

PHILOSOPHY · SCIENCE · RELIGION · THE ARTS

# *TheoSophia*

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**PEACE IN A TIME  
OF CONFLICT**

**Esoteric Ecology**

**FINDING JOY  
AMIDST UNCERTAINTY**

**Theosophy Today**

# 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](http://www.theosophy.nz)

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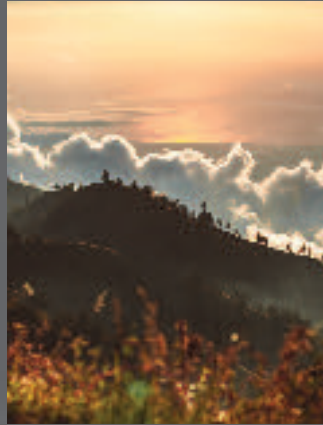
## THE MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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:  
*Autumn leaf*  
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# Journey of Spiritual Search

**SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY**

**Director of Studies: Ravi Ravindra**

**7 - 11 April 2023**

**National Section Event in Auckland**

Out of the billions of human beings on the planet Earth, only a few are deeply struck by the obvious fact that 'I did not create myself'... a searcher naturally begins to wonder 'what forces or energies have created me and why? And only for a few decades. Is my existence accidental or is there some meaning or purpose to my being alive? Who am I? And why am I here?'

This is a superb theme that many TSNZ members will find interesting and helpful especially as it is led by such a renowned, international scholar.

To register and find further details, see [www.theosophy.nz/](http://www.theosophy.nz/)



Ravi Ravindra PhD, Emeritus Professor of Physics and Comparative Religion at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada, is the author of numerous books, including *Science and the Sacred*, *The Wisdom of Pantanjali's Yoga Sutras*, *Heart Without Measure*, *The Pilgrim Soul*, *The Yoga of the Christ*, which have been translated into many languages. He is a much sought-after speaker at international conferences and has visited New Zealand before as a popular TSNZ speaker.

Error runs down an inclined plane,  
while Truth has to laboriously  
climb its way up hill.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky,  
*The Secret Doctrine*



**INTRODUCING**

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# Peace

Peace, perfect peace – which we all desire – is not only a rare commodity but can be a costly one. As war rages in Eastern Europe at the cost of many lives, world leaders try to end the conflict with as little risk to humanity as possible. All this comes on top of the upheaval of Covid, still ravaging the health of many. Personal inner peace is a gift we seek and sometimes have to pay for. It may cost our forgiveness of self as well as others, reconciliation, remorse for acts perpetrated or left undone, appreciation, gratitude, generosity of spirit and unconditional love. Peace can also be acquired through regular meditation. However peace is achieved, we are blessed if, and when, it is present.

Writing about topics close to our theme: *Peace In A Time Of Conflict*, are new TSNZ National President, Richard Sell (p.4), International TS President, Tim Boyd (p.6), American TS scholar, Robert Ellwood (p.10) and TSNZ and past TOS leader, Renée Sell (p.18). American National President of the TS, Barbara Hebert writes about esoteric ecology (p.14) and new Vice-President of TSNZ, Melanie Closs, records her vision for theosophy here (p.16). Especially interesting book reviews and details also feature (pp. 17, 25, 26 and 27). See also, feedback from TSNZ Convention 2023 held in Whanganui, highlighting comments and photos of members from all over New Zealand (p.22).

The editorial team hopes you enjoy this issue of *TheoSophia* and experience profound peace in your everyday life.

Pamela Zane

Editor

[editor@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:editor@theosophy.org.nz)

# TRY

When the stormy waters of life flood  
Over us, we try to become still and free.  
Like a tranquil lake reflecting  
Beauty – be calm and free, as  
We try to remember, that as we walk  
Along 'The best is yet to be'; on  
This winding road to our spiritual home.

Allow the flood to pass over and blow,  
Tumbling away. This brings peace and  
Calmness, to us and those in touch with  
Us. This isn't always easy to do but  
As The Great Master gently advises,  
Saying 'TRY', and this is what we can do.

May calm, stillness and love be my guide  
Throughout all of my life. Beauty is everywhere  
When in quietude and calm we stop to see.  
May we in some small way, add to the beauty  
That is already here and remain like  
A mirror reflecting colour and light.

Failure may be a part of this journey  
But success will come, if we do but try  
And remember that 'the best is yet to be'!  
Failure and success we do not heed, as  
The measure is: Did we try? As this will  
Bring us success real, long-lasting and true!

*Elizabeth Sell*

## DIARY DATES

### 2023

April 7-11	School of Theosophy – <i>Journey of Spiritual Search</i> led by Ravi Ravindra – Auckland Theosophy Centre
August 5-6	Immersion Weekend

Check for updates and details of these events: [www.theosophy.nz](http://www.theosophy.nz)

### FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2023		
June	Wisdom and Discernment	1 April
September	The Journey of Self-Transformation	1 July
December	Living in an Interconnected World	1 October

Email: [editor@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:editor@theosophy.org.nz)

New National President of TSNZ, Richard Sell, considers...



# THE PEACE WITHIN

As we navigate through our tumultuous world, it's hard not to see strife and conflict at seemingly every turn. In this intense period, many people, in particular the young, are searching for truth and meaning to life and how to cope with the growing challenges of our times. World religions and leaders have not adequately adjusted to meet these needs and so people look elsewhere.

A core tenet of Theosophy is the cyclical nature of things; we have cycles wherein peace and calm reign, followed by periods of upheaval and unrest. Such cycles may be hundreds of years in duration. Like so many facets in our life, this is an outward reflection of the karmic aspect of humanity. We reap what we sow, and unrest or calm come in proportion to that which is put out by each individual and becomes collective karma when it manifests on the national or world stage. We are in one of these more tumultuous periods of unrest, or perhaps distress may be a more apt description. This is also a time for growth and begs the question, where do we find peace?

The Hindu scriptures speak to us about *Viveka* or 'discernment'. Challenging our thinking and thought patterns about what is true, what is not true, and what is right seeing, is a necessary step in humanity's evolution. This natural inner yearning is experienced at some point in our spiritual journey, summed up well in the *Upanishads*: "Lead me from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light and from death to Immortality." In the current environment of mis- and disinformation, we are sorely challenged in our ability to discern what is true and real, against what is not, particularly in the social media space.

It may be that unquestioning, blind belief and the following of traditional leaders, influencers, titans in business, and just plain believing what we read, now ceases to be an option for many. This, while uncomfortable to some, may be part of a wider plan for humanity whereby we are being compelled to think for ourselves, to truly enter the path of 'independent thinking'. And in thinking, we use and stimulate the faculties we have thus far developed of reason, weighing up of matters and deciding upon the best course of thought and action. In doing so we are less at the mercy of the winds of fortune and instead become navigators of our own ship.

A mass shift of consciousness in humanity can be glimpsed if we peer hard enough where we see a more thoughtful person start to emerge. I say start to emerge, because this process takes time over many years. Learning to think for ourselves takes time, courage and opportunity. Guidance may be sought and found in many places or through individuals that may be a few steps ahead of us, or our own higher Self.

The introduction of the ancient wisdom to a person's life will be of inestimable value to them on this quest to change patterns of thought and action. We all come into adulthood with biases. Madame Blavatsky said that "Each of us has been bred and born in some creed or religion, that all are more or less of their generation both physically and mentally, and consequently that their judgment is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences."

Understanding these biases and influences of family, culture and nation means we can be consciously aware of the warping of what is 'Real'. We can be taught to recognise it instantly and so avoid being led away by it. This is part of the 'inner work' which comes under the important field of 'applied theosophy', expounded by the Delphic Oracles which encourage the seeker to 'Know Thyself'. This line of enquiry can be most difficult but also the most rewarding. Its ramifications too, extend beyond just the individual. Sri Ramana Maharishi said,

Self-reform automatically brings about social reform.

Confine yourself to self-reform.

Social reform will take care of itself.

