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THEOSOPHY IN THE WORLD TODAY

Living Theosophy Through
Compassionate Service

**PURIFICATION AND THE
BURNING GROUND**

*Theosophy
in the Workplace*

TheoSophia



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

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Contributions are welcome. Articles will be considered if up to 1,500 words, and sent as an email attachment to the editor. Note that *TheoSophia* articles will also be used in part or whole on the website: www.theosophy.nz

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THE MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

July 2018 Naarden meeting of the Theosophical Society.



Cover:
Christmas
By Miguel Á Padriñán
pexels.com



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TSNZ CONVENTION 2023

OUR JOURNEY

from Me to We, to the Oneness of All

12 - 17 JANUARY 2023

Assisting Branch: Whanganui

INTERNATIONAL GUEST SPEAKERS

Nancy Secrest



Visiting Guest Speaker

Nancy Secrest began studying metaphysics and religion in childhood and joined the Theosophical Society in America in 1980. She has served as National Secretary, National Treasurer and board director of the TSA. Nancy became International Secretary of the Theosophical Order of Service in 2014 and moved to the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Chennai, India to assume the position of International Treasurer in 2017.

William Meader



Online Guest Speaker

William Meader has a reputation as a gifted, influential and respected teacher of the Ageless Wisdom. He is an international presenter on a wide variety of esoteric topics in the United States, Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand where he works to assist people in the cultivation of their higher minds in order to better recognise the soul's guiding influence. He is the author of *Supernal Light* (2022) and *Shine Forth* (2004), as well as many articles. See www.emergentlight.com



Whanganui's central North Island location is within a three-hour drive from Wellington, Napier, Taupō and New Plymouth. Air Chathams flies between Auckland and Whanganui. The city has a blend of heritage architecture and modern creativity. The region is rich in history, culture and diverse natural environment.

See website: discoverwhanganui.nz

Nancy's Talks

THERE IS NO OTHER

Annie Besant, the second President of the Theosophical Society and the founder of the Theosophical Order of Service, said, "The spiritual man must lead a higher life than the life of altruism. He must lead the life of self-identification with all that lives and moves. There is no 'other' in this world; we are all one. Each is a separate form, but one Spirit moves and lives in all." Nancy's talk will discuss this concept while we explore – *Our Journey from Me to We, to the Oneness of All*.

IN THE SERVICE OF ALL

This presentation will give some of the history of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) and review how the TOS has and has not changed over the years, its purposes and activities. It includes an update of TOS projects around the world and discusses what service is and how we can best serve humankind, the animal kingdom and the earth itself.

William's Workshop

THE MASTER'S FOOTSTEPS

Initiation and the Pathway to Oneness: A one-day interactive workshop with online guest William Meader

Spiritual initiations are the benchmarks of development upon the ladder of evolution, and each can be viewed as a step on the pathway to Oneness. Every initiation indicates that the soul has taken a measure of control over some facet of the lower-self, the personality. They are known and proven markers of spiritual attainment, each representing an evolutionary footstep toward becoming a Master of Wisdom. Spiritual initiations therefore represent *The Master's Footsteps* pointing the way to enlightenment.

In this presentation, William Meader will closely consider the steps to be taken when on the *Path of Initiation*. He will deeply examine each of the five initiations and the changes in consciousness that they entail. The goal of this event is to deepen one's understanding of the ladder of evolution, and to become more aware of on which rung of that ladder he or she may be found.

Additional Topics to be Explored:

- The journey from individual to group consciousness, leading to Oneness
- Inwardly invoking a *point of tension* in support of initiation
- The nature of consciousness evidenced at each initiation
- Applying the *Rod of Initiation* upon the human causal body (soul vehicle)
- Methods designed to transform the personality in preparation for initiation.



NZTS SPEAKER
John Vorstermans



NZTS SPEAKER
Renée Sell



NZTS SPEAKER
Kirsty Morton



NZTS SPEAKER
Richard Sell



NZTS SPEAKER
Susanna Roskilly



NZTS SPEAKER
Jim Scrivener



NZTS SPEAKER
Sue Harrison



LOCAL GUEST SPEAKER:
Claire McGrail is a practising
healer, musician and artist

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

As we move toward the Christmas season, covid is still actively with us and across the world, a beleaguered country has been dragged into war with the threat of a nuclear attack. With 2023 on the horizon, we may well ask, 'What can we, as theosophists, do?'

In this summer issue of *TheoSophia*, articles about the place of Theosophy in the world today include those by John Vorstermans (p.5), Tim Boyd (p.7), Nancy Secrest (p.10) and William Meader (p.18) plus some reflections of Jurij-Orest Tarnawskij (p.22) and an interview with Esteban Langlois (p.26). The Geoffrey Hodson Library has a list of books based on this issue's theme (p.14) and TSNZ member Susanna Preston reports on a very special land blessing (p.16). Remember to register for the January 2023, TSNZ annual convention in Whanganui. The theme is 'OUR JOURNEY: From Me to We, to the Oneness of All'. It is a time to refresh friendships while learning more about life and theosophy (p.2).

We hope you have an enjoyable summer with time to re-create, ready for the new year ahead.

Pamela Zane
Editor

THE KELP IS STILL THERE

The kelp is still there
washed back and forth
as the tide's waves bid.

Leather leaves glistening
like burnished supple metal;
pods shining like costume jewellery.

The seaweed roots no longer hold
they move as part
of the tide's flow.

The tide, like our lives
moves with the hours;
are we like this?

Washed to and fro
in a sea of life
unable or unwilling

To look deep within
where our true
self abides.

The kelp is still there
part of the
ceaseless tide.

I am still here, part of life's tide
now on the eve of another birthday
slightly bemused at the number of years.

How have I fared in the to and fro?
Are we kelp in the tide?
Or anchored to belief.

Clive Conland

The above poem was created while on holiday in Stewart Island to the South-East of Invercargill in Aotearoa New Zealand in February 2018. I had been walking in the evening along the deserted bay of beautiful Butterfields Beach where we were staying in one of two small but delightful homes on this quite special island. The water was crystal clear and cold; the tide gentle, shifting the mind into less frequent realms, as the sand and sea sifted past my feet. The bush at one end of the beach and the rocks below the cliff at the other encompassed an idyllic setting. It was the night before my birthday and I was transported to thoughts philosophic - Clive Conland.

DIARY DATES

2023

January 13	Annual General Meeting at Whanganui Girls' College, Ad Astra Hostel
January 12-17	TSNZ Convention at Whanganui Girls' College, Ad Astra Hostel

Check for updates and details of these events: www.theosophy.nz

FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2023		
March	Peace in a Time of Conflict	1 January
June	Wisdom and Discernment	1 April
September	The Journey of Self-Transformation	1 July

Email: editor@theosophy.org.nz

New Zealand's National President of the Theosophical Society,
John Vorstermans, considers...



THEOSOPHY IN THE WORLD TODAY

When we look at the world today, we see the positive effect of connectedness and unity growing ever stronger through a focused, practical, experiential experience of awakening. Many groups are focused on meditation or various forms of mindfulness practices that draw attention to the nature and power of the mind/emotions. This brings about a growth in human evolution as more learn of the nature of the desire mind, the I-want nature and transcend to the one-mind that recognises our unity awareness.

As humanity evolves, a resistance tries to pull us back to our old ways, too old patterns, which can be observed in our actions. The development of mindfulness is a process that takes constant effort. Like learning to drive a car, all our attention is on the instruments we need to master, but eventually, through practice, we drive without a second thought. Once we have become mindful, we become aware of thoughts and feelings as they arise within us. As the observer, we can choose to engage in them or not.

We see this same resistance globally, as humanity tries to unite through agreed values, human rights, equality etc. and with the struggles of personal desires of the few, resulting in wars and other conflicts, thus resisting the evolutionary awakening of a united, compassionate humanity. The challenges of a global society are the very catalysts that have the power to transform and awaken us, if we learn the lesson. Consider and recognise that every personal thought and action affects everyone. The Theosophical Society has recently developed a mission statement, which clarifies what we, as an organisation, are trying to do. It says, as a Society we are here:

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

This statement reflects what we, as an organisation, are trying to accomplish in the world today. It aligns well with our Three Objects, expressed in a language of the present time. As a society, we are here to SERVE, not ourselves, our members alone, but the whole of humanity. A process for doing this is cultivating or growing within ourselves and society an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless Wisdom – an ongoing process. This is something requiring action. We

do not claim complete knowledge of the Ancient Wisdom as an organisation. However, we have since 1875 been able to come to some understanding of aspects of this wisdom and know the steps required to find it through spiritual self-transformation – an internal process.

Spiritual self-transformation, in this context, could be defined as a maturing of human nature. It is a transformation of one's perception, from the personal I-want by removing the 'I'. In Theosophical terminology, it is transformative or a conscious shift from the personal ego to the realisation of unity consciousness of the spiritual soul. It is to live as a human being who has mastery over their desire-mind, who can move their centre of awareness to the higher mind, or a state of mind centred on the realisation of unity consciousness, a state of compassion and universal love where we experience total connection. This is the goal of the current evolutionary process for humanity. It is the great initiation through which we truly realise this Ancient Wisdom. Until such a transformation occurs within our consciousness, we will only gain the odd hint of what it is when our mind is undisturbed. After this transformation, the Unity of all Life becomes a reality.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THE MISSION?

As individuals or Theosophical Branches, we may first need to step back and reflect on what the Mission Statement means to us as a group. Are we cultivating an ever-deepening understanding of the Ageless Wisdom currently, and if not, what can we do to make the change, remembering we are aiming to help humanity develop an awareness of their true nature? Talking about it and reading books may give us some understanding of our true nature from an intellectual point of view; however, to truly understand this deeply, within our hearts, requires personal practices. These could be meditation, mindfulness, personal observation of our actions and reactions, and questioning understandings and so forth.

As a branch, we could become centres in our community that offer practical programmes on an ongoing basis. Do we come together for regular meditation or mindfulness practices, awareness chanting or singing, which opens participants' hearts? Do we invite skilled people with proven experience in these methods to run workshops in our centres, who can share

the importance of the kind of life to live alongside the practice we undertake? Do we organise workshops to bring together skilled practitioners? As an organisation, at our core, we all want to learn and know. If we add the practical component as part of our programme, then we are taking a big step forward to attract those looking for practical theosophy.

REFLECTING ON YOUR HUMAN JOURNEY

One of the ancient affirmations which have helped me in my human journey is: *'I am a spiritual being having a human experience.'* I often repeat this as it has helped me find perspectives on the challenges we face on our human journey. Human life is not easy and everyone goes through their challenges as part of the experience; challenges often come about due to personal perceptions, beliefs or tendencies we have developed over lifetimes. Karma is often the catalyst that brings about the challenges we face and it is good to bring the above affirmation to mind. It helps to note we are going through a human experience, that there is a lesson to be learned and to try and understand what it is. If we resist the required learning, the challenge can intensify until we learn the lesson. Karma is neither good nor bad, although our experience of it might feel that way; it is simply a process of bringing things back into balance. It is a bit like a force that keeps the universe in balance and harmony. At our level of reality, Karma is generally caused by our motive for an action we might take. Helena Blavatsky explains it thus:

Let not the fruit of good Karma be your motive; for your Karma, good or bad, being one and the common property of all mankind, nothing good or bad can happen to you that is not shared by many others. Hence your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man's profit.

