both from himself and from other things."

In Krishnamurti's teaching and various theosophical teachings we have the means to heal man's sickness. It is important to gain knowledge, but the main thing is how we live. As it may take some time for us to reach transformation of consciousness, we have meanwhile to increase understanding and try to make these things a living force in our world before that ultimate goal is reached. But - how?

There is no question that the work of the TS in the world today has its effect outside its borders: meetings, workshops, conferences, books, CDs, DVDs, lecture- and discussion-programs for the internet reach many outside the society. But besides that we have allies in many interesting things happening nowadays that support our views. Psychologists in many countries have accepted the practice of mindfulness-meditation with very positive results; discoveries in physics support some of the teachings of the ancient wisdom; the fashion of yoga, zen etc. the world over, although sometimes commercial, has on the whole a beneficial effect; ESP research; research into the possibility of reincarnation by acknowledged scientists is

remarkable, as it has in fact never been investigated scientifically before because of religious prejudice. All this is in sympathy with the objects of the society, especially the third object. Whether this is known by the name of theosophy or something else is of no significance here. What matters is the fact that it is happening. We have to keep an open-minded attitude.

Also: besides all theories and teachings there have been throughout history remarkable cases of people having unexpected, mystical experiences which in most cases include not only higher states of consciousness, but also knowledge that is in accordance with the *ancient wisdom or perennial philosophy*. And the important thing is: this keeps on happening.

This can happen spontaneously or by our own personal efforts. But a transformed person cannot transform another person, each person has to learn by and for himself. On the other hand a transformed person can *have an effect* on others by the way he or she behaves, lives and simply the *way he or she is*. I'm tempted here to use a favourite phrase: "When you smile other people smile, and when other people smile, there will be miles and miles of smiles." This is not just funny. It is a fact.

We see today proof of this in the present financial world crisis, where we see how greed for money and power is repeated in the same pattern in many countries. It is as if these circumstances, mysteriously worldwide, are forcing man to learn a lesson. This crisis has immense moral implications. Having seen the unmasked face of greed we may reach a deeper understanding, a realisation which may have unexpected benefits for man, not only financially, but even more so at deeper

levels. We may not only be able to solve the difficulties, but also change ourselves for the better. So, if we, each and every one of us, can actually make theosophy a living reality in our lives, we can make it a living force in our world.

Editor's note: At the request of the author, this contribution is being published as the author sent it, without editorial intervention.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Clarisa Elósegui - Spain

The question "How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?" has a simple answer: only by living Theosophy. But to understand what "living Theosophy" means requires deep thought and is difficult to express in a few words.

Very often, members ask, "Why is my study of Theosophy not fruitful?" or "Why have I been studying Theosophy for so many years, but still suffer from what happens in my life?" Other members, eager to spread Theosophy in their Lodges, ask the same question with a different focus: "Why is it so difficult to reach students?" or "Why is it so difficult to convey Theosophy and to touch students deeply?"

The process of assimilating Theosophy involves three essential factors.

The first factor is information, specifically the Theosophical wisdom we receive from books, lectures, courses, and seminars. This information has to be digested so that we avoid verbal indigestion; it is said that we should read for five minutes

and then meditate half an hour, or longer, about what we have read. Too often, the process stops without the meditation, and then the students become "Theosophical parrots," repeating what they have learned without understanding it. There is no heart in such communication of Theosophy, which is why it does not reach the hearts of students, even though it can get into their heads. Those who are satisfied with such communication will become new "parrots" themselves. Those who search for something more will proceed to the second factor.

The second factor is an accurate and serene reflection in our own lives of the Theosophical information we will be passing on. We achieve that reflection by comparing what we have learned, point by point, with our own mental, emotional, and physical habits in what we do and say. The result of this comparison is a discovery in ourselves of those habits that are more or less far from the human ideal of a self-realized person, which is what we must become. We have to be willing to change our habits. Those who live only in their minds may cherish Theosophical ideas, finding them beautiful, and may even dream that they are already self-realized. But they will go no further, believing wrongly that once they have understood something, they have done with it. Those who live with balanced minds and hearts will pass on to the third factor.

The third factor is a continuous change, always governed by our understanding of Theosophy. This change is nothing but the transmutation of our present character, which will become more and more a faithful reflection of our essential nature. These three factors are a trinity. If one of them is missing, the process cannot be completed. Very often, the third one is not fulfilled or it

is fulfilled only occasionally with little intensity and determination. A human being can give only what he has, that which is a part of himself. When we talk about living Theosophy, we are talking about this gift. If we are content with tirelessly repeating what the books say, without having practiced in our lives the ideals that are the greatest riches of Theosophy, we will never become messengers of this precious Theosophy.

It is absolutely essential that all of us become living expressions of Theosophy, with a coherence between our deepest thoughts and each of our simplest actions and words, everywhere and always. This coherence must start in ourselves, but will extend to our families and spread to all our friends and every person we come into touch with.

Unfortunately, many students of Theosophy repeat the wellknown expression "Well, we are just human ..." when they apologize, even among colleagues, for some weakness or mistake in behavior that is clearly untheosophical. Such separative and incoherent behavior contributes to the increased suffering in the world, when we should really be working intensely to lessen it.

It is uncomfortable to speak about these things, and for that reason we often avoid doing so. But we can never resolve a problem that is denied or hidden.