By working on polishing the diamond within, we can be a light in the world. We can join other sparks to become a flame. This flame of self-knowledge and impact on the world starts with gaining the right view or understanding of the nature of things as explained by Lord Gautama Buddha in *The Noble Eightfold Path*. So, thinking in a new way is the first step towards finding inner peace and this leads eventually to outer peace. Developing discernment is humanity's great challenge of our time – and I suggest that the saving of our planet depends on this. Climate change and pandemics are nature's way of telling us we are travelling in the wrong direction. Right thinking is

the conscious choice to act differently. This is a personal responsibility and cannot be forced on anyone from without.

Where the will to dominate or work uncooperatively with others is present, then harmony is absent. The news at this time is full of stories about this. Therefore, understanding our own actions and their impact on others is a step toward self-awareness which is absolutely vital. In doing so, perchance the mirror may reflect something we are not particularly proud of, the challenge is to acknowledge our behaviours, our thoughts and choose to act differently. A past International President of the Theosophical Society, N. Sri Ram said,

The dove of peace has first to find a resting-place for its feet in our hearts, before it can make its home in our surroundings, establish itself in the environment of our being.

As this peace permeates within our being, a subtle transference to others occurs, if nothing more than by way of example, which is one of the most powerful means to affect others. The vibration of harmony and goodwill can displace negativity if projected powerfully enough and it is up to us to develop these qualities. Behold the power of infectious laughter in a room and the upliftment of the heart this brings, even for a few brief moments.

Battles are won in such moments, but it is by no means an easy feat; battles fought, must be refought and won many times over. As the story goes, Benjamin Franklin was walking out of Independence Hall after the Constitutional Convention in 1787, when someone shouted out, "Doctor, what have we got? A republic or a monarchy?" To which Franklin replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." In Geoffrey Hodson's occult dairy *Light of the Sanctuary* there is a snippet entitled *Warrior for Righteousness* which reads,

Every Occultist must enact the drama of Kurukshetra continually. On the one hand, he develops an increasing sense of oneness with life and men, and on the other, he is frequently called upon to fight - especially his own brethren who have become recalcitrant. When such situations arise, the occultist must fight. The Charioteer within must be obeyed and Arjuna must fight.

The above shows that it is no easy task to balance peace and harmony against one's own sense of right and right action. What should one do? This is where discernment in the form of good judgment is so critical. Being able to think matters through, in the light of the true nature of things, untarnished by the biased lenses we look through, to find the 'Real', is vital.

In balancing heart and mind through the eyes of *Viveka*, we find that even amidst conflict, we can still find that peace and happiness within our innermost centre, the citadel of the true Self. True happiness and serenity will naturally follow this state of equanimity. N. Sri Ram spoke of this when he wrote,

There is a pure happiness that arises out of virtue, right living, life without fears, without wants, and without possession, but only with a divine simplicity.

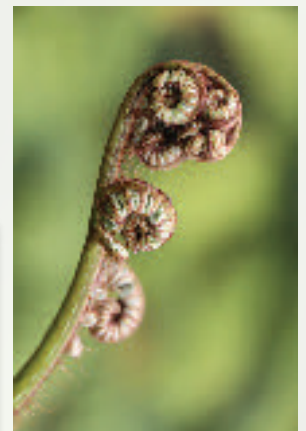
Achieving this state is something we can all strive for and can all reach, for it is a state of mind and being. This state may only be an instant away, for it is closer than the breath and it is here now waiting to be discovered.

True happiness and serenity will naturally follow this state of equanimity.



Richard Sell joined the Theosophical Society as a teenager and is a past President of the Auckland branch and was for seven years, the first Chair of the Governance Board for the New Zealand Section.

Richard has presented theosophy throughout New Zealand and internationally. He also contributes articles to theosophical magazines and is active in promoting theosophy as a founder of the [www.theosophy.world](http://www.theosophy.world) resource website. A keen student of all things theosophical, Richard is very interested in applied self-transformation and theosophical history.



# UNITY IN THE WORLD TODAY

Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society,  
looks at its current work.

The theme for this Russian National Congress is a deep one — both complex, but also quite simple. We are coming together to consider the importance of the Theosophical Brotherhood and how to build it in today's world. We should begin with the idea that in joining the Theosophical Society (TS) often we come with certain expectations. Whether it is the TS or our other relationships, we come to it with a need within us. It is important for us to recognize something basic: that membership in the TS does not change us — we change ourselves. However, the influence of the TS cannot be underestimated. In essence, we choose an environment in which we try to grow. We choose an environment, and then we respond to its influence.

There are some people for whom their choice of environment is a battlefield. They feel that war and fighting is their need. For others the environment they choose is a cave, where they can be silent and introspective. In choosing to associate ourselves with the TS, its members, and its long lineage of wise people, we make a choice to put ourselves in the presence of an Ageless Wisdom. If we are open and aware, then it will inevitably

have some influence on us. There is an expression that we can lead a horse to water, but cannot make him drink. We can be in the presence of wisdom, but remain unaffected *if* we are unaware. There are countless examples of people who died right next to a river, not knowing that the water was so near. So, just wisdom in itself is not enough. Wisdom is always present everywhere, but are we receptive?

A part of the idea for the formation of the TS was to create an environment in which certain qualities could be called out — an atmosphere in which individuals could unfold some of the deeper aspects of their being for the benefit of humanity, in which spiritually mature individuals could participate in the work, and in which people could become mature in their inner life. As highly as we may regard ourselves, we, as a humanity, are very undeveloped — really a child-like humanity. There is an expression that gives an example of this: “No tree is so foolish that its branches fight among themselves.” But as human beings we continually live and act from the conviction that somehow we are separate from one another. As much as we speak of it, we do not fully grasp the idea of Oneness, Unity, and Brotherhood.

One of the important aspects of a maturing spirituality is an awareness that at every moment we are choosing, and we are responsible for those choices. In the *Bhagavadgītā* one of the discourses of Lord Krishna is about action and inaction. Even if we believe ourselves to be not acting, to not act is action. Everything we do or not do influences the greater environment. That awareness is the beginning point. Our actions produce results, but our actions are produced first by our motivation, our intentions.

In the beginning portion of H.P. Blavatsky's (HPB) *The Secret Doctrine*, she talks about three fundamental propositions. The third of them describes our “obligatory pilgrimage” of incarnation and action, results and motivation. She makes the point that in this process of maturing, there are steps along the way, and that as long as we are unaware, all of our actions are determined by what she describes as “natural impulse”. We are pushed and moved by the environment that surrounds us. Much like leaves blowing in the wind we find ourselves moving according to forces that are outside ourselves. She makes the point that at a certain moment in our unfoldment something changes.



With maturity we become active by what she describes as “self-induced and self-devised” effort. Our movement and our activity in the world become guided by internal rather than external forces. It is only at a point such as this that something like a theosophical Brotherhood can begin to have any meaning to us. None of us is involved with the TS by accident or chance. Something like the Ageless Wisdom would have no attraction to anyone who was not receptive to what this Wisdom can give. Even though very often we come for what we can get, with time we discover that the only way that we really can receive is when we learn how to give, when we learn how to influence the environment we have chosen.

Many of us find ourselves attracted to the Wisdom, but mistake it for knowledge. There is no doubt that the Ageless Wisdom tradition is rich in terms of the knowledge with which we can acquaint ourselves. The pursuit of knowledge is something that can occupy a lifetime(s). It is inexhaustible — endless. It is also exceedingly valuable and necessary along this way, but Ageless Wisdom is something very different from ancient knowledge, no matter what that knowledge may be.

When we make the choice that we will have some level of relationship with the TS and its work, what is it that we are choosing? Whether we become aware of it sooner or later, what we choose is to make an attempt at Brotherhood, Unity, Oneness. The TS’s founding was viewed by its inner Founders, the Masters of the Wisdom, as a necessary experiment for the betterment of the world, with the hope that it would attract people who had the capacity to actually come to some understanding of Oneness. It has been a very difficult experiment. Along the way we have found ways to frustrate the intentions of those Founders. As important as our individual

unfoldment may be, the real point of the TS is to create a usable instrument for those Great Ones who stand behind this movement.