Therefore, reflecting on our thoughts, actions and motives is a necessary learning process. Nothing happens in isolation, and often Karma will bring the players together to learn an essential lesson in our human experience.

Hanging out with like-minded friends is something that aids us in our journey. Finding friends who are travelling on the journey of self-discovery can be of tremendous value. When we struggle, it is beneficial to be able to share how we feel which is a process to help release the energy of the experience. Having someone willing to listen, without judgement, is a powerful aid. Advising someone is not always helpful; we need to be cautious. The story of *The Frog* below helps to show this:

A group of frogs were traveling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered around the pit. When they saw how deep the pit was, they told the

unfortunate frogs they would never get out. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the pit. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and simply gave up. He fell down and died. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and suffering and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs asked him, *"Why did you continue jumping. Didn't you hear us?"* The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

Ultimately, we need to listen to our inner voice as our guide in life. Therefore, our practices, which we can facilitate in our branches or as individuals, will lead us to hear our inner voice, the voice within our heart. We can help those who come into touch with the Theosophical Society, to learn to understand the real human journey. We can do this through developing programmes focused on helping to show the nature of being human and providing a place for people of like minds to come together for practical experience through such things as meditation. For the Society to be relevant in the world today, visitors and members must experience the universal kinship we aim to create and be able to engage in practical processes we offer, so that they can experience transformation in their lives.



2022 RESULTS FOR TSNZ ELECTIONS

National President: Richard Sell

National Vice President: Melanie Closs

Two Governance Board Members:

Kirsty Morton

Paul Henderson

The new officers begin their three year terms after the AGM in January 2023.

Erratum: see *Theosophy: The Friend of True Religion (TheoSophia*, September 2022). The word 'Budhism' should have been spelt with one 'd' when it referred to Wisdom or knowledge. Buddhism with two 'd's refers to the religion - Ed.

THE PRACTICE OF INSPIRATION

Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society,
discusses the unfolding of revelation.

There is a familiar expression that we hear across cultures: "Practice makes perfect." The 'theory' behind it is that repetition tends to ingrain behaviours, and if we repeat something sufficiently often that behaviour becomes perfected. However, at least based on my personal experience, the idea is more nuanced than the simple expression implies.

Long ago, when my basketball-playing days ended, I had to switch sports and found myself playing tennis during one summer. Soon I realised that I could serve the ball very fast. So, I practised it, over and over. By the time summer was ending, my serve was getting weaker and my shoulder was hurting. Too late I discovered that my method of practice was not using proper mechanics, resulting in a damaged shoulder. When I moved to Chicago from New York City I had the opportunity to meet some long-time, profound, spiritual students. One man in particular was renowned for his knowledge of metaphysics. There came a time in his life when he ran into some difficulties. We invited him to come and live with us in our spiritual community. We felt it would be beneficial for him as well as for us young people to be able to imbibe a lifetime of wisdom and practice.

He was almost encyclopaedic in his knowledge of various texts and spiritual matters. At that time, every morning we had a group meditation. Shortly we came to find out that this gentleman had no grounding in meditation. Even though all of his life he had been involved in study, his concept of meditation was nothing more than the repetition of affirmations. The whole process and practice of quieting the mind eluded him during a lifetime of practice; he was 80 years old. This opened my eyes that practice, in and of itself, does not make perfect; proper practice does.

The key for us is not the mere repetition of behaviours or ideas, but the proper choice and attention to those things. When we practise we are creating habits. It is a repetition of the body, emotions and mind that creates a certain habit. The difference between our ordinary living and focused practice is awareness and attention. The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, we are *always* practising. During the course of each day, we are rehearsing patterns of behaviour; whether or not they are productive to our unfoldment is another issue. Often, we are practising our best methods to express our anger. Almost everyone who watches the nightly news has moments when they are practising awakening feelings of fear and anxiety. All of these are repetitive behaviours that we engage in unconsciously. It is the unconscious aspect that separates it from a viable approach to unfoldment.

Habit is overcome by habit. This is what we engage in when creating new or different habits. If we are honest, *any* habit, whether we call it good or bad, ultimately limits or restricts consciousness. This is a paradox because although habit is limiting, also it is an avenue to freedom. For instance, anyone who has been involved in learning to play a sport, music, cooking, or learning how to drive knows that it is an exercise in intense concentration. When I was trying to teach my daughter to drive there were moments when she would be gripping the steering wheel and even perspiring from having to concentrate on so many different things at the same time. The concentration required is greatest in the beginning, as we are learning to develop a skill. Once we have reached a point where that skill is engrained, it becomes completely unconscious. Any experienced driver can listen to the radio, have a conversation, watch the traffic, eat a sandwich, and still drive.

So, concentration, the restriction of our attention, develops a capacity that leads to a greater freedom. Whenever our focus becomes the cultivation and unfoldment of consciousness this process becomes more pronounced.

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) very frequently referred us to the Hermetic Axiom: “As above, so below; as without, so within.” We learn from observing and from the analogies of outer to inner processes. An analogy with magnetism is familiar to most of us from science experiments in early years of school. Magnetism is a force that can be described scientifically, even though it is not completely understood. A magnet has the capacity to attract to itself ‘ferromagnetic’ metals, which are strongly attracted by a magnetic force. This is so much so, that if a magnet were to touch a nail or an ordinary piece of iron, the nail would become magnetised and would attract metals as long as it is in contact with the magnet. Remove it from contact with the magnet, and its magnetism goes away.

This material example illustrates a process of the inner life — the process of inspiration and being inspired. To the extent that we are in contact with some magnetic or higher source, we also become similarly charged. When removed from the presence of that source, that inspiration fades. The analogy is also relevant when we consider what might be meant by a ‘practice of inspiration’. In those same childhood science experiments we find that not only does contact with a magnet temporarily convey magnetic properties, but that a nail, or other suitable ferromagnetic piece of metal, can become *permanently* magnetised. If a magnet is repeatedly drawn in one direction along the length of the nail, the materials in the nail are realigned, making the nail a magnet in its own right. Although nothing new is added, the act of regularly exposing ourselves to ‘higher’ forces brings the materials of our personalities into an altered alignment.

There is a foundational principle underlying this whole subject of practice. It is that consciousness is universal. All matter, at whatever level, is conscious and capable of responsiveness. According to the degree that attention is focused on this matter, currents of energy are generated that affect the structure and composition of the material object, whether it is physical, emotional, or mental matter. Nowadays we are quite aware of this. Not so long ago, people like HPB, Annie Besant and others would make pronouncements about the effects of such things as meditation, regular exposure of the mind and emotions to

higher levels of activity, saying that regularity of intelligent practice results in unfoldment of dormant capacities. The science of their day was not yet able to demonstrate these things experimentally. In our time many studies have been done about the effects of meditation practice. It has been studied in a variety of ways, largely through brain imaging and has been found to have a dramatic effect on the brain. For example, over a very short period of regular meditation practice the physical structure of the brain is altered. The synapses, the web of linkages between the neurons in the brain, increase. With long-term meditators, specific areas of brain matter become denser and more enriched, particularly those related to open thought and compassionate response.

It has also been observed that a physical structure within the brain called the amygdala shrinks as a result of long-term meditation practice. The amygdala is a structure of the ancient, ‘reptilian’ brain involved in the expression of conditioned fears and anxiety and the ‘fight or flight’ syndrome we engage in when we are fearful. Our response to stressors is altered. All of these and more are demonstrable outcomes of meditation practice. So, in many ways the practice we engage in has very definite results in terms of physical brain structure and our capacity for higher emotions and other aspects such as healing. All this has been observed.

Before considering the Practice of Inspiration we should start with asking ourselves: “What is inspiration?” The root of the word means ‘breathing into’. *Spiritus* is breath; it also means spirit. So, inspiration is the process of being filled with a life force. Everyone has had the experience of being inspired, so it is not difficult for us to draw on our own memories and experiences. Depending on our temperament our moments of inspiration are associated with our contact with a person, an idea, or an encounter with beauty, art, or poetry. The avenue through which this light shines into our world is what we then experience. It has a twofold aspect. In the presence, in the moment of the experience, we would describe ourselves as being inspired by something, by the poetry, by the words of the Dalai Lama, or by a variety of inputs that create this moment of inspiration. So, we are inspired *by*. One of the effects of this condition of inspiration is that we are also inspired to express it, to transmit it, to actualise it in our own lives; so it has this sort of twofold aspect.

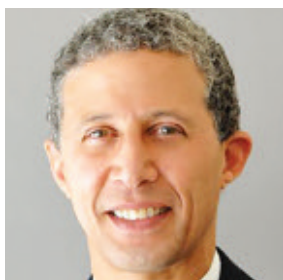
In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, in writing about the advance of a popular understanding of the Ageless Wisdom, it is said that “science will be our greatest ally.” Recently, in some

outlying corners of the scientific community, there is work being done on the nature of inspiration from a scientific point of view. In order to describe what qualities are related to inspiration, in one particular scientific study they developed a threefold way of analysing the practice of inspiration. The first aspect these scientists talk about is that the inspirational experience is “evocative.” It is not something we call down at will, or that is controlled by the one who experiences it. This is what we find is true for the times that we have actually been inspired. We can say in hindsight that “this is what occurred in the presence of that person,” or “because I was reading that poem,” but we cannot invite it at will.

At different times I have been in the presence of people of power, people with an ongoing connection to some spiritual source. It always has been fascinating to me how strange things happen in the presence of these people. For us, normal, undeveloped people, we may meet someone, greet them, say a few words, and then they walk away pretty much unchanged. But on a number of occasions I have seen things that shed light on the transmission and source point of inspiration.

The right motive for seeking self-knowledge is that which pertains to knowledge and not to self. Self-knowledge is worth seeking by virtue of its being knowledge, and not by virtue of its pertaining to self. The main requisite for acquiring self-knowledge is pure love. Seek knowledge for pure love, and self-knowledge eventually crowns the effort.

H. P. Blavatsky
Practical Occultism



Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society was born in New York City and studied at Brown University then at the University of Chicago. In Chicago Tim joined the TSA in 1974 and co-founded a Theosophical spiritual community in Chicago's inner city. They held classes on the Ageless Wisdom, meditation and healing

and formed a business which helped stabilise neighbourhoods through the training and employment of local youth and creation of affordable homes. Tim has been involved in Theosophical work at many levels: from lodge member, to TSA president and president of the Theosophical Order of Service USA. He has spoken across the USA and every continent except Africa. Tim's articles appear in journals around the world.

Living Theosophy requires that we go through each day recognising the Oneness of all life, inherent in the First Object of the Theosophical Society, through compassionate action and selfless service,
 writes Nancy Secrest,
 Theosophical Order of Service International Secretary.

Living Theosophy Through Compassionate Service

In his article *Reflection*, David Bruce, current National Secretary of the Theosophical Society in America, says, “In her writings, H. P. Blavatsky repeatedly emphasised the importance of brotherhood as a guiding principle: ‘It is only by all men becoming brothers and all women sisters, and by all practising *in their daily lives* [italics added] true brotherhood and true sisterhood, that the real human solidarity ... can ever be attained.’ (*The Key to Theosophy*). No matter how learned or erudite we may become in the metaphysics of Theosophy, let us not forget that the true measure of a Theosophist lies not in a proud and self-centred intellect, but in an open and loving heart.”