Each one of us is responsible for the state of suffering in this world. We have to respond lovingly to everyone and everything, acting intelligently if we are to help in bettering their lives. Only in that way can we make Theosophy a living force in the world, because only men and women who live Theosophy can be its

living force.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Tim Boyd - USA

An attempt to answer the title question requires examination from several levels. The first and most obvious is from the point of view of the individual. Theosophy cannot be a force in the world around us until it is a living force within us. To quote Albert Schweitzer, "Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing." When we think about the people who have had the greatest influence for good in our own lives, invariably we find that the ones who were fired with a passion, being steadfast, open, and wise, are the people who made an impression. Add love and kindness to that mixture of qualities and you have the ingredients for a person of transformative power.

One of Theosophy's many beauties is the depth of its teachings on the constitution of both the human being and the universe we inhabit - a vision of who we are and how we came to be. This vision is empowering, but without a systematic application of those teachings, they become a collection of expansive, but ineffectual concepts. The first goal for us as Theosophists is to

enliven these truths by applying them, first to ourselves and then to the world around us. As HPB said in *The Key to Theosophy*, "Honor every truth by use."

The need for self-culture and self-initiated effort in trying to bring the richness of Theosophy to life is self-evident. The place where we often stumble is when it comes to figuring out the "how to" part of it. Yes, there is a body of wisdom in the teachings of Theosophy; and yes, to bring those teachings to life I must do something, but what? Many Theosophists, feeling that clear guidelines are lacking in this process, stop with mere study of the challenging and profound ideas that Theosophy presents.

In our attempt to live Theosophy, perhaps our greatest challenge is to confront our personality, that construct of temporary attributes which has taken on a preeminent sense of reality for us. Many formulas for loosening the stranglehold of the personality can be found in the spiritual traditions of the world. One of the best is within the Theosophical tradition, namely, HPB's "Golden Stairs":

"A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for one's co-disciple, a readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, a loyal sense of duty to the teacher, a willing obedience to the behests of truth once we have placed our confidence in and believe that teacher to be in possession of it, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human

progression and perfection, which the secret science depicts. These are the Golden Stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb to the temple of Divine Wisdom."

When deeply explored, these stairs will be found to be a complete expression of both the process and the practice of following an authentic spiritual path.

Now let us briefly consider the title question in the context of the world around us. In our search for an answer, the most important thing is the question we ask. Perhaps the question "How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?" should be rephrased. Theosophy is already a living force in our world. Although rarely a subject for nightly news reports, everywhere we look, groups and individuals are working selflessly to alleviate human and animal suffering, to establish a functional brotherhood of humanity, to understand and cultivate our deepest inner resources, and to bridge the divides between religions. Though such work may not be called Theosophy, in every nation groups are working along these central Theosophical lines.

The question might be better expressed this way: "How can we magnify the living force of Theosophy in our world?" Theosophy is not the possession of Theosophists, neither is it specific to the Theosophical Society. The leavening influence of the wisdom teachings is active globally and often is most active in people who have never heard of Theosophy. With this in mind, we can focus on two approaches. First, we can support all those specifically Theosophical projects that present the ageless wisdom to the world. In our lodges and in our individual

lives, we have countless opportunities for doing this. Second, we can align ourselves with other groups that actively work to minimize suffering in the world or seek to uplift the human spirit. Lending our work and the quality of our consciousness to kindred efforts will magnify, more than anything else, the reach and power of Theosophy in the world today.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Jan Jelle Keppler - Belgium

In answering the title question, we should first define who we are who are asking the question, so we can know what our possibilities are to make anything a living force. Then we should define Theosophy and thereby be aware of what it is that we want to make a living force. Also we should define what our world is to be better aware of where we are working. Furthermore, we should define the idea behind the words "a living force," which is the ideal that the question is striving at.

The question does not seem to be concerning the moment in time when we can make Theosophy a living force. Neither is the question concerned with why we should make Theosophy a living force in our world. If the question is directed to the members of the Theosophical movement, it is not necessary to give much attention to the why of it, because the three objects - about forming a nucleus of the brotherhood of humanity without any distinctions; the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science; and investigation of unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man - are well known to most members.

Theosophy is the universal wisdom possessed by the sages of all ages, given out to those who can experience that wisdom in their own lives. We are one life, inter-related not only at the human level, but also with the animal, plant, mineral, and elemental kingdoms - seven kingdoms in total. This brings us to the sevenfold human constitution, which is part of Theosophical teachings. Anyone can experience the principle of the sevenfoldness, which is manifested in our world and the whole universe. These seven principles interrelate the human microcosm and the universal macrocosm.

Everything in manifestation is alive, either unconsciously, consciously, or self-consciously. We can make the universal wisdom a living force in our world by becoming more and more self-conscious. Application of our discriminating force about what is true and what is not true becomes an ever-increasing force, when we take into consideration all our experience at every moment of day and night. We are our own sovereign law maker and therefore responsible for all our actions, past, present, and future. It is in the eternal now that we can grow in self-awareness and become more and more at one with the one truth of the universal consciousness. Why we should do so is known by those who have experienced this oneness.

Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Diana Dunningham Chapotin - France

"May Theosophy grow more and more a living power in the lives of each one of our members, and may the coming year be yet more full of good work and healthy progress than the one just closing, is the wish of your humble co-worker and fellow member." Helena Blavatsky's her third letter to the American Convention, April 1890, *Collected Writings* 12:151.

How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world? This question has been addressed by a number of Theosophists on this website. Without reading the contributions of those who have already expressed themselves, one can guess what they have to say: namely, each in their own way and with varying emphases and colors, that we must study Theosophical doctrine deeply, show its relevance for people's daily lives and for their spiritual practice, and above all demonstrate it as a living force within ourselves? Is that far off the mark?