In terms of the importance of the theosophical Brotherhood and what it is we can do to bring it about in today’s environment, I can offer just a couple of thoughts. Our work within the TS in many ways is not that different from the work we do in what we call “ordinary life”. If we are awake, we have the capacity to observe and correct behaviors. So, first of all, in our theosophical work we have to be willing to make mistakes. Mistakes are so important.

H.P.Blavatsky, above all others, made numerous mistakes that were pointed out by the Mahatmas, by Col. Olcott and by herself, but her mistakes were made in the service of the Ageless Wisdom, in the service of others. One of the words that comes up again and again in the advice from the Mahatmas is that the most important thing is that we “TRY”. The only people who make no mistakes are those who do not try. However, they make the greatest mistake — not trying.

Every moment that we live we are involved in an experiment — that of unfolding a deeper, mostly hidden life. With every experiment there are certain risks involved. If we want adventure with no risk, we go to Disneyland. We can experiment with expressing the fundamental principle of Unity.

One of the ways in which HPB described what Theosophy is was that it is altruism first and foremost. So in this effort to bring a wisdom into the world and to address the universal suffering of all human beings we have to be willing to move beyond our normal limits, and to know that we may fail many times, but we are supported by a Brotherhood within which we live and move. Often we fall down in our attempt at a theosophical Brotherhood by not

Every moment that we live we are involved in an experiment — that of unfolding a deeper, mostly hidden life.

... advice from the Mahatmas is that the most important thing is that we “TRY”.

being as generous with the mistakes of others as we would like others to be with our mistakes — the Golden Rule.

There is great value in not taking ourselves so seriously. Most of us have certain aspects of our identities that we treasure — that we take pride in and protect — but in the big picture, none of us are that important. Think of it this way, we have lived in many bodies, in many places, over countless periods of time. Even at this moment we are participating, like cells, in the organism which we call humanity, composed of seven billion other beings similar to us. As individuals, we are not so important.

Our influence is elevated when we arrive at a recognition that this apparently individual separated self that we value so much, really does not exist as an isolated, independent entity. It is an expression of something greater. With this realisation there is a possibility for the Ageless Wisdom to make itself known through us, and through the TS.

A Taoist teacher asked a question, and then gave the answer. The question was: “Why are you unhappy?” The answer was: “Because 99.9 percent of your thoughts, activities and feelings are focused on yourself, and there isn’t one.” Perhaps the realisation of the non-substantial boundaries we place around ourselves is something distant for us, but in the meantime there is work to be done.

Unity, harmony is the basis of all strength. That is the field in which we need to work. These are just a few thoughts. There is no formula for theosophical behavior, as there is no formula for life or living, but our goal is to *find* that avenue toward a deepening understanding of Wisdom, Unity, and Brotherhood.

Q: You talked about experiments and acceptance of mistakes, but there is a question which we discussed several times during our Congress, and I would like to hear your opinion: How should we

deal with those people whose experiments and mistakes ruin and destroy others’ efforts — our personal efforts or efforts of a group of people?

A: In our desire to be brotherly very often we are willing to overlook facts that are in front of us. One of the facts about this work is that all of us are functioning on different levels of unfoldment and understanding. To the minds of many people within the TS — because this Ageless Wisdom is so vast — they think it is everything and anything, which is incorrect. There is the expression that “Theosophy is everything but everything is not Theosophy.” Often some aspect of the Wisdom Tradition becomes attractive to an individual, and also becomes colored by that individual’s temperament and limitations.

After He had his enlightenment, the Buddha lived for another 50 years and produced a vast body of teaching. At the end of his life He condensed his teachings to just three things: “Do no harm, do good, and purify your minds.” In the TS’s history, these cases that continually present themselves of individuals who willfully or unconsciously do harm to the TS, we have to apply that idea — do no harm.

Where the harm is being done, we sometimes have to interrupt that process by various means. In Russia, as everywhere else, I am sure you have a number of things that are problematic. As International President, you can imagine what I deal with. To some it might seem surprising, or counterintuitive that the greatest problems I have encountered within the TS have been with people who are either very intellectually knowledgeable about the theosophical teachings, or those who have a devotion to some personalized idea about Theosophy and the theosophical work.

This is not an issue of casual members with personal ambitions. Often the deeper problems have been with those who have acquainted themselves with

theosophical teachings, but have not acquainted themselves with themselves. These are not small things we are talking about. There is no formula for how to approach it. The main idea is: do no harm and, where it is possible, do not allow harm to be done.

Q: As International President you travel a lot, give a lot of talks in many places, communicate with many theosophists and many local theosophical societies, so in which society and in which country, in your view, is the idea of Brotherhood realized in the best way?

A: In a certain sense, this is an unfair question. It is like a question we may ask our mother or father: "Which is your favorite child?" In the TS world, everywhere an attempt is being made — in every country. In some places some aspects of it are more developed, in other places different aspects are developed. In no place is it fully realized. My hope is that if I am asked the same question in future years, I will be able to say, without doubt, that "it is the TS in Russia."

Q: We listened and read the translation of your talk recently to the Inter-American Federation, where you described the process of creating the Mission Statement, which is very interesting and important. And the question is actually about the formula of the very Mission, because there is this word "realisation" which could mean two things: understanding, or making something happen in life, in reality. So which one is it in the Statement?

A: The experience of the coming into being of that Mission Statement was one of the high points in my years within the TS. It was an example of unity in action. There were more than 30 people involved in the final stage of the process — sitting together around the table in Naarden, the Netherlands. The experience was one where personal preferences disappeared, allowing for interaction that brought something quite sublime into being.

... within the Mission Statement everything is connected to everything else.

The Mission Statement of the TS is very compact. In English it is 24 words. I can remember very well the moment when that last word was presented and the silence that pervaded the room, the quality of the light that was shining in, and the sense of expansion that was universally felt. It was remarkable and gave some small glimpse of the possibilities of this theosophical work.

In the Mission Statement initially the word 'realisation' was not included. It was "an ever deepening *understanding* of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the unity of all life." The idea was that 'understanding' by itself might be perceived as personal and static; but that the inclusion of realisation related to the path that we are on.

Understanding leads to realisation, the actual experience of what this Ageless Wisdom is about.

You have to be aware that within the Mission Statement everything is connected to everything else. Realisation does not stand alone as a quality or as an experience. So it is "an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of ..." and then it is three things: a realisation of the Ageless Wisdom; a realisation of spiritual self-transformation; and a realisation of the unity of all life. This Mission of the Theosophical Society points us toward an ever deepening experience of these three dimensions of the Ageless Wisdom.

I especially appreciate this question because it arises out of the intent of the Mission Statement. The idea in producing it was first of all that we fool ourselves if we believe that any words we put together can capture the fullness of this exalted Mission, but we have to do something with words. So, the intention was that something could be provided in the most compact form possible, that would be able to expand endlessly in thought and meditation.

Published with kind permission from *The Theosophist*, March 2022.



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.

Renowned American scholar, **Robert S. Ellwood**  
 considers past and present attitudes

# THEOSOPHY on War and Peace

## PART ONE

**B**oth of the principal founders of the Theosophical Society in 1875, the Russian émigré Helena P. Blavatsky and the New York lawyer and journalist Henry Steel Olcott, had some background in military matters. Blavatsky's father had been a career officer in the army of the czar and Olcott had served the Union during the Civil War as an investigator of fraudulent suppliers and also in the investigation of President Lincoln's assassination, acquiring the more or less honorary title of Colonel.

But despite this exposure, the issue of a coherent Theosophical view on the morality and legitimacy of war does not seem to have presented itself forcefully to Blavatsky and Olcott. The latter does not appear to touch on it at all, and Helena Blavatsky refers to war only in passing and as a matter of course as the vast mythologies of *The Secret Doctrine* unfold, revealing conflicts between various primordial races.

Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy* (1889) contains much indictment of the wrongs of society, stating as humanity's due "full recognition of equal rights and privileges for all, and without distinction of race, colour, social position, or birth," and stating unequivocally that "the whole present system of politics is built on the oblivion of such rights, and the most fierce assertion of national selfishness." But this important late work also affirms that Theosophy is not a political organization and states that political reforms cannot be achieved before "we have effected a reform in human nature." Work to influence public opinion is therefore important. Individual theosophists may pursue their own reformist agendas, even if superficially different; by creating good karma and because of the solidarity of the human race, they will all work together for good in the end. War is not explicitly cited as an evil, unlike the evils of extremes of wealth and poverty; this is no doubt characteristic of the Anglo-American perspective of 1889. The late Victorian decades of relative peace obscured the war issue somewhat, but the horrors of the industrial

revolution's fetid urban slums and the social injustice they betokened, were all too apparent.

With those ills, however, came the zeal of the late Victorian reformers, many of them women. No one was more characteristic of the type than Annie Besant (1847-1933). Once freed from her lot as an unhappy wife of an Anglican parson, she plunged into the frontlines of reform, working closely with the radical freethinker Charles Bradlaugh. She was heavily and very controversially involved in labour organization, dissemination of birth control information, the London School Board, the socialist Fabian Society and much else. In 1889, after reviewing *The Secret Doctrine*, she moved away from atheistic free thought and joined the Theosophical Society, bringing to this new enthusiasm the social as well as intellectual passion that had animated her earlier commitments. While Theosophy had from the beginning tended to attract people of liberal inclination, it was Annie Besant more than any other single individual who made it a vehicle for what Catherine Wessinger has called "progressive messianism." This viewpoint embraced, Wessinger believes, a millennialist belief in coming world perfection attained with superhuman help, in the persons of the Theosophical Masters and particularly the World Teacher, but achieved gradually rather than with apocalyptic suddenness. In Besant's vision, the messianic process would bring to fruition all the worthy causes for which she had laboured with somewhat less hope, at least on the spiritual side, in her pre-Theosophical days. She was in a good position to try to implement the vision after becoming International President of the (Adyar) Theosophical Society in 1907, an office she held till her death in 1933.

The issue of world peace and of finding a way to make war obsolete came more to the fore of public consciousness during Besant's early theosophical years in the 1890s and the Edwardian period. These years saw the founding of the Nobel Peace Prize, the much-publicized Hague

Conference on Peace in 1899, and the establishment of the World Court in that Dutch city. Attention to peace issues on the part of reformers grew as the world situation leading up to the First World War became more tense. That conflict was to sorely test the progressivist mood of the century's first decade, at the same time pushing it into new dimensions.

In this situation, Annie Besant wrote about war and peace on several occasions. In general, the concept of dramatic world evolution, in which war might have a necessary part, took precedence for her over strict pacifism. This perspective was only enhanced by her theosophical regard for the Hindu classics, in which "at least on the level of ordinary exoteric understanding" war played as central a part as in the comparable epics of Homer. Thus in her preface to a retelling of the Ramayana for Indian students, she writes of its climactic war by Rama and his monkey allies to rescue Sita from the demon Ravana in terms of the long sweep of evolution, saying, "In order that this evolution may take place, two things are necessary – two forces that apparently work the one against the other. ... The force that pushes against evolution is as necessary for it as the one which pushes it onwards." In this unavoidable conflict it may be a requisite for an avatar like Rama to appear, as an "ideal king and warrior," to exemplify the "manly virtues," for "No nation can be great which lets slip out of its character these strong and virile virtues, and we must rebuild them in India's sons."

The circumstances when these qualities might be called for were spelled out clearly in Besant's introduction to another of India's great classics, the *Mahabharata*, within which the *Bhagavad Gita* is set. Of this epic of epochal war between rival contenders for the throne of an ancient kingdom, she writes:

Sometimes a whole nation goes wrong. Then the Gods place in its way a great war, or a famine, or a plague. The nation is gone wrong and must be driven right, or has gone wrong and must suffer, so as not to go wrong again. And the Great War, the story of which we are going to study, was brought about by the Gods, because it was necessary for the evolution of the nation.

This passage, undoubtedly written with the then-recent Great War of 1914-18 in mind, reaffirms still more clearly that war can be of evolutionary and even character-building benefit.

In 1940, as another great conflict was underway, the Theosophical Publishing House in Adyar produced a slim volume in the "Besant Spirit Series" called *The High Purpose of War*. Containing an enthusiastic foreword by George S. Arundale, it offers a collection of passages on this theme culled from her lectures and writings, mainly of course, from the World War I era. She continued:

We, who are servants of the White Brotherhood, who regard Love as the supreme Virtue, and who seek to enter into the Coming Age of Brotherhood and Co-operation, we can but follow the Guardians of Humanity, and work for the triumph of the Allied Powers who represent Right as against Might, and Humanity as against Savagery. The Theosophical Society, the society of the Divine Wisdom, founded by members of the White Brotherhood and Their Messenger in the world, must throw itself on the side which embodies the Divine Will for evolution, the side on which are fighting the super-men of the Day.

A contemporary, and rival, of Annie Besant in theosophical circles was the American, Katherine Tingley (1847-1929). Like Besant, she was active in social work before coming to Theosophy, and was also a Spiritualist. She founded a Society of Mercy in 1887 to visit hospitals and prisons, supporting it with dramatic recitals and Spiritualistic readings. She established the Martha Washington Home for the Aged in 1889, and a Do-Good Mission in New York in 1891. Her spiritualistic and social concerns led to her meeting with William Q. Judge, head of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, in 1894. She became a theosophist, convinced

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that its worldview placed both her spiritual and humanitarian commitments on a deep footing, and quickly became a close confidante of Judge.

Tingley was therefore prepared to play a leading role in dramatic theosophical events that were about to unfold. In 1895, at Judge's urging, the American Section declared its independence from the international Theosophical Society headquartered at Adyar, Madras, India, under the presidency of Henry Steel Olcott, and with which Besant was affiliated. Judge died in 1896 and within a couple of years Tingley had risen to the Presidency of the separated American section, though Annie Besant, on a whirlwind tour, won back a number of U.S. lodges.

At the same time, Tingley was nursing another dream, the idea of a utopian theosophical community, in which the arts, education and labour would combine to create a new vision of human life. With the help of wealthy Theosophical patrons, the dream took shape. In 1897 land was bought on the Point Loma peninsula in San Diego, and by the turn of the century Katherine Tingley and many of her followers were settled in Lomaland, as the community was called, surrounded by imposing edifices with leaded glass domes and Egyptian gates. The Raja Yoga Academy, in which the community's children and youth were schooled, was particularly impressive because of its futuristic educational principles. She closed her remaining lodges, urging their leaders to join the new community.

Tingley was passionately concerned with peace, as with many social issues. As she once recalled, this opposition was grounded in childhood memories of the dreadful and unforgettable expressions she saw on the faces of Civil War casualties; after that she could never again credence those who spoke of the "honour" and "glory" to be attained on the battlefield. In 1913 she organized and attended an international Theosophical Peace Congress in Sweden, held June 22-29. On the way back, she attended the Twentieth World Peace Conference in The Hague, August 18-23. More peace meetings were convened at Point Loma. Once war had erupted in all its horror, Tingley and the Lomaland community swung into action with a "Sacred Peace Day for the Nations" on September 28, 1914, which as a day of prayer for peace drew endorsements from President Wilson and several governors; in San Diego there was a Peace Parade, "a great procession of protest" against the slaughter commencing across the Atlantic.

In her writings on peace, Tingley emphasized a special role for America. It was to be the "Spiritual Mecca of the World," "The Cradle of the Sixth Sub-race" which would carry humankind to a higher level, and "The Torch-Bearer of Peace." But she recognized that the present United States was an imperfect vessel for this lofty destiny, "its duties were only half done," and there was much to regret in its past wars and injustices. The case might have been better "if our great America had from the beginning realized that Brotherhood is a fact of Nature."