The First Object of the Society speaks to the actualisation of Universal Brotherhood, but it means even more than this. According to Theosophy, Universal Brotherhood is not merely a high and lofty ideal but is eternally a *fact in Nature* because of the oneness and divinity of all life. Many religions and philosophies speak of brotherhood and of helping those less fortunate than ourselves, but the theosophical meaning speaks to the Oneness of all life, not just in a metaphorical sense but actual Oneness. I like to think of it as each of us being a drop in the ocean. Once the drop enters the ocean it is blended with all other drops in the true sense of Oneness.

Joy Mills, a prominent theosophical teacher, speaker and writer, said that the focus of our existence as human beings is self-realisation. Learning who we are, who we really are. That’s what we’re supposed to be doing here. This, she said, is the central point of the *Mahatma Letters*. Blavatsky made this point in her writings as well, calling it spiritual unfoldment. She taught that self-responsibility, ethics and altruism are essential to true spiritual unfoldment.

As we progress along the path of self-realisation, or spiritual unfoldment, we eventually awaken, or become aware of, our Buddhi nature. (If you are new to Theosophy, the Buddhi nature is beyond thought even on the conceptual level. It is the seat of intuition and all that is universally compassionate and noble within us.) With this awakening or awareness, compassion based on a sense of responsibility for all beings becomes a driving force in our lives, and we act as a bodhisattva acts, for the good of all. “In Theosophy the term *bodhisattva* is used to denote an individual who has reached enlightenment and may pass beyond the ‘wheel of rebirth’ but elects to reincarnate for the good of all.” (*Theosophical Encyclopaedia*, p. 110). In other words, a bodhisattva sacrifices his or her reward of transition into Nirvana to help other sentient beings until all reach enlightenment. We may not be bodhisattvas. But, are you familiar with the term, ‘fake it until you make it’? What that means is that all of us can work as *if* we are bodhisattvas. All of us can help each other and humanity at large right now. Blavatsky said that, “He who does not practise altruism: he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf

ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own – is no Theosophist.” (*Lucifer*, Vol. I, p.169)

Later, Annie Besant tied together Blavatsky’s altruism, already a high ideal, with the sense of Oneness alluded to in the Society’s First Object by saying, “The spiritual man must lead a higher life than the life of altruism. He must lead the life of self-identification with all that lives and moves. There is no ‘other’ in this world; we are all one. Each is a separate form, but one Spirit moves and lives in all.” We’ve stated that it is our quest for self-realisation that touches the Buddhi nature within us and ignites our sense of compassion.

SO, WHAT IS COMPASSION?

Although stated in different ways, various viewpoints, scientific, psychological and Buddhist, agree that compassion, simply put, is the response to the suffering of others that motivates a desire to help. Compassion is not the same as empathy or altruism, though the concepts are related. Empathy refers to our ability to take the perspective of and feel the emotions of another person. Compassion is when those feelings and thoughts include the desire to help. Altruism is kind, selfless behaviour often, but not always, prompted by feelings of compassion. Scientists have started to map the biological basis of compassion. This research has shown that when we feel compassion, our heart rate slows down, we secrete the ‘bonding hormone’ oxytocin, and regions of the brain linked to empathy, caregiving and feelings of pleasure light up, which often results in our wanting to approach and care for other people. According to the Buddhist view, true compassion is necessarily based on cherishing others. Compassion is a mind that is motivated by cherishing other living beings and wishes to release them from their suffering.

Earlier we spoke of the Bodhisattva path. We may not be there yet, but most of us already have some degree of compassion, albeit biased and limited. We feel compassion for the suffering of our family and friends, but we find it more difficult to feel sympathy for people we find unpleasant or for strangers. We may feel compassion for those who are experiencing a great deal of pain, but not for those who are enjoying good conditions, and especially not for those who may be trying to harm us or others. If we genuinely want to realise our potential by attaining full enlightenment, we need to develop universal compassion that embraces all beings whether beloved, family, friend, stranger or someone who engages in harmful activity. Universal compassion comes at the Buddhist level of our being and can be cultivated through meditation. Another way of saying this is: “Compassion is seeing someone as they are and loving them anyway.” (www.ehkhealing.com)

Compassion comprises all the best qualities in human beings, like sharing, readiness to give comfort, sympathy, concern and caring – all are manifestations of compassion. You will notice also that in the compassionate person, care and love towards others has its origins in care and love for oneself. We can best understand others when we really understand ourselves. We will know what’s best for others when we know what’s best for ourselves. We can feel for others when we feel for ourselves. Therefore, one’s own spiritual development blossoms quite naturally into concern for the welfare of others, and vice versa.

Compassion is the very essence of a spiritual life, and the main practice of those who have devoted their lives to attaining enlightenment. In the book, *Stages of Meditation*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama states that, “Compassion is essential in the initial state, in the intermediate state

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Loving-kindness is unconditional, inclusive love, a love with wisdom.

and in the final state of spiritual development.” And the question is asked, “How should we meditate on it?” The answer is given, “You should begin the process by attempting to develop loving-kindness toward beings who are in misery.”

Loving-kindness is unconditional, inclusive love, a love with wisdom. It does not depend on whether one ‘deserves’ it or not. It is not restricted to those we love. It extends out from the personal to include all living beings. It harbours no expectations of return. It is the ideal, pure, universal love held by everyone in potential. Compassion generates in us the desire to help others. To say this another way, compassion generates the desire to be of service to suffering beings.

WHAT OF SERVICE?

HPB said, “Theosophy teaches that altruism, selfless service to humanity, living solely to help and benefit others, and the pursuit of the Bodhisattva ideal, are all just as important for our spiritual evolution and development as meditation and aspiring to higher levels of inner unfoldment in our quest to attain Union with our Higher Self, which is ONE Infinite Divine Life.”

A few years ago, I was interviewed on the question of service and was asked, “If someone asked you how to serve, what would you emphasise?” I said that I’d tell them to “grow where they are planted.” In other words, look at where you are in life and attend first to whatever is needed in your immediate circle. We do not have to do great things to be of service. Service to one’s family is just as important as service to a nation. It’s also important to take care of yourself, to the extent possible, so that you will be fit enough to be of service to others. In the little book *At the Feet of the Master* we are told to take care of our body, to keep it clean and healthy, as it is “the horse upon which we ride.” And, as the airlines tell us, “Put on your own oxygen mask first, before helping others.”

It doesn’t take much effort to be of service to others, often a simple smile can be of great benefit. It’s mostly a matter of attitude, of being alert and aware of people or situations to or about which we can be of help and using our discernment to know when and how that can best be accomplished. We also need to know and respect our own limits. Obviously, one does not give all one’s money to charity and let one’s own children starve, or walk into dangerous situations one is neither physically, mentally nor emotionally able to handle.

The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) is a service or charitable organisation. It was founded by Annie Besant, the second president of the Theosophical Society, in 1908 to put the First Object of the Theosophical Society (TS) into action. It fosters a practical living application of theosophical principles and is a way to demonstrate and practise the oneness of all life. The giving of our time, talents, energy, money, advocacy and moral support to those in need is based on compassion and on the acceptance of our responsibility toward those with whom we are One. Our TOS motto, “a union of those who love in the service of all that suffers”, reminds us of our commitment to the Oneness of All Life. Our activities are many and varied. They include supporting education, healing, efforts toward peace in the world, animal welfare and emergency relief. For the past several years, our main international focus has been on women’s issues, and the TOS in India recently made women’s issues its principal area of service. We are also currently focused on providing a theosophically based education for children and fund-raising for our schools in the Philippines, Pakistan and India. International TS President, Tim Boyd, once said, “The TOS is motivated by a sense that we are all participants in the One Life. Suffering and overcoming suffering are not isolated or regional. We all share in it.”

Balance is the key to spiritual growth. The theosophical triad of study, meditation and service exemplifies this. Study utilises our ability to reason and think logically. Meditation helps us to tap into our Higher Selves, the divine within, and gives us respite from today's hectic world. Service then is the fulcrum – the point of balance. Service is that part of the triad which allows us to demonstrate the divine in the world. Through selfless service we help to heal suffering humanity. We draw attention to the woes of the world, and lead by example in the effort to ease suffering and right wrongs. In the process, we help ourselves. We grow spiritually as we become more and more open to seeing the unity of life wherever we look. So, let each of us work as *if* we are bodhisattvas. All of us can help each other and humanity at large right now.

Nancy Secrest is the visiting guest speaker at the TSNZ convention in Whanganui this coming January 2023. For more information, see page 2.



Theosophical Digest



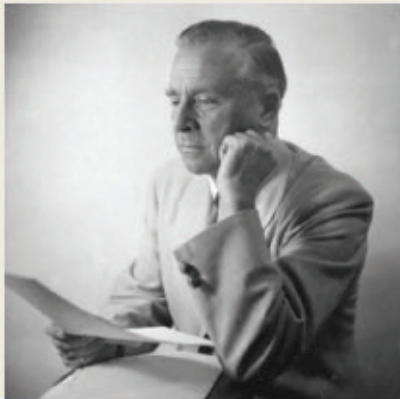
The *Theosophical Digest* is a quarterly magazine which condenses wholesome articles on meditation, comparative religion, Ancient Wisdom, art of living, health, science, theosophy, spirituality, philosophy and more.

The compact format of short articles, snippets and humour from authors around the globe makes the *Theosophical Digest* a great read for short relaxing interludes at any time. These books also make great gifts – perhaps as a subscription to an organisation, or someone you know who would appreciate some thoughtful inspiration in a busy world.

Subscriptions in New Zealand are \$25 annually, and the magazine is sent out quarterly. Back copies of individual Digests can also be ordered for \$5 each, and are subject to availability. The *Theosophical Digest* is published by the Theosophical Publishing House in the Philippines and reprinted in India.

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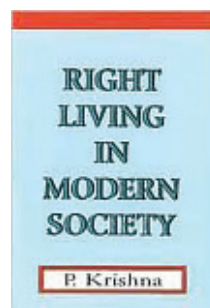
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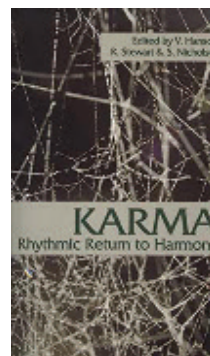
Theosophy in the true sense is the perennial and unchanging philosophy of humankind, but in its presentation needs to be adapted to the times. In these essays an attempt is made to discuss some of the principles of this philosophy in modern terms.



RIGHT LIVING IN MODERN SOCIETY

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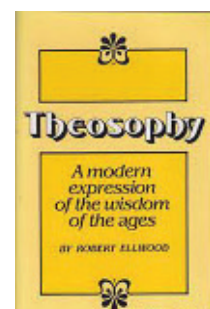
A religious inquiry into fundamental questions which have perplexed human beings throughout history.



KARMA: RHYTHMIC RETURN TO HARMONY

edited by V. Hanson

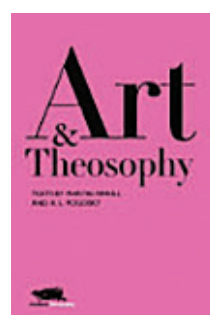
A collection of articles by authors from many different fields such as yoga philosophy, Buddhism, science, astrology and psychology. Shown in its traditional context of Eastern thought, we see how karma also relates to problems in our lives and of our times.



THEOSOPHY: A MODERN EXPRESSION OF THE WISDOM OF THE AGES

by Robert Ellwood

Now over 100 years old, the Theosophical Society and its philosophy have grown to be an important voice in today's world.