So what can I contribute that hasn't already been said beautifully? Actually, the longer I am a member of the

Theosophical Society, the more I tend to think that we are collectively already doing the best we can. "What?!" I hear you say. "Is the writer of this article blind to our monumental defects?" Perhaps what I perceive to be acceptance is simply a certain (jaded) resignation brought on by middle age. Either way, let me assure you, I believe that Theosophists have a role to play in making Theosophy a living force in the world and I acknowledge that every group must aspire to doing ... even better than its best! Here then are a few suggestions for what we might do in the future. Our organization needs to be four things:

1. A center where people can find clear in-depth instruction in the fundamental principles and literature of Theosophy, such as *The Secret Doctrine*. In cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, we have an inspiring metaphysic that totally and radically changes the way the world and human beings are viewed. It would be helpful if our groups focused on the primary literature as a basis for their study.
2. A resource center, clearing house or forum where people can meet other like-minded groups and individuals. The TS in America is just one Section that is doing well in this respect. The brilliant community outreach of its national headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois, comes to mind - its sustained interfaith work, for example.
3. A center where people can find in-depth instruction in spiritual practice, including meditation, spiritual psychology and conflict resolution. Our own in-house spiritual instruction still consists largely of nineteenth-century moral exhortation, such as lecturing each other about the need to be brotherly. Happily,

highly respected leaders like the Buddhist monks Thich Nath Hanh and Ajahn Sumedho are being invited to our international headquarters to lead retreats. The meditation practice encouraged by teachers such as these is not intended for the faint-hearted - and so much the better.

4. A center where people can explore contemporary issues of concern in the light of spiritual principles and be inspired to enlightened social action. Consider the theme of a three-day participatory event handled in recent years by the TS in America: "War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." How does the following testimony written about the event by participants strike you?

"Thanks and blessings to all. The work you do has convinced me of both the need for and the effectiveness of the approaches I witnessed. ... I felt honored to be in the presence of these soldiers, their families, to hear their narratives, and to have my heart opened to their realities. ... It was a privilege to be part of that group and to witness the healing that occurred. ... The Theosophical Society facilitated this healing by kindly allowing us the sacred ground to plough, plant, and grow toward new and renewed life. ... Throughout our time together we managed to accept the hand of the Luminous Other to raise us from our deathly fever to our new life, whether that hand was seen as the hand of Jesus, the Bodhisattva, the Elder Spirit, or simply another one of our own circle, our own lodge. Souls that had been rendered dark, emerged, showing light."

When we read testimony like that, perhaps we can take heart and permit ourselves to believe that we really are - in modest measure - making Theosophy a living force in our world.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Manuela Kaulich - Germany

Many good thoughts and wise words have been written in all the articles in this series of *Theosophy Forward*. So my first thought was that there is nothing more to add. Then I remembered *Mount Everest* (1933), in which our former President George Sidney Arundale wrote about right citizenship in "Individuality and Leadership":

"And there are two duties, the duty of the individual and the duty of the state. ... The state alone is happy in which these two go hand in hand, ... each fulfilling its own dharma. ... Right citizenship involves right living - that is, the pursuit of wealth. ... What are the constituents of real wealth? Work and happiness. ... Work which concerns specifically the individual, for his own uniqueness, his own individual growth, and then work of the collective good. Harmony must be established between the two. Happiness immediate and remote is the purpose of work. In this there are two ingredients: (a) Self-realization. (b) Service. The wise man is he who perceives no distinction between self-realization and service, but is able to combine the apotheosis of

self-realization and the apotheosis of service. ... When we try to make people happy we are adding to the national wealth."

Isn't it one of our most important goals to seek happiness for ourselves? On the contrary: doesn't social service create self-realization and therefore enhance cognitive facility? Doesn't transformation arise out of collective moments of happiness? Interdependency between the individual and fellow humans in general is evident. All individuals can contribute to making themselves and others happy by living Theosophy and thereby creating harmony between self-realization and service.

To quote G. S. Arundale once again: "Work is supreme, and work, of course, is the expression in the outer world on the physical plane of an individual's honor. Every piece of work carries the honor, the character, of the individual. ... We shall never get rid of the employer and the employee relationship. It is in the very heart of the Hierarchy itself, from the Great Employer Himself, down to those He employs. There are the super-ordinates and the sub-ordinates, and both must recognize their position and their duties. ... You see, then, in all this, the great work that awaits true leaders. ... [who] there in [their] own measure carry out the will of God as best [they] may in strength and wisdom and happiness."

These declarations can also be followed in our spiritual work. We have to attend to our duties, as we are responsible for the welfare of the community we are living in. Let us take our rightful place in the hierarchy - in the continuous circulation of the life force - as teachers, as students, according to our circumstances, so that we can come nearer to the Oneness.

The previous contributors to this series in *Theosophy Forward* have written about the importance of preparing and transforming ourselves and developing a certain level of consciousness. In this context, Gaspar Torres, in his article on the subject, published in June 2010, says: "Everyone who understands Theosophy must make it a living force within him or herself and try to demonstrate the effect of the inner peace and true happiness that it conveys. The determination to attain this inner state is the first step. Only afterwards can we think about conveying it to others. If we are unable to attain this state, it is impossible to be of any real help to the world at large." While we are determining "to attain this inner state," it is very important to get help from students on a higher level.

G. S. Arundale describes his own path in his books. Many Theosophists were and are accompanied on their way by such books. He describes the path to spiritual awareness as one of easing the way for his brothers and sisters, as he himself received help in his time. It is important for our brothers and sisters that they take part in our experiences, whatever step we are on at the moment. Such participation is service and self-realization in harmony. To quote great thinkers repeatedly is not the same as relating one's personal experience. The latter is full of life and responds to the questions that come when we face life directly.