For Tingley, this was a key fact, reiterated repeatedly: Brotherhood is a fact of nature. War is based on essentially false premises, promoted by the "pernicious propaganda" of the news media, whereas peace is based on the fundamental fact of "that Divinity which now stands in the background of human consciousness." More than Besant, for all her reformist zeal, and the cause of Indian self-rule to which she was by now giving herself even at the cost of brief imprisonment, Tingley together with Lomaland stood for and sought to exemplify what might be called a utopian, rather than evolutionary (in the Besant sense), Theosophical millennialism. The position was well put by a disciple of hers, Montague A. Machell, in connection with the 1913 Peace Congress in Sweden:

I believe it is because Theosophy teaches and has taught the doctrine of human solidarity throughout the ages, because it holds that all men are brothers and are bound into one great

family by bonds infinitely stronger and more lasting than those of mere nationality, it is because of this that the Theosophical Leader is calling this International Theosophical Peace Congress... [For] Theosophy is another name for the Wisdom-Religion, that religion which is coeval with man himself and anterior even to the earth upon which he dwells...

This sentiment may well have been based on lines from Helena Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*: "All men have spiritually and physically the same origin, which is the fundamental teaching of Theosophy. As mankind is essentially of one and the same essence, and that essence is one 'infinite, uncreate and eternal, whether we call it God or Nature,' nothing, therefore, can affect one nation or man without affecting all other nations and all other men." (That Blavatskian dictum was, ironically, imprinted on the bulletin of a Peace-Day Celebration of the International Theosophical Peace Society, held in the Isis Theatre at Point Loma, on May 18, 1914, only a little more than two months before Europe would be awash with the carnage Katherine Tingley and her Theosophists had so strived to avert.)

But, though undoubtedly very few Theosophists saw the world struggles of the twentieth century with any sentiment other than initial, visceral revulsion, there were alternative ways to interpret them and all wars in light of the Ancient Wisdom, as we have noted already in the writings of Annie Besant, just as there may be a latent tension between Blavatsky's practical ethics of *The Key to Theosophy* and the grand mytho-historical role conflict plays in *The Secret Doctrine* when rivalries between the godlike fore-parents of humanity were under consideration. These are what might be called Tingley's ethical unity theme and the Besantian "evolutionary" Bhagavad Gita theme, one emphasizing that peace only enacts the fundamental reality of natural and cosmic oneness, the other the possible spiritual dharma or duty evoked by

conflict necessary to evolutionary change. To put it another way, it is the strain between ontological reality and evolutionary necessity, a tension evoked by very basic but unreconciled precepts of Theosophy's dynamic monism, predictably coming to a head in the issue of war. The conundrum can be viewed in further detail and possible resolution in positions taken in the next Theosophical generation.

To be continued in the next (June) issue of *TheoSophia*.

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...there were alternative ways to interpret ... all wars in light of the Ancient Wisdom...



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# Esoteric Ecology

American Theosophy leader, **Barbara Hebert**

challenges us to consider our part in today's world.

When I think of ecology, my mind goes immediately to the environment. From there, it goes quickly to the impending ecological disaster that humanity has created. All of us are aware of this, and many are doing what they can to mitigate the damage to our great mother, the Earth.

The *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* defines ecology as the branch of science that focuses on “the interrelationship of organisms and their environments” and “the totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment.”

It is relatively simple to gather information about ecology in the familiar sense. However, it is not necessarily easy to learn about the hidden components of ecology. From our studies, we know that there is more to our environment than simply its visible aspects. I believe that there is not only a physical ecology, which we can see, but also a hidden or unseen ecology, which we may term *esoteric ecology*. It involves our relationships with others and our environment in imperceptible ways. I am specifically referring to the astral light and the reciprocal interactions we have with it.

Like other living things, the Earth has something comparable to the etheric double of the human being. Using a term coined by the 19th-century French occultist Éliphas Lévi, H.P.Blavatsky refers to it as the *astral light*. According to Theosophy.wiki, the astral light is not a universal principle; rather, it is a lower form of akasha that belongs to our world. HPB writes, “There is one great difference between the Astral Light and the Akâsa [*akasha*] which must be remembered. The latter is eternal, the former periodic.” (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 10:360–61) This article is not intended to be an in-depth discussion of either the astral light or akasha, the primordial substance that permeates the universe. It is intended to share perspectives about esoteric ecology and how our relationships with one another and the world in which we live physically can impact us metaphysically. (See Theosophy.wiki for further discussion of the astral light and akasha.)

The Ageless Wisdom teaches that all that happens on Earth is recorded in the astral light. The thoughts, feelings and actions of humans are inscribed in this medium and frequently pollute it. The astral light then reflects what it has received back to the Earth and its inhabitants. As HPB writes in the *Theosophical Glossary*, the astral light “gives out nothing but what it has received; that it is the great terrestrial crucible, in which the vile emanations of the earth (moral and physical) upon which the Astral Light is fed, are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics – moral, psychic and physical.” HPB also writes:

As the Esoteric Philosophy teaches us, the Astral Light is simply the dregs of Akâsa or the Universal Ideation in its metaphysical sense. Though invisible, it is yet, so to speak, the phosphorescent radiation of the latter, and is the medium between it and man's thought-faculties. It is these which pollute the Astral Light, and make it what it is – the storehouse of all human and especially psychic iniquities. In its primordial genesis, the astral light as a radiation is quite pure, though the lower it descends approaching our terrestrial sphere, the more it differentiates, and becomes as a result impure in its very constitution. But man helps considerably in this pollution, and gives it back its essence far worse than when he received it. (*Collected Writings*, 10:251)



Given the theosophical teachings regarding the astral light and its role in both receiving and emanating all of the occurrences on Earth, our discussion about esoteric ecology must include some thoughts regarding the interrelationship between ourselves and this unseen component of our earthly environment.

## There is a reason each of us is here now.

In her talk *Mastering the Cycles of Existence*, given at the 145th Theosophical Society International Convention (held in December 2020), Elena Dovalsantos said, “With us in the midst of a global pandemic, one might surmise that an accumulation, or a great accumulation, of human iniquities in the astral light have now returned as global karma.” Dovalsantos then referred to the many thoughts, feelings and behaviours that must have been recorded in the astral light, including divisiveness, wars, greed, cruelty to our fellow humans and to animals, the destruction of our environment, and so on.

Just as human beings are responsible for the pollution of our planet, we are responsible for the pollution of the astral light. Furthermore, like the pollution of the physical planet, the pollution of the astral light seems to be causing dire consequences. Clearly what we are seeing is what humanity has fed into the astral light, and it is being “radiated back intensified.” While this discussion of the astral light and its relationship to the extraordinary happenings in our world today may be interesting to contemplate, how can it be helpful to us? Have you ever wondered about the timing of your birth? That is, why were you born at this particular time in history? The teachings of the Ageless Wisdom may provide us with some answers. As we read in the Theosophical texts, each lifetime is a part of our spiritual

pilgrimage, providing an opportunity to learn and grow from our experiences. May I suggest that in this incarnation, we are being called upon not only to learn and grow, but to put our beliefs into action. We are being faced with a spiritual test. Are we really willing to work for the Light? Can we put our beliefs into action? Most theosophists spend a great deal of time studying and discussing abstract concepts about the universe and our place in it. How often do we take action based on those theosophical teachings?

On January 6, 2021, the Capitol of the United States was attacked while Congress was in session. Many of us watched the proceedings with shock and horror. Many of us no doubt experienced feelings of anger, frustration and disgust, possibly even fear and sadness. Questions loomed about the safety of the people in the Capitol, about the sanctity of the democratic process, and even the future of democracy in the United States. It might even be fair to say that many were shaken to their core by the day’s happenings. We know from our studies that thoughts are things that have the power to impact others. Many of us, at least initially, probably radiated fear, anger and similar emotions into the world, thus exacerbating the situation in a powerful but unseen way. How long did it take to realise what we were doing and change direction to send out thoughts for peace and unity?