ART AND THEOSOPHY

by Martin Firrell and A.L. Pogosky

This volume explores the insight modern Theosophy can offer into the spiritual and social dimensions of art, artistic practice and creativity. It is part of a series of writings, collected under the banner 'Modern Theosophy' re-presenting important texts drawn from the history of the Theosophical movement and further complemented by texts from contemporary authors and innovative thinkers.

THE PERSIMMON JOURNAL

The art of getting older through
lockdown, loss and release

By Juliet Batten

Here is a book to gladden the heart and soothe the soul of readers of all ages. Juliet Batten's latest book works through a theme represented by the persimmon in all its lush, generous and hardy bounty. In her first book in this trilogy *The Pomegranate Journal* (reviewed in *TheoSophia*, June 2022) Juliet shared wisdom and insights into ageing. These are further developed in this collection of short, personal journal entries that are as fresh as spirited conversations.

The Persimmon Journal takes the reader through an enlightened process with a focus on life-giving generosity, awareness and discovery. Material belongings of deep meaning are sorted, saved and shed; a once very active body thoughtfully tended to enable new activities and relationships appreciated and nurtured as we witness a life well-lived and growing into a creative and expanding future.

The Persimmon Journal inspires through Juliet's courage, ingenuity, spiritual resources, healthy discipline, conservation and inspired values, compassion and keen perception. This record of the effects of lockdown restrictions, inevitable and necessary losses, physical pain and recovery and detachment from beloved places and memories, leads into a renewal of lightness, freedom, hope, health and creative expression. I recommend it to all those wanting encouragement for the future.

Juliet's *Spirited Ageing* book and seminars are well-known as are her multiple awards and writing. Now we have insights into Juliet's ability to reflect and listen to 'inklings' and more, which lead her to meditation and awareness. As part of her regime, Juliet regularly records and considers her dreams which often shed light on her situation and concerns. These diary entries of Juliet's reflection and contemplation have encouraged me to prioritise such rewarding practices.

Juliet Batten's book has shown me ways to release old habits and activities that no longer serve well, recover from losses and adjust to changes which can be creative opportunities. I am inspired to be open to 'entering the unknown' and discovering capacities within that can increase with age – such as intuition.

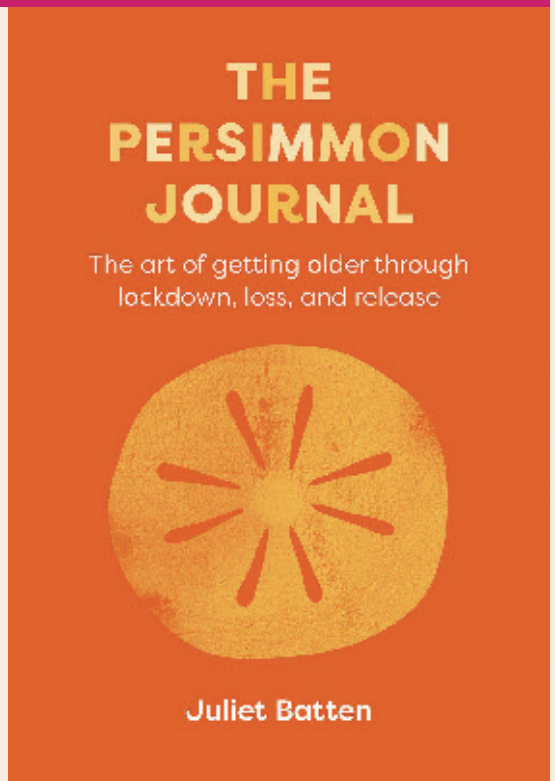
With the word 'permission' being an almost-anagram of 'persimmon', readers can follow Juliet Batten's shining example in *The Persimmon Journal* and allow ourselves to rejoice in the ripeness and new discoveries of age.

Reviewed by the editor.

THE PERSIMMON JOURNAL: The art of getting older through lockdown, loss, and release by Juliet Batten

Ishtar Books ISBN 978-0-473-64440-6

<http://www.julietbatten.co.nz/shop/>



Juliet Batten has a PhD in English and taught English, Women's Studies and Environmental Studies at the University of Auckland before practising psychotherapy for 26 years. She is an artist coordinating collaborative art projects including the 1986 One Hundred Women Project at Te Henga beach. Juliet meditates and celebrates the seasons with others.

CAMBRIDGE TERRACE LAND BLESSING

Canterbury Branch President, **Susanna Roskilley**,
reports on a very special occasion.

For 10 years our historic Cambridge Terrace site sat empty, the 1926 Lodge demolished and land cleared, post-quake. The remaining trees and bushes continued to grow, surviving Spring bulbs pushed forth every year and grass and wild flowers covered the compacted site. With the start of our Lodge rebuild imminent, Branch members decided that a Land Blessing was appropriate. Members gathered on an unusually warm and sunny Saturday morning, the timing coinciding with the Spring Equinox.

A blessing was said by Susanna followed by poetry read by Susan Kaschula, which acknowledged the river running along the front boundary of the land. Robin spoke of the auspicious Spring Equinox timing of the start of our rebuild as the ancients regarded Spring as the reincarnation season of the year and how in our human sphere, we reflect that which happens at a cosmic level. Gordon led us in meditation, focusing on the life force, universal love and unity with our land and each other. David then led us around the site boundary with his divining/dowsing rods, indicating energy sources and the main energy centre of the site. We finished with a picnic lunch, the sun warming our backs and the reassurance of our land underfoot.



Energy Haze



David with divining rods



Gordon leading meditation



The land

SUSANNA'S BLESSING

We come together today as fellow Theosophists, united in our vision to once again have our Theosophical Hall standing on this land. We gather together to prepare our land for the physical transition about to take place.

Today we re-affirm our connection to this land.

We express our respect and appreciation of this land.

We acknowledge with gratitude and love, the past members who have since moved on to other realms.

We are here as friends and fellow inhabitants of this land and we give thanks for the life forms and life forces that also inhabit this land.

We acknowledge The Elm – Sentinel of this land for over 100 years. Gentle Deva of the Elm may you continue to live and thrive in this space. We give love and thanks for your presence.

I call to the spirit below to bless and protect this land. I ask that you fill this land with your energy and blessing.

I call to the spirit above to bless and protect this land. Sun that shines above and the stars that bathe this land in radiance, I ask that you fill this land with your energy and blessing.

Guardians of the North – South – East and West, we call upon you to guard and protect this land.

Guardians of the North – South – East and West, we call upon you to protect, guide and enhance the skills of the workmen who will soon be commencing the rebuild of our Theosophical Hall.

Loving Creator, we ask for your blessing to be bestowed upon every part of this land, the soil, the plants, the living creatures and the material construction.

Divine Creator, we ask that your blessing and protection will continue throughout the building project and into the future, trusting in your care for generations to come.

Amen



The Elm Tree

THE ELM TREE

The Elm tree on our site is over 150 years old and was already there when the Lodge was built in 1926. The Elm has significant and very interesting mystical qualities. In Celtic mythology it is said to grow close to portals that lead out of our earthly realm and grow at crossroads leading to the Faery world. Elm is popular with elves. Elm essence energises the mind and balances the heart. It attracts love and protects and aids in sharpening psychic powers. Interesting to note is that the main energy centre found on the Lodge site was directly in front of the Elm.

Online guest speaker at the TSNZ January 2023 convention, William Meader, considers necessary and challenging steps toward enlightenment.

PURIFICATION and the BURNING GROUND

Within most spiritual systems, the theme of purification is considered an essential discipline. For centuries, theology has conveyed the notion that through various purificatory practices the light of God will become more evident within one's life. As such, purification is understood as a force capable of invoking divine light by creating a more purified life through which divinity may be expressed. Within the *Esoteric Philosophy*, such practices are also viewed as essential. Yet while it considers the usual ideas of purification to be true, esotericism also states that full purification requires many incarnations to achieve, and is a central requirement of enlightenment. In addition, at each purifying stage one must dare to travel through a fiery ordeal. Referred to as the burning ground, walking it is a function of purification itself. The purpose of this article is to highlight the nature of purification as it relates to the burning ground experience.

Inherent within the soul is the will to purify. It is the soul, as it seeks to manifest through the lower-self (personality), that sounds the call to purify. When someone steps upon the spiritual Path, this call is subtly registered by the personality, then brooded upon. Essentially, such an individual has consciously awoken to the light of the soul for the first time. It is an inner realisation that is unmistakable and pivotal in one's life. From that point onward, the soul's purifying light will periodically crest upon the shores of his or her consciousness, and it will have growing implications throughout the entire evolutionary journey leading to full enlightenment.

It should be noted that the initial awakening to the soul's light is brief and fleeting. Once experienced, it rapidly fades away, thus leaving the aspirant with only a nostalgic memory of what had inwardly occurred. Yet this event is foundational to walking the spiritual path, for it provides one with experiential proof of the soul residing within. Confused by the loss of what was inwardly sensed, the individual will then begin a quest to recapture the experience. This search tends to go in two possible directions. For some, it leads the personality to embrace dogmatic beliefs, such as those espoused by evangelical or fundamentalist adherents. Others will instead seek out a variety of non-traditional spiritual groups in hopes that some teacher, method or technique will help him or her re-experience the soul's light once again. The so-called New Age movement is fertile ground for this group of newly awakened aspirants.

In either case, recapturing the experience of the soul's light will occur only rarely. This then forces the aspirant to eventually re-examine the situation, and to conclude that perhaps there is something impure within his or her personality, and that this is why the soul's guiding light is only fleetingly experienced. From the esoteric perspective, this is when the seeker truly steps upon the Path and begins to more consciously purify his or her life. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the Esoteric Philosophy the beginning phase of the spiritual journey is sometimes called the *Path of Purification*.

During the early stages of the Path, purification efforts are evidenced most within the realm of character-building. The



individual deliberately focuses upon the development of those qualities considered by society as noble and of good standing. However, as incarnations proceed, efforts at refining one's lower nature change. From character-building there is a gradual shift toward a preoccupation with the health and cleanliness of the physical body. Physical disciplines then become paramount in the life, such as regularity of exercise and a focused effort upon dietary improvements. Consciously (or unconsciously), the aspirant believes that through such efforts the fullness of his or her spiritual nature and purpose can be realised and expressed.

In the initial phase of the *Path of Purification*, the physical body is viewed as the temple of the soul, and all efforts are directed toward the purification of this biological shrine. Often, such disciplines are followed with fanatical conviction, then later are tempered with a more balanced perspective. As the evolution of consciousness continues, the soul's temple becomes more broadly defined to include other aspects of one's lower nature, such as the emotional and mental bodies of the personality. Nonetheless, at this early stage the individual holds the view that the physical body is the primary vehicle within which the soul seeks to reside.

Eventually, the aspirant's efforts at physical purification will reach a crisis point. This crisis is what is referred to when speaking of the burning ground. It is a period when the needed purification has occurred, and the soul is ready to assert a gesture of control toward the personality. Yet, to do so requires that the consciousness of the personality freely step upon the burning ground to prove its willingness to faithfully yield to the soul. The burning ground represents the place in consciousness where the personality must forfeit an aspect of who and what it thought itself to be. At this stage of development, it is an experience that is primarily (though not exclusively) related to the physical body, and one's relationship to it. For countless incarnations, the indwelling self has falsely identified itself with its physical form and its appetites. When on the burning ground, the aspirant is now forced to face this illusion, not theoretically, but practically and experientially.