Tim Boyd in his article on "Living Theosophy," published in September 2010, says: "The first goal for us as Theosophists is to enliven these truths by applying them, first to ourselves and then to the world around us." Pablo Sender, in his article published in June 2010, says: "If we want Theosophy to become

a living force in our world, we have to present it ... as a spiritual path ... as tools to help people face today's challenges and enable them to live their daily lives spiritually."

Finally our third object instructs us to "investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in humanity." Do Theosophists really tolerate the work of other groups that encourage practices like mind healing, channeling, dream interpretation, and clairvoyance? Wouldn't it be better to deal with these phenomena, to explore them, than to scoff at others and their approach and to dismiss their theories? A Theosophist should be able to investigate these attentively and respectfully, but cautiously and fearlessly, with others who are earnestly searching for spiritual truth.

A quotation from Albert Schweitzer is an apt conclusion: "Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the only thing. And each truly searching person is an example."



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Preethi Muthiah - India

Simply put, the answer to the title question is "by living the teachings." A corollary, however, is "What does it mean to *live* Theosophy?"

In a world that is largely divided - by religion, race, gender, or material affluence - Theosophy has a very relevant message to give to the world, but before it can do that, we who are its "flag-bearers" must live the teachings at our most personal level. Living those teachings does not imply that we have no problems but rather that, as we grapple with imperfections in ourselves, we also learn to be forgiving and tolerant of these in others. The pitfalls for us are greater because we have a large storehouse of knowledge open to us and thus can become very smug in our scholarliness, ignoring in the process the little things that count.

The most essential of the things that count is our relationship with fellow humans. Are we open to questions - even criticism - from outsiders? Or do we shut people out when they seem to disagree with us? In dealing with our relationship to others at a deeper, personal level, we should realize that unless we have a

healthy relationship with ourselves, we cannot have a good one with someone else. And so we do need to get down to the basics and make changes at the most micro level before we can hope to make Theosophy a living force in the world. The question we must fundamentally ask ourselves is: How comfortable are we being ourselves?

This question is not a judgmental one but rather a factual one, in the sense of being comfortable with our own faults, weaknesses, strengths, and competencies - all of which are part of us at the moment. Mostly, we are comfortable to the point of enjoyment with our strengths and competencies, but cringe at the very mention of our faults, failings, and weaknesses. To add to this schism is the fact that we have the ideal examples that the World Teachers have given to us, and mostly we are in a rush to attain to their state without having lived out or experienced fully the human stage. This means that for the most part we are half-ripe or half-baked.

The other part of this conundrum is that we tend to think of the Teachers' states of being as a set of behaviors, while that is definitely *not* what the thing is about. So, for example, the Buddha said "Be compassionate," which most people interpret as "behave compassionately." But since merely behaving compassionately is not an inner reality and does not include oneself, it is fake compassion - if there is such a thing. Compassion is not a set of behaviors but rather the attainment to a state of being from which compassionate action emanates as a natural outpouring. The compassionate act is *who* the person is. In other words, compassionate action/behavior flows from a compassionate being. The same can be said for the other virtues as well.

To better elucidate this point, let us see what happens when someone does something that hurts us. We rave, rant, and cry about the trust that is broken. In the middle of this, we suddenly remember the words of a Wise One and then try to put on what we consider to be the desired behavior. But this habitual going back and forth between the two poles of feeling hurt and resentful, on the one hand, and trying to live up to a Teacher's words, on the other, causes deep-seated disintegration.

The next time you are hurt, try to accept that hurt, *be* with it, and see what happens. I have found that the hurting part of me feels listened to, cared for, respected - not by an outsider, but inwardly by me, which is very healing. When I stand with myself for who I am, I eventually become comfortable with myself. The more comfortable I am with myself, the easier it is for me, on the one hand, to accept criticism and, on the other, to be truly of help to someone who is going through an internal struggle. Thus being comfortable with oneself does not imply ignoring one's faults, but rather knowing that one is worthy of love and respect because of and in spite of these. It does not imply a refusal to change, but rather that one will change with love and care. Love and care are essential to change; in the absence of these there is only resistance, which is not life.

The more comfortable we are with ourselves, the more integrated we become. In this inner integrity, we find love, wisdom, compassion, power, and beauty residing simultaneously with our human imperfections. This integrity has the power to heal and to inspire. Living from this state is part of "living the teachings."



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Jan Nicolaas Kind - Brazil

Our wonderful, magnificent, and ever-intriguing planet is a blue wonder indeed. Looking at Mother Earth from outer space is a breathtaking experience. Looking at our planet, from the outside in, leaves us with the impression that all seems to be so coherent. There are no borders, no divisions, with the continents warmly embracing one another. And, above all, everything we observe has this splendor. All appears to be so interwoven, peaceful, and majestic.

Earth is the third planet from the sun and is, in diameter, the fifth largest in the solar system. Like a gigantic space craft, it is moving - in sacred communion with the other planets - through space at the vertiginous speed of 72,360 km (some 44,962 miles) per hour toward the constellation of Hercules, while the Milky Way, of which our solar system is a part, is moving toward the constellation of Leo at about 2,160,000 km (some 1,342,161 miles) per hour. Also the earth and its satellite moon move together in an orbit around the sun. All these many movements are made in perfect harmony at incomprehensible speeds. All that exists functions in sacred communion.

In direct violation of the laws of nature, human beings have created divisions by drawing trivial lines we call borders on pieces of paper we call maps, establishing illusive territories we want to possess, in which we think we will be safe from our enemies, never realizing that our greatest enemy dwells within ourselves.