As children, my siblings and I would play in a circular water-filled metal trough during the hot days of the Louisiana summer. We would all swim in the same direction and create a strong flow; then we would reverse course and try to swim against the current in the opposite direction. That is how I felt when I changed course from sending out thoughts of anger and fear to sending out thoughts of peace and unity. I felt as if I was going against the current, and it was uncomfortable. However, as more

people began to call for peace and unity, the current seemed to change, and it became easier. Going against the current, whether in water or in the world, is never easy. But our task as theosophists is not easy. Many of us are called to the bodhisattva path, the path of selflessness, the path of liberating humanity from its suffering. Walking this path means that our primary goal is to help humanity. It may mean going against the current – whatever that happens to be – in order to do so. It means learning to remain calm in the storm and refusing to add to the confusion and chaos that already exists. It means balancing fear and negativity with peace and light. It means seeing all beings, regardless of their behaviour, as extensions of ourselves, knowing that we are all aspects of the One Unity that is the ground of being.

When we focus on such thoughts, we are helping humanity. We are putting the Ageless Wisdom into practice. Perhaps we were born at this very time in history so that we can bring light to the world in our own unique way, based on our beliefs and our studies. There is a reason each of us is here now. What is it? What role will each of us play in helping to liberate humanity?

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Barbara Hebert, Ph.D., National President of the Theosophical Society in America, Director of the Southeastern Louisiana University Counselling Center, is a third-generation theosophist. Barbara says it is essential to grow and evolve so that the Theosophy message remains clear and relevant.

Newly elected National Vice-President of TSNZ,  
**Melanie Closs**, shares her vision for the Society.

## Theosophy Today

We are all part of this organisation and rely on one another for support...

**W**e are all here on a physical journey of life along with the variety of issues that must be dealt with and during this physical experience, we develop a core base of understanding and philosophy of life that can be applied to issues that we encounter.

The development of this core base is one of the main reasons that we study Theosophy, along with the exchange of ideas in our wisdom learning process. It is also important that we maintain our relevance to the general community by ensuring the wisdom teachings can be applied to modern day society and are seen as relevant to all concerned.

To ensure that our organisation remains strong, we must have a firm foundation and be able to work with one another in a positive manner. We must ensure the Theosophical Society continues to be resilient through the difficult times that occur, not only now but also in the future.

To be an effective organisation requires inner strength that comes with the understanding and application of theosophical principles within individuals as well as in the branches and study groups. When branches and groups become forums for the wisdom teachings and exchange of ideas, ongoing growth, essential for a robust future, is ensured.

The importance of the work locally is reflected in knowledge gained and applied benefits not only for branches and groups but also the general community. We should encourage this ongoing development of a core base on a personal level as well as at branch level with other like-minded people in the community.

We need to continue extending ourselves through social media and the website. The profile of Theosophy can also be promoted at community events to people who are interested in furthering their understanding of the wisdom teachings.

I would like to see the continued development of speakers for the Society and continued holding of events that encourage active participation and development of understanding of the wisdom teachings. It is important that we examine why we are theosophists so that we remain effective when the situations around us get difficult and remain positive and accepting of other members of the Theosophical Society.

Each branch determines its own identity and future; however, it is important that we share with one another our creative ideas and encourage one another with our ongoing programmes and events. We are all part of this organisation and rely on one another for support to build an effective Theosophical network throughout the country.



Melanie Closs lived in Wellington until she was five years old, when her father joined UNESCO and moved the family to Singapore, Ethiopia and Hong Kong. They lived overseas until Melanie was 15. During this time, she gained a wide, enriching experience which led Melanie to study Anthropology and appreciate the significance of culture. Melanie

has been a member of the Whangarei Branch for 32 years and has been their President, Secretary and Treasurer.

# UNFOLDING CONSCIOUSNESS

*Exploring the Living Universe and Intelligent Powers in Nature*

In four volumes by Edi Bilimoria, DPhil, FIMechE, FEI, FRSA

Reviewed by Tim Wyatt

Let's be blunt – this is probably the most important and penetrating work on consciousness which has been written in many decades – and possibly ever. Apart from that it represents a hammer blow to scientific hubris.

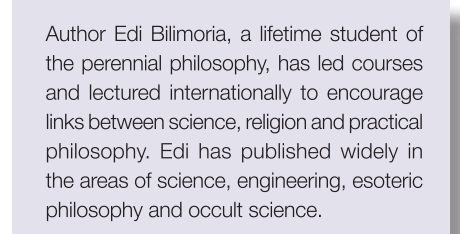
A number of previous attempts have been made to explore the gaping gulfs and flimsy bridges between hard, contemporary science and the occult understanding contained in the Ageless Wisdom or perennial philosophy currently enshrined by such movements as theosophy. No one has yet offered such a comprehensive assessment as veteran theosophist Dr Bilimoria. This is a master-work by a modern-day polymath, the result of two decades of research and seven years in the writing. (This reviewer uses the word 'polymath' advisedly. As an engineer, Dr Bilimoria helped build the Channel Tunnel and the UK's latest warship. He has authored award-winning books. And, as well as being an experienced glider pilot he is also an accomplished concert pianist.)

*Unfolding Consciousness* details the stark inabilities of conventional science to explain the mysteries of life, humanity, the world or the cosmos – and science's implacable refusal to define consciousness other than as a supposed epiphenomenon of the brain. One of Dr Bilimoria's main contentions is that a fetish-like adherence and fanatical devotion to materialistic science has transformed it into what he calls 'scientism' which is unquestioningly and almost universally revered as the new world religion. He writes:

...the late 19th and early 20th centuries were promising times for a rapprochement between science and spirituality. Thereafter, materialism as a legitimate element of scientific thought gradually hardened into an ideology and then into a dogma. Despite the findings of quantum physics, this ideology became so dominant in academia, and learned societies in the 20th century, that the majority of scientists unquestioningly believed that it was based on empirical evidence and therefore represented the one and only credible view of the world.

Not only does this monumental work offer the most comprehensive exposition of consciousness, it persuasively dismantles those smug certainties and blinkered assertions which haunt most laboratories. This re-vitalising of ancient, epic and eternal ideas is a work of immense significance and importance – especially in these fractured times.

Displaying meticulous scholarship, minute attention to detail and panoramic research, *Unfolding Consciousness* is not only a



Author Edi Bilimoria, a lifetime student of the perennial philosophy, has led courses and lectured internationally to encourage links between science, religion and practical philosophy. Edi has published widely in the areas of science, engineering, esoteric philosophy and occult science.

challenge to scientific thinking. It is also a book with the potential to change attitudes (even of the most stubbornly hard-headed) and administer stimulating shocks to the collective scientific mind-set pickled and blinded by the supposed supremacy of materialism. It is perhaps the most powerful demolition job to date of these futile, archaic and arthritic views.

Effectively, Dr Bilimoria has produced a full-blooded manifesto to help kick-start that long-awaited convergence of hard science with its occult cousin. It is both a history book and blueprint for a new era. Embedded throughout the entire 1,300-plus page narrative runs an urgent mantric rhythm constantly stressing the vital importance of free, unrestricted thinking and highlighting the need for new paradigms of thought.

Volume One contrasts the radically different approaches and conclusions of modern natural science and its much older occult counterpart. Volume Two deals with man's occult constitution and the mechanics of death and re-birth. Volume Three widens the perspective to explore how occult science views the unfoldment of humanity as well as the cosmos. And Volume Four has a mass of additional material and timelines.

This work is most certainly not for the faint-hearted and requires both time and dedication to absorb. For those who persist, it provides rich revelations. Its ideas are not only deeply fascinating, but they may also be crucial in understanding who we are as a species.

ISBN: 978-08-5683-538-4

Available in four large format hardback volumes in a slip case price £98.50 from: [www.shephardwalwyn.com](http://www.shephardwalwyn.com)

Reviewer Tim Wyatt is a U.K. journalist, broadcaster, musician, actor and popular lecturer at English TS Lodges.