The burning ground will always be experienced as a death of some aspect of the personality and its illusions. The individual's misidentification with the physical body must be burned away, and this is experienced as a death of sorts. This is why the personality must willingly enter into the burning ground. Free will is never forfeited. The soul waits within the burning ground, precisely at the point where its flames are highest and most intense. Metaphorically, this is simply to say that at the place of greatest crisis (within the aspirant's consciousness) is found the soul waiting to bless and give honour to the supplicating personality. It is the reward offered to the personality that is ready and willing to enter the burning ground, and marks the time of the first initiation, occultly called the Birth Initiation. From that time forward, the soul has control and dominion over the physical form. No longer does the Self wrongly define itself with its physical garment. No longer does the individual fall victim to the unregulated demands of the body and its many appetites. The love of the soul now radiates through the heart centre (chakra) unencumbered, and service to humanity becomes the soulful motive that

Inherent within
the soul is the
will to purify.



During the early stages of the Path, purification efforts are evidenced most within the realm of character-building.

drives the individual onward in life. Up to this point, the seeker is referred to as an aspirant, in that he or she is aspiring to live as soul. Yet at the first initiation that title is left behind, and the title of disciple is conferred. By this is meant that the individual is now truly a disciple of the soul. Thus has the burning ground done its work, and the Path of Discipleship begins.

For the next several incarnations, the disciple learns to refine his or her relationship to the soul. It is a period when many purificatory steps are made, and many burning ground experiences must be faced and overcome. Much of the purification done during this time relates to learning how to more effectively utilise emotion, rather than being used by emotion. Importantly, crisis is always a forerunner to expanded consciousness, and at this stage it is closely related to the emotional body of the personality, and one's relationship to it. As time passes, the disciple will eventually arrive at an incarnation where a major crisis will occur, and it will be of a magnitude greater than that experienced when taking the first initiation in an earlier incarnation. The preparatory work of emotional purification has been done. Lofty feeling states are now naturally and automatically felt. Such an individual is then ready to face a great and difficult test, often protracted over many years. Walking the burning ground will again ensue.

This time the burning ground is designed to incinerate the disciple's identification with the emotional body. Suggested by this is that one must relinquish any belief that emotionally generated feelings give validation to one's identity. Emotional and fanatical reactions to truth must also be forfeited, as well as the many glamorised ideals cherished by the personality. Essentially, the disciple dis-identifies with the emotional body, thus making it possible for the soul to rightly utilise the emotional instrument in order to more effectively serve the outer world. Indeed, the soul needs a wholesome and balanced emotional vehicle (within the personality) through which to work creatively. Yet to do so requires that the self be lifted from its misidentification with feeling states. This purifying step is one of the most difficult on the long journey toward enlightenment. When it has been surmounted, the disciple then takes the second initiation, the Baptism Initiation, and an enormous expansion of consciousness is then sure reward.

As travel upon the Path continues, the disciple is next challenged to purify his or her thought life in preparation for the soul infusing itself into the mind of the personality. It should be noted that mental cleansing has been an effort of purification from the beginning of one's journey upon the Path. Nonetheless, because the soul now has dominion over both the physical and emotional aspects of the personality, exclusive work upon the mind is now possible and spiritually profitable. During this period, the disciple is not only attempting to nurture thoughts that support spiritual truth, but also to develop control over the use of the mind itself. The goal of this effort is mastery over the independent tendencies of the mind. This is first done via disciplines that support mental control, as well as developing the ability to utilise the abstract mind with ease and purpose. Ultimately, the

soul needs a mental body that is well developed, detached, and able to grasp and apply abstract and intuitive truths.

When the needed purification and development of the mind has been achieved, the disciple then faces the Third Initiation. A new burning ground is then inwardly sensed. To step into its fire requires that the personality (now identified with the mind) completely yields to the will of the soul. At this lofty stage of development, the soul seeks dominion over the mind, and therefore over the entire personality. This is occultly called the *Transfiguration Initiation*, for it implies that the entire personality has been transfigured in the light of the soul. Discipleship, as previously understood, is now a thing of the past. Such a person is no longer simply a disciple of the soul's lofty promptings, but is now fully identified with the consciousness of the soul. Sometimes called the *world disciple*, such a person's uplifting work will have global implications, either during his or her life, or as a legacy of that life.

From this discussion it can be seen that purification is an unavoidable feature in the evolution of human consciousness. Every spiritual milestone (initiation) requires a form of purification, and serves as a prerequisite and gateway to expanded consciousness. When the needed purity is established, the burning ground is then entered as testament to the personality's willingness to sacrifice. This always involves the yielding of the personality to the soul's regime, and the forfeiture of any cherished illusions related to one sense of ego and self-definition. Yet the promise of heightened states of consciousness gives divine incentive for such acts of internal surrender. Purification and the burning ground are therefore inescapable companions on the journey toward enlightenment.

For information about the author, see page 2 of this issue of TheoSophia.

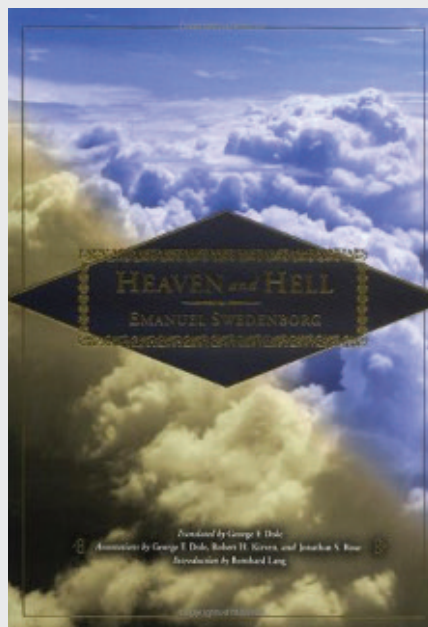
Purification and the burning ground are therefore inescapable companions on the journey toward enlightenment.



Jurij-Orest Tarnawskyj shares his thoughts on reading mystical writings...

REFLECTIONS

Wilson Van Dusen's two books have introduced and clarified a pathway into the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772, author of *Heaven and Hell* and much more). Even though my immersion as a quester in this area has been brief, I have found this personal adventure most rewarding and there is a need to share it. Wilson M. Van Dusen (1923-2005) was an American clinical psychologist and an active Swedenborgian. But of greater significance he was also a mystic.



Wilson Van Dusen states in his Introduction to his work, *The Design of Existence*, "I am by nature a mystic... one who has known God to such an extent that it has changed him or her from within... Only because one needs to be a mystic truly to understand and appreciate a great mystic, my own experience becomes relevant."

My attempt at defining a mystic would include that there is a commencement to becoming a recipient of the divine spirit within, an awakening of higher sentience (see map of the Cosmic Physical Plane below) including spiritual telepathy and intuition. The design of existence is what is. Our ultimate aim should be to live harmoniously within this design. When reading Van Dusen's *The Natural Depth of Man*, I was gradually drawn inwards into a state of coherence. Three mystics partially converge as recognition via a deeply felt experience, powerfully attracts this centring. Swedenborg is the Master mystic, Van Dusen is the Soul (consciousness) middle mystic and I, Orest, a junior mystic reaching towards deeper realities. Three symbolic spheres. Orest the external recognising the Dusen middle sphere, who in turn moves to enter the inner core of the Swedenborgian central sphere; yet there still remains, a journey to plunge into a deeper unknown. All ONE, but not yet fully merging in conscious unity; though knowing that this potential is evident. This gradual immersion into a state of relationship which led to coherence deepened when reading Van Dusen's second book, *The Design of Existence*. We all have this mystical part waiting to unfold. Reverence, respect and awe at the mystery of the HOLY comprise the held attitude that opens the gate.

This experience for all three seekers had a rational broad foundation but intelligent cognition was not the method of entry. In a brooding reflection while reading, I began to empty comparisons and created an opening in trust to this spiralling pull as a feeling of knowingness emerged from within and entered into my consciousness. This strong feeling strives for relationship or union with gnosis. Gnosis is likewise striving to find a recipient. This merging is as if seed thoughts are symbolically conceived in the womb of the higher mind. Gestation varies from spontaneous recognition to a more leisurely precipitation from this rain-cloud of knowable things.

SEER

Thou who sees, beyond the Vision
 Fleeting glimpses of the Inner
 Thou who hears soundless sounding
 Angel voices breathing balance
 Smelling the Rose in winter's depth
 Knowing with a certain grasp
 Essences hidden to the Sight
 Where stand you by thy brother blind
 Holding whisperings from the Divine?

Jurij-Orest

This poem *Seer* touches this process of inner seeing and then sharing your inner felt intuitive knowingness with others. A form of love, this giving of radiance ensures the continuity of flow. Van Dusen brilliantly demonstrates this 'Seer-ship' through his incisive writings. His explanations of Emmanuel Swedenborg's wide breadth of spiritual experiences are based not only upon diligent study but an inner felt affinity with their central themes and concepts. Key statements rang the heart's 'bell of truth'. It was not so much the words, but symbols evoked or conveyed the sense that the inward is reflected in the outer external simultaneously, the outer appearances reflecting the inner life. This central theme gradually expanded and synthesised into a postulate of significance. I wondered, how do we illuminate our true senses so that our inner blindness is healed?

Earlier I stated that a rational broad foundation was an essential. Swedenborg was able to speak nine languages and wrote more than 150 scientific and technical books on a huge range of disciplines. Anatomy, metallurgy (he worked for Sweden's mining development), philosophy, mathematics, chemistry, physics and astronomy were just a few areas he covered. He was an inventor of a flying machine and pursued many of the specialised crafts of his time. This first prerequisite of intellectual attainment created a firm basis for observation, focussed concentration and logical analysis and established him as an eminent scholar. This phase of achievement through study of the external world and service to humanity is important. This is one frame of reference. But, this attainment becomes a possible impediment once the transition to a spiritual awakening commences. So, how do we illuminate our true senses so that our inner blindness is healed?

"I emptied myself so as to be instructed by all there is: as simple as that." This is so profound and suggests that Swedenborg's earlier achievement (mind filled with concepts) became a difficulty to be gradually overcome. For some this emptied state is meditation. To empty one's self is very Zen. Being truly present in the now moment while opening in trust and gratitude to allow the inner to

explicate, is the way. To move from the world of FORMS to the FORMLESS worlds is the greater journey. Emmanuel Swedenborg managed to become highly acquainted with the full range of dimensional realities as his prolific spiritual writings clearly indicate that experiencing. This is the second frame of reference.

Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle (Page 155) by Alice A. Bailey is quoted below to indicate the relevant sentence on the appropriate planes. This unique map requires that inner quietude, of the still hen brooding over the nest of eggs, as the consciousness witnesses a transition of a concept expanding towards a principle. In the *Esoteric Astrology*, Bailey wrote:

Prana might be defined as the life-essence of every plane in the sevenfold area which we call the cosmic physical plane. It is the LIFE of the planetary Logos, reduced within limits, animating, vivifying and correlating all the seven planes (in reality the seven sub-planes of the cosmic physical plane) and all that is to be found within and upon them. The cosmic *sutratma* or life-thread of the planetary Logos enters His manifestation on the highest of our planes (the logoic plane) and, through the instrumentality of the informing Lives to be found in Shamballa (which, I must remind you, is not the name of a locality) is brought into contact with, or is related to, the matter of which the manifested worlds are made – formless, as on the cosmic etheric planes (our highest four planes), or tangible and objective, as on the lower three planes. The fact that we call only that tangible which we can see or touch and contact through the medium of the five senses is entirely wrong. All is regarded as belonging to the world of form which is found on the physical plane, the astral plane and the levels of the lower mind. This lower mental plane, referred to above, includes the level on which the causal body is found – the plane in which "the lotus of love is floating," as the Old Commentary puts it. All that lies above that on mental levels, and on up to the highest of the cosmic physical planes, is formless. These distinctions must be most carefully borne in mind. (Page 155).