Humanity is caught in a great and deep-rooted illusion. We think that we can resolve our problems via legislation, through political and social reform, through advances in science and technology, or through greater intellectual understanding. However, we lack wholeness, awareness, gratitude, and even respect, and therefore also love.

Religion, politics, revolutions, and wars have not brought about any change; on the contrary, they have taken us further away from our divine destiny. More than six billion human beings inhabit the Earth, of which Theosophists make up roughly 60,000 people; that is one Theosophist per 100,000 people. As Theosophists, being aware of the overall condition of the planet, we ought to seriously ponder how we can make Theosophy a living force in our world.

Theosophists, like people in the world all around us, have been and still are divided. Different Theosophical Societies have different views and follow their own particular interpretation of Theosophy. These apparently conflicting views are well known, so this is not the place to investigate them.

What it comes down to is that Theosophists really have not done much better than most religions. Instead of carrying light into the world, we have occupied ourselves with underscoring

differences, claiming that what we grasp from the teachings contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This stance causes disharmony, animosity, competition, and far-reaching egocentricity. The result is odd and paradoxical, when one comes to think of it, since Theosophists claim there is but one Life and one Truth.

Unity among Theosophists, which ought to exist, no matter what tradition they follow, is lacking. This lack makes it hard, if not impossible, for Theosophy to fully transmit its blessed message to humanity. Theosophy is not limited to any specific country, region, or tradition; it exists independently of such limits. Theosophy does not recognize illusory borders, obstacles, or man-made differences.

But then, where must Theosophists take Theosophy, so that it can do its necessary work and become a living force?

Mere words and lectures on a purely conceptual level are not enough. What a lecturer does from the moment he or she steps down from the platform is what truly counts. Mere study in order to gain more intellectual knowledge is insufficient. Merely quoting the Lord Buddha, the *Bhagavad Gita* or H. P. Blavatsky has no significance if one is not willing to live up to those quotations, or at least make a serious attempt to do so. Writing impressive articles, with a lot of footnotes and countless references, has no value when deeds do not match the claims.

Theosophists should learn to see differences among themselves as challenges instead of obstacles. For too long, we have looked at our disagreements and not at what we have in common: our mutual responsibility. We should do away with the

three main failures that for so long have kept us apart: mistrust, misinterpretation, and misunderstanding. Letting go of old prejudices and instead showing modesty, tolerance, flexibility, and an ability to adapt to the reality of change will trigger the growth of inner discernment. That discernment, in its turn, will ultimately lead to fulfilling the work of the Theosophical movement.

It will be a rewarding, though at times tough, exercise, but attempts can be made toward that end and now is the time to do so! The moment will come when the question raised earlier, "Where must Theosophists take Theosophy?" will have to be changed into "Where will Theosophy take Theosophists?" Only when this question becomes pertinent can Theosophy become an essential and living force in our troubled world.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by John Algeo - USA

Four Ways of Living Theosophy

This series has called forth a large number of excellent responses. Most of them, in one way or another, have said quite truly that Theosophy will be a living force only to the extent that we live according to Theosophical teachings. Little, if anything, can be added to that truth - except, perhaps, for one detail. And that detail is to specify how, in particular, we can live Theosophy.

Certain particulars are obvious, to be sure, from the Society's three objects. If we are to form a nucleus of universal brotherhood, we must act in a brotherly way toward others: the brotherliness of Castor and Pollux (in which one lays down his life for the other), not that of Cain and Abel (in which one takes the life of the other). If we are to encourage the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science, we must not be anti-intellectual and it helps to know a bit about those subjects. If we are to investigate unexplained laws and latent powers, we must know what those laws are about, what the powers control, and how to investigate them sensibly and safely.

However, beyond whatever actions the three objects imply, still rather large generalizations, the question remains: Exactly how do we do it? That question has not been left in the dark by the brightest lights of the Theosophical Society. Indeed, it has been addressed several times and quite specifically. From the very beginning of the Society, it was intended to provide an entrance to practical work, as Colonel Olcott reports in *Old Diary Leaves*. When, for a variety of reasons, such practical work did not materialize generally (although Olcott certainly lived Theosophy his whole life), Madam Blavatsky created the Esoteric Section (now the Esoteric School) for precisely that purpose. It still exists, and membership in it is intended to provide a structured way of living Theosophy - although the extent to which it succeeds in achieving that aim depends crucially on those in the School.

Later, Annie Besant, recognizing that more was needed, particularly to suit individual bents, urged all members of the Society to involve themselves with one or more of three sister organizations, each of which addressed a different aspect of the need for a structured way of living Theosophy. Membership in any of them was never compulsory, but they were and remain available as options for putting Theosophical ideas into practice as ideals for living.

One of Annie's supplementary organizations was the Liberal Catholic Church. It obviously works best for those from a Christian background. That and its adherence to Catholic opposition to women in the priesthood create problems for some. But analogs for other religious backgrounds could be developed, as a Hindu temple ceremony has been, or as an unstructured way of regarding the ancient teachings of

Zoroastrianism was pointed to by Colonel Olcott and is still adhered to by a number of Parsis.

Another of Annie's options was Co-Freemasonry. It suits those with a ritual bent but who are not necessarily Christian and who value the equality of the sexes in all activities. Before Besant, Co-Freemasonry was largely secular in orientation and centered in France. Besant spiritualized it by envisioning it as a modern form of the ancient Mysteries and universalized it by spreading it around the globe through her Theosophical connections. Today it still exists in a number of forms, of which those most closely aligned with Besant's own ideals and ideas are the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry and the Grand Lodge of Freemasonry for Men and Women in Great Britain. Free-masonry uses an eighteenth-century set of symbolical actions, objects, and language to express ritually the ideals implicit in Theosophy. It is consequently not for everyone.