# FINDING JOY AMIDST UNCERTAINTY

Renée Sell reflects on an endeavour which can conjure up different images, words and ways of seeing and perceiving for each of us.

**W**e may experience uncertainty and our lot can seem heavy at times. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama has commented that when we think everything is someone else's fault, we suffer a lot but when we realise that everything springs only from ourselves, we learn both peace and joy.

Carl Jung, founder of analytical psychology, says our vision will become clear only when we can look into our own hearts. He famously wrote: "Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes." Here is a lovely story from the Buddhist teacher and nun, Pema Chodron in *The Wisdom of No Escape: How to Love Yourself and Your World*:

A woman is running away from tigers. She runs and runs and the tigers are getting closer and closer. When she comes to the edge of a cliff, she sees some vines there, so she climbs down and holds on to the vines. Looking down, she sees that there are tigers below her as well. She then notices that a mouse is gnawing away at the vine to which she is clinging. She also sees a beautiful little bunch of strawberries close to her, growing out of a clump of grass. She looks up and she looks down. She looks at the mouse. Then she just takes a strawberry, puts it in her mouth, and enjoys it thoroughly.

Pema Chodron suggests: Tigers above, tigers below. This is actually the predicament that we are always in, in terms of our birth and death. Each moment is just what it is. It might be the only fully conscious moment of our life, it might be the last moment of our life or it might be the only strawberry we'll ever eat. We could get depressed about it, or we could finally appreciate it and delight in the preciousness of every single moment of our life.

Finding joy in the present moment is being aware of what is right in front of us and honouring the preciousness of each moment, whatever that may be, whether it be sad or happy, what we see as good or bad, for example, the tigers and the luscious looking strawberry.

We don't have control over all the circumstances of our life, even though we'd like to think we do at times. Life is always going to have its moments in the pairs of opposites and it is our attitude as we navigate these times that will bring us the joy, the peace or the suffering. Life is not meant to be endured, but to be appreciated for what it is.

Deep joy, a quality of the Soul, is more than happiness. It goes beyond what is happening outwardly in life. It can be a spiritual practice growing out of gratitude, appreciation, hope, love, grace, for example. When we are kind and helping others, joy and gladness come in abundance. The quality of joy comes from a place deep within ourselves, from the very centre of our being.

What are the moments that bring you joy, moments of sheer beauty that open the wonder within you? Do you think of a beautiful sunrise or sunset, or the blue sky, a new baby, or birds, pets, the garden, your family or just being yourself on a journey of discovery? Not using any great energy to be who we are not, just being who we are born to be. Not worrying about what others might think. It is the birthright of every human being to discover who they are at the deepest level, although few may manage this on their journey this time round. Robert Browning writing of 'the imprisoned splendour' (in Paracelsus):

TRUTH is within ourselves; it takes no rise  
From outward things... and, to KNOW  
Rather consists in opening out a way  
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape  
Than in effecting entry for a light  
Supposed to be without.

I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,  
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,  
But somehow felt and known in every shift  
And change in the spirit... in every pore

We have a role to play,  
we are co-creators with  
nature herself...



Of the body, even,) what God is, what we are  
 What life is – how God tastes an infinite joy  
 In infinite ways – one everlasting bliss,  
 From whom all being emanates, all power  
 Proceeds; in whom is life for evermore...

To be united in some wondrous whole,  
 Imperfect qualities throughout creation,  
 Suggesting some one creature yet to make,  
 Some point where all those scattered rays should meet  
 Convergent in the faculties of man/[the human being].

#### THE JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Only in 'our personal effort and merit' throughout a long series of metempsychoses or awakenings and reincarnations (our mode of travel) are we able to move forward. There are no privileges or favours to be had here and quoting Helena Blavatsky from the proem of *The Secret Doctrine*:

The Pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man/[the human being], save those won by his/[her] own Ego (Soul) through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations.

Helena Blavatsky goes on to say that "the Universe is worked and guided from within outwards."

We have a role to play, we are co-creators with nature herself, when we choose to go with the flow of life and assist in our own unfolding. There is always time to do this, even if we have to carve out that time. Life goes fast and before you know it, this incarnation will be coming to a close so make a start now if you haven't already. Author, H.K. Challoner reminds us of this:

Never say that you have no time to cultivate one of the most precious of gifts – this ability to draw aside and renew your spirit through contact with that stream of power which can always bring tranquility and strength, even in the midst of the most violent onslaughts.

Reflecting on the Zen tiger/strawberry story, we can consider that stories can be more than just an interesting tale, they can offer us great lessons, help us step into the shoes of other people and situations and give a taste of what things might be like for others. We may even change our perspective. It may be a lesson for us.

This story could make you feel frustrated, thinking it is impossible, how could anyone enjoy that strawberry, in this situation? What is the takeaway message here, is there a bridge into your life here?

Definitely. Although much is left for interpretation. I was initially imagining a happy ending with a helicopter coming by and whisking her away to safety (a Cinderella ending). But this story promotes thinking and sparked curiosity within me. It encouraged me to look for the meaning. We need to dig deep and go beyond the surface of the story...

Some possible interpretations could include: Live and appreciate each moment to the fullest. Even when disaster is at every turn, there is no reason to not enjoy the good things in life! Or, the woman wasn't caught up in what was behind her (the tigers) or worrying about what was yet to come – the gnawing mice on the vine or the fall ahead. Or, she wasn't desperately grasping onto the vine for dear life but was in the moment and able to notice the delicious strawberry.

If stopping here, we may miss the potentiality of all the possibilities. After all, if she wasn't so frightened by the tigers, she might not have been hanging off the cliff and if she wasn't so fixated on getting momentary pleasure, she maybe even could have escaped. Maybe, if the woman wasn't so intent on enjoying the strawberry, she might have been composed enough to realise she could have given it to the mice and then thrown the mice to the tigers. Instead, she was too self-absorbed and was destined to fall.

You may even say she wasn't living in the moment at all. Rather, she was living in the past by remembering how good strawberries taste or the future, thinking she may never taste one again. The present was very clear: how to face the difficult problem of saving her life.

You could go around and around in circles considering whether the right thing to do was to enjoy the strawberry, climb up or down, fight for her life, eat the strawberry, or simply not run away from the tiger in the first place. There are many possibilities as we try to give the story a clear, neat resolution while looking for meaning, to feel satisfied and solve the problem.

However, a Zen story is to get us to reflect deeply about our own life. Quiet contemplation may lead to understanding.

Sometimes during difficult times, we find it hard, almost impossible to find joy or to feel gratitude. For this reason, joy and gratitude have to go beyond what our memory tells us, in thinking of good things in our life. Do we embrace the good and the bad, the easy and the difficult, the highs and the lows – the messy stuff too? The Zen story alludes to impending doom. We are all hanging from a breaking vine. To be alive is to hang from a breaking vine – it will break one day.

Just thinking of the good things and focusing on the positive and pleasurable sides of our life, may make us feel better for a while, but at some point the tigers will pounce and we will catch a glimpse of the mice gnawing away at the tether of time.

When we practise joy and gratitude, it is something we cultivate



We don't  
need to go  
out of our  
way to find  
joy.

despite the difficult and uncomfortable sides of life. We practise joy and gratitude daily to bring an awareness of life itself amidst what we deal with. We don't need to go out of our way to find joy. When we cultivate, through spiritual practice, soul qualities like joy, gratitude, love, we are being softened to embrace life's inevitable challenges, impossibilities and the daily struggles. As our life comes to an end, according to Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield, not too much matters:

How well we have lived,  
How well we have loved.  
How well we have learned to let go.

It's difficult to appreciate your life, when you're always trying to run away from its unruly tigers and gnawing mice. It can be hard to appreciate life when you are clinging on to a vine as tightly as you can, and afraid to let go.