This "prana" on each level is an inflow of essential energy creating an organised pattern of knowing or a living symbol that is experienced. Both Swedenborg and Dusen commenced this Livingness of Being initially via significant dreams. Dreams were the initial impetus and a dream journal kept the immediacy of the event fresh. Swedenborg entered into the 'feeling' qualities of the dream. He assumed these were images of his own life. Later as his interpretation skill developed the relationship between these 'inner states' and outer or external events/appearances were revealed. The charts below may help to illustrate the states.

MICROCOSMIC SENSORY EVOLUTION

Planes

PHYSICAL

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Hearing | 5th gaseous |
| 2. Touch, feeling | 4th first etheric |
| 3. Sight | 3rd super-etheric |
| 4. Taste | 2nd sub-atomic |
| 5. Smell | 1st atomic |

ASTRAL

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1. Clairaudience | 5th |
| 2. Psychometry | 4th |
| 3. Clairvoyance | 3rd |
| 4. Imagination | 2nd |
| 5. Emotional idealism | 1st |

MENTAL

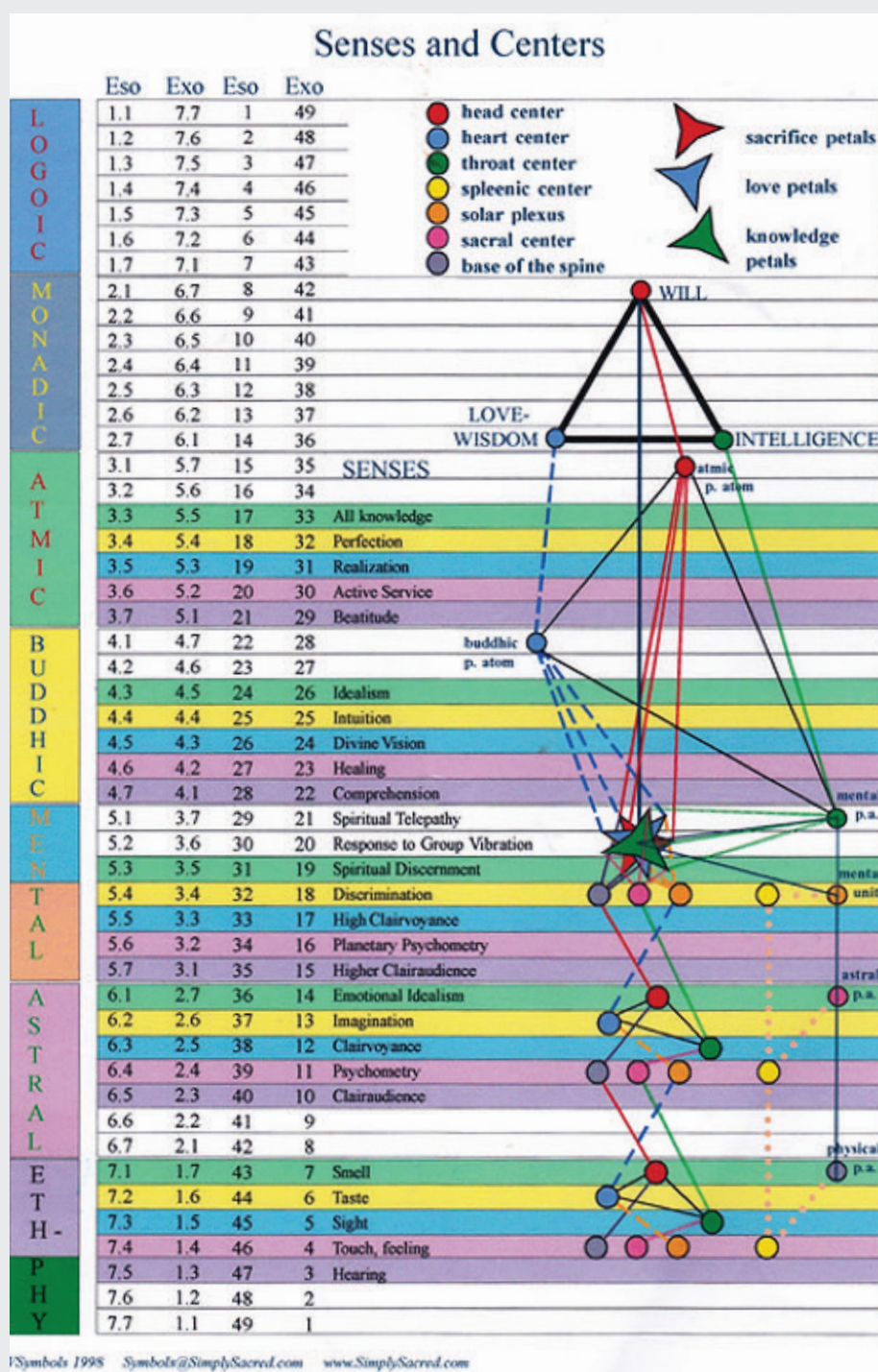
- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Higher clairaudience | 7th FORM |
| 2. Planetary psychometry | 6th FORM |
| 3. Higher clairvoyance | 5th FORM |
| 4. Discrimination | 4th FORM |
| 5. Spiritual discernment | 3rd FORMLESS |
| Response to group vibration | 2nd FORMLESS |
| Spiritual telepathy | 1st FORMLESS |

BUDDHIC

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Comprehension | 7th |
| 2. Healing | 6th |
| 3. Divine vision | 5th |
| 4. Intuition | 4th |
| 5. Idealism | 3rd |

ATMIC

- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1. Beatitude | 7th |
| 2. Active service | 6th |
| 3. Realisation | 5th |
| 4. Perfection | 4th |
| 5. All knowledge | 3rd |



PENETRATION AND EXPANSION, CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

Recently, I was highly impressed with a professional, diamond loupe (small jeweller's magnifying glass) that I bought. This loupe was of excellent quality and craftsmanship. The lens was able to give clarity of detail. This power to magnify and reveal fine detail enabled me to ascertain small flaws in an opal locket setting. Also, the colours reflected were pristine. This device extended vision. It provides a broadening of 'framework' that enables a more pertinent understanding to unfold. A personal 'frame of reference' was extended. Magnification varies from 5x-10x - 20.5mm. Lens - 20x - 20.5mm. Lens. To put this penetration into scale, Itzhak Bentov in *Stalking the Wild Pendulum* used to examine human tissue. He gradually descended into the microscopic level and then to a molecular level. From this basis, he extends into higher realms of

experienced reality – much as did Swedenborg. Zach Bush explored the inner worlds of the microbiome. He said, “We are facing the largest disease epidemic in history due to the loss of microbiome diversity. Connection to nature is our saving grace.” This statement is based on an extensive ‘Framework’ gained via a range of inclusive experiences while doing medical training and research and later while practising as a doctor. *Occult Chemistry* by Annie Besant and others reveals the possibility of in-depth vision as a form of higher sentience to explore the minute. It provides a ‘Framework’ supporting sacred geometry, which is evident in the organisation or structure of all Life.

Scale can also penetrate upwards expanding to the macro-universe. The development of the astronomer’s telescope was significant; yet the outer space Hubble opened a window into the universe. Plasma has become a key concept particularly with the Electric Universe group intelligent organisation structures, said scientist David Bohm. (<https://www.amazon.com/Electric-Universe-Wallace-Thornhill-Talbot/dp/0977285138>)

This depth of revelation enables a breadth of vision to those seekers who from that vast panorama can correlate facts. They may see correspondence between levels of reality. They may determine guiding principles as patterns emerge. Appropriate sentience develops as intent and focus create the need. Spirit/soul are existent within you now and expressing to the degree that you allow by the choices you make. The first critical question is why we wake up in a spiritual realm. Swedenborg’s simple answer is that we awaken in a spiritual realm because we have always been a living spirit in a body.

Many limit themselves to a zone of preference and expect a future to ‘uplift them into the sublime’. You are now expressing as a soul through your form and when a transition happens, your present soul as a consciousness continues to express in the

zone of preference that you hold as relevant. This expressing as a soul consciousness while on earth requires that held cherished values and right knowing is demonstrated in our relationships with others and with Nature. Dusen wrote:

GOD IS LOVE

Love is the End of All. This End creates causes, and through them effects, and hence existence itself.

Insofar as we participate in love, we participate in the End of All, and by this means existence returns

To the love which is the All.

There is an absolute emphasis on what a person truly is. Swedenborg often described this as the external person versus the inner person. In the spiritual worlds, the inner person is central, clear, and completely revealed. Moreover, in the spiritual worlds, we are not permitted to say we believe one thing and then to act differently. In other words, we must be of one mind. The ruling love is the core tendency of a person. Thus, if you regard the spiritual worlds as places where people are sorted into what they really are inwardly, even to their ruling love, you understand the nature of heaven and hell. If you accept the impossibility of saying or pretending one thing and doing another, you see the basic difference of heaven and hell. These things are of the intrinsic design of existence. This is the essence of it all.

The idea of a ‘Frame of Reference’ or a Personal Framework that is inclusive of external material reality as physical earth existence and also the inner higher consciousness (soul) life has been suggested as a necessity. The more inclusive this frame of reference is the better. My understanding is that through extensive reading we connect with the essence or soul of the author and somehow bridge into their consciousness. This reflective reading and re-reading extends our grasp of the Design of Existence.



Jurij-Orest Tarnawskyj lives at Akaroa’s *Southern Lights Centre* where he is a trustee, teacher and caretaker. He has a Master’s Degree in Esoteric Psychology and a long association with the Theosophical Society in Australia and New Zealand.

THEOSOPHY IN THE WORKPLACE

An interview with Esteban Langlois in Buenos Aires

If someone were to ask each of us how we apply Theosophy in our job, we might respond that there is no direct, obvious application of its principles in our field. And yet...



Yet somehow there is a level at which Theosophy has an influence on all we do, isn't there? In this interview, the Theosophical Order of Service in New Zealand asks Esteban Langlois, General Secretary of the TS in Argentina, how his spiritual philosophy affects the decisions he takes as assistant director of the leading medical establishment: the Italian Hospital of Buenos Aires.

TOS: Esteban, for how long have you been a member of the Theosophical Society?

Esteban: Since I was 17. I'm now 55. Theosophy is a source of strength and inspiration to me but every single day I ask myself if I am doing well enough in applying its concepts to my life within my family, my professional work and my TS activities.

TOS: And what answer do you give yourself?

Esteban: That I'm not doing well enough, of course, and in particular that I need to put more effort into doing what needs to be done rather than into what I like doing. Many of our theosophical values doubtless do find expression in my everyday life, though, even if I'm not too aware of them. We are often more aware of our faults than our strengths.

TOS: Is Theosophy relevant to you in your work in the hospital?

Esteban: I'd like to answer this question first as attending physician then as assistant director of the hospital.