Annie Besant's most original option, one she created *de novo* was the Theosophical Order of Service. This sister organization has only one purpose: to put Theosophical ideas into practice for the service of others. When people try to resolve problems in their own lives, often the best advice one can give them is to forget about themselves and concentrate on helping others. As *The Voice of the Silence* makes clear, it is by serving others that we save ourselves. The TOS is the most neutral of Annie's three options. You don't have to be Christian or ritualistic to act within it. You need only to do what Theosophy asks of all of us: to serve our fellow beings in practical ways.

The Esoteric School, the Liberal Catholic Church, Co-Freemasonry, and the Theosophical Order of Service are all

excellent ways of living Theosophy and thereby making Theosophy a living force in the world. Together, they provide four means of doing just that, each suitable for a somewhat different personal orientation, but all compatible with one another.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Agnes Gasemyr - Norway

The fact that this force exists is a great challenge to us in our life. We know it exists because great men and women have given evidence of the fact through their lives and writings. They have pointed out that the world is one, and that we can become deeply aware of it in our expression of love and compassion.

Love and compassion not only towards a near friend or a family member, but an expression of it in relationship to all living beings and all Nature. How does this come about when most of us are living in cities and so necessarily do meet most living beings as we pass them by, where Nature is scarce and animals are only allowed on a leash or in certain areas.

We can read about animals or watch programs on Nature on the screen, and we know that they live by instinct. Biographies are becoming very much sought after. Through these we can come to know a little about how some people spent their lives, and learn what a human being is. But first of all we must go to the source and learn first hand about ourselves - look inside and see if we can find love, compassion and peace there. No one

else can do this for me; I am the only agent to do this work. This is urgent - for 'if we can't find peace in our hearts, we are not going to find it elsewhere'. This is pointed out in all Theosophical literature.

We see the truth in ourselves and find what we can do - what we can contribute to Life. We must start where we are, literally, and use our discrimination. Do I act in a good way in this? Is my thinking true? Our possibility for action may seem limited - but truth and goodness are limitless. So we do the best we can locally to create a good atmosphere and friendly relations - wherever we have our walks in life by asking ourselves if this is true or false. Life is a never ending story and we are part of it. We can take a break and seek to be in Nature every day - or look after a plant on our window sill - and know that we also represent Nature, which has law and order and beauty.

If we are lucky enough to be a member of a Theosophical Lodge, the possibility of making an impact on the world is much greater. Wisdom and Truth are to be found in the sharing and deep understanding of Theosophical literature; only coming together in the atmosphere of a Lodge gives awareness of Truth and Love and an inspiration to do good work where we are. It is the spirit of questioning about the best way to act that makes the sharing uni- versal.

Universal - the word is so full of meaning, we have to find it in our heart and keep it in the background and bring it forth when we use our discrimination: - is what we are doing right or wrong in this perspective? Being what we are (!) is no idle work, for it will make us strong to the benefit of every being and thing that we meet when we look at the spiritual side of things. We need to

look at the spiritual aspect, because the TS is a spiritual body trying to promote the science of the spirit.

Theosophy is practical. Spirituality in man has to be awakened, and made to flower. It will embody us, so to speak, when we are awakened to letting ourselves look for it, have sympathy with it in ourselves and in all men and beings on the whole living planet, and sympathy with the universe also. It is a universal force that belongs to everybody. It is there all the time for us to partake in it - inwardly and outwardly - and to look for it always. Then we can't go wrong, because if and when we do we human beings being what we are, we can see it and make it right. In this way we work together - each in his or her own way - knowing the immense force that is at play, playing by the rules of universal laws which by nature are immutable. We only have to see it in ourselves and everywhere, and we are working for the good evolution of all the beings on this planet, from the wherever we are. Looking for the truth everywhere, the useless spill of energies will come to an end.

Truth can be discovered on any path, and that is the wonderful practicality of it. It is universal. So is Wisdom. The quest for it demands a force that has no room for the lower aspects of mankind, so we simply have to lift ourselves to the plane of a religious search for the Truth

This work of ours will bring order in our consciousness. Without this inner order, truth - or spiritual consciousness - cannot function through us. It is there but it cannot function when we are not one, when we do not give room for the Universal Brotherhood to function. Inner order is the key to outer order and we are investigating all the time for this inner order to bring out

these latent powers in man. We are so complex, and the powers latent in man need to be seen by us, to be used by us.

We have the tools within ourselves, and our relationship with others will stimulate and widen the depth of investigation. The books and the texts given us by the great spiritually evolved people who have gone before us are there for us to study. Let us look into them deeply and with perseverance search for the truth everywhere - the truth that we are one. How does it manifest? What is the beauty of it? The non-truth can be discarded - our illusions and our deep ignorance - as being invalid, dead; and so we give room for Truth which is the highest force we can reach - the real powers that are now latent in man. Sympathy with them is what we have declared when we became members of the Theosophical Society, and sympathy is what is needed. Discernment is also needed, because it has to be the Real that we have to have sympathy with, not with the egoistical part of the mind and lower self.

Can we bring about this evolution in man? We have every opportunity in our daily living. We just have to deeply grasp it and set about it now. We have been given all the tools - they are where we are - within us. Be a lamp in the darkness that is inside and outside.

In his Blavatsky Lecture: *CONSCIOUSNESS: Its Nature and Action* (TPH 2002) N.Sri Ram says:

"Intuition is not a hunch, not wishful thinking, but a faculty. It is like instinct, but there is a vast difference between them. Instinct is fixed and acts only in certain situations. It works mechanically. Its action is blind, elemental and repetitive. But *buddhi* is ever

free; it moves in no fixed grooves. It is intelligence unconditioned, and creates newly every time. The development of thought in man has suppressed instinct. But when the whole mode of thinking becomes different, when it ceases to divide, to shape and alter the underlying consciousness, then the instinct of the earlier stages reappears with a superior nature as a capacity to know the truth and create the image of truth. When *manas* regains its undivided state, it automatically integrates itself with *buddhi*, because there is only one consciousness in man, though it has these two modes of action. It is then a new consciousness, which has in itself the nature of truth and in its actions expresses the beauty of that truth. The newness has always been there, waiting to be uncovered."





Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Navin B. Shah - Kenya

The motto of the Nairobi Lodge of the Theosophical Society in East and Central Africa, which is prominently displayed in its meeting hall, is "Living an exemplary life based on Theosophical values."

The Theosophical Society's emblem has the following words inscribed below it: "There is no Religion Higher than Truth". All our actions should be based on ethical values where Truth is the highest goal. Honesty, integrity, commitment, and dedication to work are the hallmarks of a true Theosophist. Theosophy, though not a religion, embraces all religions. Madam Blavatsky clearly stated that Theosophy is not a religion; it is religion itself, that is, the essence of all religions. If the first object of the Theosophical Society, based on universal brotherhood, is truly practiced, it has the capacity of building a just world free from all limitations of outer differences.

The twentieth century revolutionized the way humans had lived for centuries. Modern inventions of motorcar, airplane, radio, telephone, computer, and many other innovations in technology,

society, and politics have changed our lives dramatically. We take these developments as a matter of course today. Yet they have truly squeezed the world into a globalized village. Where does Theosophy, which Annie Besant called the Ancient Wisdom, come in all these modern advancements? Theosophy is all embracing; and we, as Theosophists, have a duty to help turn materialistic gadgets into useful tools to promote peace in the world and to bring prosperity to all.

We Theosophists have to redouble our efforts to explain the divine plan to the world so that humans are not immersed in materialism at the expense of the real purpose of our life in this universe. Theosophy has to be heard around the world; it cannot shy away from adopting modern media, especially television, in promoting the message of Ancient Wisdom. As Robert Ellwood put it in his Adyar convention lecture of 1999: "Partly because of our initial impact, there are now many venues for the kind of teaching we present about oneness, the cosmic interpenetration of matter and consciousness, or the cyclical evolution of all beings."

The Hindu saying *Vasudeva kutumbakam* ("the whole world is my family") teaches us to treat everyone as our brothers and sisters or family members. There is no place in this world for selfishness, greedy amassing of transitory materialistic wealth, or other divisive actions. The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path sets out eight steps for the guidance of human life. They are Right Knowledge, the basis for Right Thought, leading to Right Speech and Right Activity, including Right Means of Livelihood, and Right Exertion, producing Right Memory and the highest achievement of Right Concentration. If we practice Theosophy in our daily life, it can become a tremendous living force in our

world as we begin to look at everything from an objective rather than a subjective point of view.

Recent interfaith dialogue, like Theosophy, studies all religions and philosophies, leading to tolerance, understanding, respect, and a realization that we are part of a pluralistic society. Theosophy believes in freedom of thought. It shares the Jain religion's principle of *Anekanta-vada*, which is that everyone's viewpoint is right and therefore no viewpoint should be forced upon anyone. It is exemplified by the story of an elephant and eight blind men - each of whom is right in describing the part of the elephant they are holding as what an elephant looks like!

Intercaste, intertribal, interethnic, interreligious marriages are becoming common in all parts of the world as a result of education and people's movements in what is now a globalized village. Theosophy has enunciated this principle of universal brotherhood devoid of all distinctions. Theosophy has gone even further in affirming that all life is one, be it in minerals, plants, animals or humans. Thus we as Theosophists are called to respect these younger brothers of us, the humans. It is this sensitivity which, if we cultivate it, can be a living force in our world. We shall then avoid all man made disasters of war and oppression and exploitation of those who are weaker.

To quote Robert Ellwood again: "If love means anything, it means accepting others in their differences from oneself as well as similarities and wanting to grow mutually by exploring those differences with appreciation." Every small step by a Theosophist will go a long way in making Theosophy a living force in our world. The Theosophical Society is the vehicle for this change.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Nelda Samarel - USA

I am quite certain that nothing new, nothing that already has not been said, is being added in response to this question. However, it is quite instructive for each of us to ask this question of ourselves, to ponder upon it, and to make whatever adjustments in our lives that may be a natural outcome of our query. And so I am grateful for the opportunity to ponder upon this question, essential for every true Theosophist.

Prior to attempting to state how we may make Theosophy a living force in the world, it is helpful to first define our terms. What is meant by "Theosophy"? Theosophy is a word, a doctrine, and a way of life. As a word, it simply means "wisdom of the Gods," or "divine wisdom." As a doctrine, Theosophy offers a unique body of knowledge which, when studied and understood, assists us in making sense of the universe and of our place in it.

Theosophy as a word and as a doctrine, however, are empty unless they are lived, unless Theosophy is a way of life for the student. This requires making the teachings, the doctrine, a part

of oneself, assimilating the doctrine - studying it, owning it, digesting it, and becoming one with it. When something is thus assimilated, as with any nutrient, it changes us; we are different than we were prior to its assimilation. Assimilation of Theosophical doctrine changes our outlook, broadens it, makes it more complete, resulting in a wider perspective on life and on living a more complete life.