TOS: How can you possibly combine both roles? How can you have time to

be a doctor and assistant director at the same time?

Esteban: In the past, I worked full time directly in medical care. Now I fill in for colleagues for just a certain number of weeks a year, taking care of hospitalised patients. In both roles, Theosophy has helped me better understand and accept human suffering as a natural and inevitable part of life. Faced with the sense of impotence and helplessness that we doctors often experience, instead of developing a wall of indifference as a means of self-protection, the understanding of Theosophy gives rise to a sense of compassion and an awareness of the importance of simple listening. Empathy is often more useful than any prescription. To me, Theosophy applied means being conscious at all times of the apprehension and even fear that patients experience, taking the time to explain things to them and giving them the opportunity to ask questions. Even young doctors can quickly get so used to their habitual medical procedures that they don't notice their patients' anxiety about things that are in fact entirely new to them.

TOS: Do you ever share theosophical ideas with patients?

Esteban: Generally, I don't as I deeply respect their own beliefs and values. Most of my patients are not interested in philosophical or religious discussion. However, when advice is requested, say from family members about whether to keep their relative alive or to stop treatment, I quite naturally do it from a theosophical perspective. Of course, from a theosophical perspective we can defend both positions on this question;

all depends on the particular case – the medical facts, the feelings of the patient if they are conscious and the not always obvious wish of the family. Many times, families want a certain line of conduct but they don't have the courage to ask for it. They want the doctors to decide for them. In this case our duty is to interpret those wishes.

TOS: Does Theosophy help you in facing honestly any medical mistakes you make?

Esteban: Every doctor makes mistakes. Some of them have no impact but others cause harm to the patients. Many doctors do not recognise their mistakes and can even try to hide them but I think that the only way to effectively handle them is to acknowledge them and to analyse why they occurred. In general, those mistakes have more than one cause because so many health professionals are involved in caring for any one patient.

I think that the habit Theosophists have of self-observation may help me somewhat in sincerely looking at how I have come to make an error and admitting it honestly. I hope this is the case at least.

I also think that people live today in a rather unnatural way. We have learned to control physical matters quite well so human life is longer every year. The good side of living with artificial means: we have physical comfort, enough food all the year, heat in winter, medicines, surgery, etc. However, we also become dependent on science and technology because this artificial life also carries mental and physical problems: obesity, diabetes, heart and vascular problems, anxiety and

depression, loneliness. So, I see a packet of good and bad things that come together. People live longer but they are not happier! And the worst is that we invest so much time in obtaining the resources to live this better artificial life that we have no time to enjoy it, to think about any spiritual purpose it may have! So, when patients come for external consultations to the hospital clinic, I see that they are sometimes trapped on a kind of wheel. I try gently to point to the problem so they can find their way to a solution. There is not much I can do, alas, because the whole model of society feeds the turning of the wheel.

TOS: What about your role as assistant director?

Do theosophical ideas and values help you in it?

Esteban: The Italian Society in Buenos Aires is a Charitable Association that owns two hospitals: the original and biggest that is located in the capital city (Buenos Aires) and a smaller one located in the suburbs, at San Justo village. Both of them are high-technology hospitals, with a capacity of 550 and 150 beds respectively.

I was in charge of the smaller hospital for about eight years as director. This experience gave me the opportunity to learn how to apply Theosophy in this field. The first and most important is the kind of leadership it helps one model. All big problems arrived at my desk and I was required to respond rapidly, efficiently and sagely to them all! The way of leading the staff is similar to what I have said about communicating with patients. One cannot be authoritarian, decreeing this or that line of conduct. One has to explain as much as possible the reasons and positive aspects of the decisions taken, having heard what everyone has said on an issue. It is essential to hear the needs of the whole staff, from the most senior doctor to the cleaning personnel, in order to keep a climate of harmony that is consistent with the required care of patients. One cannot expect to have empathetic hospital personnel who care about patients' feelings and who treat them as suffering human beings and at the same time see the staff merely as machines or tools to certain ends.

A very practical change was made shortly after I took office in 2012. When I arrived at the hospital, meat was served generally twice a day, seven days a week. Now it is served only three or four times a week and there is always a vegetarian option offered. My staff recognised that excessive meat consumption is not good for the health and there was no problem with this evolution in catering. Similarly, better care is being taken of the animals used in the training of our young surgeons. The animals are now always fully anaesthetised so that their suffering is minimised. Naturally I would rather that animals were not used at all and that technology could provide the necessary non-animal models for our surgeons' practice.

I also initiated some programs for the staff in order to awaken and deepen their sense of service and compassion. Every worker – meaning nurses, doctors, maintenance and administrative personnel – should have the notion of being servers of people

who are suffering. I refer here to both patients and their worried friends and relatives. Indifference is not an option. One might think that compassion goes without saying amongst medical staff but we are only human and we need to work constantly on developing and maintaining a sense of real service. I take care of such staff education programs myself and they are helpful to me too, of course.

I'm convinced that medicine with compassion may enlighten people, patients and hospital staff, in the sense of helping them to discover new values (that are actually old), other than buying things, accumulating physical, emotional and social possessions that will never give them satisfaction, but, on the contrary, will bring frustration, anxiety and depression and will also contribute to physical illness.

TOS: When did you move from the smaller hospital to the larger one?

Esteban: When I finished my term in San Justo in 2020, I moved to the main Buenos Aires hospital. After just a few weeks in office, the Covid pandemic started in Argentina. This was a big challenge: to inspire emotional stability in patients and staff who were facing an uncertain situation with a lot of publicity encouraging fear. That first year working in that huge community that is the Italian Hospital of Buenos Aires was very difficult and I was very grateful for having had the opportunity to acquire skills of theosophical leadership in my previous job. That allowed me to make decisions taking into consideration the needs of everyone and to try to maintain a compassionate point of view. As you might imagine, I failed many times. I remember flying into a rage on some occasions, especially when useless and harmful measures were being applied. These were the product of misconceptions, ignorance and fear. But each failure was an opportunity to increase my awareness and fail less and less often. And yet it happened again and again! That is the way of learning...

TOS: Thank you very much for sharing your experience with us, Esteban, and all the very best for your work. We look forward greatly to welcoming you to New Zealand one day.





A Union of those who Love in the service of all that suffers



Carol Collier, National Coordinator
for the Theosophical Order of Service, New Zealand,
welcomes readers to this Christmas TOS report.

As we close off this year, let us reflect on wisdom gained through experience and let go of those moments in life that are over. The new year brings fresh beginnings and new opportunities to heal wounds and start afresh. 'Life is not about expecting, hoping and wishing. It's about doing, being, and becoming' says Mike Dooley of the New Thought movement. We may ask, 'How can we be of Service?' Let us simply open our hearts and reach out our hands to those in need. They are our brothers, our sisters, our families. There is no separation, they are part of us as we are part of them. Let us begin with one small step.

We look forward to welcoming back our TOS International Secretary Nancy Secrest to New Zealand for the January 2023 Convention in Whanganui when we can reconnect with our local and international members. I look forward to seeing you there. There will be two beautiful prints of Elizabeth Sell's artwork for sale and a special raffle comprising two lovely cat and dog blankets, made and donated by Barbara Zanarb and *Poems of Contemplation* by Elizabeth and John Sell, donated by the Sell Family. Raffle proceeds go to the TOS. Our Ukraine Fundraiser is ongoing and we have a new international emergency aid appeal for Pakistan. See more below.

A big 'THANK YOU' goes to all who have generously donated to TOS projects this year and especially Renée Sell, Vicki Jerome and Sue Harrison who hold the TOS close to their hearts. Thank you, 'Team'. 'What I give out comes back to me. Today I chose Love,' wrote Louise Hay. LOVE AND PEACE to all this festive season. Stay safe, stay well.



Print by Elizabeth Sell of *Santorini Sun*.

UNITY – TOS THEME FOR THE YEAR

This is the last contribution in our series on Unity for 2022. Thanks go to TOS supporter, Trish Lynch who asks the question:

CAN WE AS THEOSOPHISTS HELP TO BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD?

Humanity: "The fulfilment of the wonderful dream of world unity depends upon the individual person, the awakened fiery soul, dedicated to the service of the race" wrote Geoffrey Hodson. A beautiful definition of service is, the spontaneous effect of Soul contact. As we develop a sensitive response to the needs around us, service will become an organic process. Alignment with our bodies in meditation leads to the inflowing force of the Soul and leads to service on the physical, astral, mental or spiritual levels. Meditation with a group of aware focused individuals is a powerful service and force for change. HPB in *The Key to Theosophy* wrote, "A true Theosophist must put in practice the loftiest moral ideal, must strive to realise his/her unity with the whole of humanity and work ceaselessly for others." Warwick Keys, in his excellent article in *TheoSophia* June 2021, *Using the Wow Factor*, discussed Prayer, Meditation and Invocation leading into the power of Group meditation. He addressed the move from private and individual effort in prayer and meditation, to a growing understanding and appreciation of the group dynamic. There is a growing increase in spiritual energy when a group works in harmony and with a shared purpose. In 2009 a group meditation was introduced by John Vorstermans and Warwick Keys and put on the Theosophical NZ website. A number of TS members agreed to participate. A challenge for us all: could it be time to reintroduce the process of a united focused Group Meditation at our branches and groups by dedicated theosophists to help restore balance and health to the planet and its inhabitants? Could we combine service and group meditation for the greater good? I believe we can. What do you think? This quote from C.W. Leadbeater is apt: "The hidden side of Lodge Meetings, the power of thought by a group of people, is very much more than the sum of their separate thoughts. It would be much more nearly represented by their products." Lastly, what better gift can we give than service through meditation?

ONGOING UKRAINE APPEAL

We are collecting for the TS Ukraine appeal. If you wish to support this urgent appeal for our sisters and brothers in Ukraine, please donate, with your name and Ukraine as a reference, details in the Donation section below.

EMERGENCY FLOOD APPEAL FOR THE PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN

We have received an urgent appeal from Mushtaq Ali Jindani, the Honourable General Secretary of the TOS in Pakistan for international aid. Recent floods in Pakistan have devastated the landscape, causing catastrophic misery for the people. Over a third of the country is now under water (an area the size of the UK). UN Secretary-General, António Guterres visited Pakistan to mobilise urgent help for millions affected. Some words from the Pakistan Prime Minister and echoed by the head of the TOS in Pakistan, Mushtaq: "I appeal for massive support from the international community as Pakistan responds to this climate catastrophe." Let us all get behind this urgent appeal for help, as the scale of devastation is beyond anything seen before. See Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighting the impact: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqYDaNZhNZA&t=447s>



POEMS OF CONTEMPLATION

This book of poems by Elizabeth and John Sell, artwork by Elizabeth is now offered for purchase. All funds raised go to TOS Projects. Purchase price is \$30.



CONVENTION 2023 RAFFLE:

TOS supporter Barbara Zanarb has very generously donated two blankets (one for a cat, and one for a dog) for a raffle with proceeds going to the Golden Link College in the Philippines. These beautiful warm blankets were made by Barbara and would be a lovely gift for your pets. *Poems of Contemplation* is also part of the raffle, so don't miss out – tickets are only \$5 each.

When we recognise that
unity of all living things,
then at once arises the
question –

how can we support this
life of ours with the least
injury to the lives around
us;

how can we prevent our
own life adding to the
suffering of the world in
which we live?