This often is referred to as living Theosophy, as practical Theosophy in contrast with academic Theosophy. Making the doctrine come alive in our lives is what differentiates the two. Theosophy as a "living force" is a power that changes our lives.

The very first thought that came to mind when confronted with the question, "How can we make Theosophy a living force in the world?" was similar to what came to mind for many others who previously answered the same question: In order to make Theosophy a living force in the world, we first must make it a living force in ourselves.

Assimilation requires a willingness to change who and what we are, a willingness to accept changes in values and in a way of life. It is done, not through a conscious decision, although a conscious decision may be the first step in the process, but through an openness to the doctrine. This openness must be not only emotional and intellectual, but a spiritual or intuitional receptiveness, as well. We must allow the doctrine to penetrate, to permeate, not only Kama and Manas, but Buddhi. Buddhi only may be reached through *meditation*, the 2nd arm (following *study*) of the Theosophical Society.

If meditation is so essential, and I am suggesting that it is, what

is needed in the Society, then, is in-depth meditative instruction and supported meditative practice, more than the occasional workshop and pre-meeting "moment of silence." As members, we rightly place great emphasis and spend much time on *study*; I am suggesting that the same or greater emphasis be placed on *meditation*.

Through *study* and *meditation* Theosophy becomes a living force in ourselves, absolutely necessary prior to thinking about making Theosophy a living force in the world; necessary, but not sufficient. The third arm of the Theosophical Society, *service*, is required in order to reach beyond ourselves and make Theosophy a living force in the world.

Addressing the American Section during an annual convention, when asked what is the hallmark of a true Theosophist, H.P. Blavatsky replied in a single word: "Altruism." Altruism implies unselfishness, using the Theosophical doctrine and all that is learned from it not only for oneself, not only for our own growth, but in the service of others. It implies self-sacrifice, or making our actions sacred for the benefit of humanity. The Master K.H. has said,

"... it is the duty of every man who is capable of an unselfish impulse to do something, however little, for its (humanity's) welfare. ... Since there is hope for man *only in man*, I would not let (go) *one* cry whom I could save!"
(*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, Chronological Edition, Letter 15, page 49)

And so it is suggested that the purpose of study and meditation is to ready oneself for service, for work on behalf of our brothers

and sisters. Only then may Theosophy become a living force in the world, only through living the three arms of our Theosophical Society, only through *study, meditation, and service*.



Living Theosophy - How can we make Theosophy a living force in our world?

by Dolores Gago - Uruguay

The Theosophical Society was founded during a period of risky materialism on one side and a dangerous inclination to dogmatism on the other. In many associations the very name of the institution states more or less clearly the work its members are expected to do. Curiously enough the word "Theosophy" is not included in the Society's Objects, and furthermore those Objects are stated as "declared objects." This makes us wonder whether the purpose of the Society is some kind of unveiling or discovery as a result of the sincerity of commitment the member decides to offer.

Therefore, the work of investigation becomes a challenge for the members of the Society. And the question arises, what are we going to investigate? It is helpful to remember the words of some of the international Presidents. Col. Olcott, during his inaugural address on 17 November 1875, said: "If I rightly apprehend our work, it is to aid in freeing the public mind of theological superstition and a tame subservience to the arrogance of science." Annie Besant emphasized the interpretation of the first declared Object and, during her

inaugural address on 26 June 1907, said: "The Theosophical Society asserts itself as a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. ... its function is to proclaim and spread about Theosophy." So inevitably the question arises, what is Theosophy?

In a seminar in July 1990 at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden-Holland, conducted by Mrs. Radha Burnier, President of the Theosophical Society, during which attempts were made to define "Theosophy": "Theosophy is wisdom which is not mere knowledge. It is the kind of knowledge which finds expression in right action. Action includes not only physical action but thinking, living, in fact every movement of consciousness within each person. Discovering wisdom is therefore not different from regenerating oneself."

Since the founding of the Society, the private investigations of its members have led to an understanding that the work of the Theosophical Society, through its members, is to spread wisdom that the many may understand, avoiding dry discussions that lead to nothing, but instead by living a kind of life that may reflect a contagious quality of happiness and acceptance of life and its mysteries, so necessary in human life. Thus we could try to practice what H. P. Blavatsky said is the purpose of studying Theosophy: teaching the animal-man to be a human-man.

Study groups should receive anyone who knocks at our doors, even to be ready to change the focus of the momentary study if the visitor puts a question more relevant to affairs of the world. Narrowness of vision paralyzes the growth of the Theosophical

Society. Let us also remember that the Theosophical Society does not promote mass salvation under an infallible guru.

On the other hand, a shallow understanding of the expression "universal brotherhood" may lead to great confusion. Allowing presenters to promote any kind of so-called spiritual teachings, even if they are harmless, may lead to unbalance the purpose of the Society. This does not mean that we have arrived at the final purpose for which the Society has been founded. Since Theosophy is a living teaching, the idea of arriving at a goal is excluded. We remember the wise words with which Geoffrey Hodson always started his lectures: "As I understand it now ..."

Each member is free to choose what to study, but it is expected that study groups consider the need of the many and of the world. A responsible study of Theosophical teachings, even if we do not understand all that we study, will convince us that it is possible to live according to them, irrespective of our surroundings, professions, and any other differences. If we aspire to make Theosophy a living force in our world, let us start by having a clear idea of the purpose for which the Theosophical Society was founded: the development of a personal commitment to devote ourselves to live a life with high regard for the great Laws that govern the Universe and a sincere feeling of compassion for all living creatures.

Annie Besant, whose life was dedicated to the welfare of humanity, wrote: "Only as you live Theosophy, can you spread Theosophy. It is not our words, it is our life that affects people."

TIPS

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