Annie Besant

To help contact:
CAROL COLLIER

Phone:
027 668 4554

or
Email:
tos@theosophy.org.nz

Please donate to help the work:

Name:..... Email:.....

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- | | |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent Plea, Ukraine Project | \$..... |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> TOS Christmas Convention Raffle | \$..... |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual child sponsorship \$150 per child India/Pakistan (circle preference) | \$..... |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct credit to a/c 'TOS New Zealand' | |

Bank account number: 03-0104-0088756-03, e-mail tos@theosophy.org.nz

Vegetarians Today

From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, Margaret Johns encourages us to reflect on our food choices.



As we move into the summer season with its fresh salad vegetables and delicious berries and fruits, we are reminded that food crops are naturally seasonal, although most fruit and vegetables are now available year-round (at a price) because of growing techniques that have been developed over the years. However, with the inexorable march of climate change taking up more and more headline space, are these new techniques helping or hindering the reduction of carbon/methane emissions?

The United Nations website advises on its climate change page that one way to reduce carbon emissions caused by the production and distribution of food and its waste is to, where appropriate, “shift food systems towards plant-rich diets, with more plant protein (such as beans, chickpeas, lentils, nuts and grains), a reduced amount of animal-based foods (meat and dairy) and less saturated fats (butter, milk, cheese, meat, coconut oil and palm oil) [which] can lead to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to current dietary patterns in most industrialized countries.”¹ Of course, this would also cut down on the number of animals being slaughtered for supermarket shelves, so two good results from one action!

Another point to keep in mind when thinking of harmful emissions, is trying to reduce our food waste as much as possible – grow what we can, buy only what we need, and compost leftovers that can’t be re-used! Definitely something to aim for!

The NZ Vegetarian Society celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2023 and what a lot has happened over those 80 years! I think the main change has happened in the last 10 years leading to the current popularity of vegetarianism/veganism – it would seem that people are finally making the connection between both the cruelty of, and the destructive nature of, intensive farming and the limited nature of the world’s resources. The Society’s work is more important than ever, assisting people to make changes in their eating habits and thus ensuring they eat healthily. So, if you would like to have a special dish for the Christmas celebration (or any other celebration for that matter), here’s a delicious recipe from our *Home Tried Favourites* recipe book to try – and remember, the NZ Vegetarian Society website is a ‘click’ away, should you have a question, or need help: www.vegetarian.org.nz or info@vegetarian.org.nz

¹<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/food>

LAYERED CASHEW NUT LOAF (Serves 6)

LOAF

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Tbsp oil | 200ml water or vegetable stock |
| 1 large onion, diced | ½ tsp salt |
| 225g cashew nut pieces | 1 tsp basil |
| 100g brown bread (non-grainy) | ½ tsp ground nutmeg |
| 2 cloves garlic | 1 Tbsp lemon juice |

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Line a loaf tin with baking paper and put aside.
3. Heat oil in saucepan, add onion and sauté for 5 minutes – until tender but not browned. Remove from heat.
4. Put cashew nuts, bread and garlic into a food processor and process until medium fine. Do not over-process. Put into mixing bowl.
5. Add onion mixture to bowl, and the remaining ingredients of water, salt, basil, nutmeg and lemon juice. Stir together well using a spoon and put aside.

STUFFING

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Tbsp margarine | ½ tsp marjoram |
| 1 small onion, finely chopped | 5 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped |
| 100g white bread (non-grainy) | ½ Tbsp water |
| ½ tsp thyme | |

1. Mix all the stuffing ingredients together in a food processor.
2. Put half the cashew nut mixture into the prepared tin, top with all of the stuffing, then spoon the rest of the cashew nut mixture on top.
3. Bake for about 30 minutes or until firm and lightly browned.

TO SERVE

1. Remove from oven and allow to stand for five minutes.
2. Turn out carefully onto the serving dish, remove paper from the top of the loaf.
3. Decorate with sprigs of parsley with lemon slices or wedges around it.

www.vegetarian.org.nz for more information, recipes and to order a copy of *Home Tried Favourites*.

More recipes, information and the NZVS revised and updated *Home Tried Favourites* recipe book, are now available from www.vegetarian.org.nz



Vasanta House Library



Books can be ordered from the library at TSNZ national headquarters by using the postal facility available and contacting the librarian at email: library@theosophy.org.nz or 18 Belvedere St, Epsom, Auckland 1051, or telephone 09 523 1797 (Saturday afternoons).

Cost to members is the return postage, non-members may join for \$50.

Vasanta House Accommodation

Casual accommodation is available at TS National Headquarters, Vasanta House in Epsom, Auckland. There is a range of rooms: single, double and bunk rooms with and without en-suite plus kitchen and laundry facilities. We welcome those in sympathy with the TS Objects and willing to abide by vegetarian, smoke-free and alcohol-free requirements. For bookings and more information please contact the office 09 523-1797.

Theosophical Bookmarks – Order Form

Code	Description	Quantity	Code	Description	Quantity
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Cost: \$2.50 each or \$2.00 if bought in quantity

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Send to: Theosophical Order of Service, c/o Renée Sell, HPB Lodge, Theosophical Society, 18 Belvedere Street, Epsom, Auckland 1051. (Please refer to issue *TheoSophia* MARCH 2007, Vol. 68 No. 1 inside back cover for samples.)

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Theosophy

Theosophy is the body of truths which form the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guides its evolution.

Theosophy puts death in its rightful place as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the science of the spirit, teaching one to know the spirit as oneself and the mind and the body as one's servants.

Theosophy literally means divine wisdom: *theosophia*. Theosophy illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions, by unveiling their hidden meanings; thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone who is willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high and to work perseveringly, is welcome as a member and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

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

DIRECTORY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN NEW ZEALAND

BRANCHES

AUCKLAND

Venue: 4 Warborough Ave, Epsom
Meetings: Theosophy Exploration - Mondays 7.30pm
Members Meeting: 4th Wednesday of month 7.30pm
Contact: Ph 09 524 7994 / hpbpres@theosophy.org.nz
President: Richard Sell
Website: <https://hpb.theosophy.org.nz>

CANTERBURY

Venue: Aldersgate Centre, rear entrance from Chester Street West, Christchurch
Public Talks: 1st Wednesday of month 7.30pm
Contact: theosophycanterbury@gmail.com
President: Susanna Roskilly
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/canterbury>

DUNEDIN

Venue: 469 Hillside Road, Caversham
Meetings: Wednesdays 7.30pm
Contact: 03 455 6917 / theosophy.dn@actrix.co.nz
President: James Fox
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/dunedin-lodge>

FAR NORTH

Venue: Theosophy Centre, Waikare Ave, Kaeo
Contact: Maureen Paterson (09) 405 0707 / farnorththeosophy.president@gmail.com
President: Maureen Paterson
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/far-north>

HAMILTON

Venue: 73 Anglesea Street
Meetings: Sundays 7.30 pm
Contact: hamiltontheosophy@gmail.com
Website: <https://hamiltontheosophy.weebly.com>

HAWKE'S BAY

Venue: Cedric Alexander Hall, 5 Devonshire Place, Taradale, Napier
Meetings: 2nd & 4th Thursday 7.00 pm
Contact: Don Harrison 021 532 050 / hawkesbayts@gmail.com
President: Sue Harrison

NEW PLYMOUTH

Venue: 30 Hine Street, New Plymouth 4310
Meetings: Public - see newsletter on website
Members - 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 7.30pm
Contact: Jim Scrivener 021 251 1011 / tsnewplymouth@gmail.com
President: Jim Scrivener
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/new-plymouth>

OREWA

Venue: 9E Forest Glen, Orewa 0931
Meetings: Varying
Contact: Heather Bell (09) 427 0149 / palumbo@xtra.co.nz
President: Heather Bell
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/orewa>

PALMERSTON NORTH

Venue: 304 Church Street, Palmerston North Central 4410
Meetings: See website
Contact: Anthea Clement (06) 353 6221 or 027 240 2069 / pn@theosophy.nz
President: Helen Sussmilch
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/pn>

WELLINGTON

Venue: 19 Marion Street, Te Aro, Wellington 6011
Meetings: Public - Tuesdays 7-8pm
Members - Some Sundays 2-4pm (see programme)
Contact: Sushma Webber 022 626 8381 / tswlgtm@gmail.com
President: Simon Webber
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/wellington>

WHANGANUI

Venue: Community Arts Centre, Taupo Quay
Meetings: Usually 2nd Sunday of month 2.00pm
Contact: Kirsty TXT to 021 212 3819 / theosophywhanganui@gmail.com
President: Kirsty Morton
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/wanganui>

WHANGAREI

Venue: 110 Handforth Street, Onerahi, Whangarei
Meetings: 3rd Sunday of the month 11:00am
Contact: Paul Henderson (09) 436 2661 / mjcloss2014@gmail.com
President: Paul Henderson
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/whangarei>

STUDY CENTRES

DANNEVIRKE

Contact: Daphne Miller (06) 374 7492 / daphnemiller@slingshot.co.nz

INVERCARGILL

Contact: David Simpson (03) 213 0424

NELSON

Contact: Jan Lowe 022 123 4920 / momentumsigns@gmail.com
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/nelson-study-centre>

TAKAKA

Venue: Members' homes
Meetings: Usually alternate Tuesdays
Contact: Murray Rogers 022 072 4569 / jmrwordplay@gmail.co.nz

WAIKATO THEOSOPHICAL STUDY CENTRE

Venue: 40 Marama Street, Frankton, Hamilton 3204
Meetings: 1st and 3rd Thursdays of month 7-9 pm
Contact: Carol Collier 027 668 4554 or Sue Mitchell 027 636 6435
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/waikato-theosophical-study-centre>

NATIONAL OFFICERS

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THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN NEW ZEALAND website: www.theosophy.nz/
VASANTA GARDEN SCHOOL website: www.vasantagardenschool.weebly.com

Please Note: Due to Covid Restrictions, branch meetings may be postponed

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THEOSOPHY TODAY?

The problems humanity faces – pandemics, war, overpopulation, exploitation, prejudice, oppression, greed, hate – are just the symptoms of a disease. We need to treat the symptoms, but to cure the disease, we need to eliminate its cause. The cause of the disease is ignorance of the truth that we are not merely unconnected, independent beings whose particular welfare can be achieved at the expense of the general good. The cure is the recognition that we are all one with each other and with all life in the universe.

Despite the superficial cultural and genetic differences that divide humanity, we are remarkably homogeneous – physically, psychologically, intellectually, and spiritually.

Biologically, we are a single human gene pool, with only minor local variations.

Psychologically, we respond to pleasure and pain in the same way. Intellectually, we have the same curiosity about our place in the universe and the same power to discover truth. Spiritually, we have a common origin and a common destiny.

We are part and parcel of the totality of existence stretching from this planet Earth to the farthest reaches of the cosmos in every conceivable dimension. When we realise our integral connection with all other human beings, with all other life forms, with the most distant reaches of space, we will realise that we cannot either harm or help another without harming or helping ourselves. We are all one. To know this is to be healthy in body, whole in mind, and holy in spirit. That ideal is expressed in the following words, known as the *Universal Invocation*, written by Annie Besant, the second International President of the Theosophical Society:

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

From the TS in America website <https://www.theosophical.org/>

On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most important vision, namely to unite firmly a body of all nations in brotherly love – on true altruistic work, not a labour with selfish motives – on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky



December 2022