Seriously, before the woman was over the cliff with the tiger, was she living in an illusion? Is there really any fundamental sense of safety or security here on this earth? She seemed to get clarity once she was over the cliff, with no possible way to escape – reality became strikingly clear! Suddenly, there was nowhere to run, nothing to hold on to that could save her. In that strawberry moment, did she let go of her resistance to the flow of life and become able to fully appreciate the deep joy and beauty of what had been right in front of her all along? Maybe next time round she may cultivate a spiritual practice and discover that deep joy and clarity earlier?

We are required to discover our own way, in expanding from within, outwards. We have the possibility to transcend our own little world of our hopes and fears, 'to die in every moment', as Krishnamurti says, to these things.

In opening a way out, we break the shackles of life's long programming and mind patterns, consciousness unfolds, and we see differently. Annie Besant wrote "Love, is a form of Seeing." Also from her book *A Study in Consciousness* she speaks of how "consciousness cognizes itself"...

And as we expand our horizons inwardly, the outward comes automatically in the same way, when we are appreciating some breathtaking beauty e.g. that beauty of a morning sunrise for example – that appreciation and pure joy comes from deep within our own HEART, and as we practise and nurture 'beauty, love, joy etc.', it flows from the Heart of our being MORE freely and spontaneously.

This is theosophy in action, in its deepest sense: a direct knowing, a way of seeing in the world, a foundation for a new way of Being, an Unfolding of who we truly are, in each moment. This is the attaining of Wisdom, and Walking the Path toward Final Freedom. Helena Blavatsky, towards the end of her life, encouraged us to turn inward and pressed this message home to us, as seekers and enquirers, to make the personal effort in her last book off the press, *The Voice of the Silence*, a Mystical work for the Few (those that want to do the hard yards this time round). The work points toward an interior movement, it is all within us, closer than breathing, closer than our hands and our feet!

Well known emeritus Professor of Religion, Robert Ellwood, suggests that "Joy is ours by right and we are empowered to take charge of our lives" and says that "Eternity's gifts belong to any and all points in time."

The only true progress there is to be made is spiritual progress because this is longer, lasting beyond one life, more permanent. As we age, we want to be climbing spiritual vistas to celestial heights and then death and birth will be seen or viewed in their rightful place, not as an end but as outer events. The inner pilgrim is untouched by these.



Imagine knowing joy at the deepest level of your being, the illumination – through experience of your own, this wordless knowledge. It's time to light the flame of your own heart, because you are a wayfarer for all humanity! Finally, from H.P. Blavatsky:

Behold, the mellow light that floods the Eastern sky. In signs of praise both heaven and earth unite. And from the four-fold manifested Powers a chant of love ariseth, both from the flaming Fire and flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind.

Hark! ... from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, ALL NATURE'S wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:  
 Joy unto ye, O men [and women] of Myalba  
 A Pilgrim hath returned back from the other shore.

Light the  
 flame of your  
 own heart,  
 you are a  
 wayfarer for  
 all humanity!



Renée Sell is passionate about weaving the Ancient Wisdom teachings into everyday life and finding more practical ways to make Theosophy inspiring for all who touch its shores. Renée was National Coordinator of TOS NZ for 18 years and National Vice-President of TSNZ for the past seven years. She is President of HPB Lodge, Auckland.



## TSNZ CONVENTION 2023

# OUR JOURNEY

## *from Me to We, to the Oneness of All*

### Selections from positively charged feedback...

What a great way to start off the year! Thanks to all the speakers, both local and international, who harmonised their messages beautifully to help us move from focussing on 'me' to 'we' and to illustrate the oneness of all life.

It was an honour to meet Nancy Secrest in person, after reading her articles in *TheoSophia* over the last couple of years. Nancy's talk, *There is No Other*, dovetailed neatly with John Vorstermans's presentation, and reminded us about the unity of all life and our journey towards that realisation through service.

On Saturday, our new National President, Richard Sell, gave us an excellent overview into the Mystery Initiations, reminding us to stay with the big picture, rather than the narrow focus of our own lives. Definitely a lecture I will watch again online. William Meader gave us further in-depth insight into the path of initiation, emphasising that it is the journey from me, to we, to the oneness of all that determines our progress on the path. I found it particularly helpful to be able to distinguish more clearly the appetites of the personality from the soul infused integrated parts of my personality.

...we laughed together, shed tears together and grew closer as a group. Kirsty and the Whanganui team were great hosts and organised amazing vegan and vegetarian food and spiritual entertainment. I'm so glad to have attended. Thank you all so much, Wendy Rapp - Auckland

.....

All levels of our being were replenished with life-giving food, love, knowledge and inspiration. Added to all this nourishment was the joy of sharing Whanganui with you. With immense gratitude for being able to hang out with the super cool TSNZ folk. Love and light, Widge and Orlanda - Whanganui

.....

It was an honour and a pleasure to have Nancy Secrest as our guest speaker. Also, the reconnection attendees made with old friends after the long period of lockdown led to an atmosphere of theosophical kinship and a tangible recognition of 'the Oneness of All'. Vicki Jerome - Christchurch

.....

...A wonderful re-uniting with treasured friends and meeting others, now also never to be forgotten. Talks and presentations of high calibre, all this over five wonderful days. Thankyou Kirsty and all those who worked so hard to make this precious event possible. Robin de Mandeville - Christchurch

.....

The atmosphere at Convention this year was so positive and friendly, everyone interacting in a true spirit of friendship. We were pleased to see each other; breaks and meals were opportunities for catch-up, discussion and cementing connections. There was also a strong acknowledgement and genuine appreciation for the huge contribution retiring National President, John Vorstermans, and Vice-President, Renée Sell, have made to the Society. Presentations were insightful and at times emotional. Maybe Covid19 forcing a break made this convention particularly special. Clive Conland - Wellington

.....

Convention 2023, complete. They came, used the space provided at all levels and progressed our shared harmony. People noted the calmness, how lovely the venue and area Whanganui is and that the food was (too) good! What a wonderful opportunity for those able to take it. It has been very special to share our space through convention. I'm pleased we got to host. Kirsty Morton - Whanganui





International speaker, Nancy Secrest



TSNZ National President, Richard Sell



International on-line speaker, William Meader



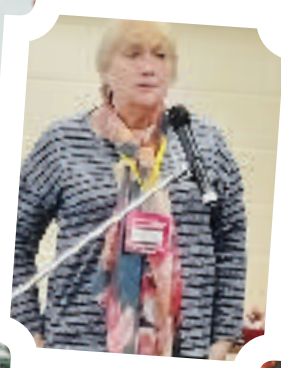
Whanganui Branch helpers



The wonderful kitchen staff

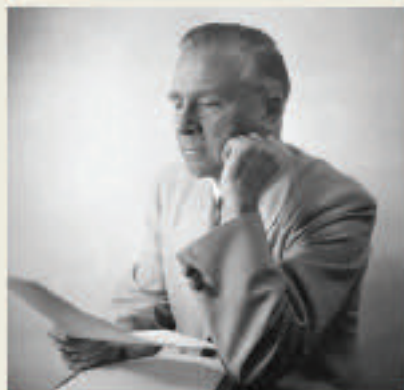


John Vorstermans, out-going National President





## The Geoffrey Hodson Library



Make 2023 your year to commit to reading and studying more theosophical literature. The Geoffrey Hodson library at National Section's Vasanta House has the widest range of spiritual, theosophical and esoteric material available in New Zealand, all of which is free for members to access. For those outside of Auckland who are unable to access the library in person, borrowing is still a breeze. Simply make your selections from the catalogue online, <https://tsnz-library.theosophy.org.nz> and email us at [library@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:library@theosophy.org.nz) to have them posted to you.

Obtaining more knowledge and understanding of who we are and how to best make meaning and use of this life are some of the most important things we can do for ourselves, for others, for the planet, and for all living beings that are connected to one another in the ever-expanding universe. Reading is foundational, let's commit ourselves to keep on learning.

# Peace in a Time of Conflict

Books available on this theme include:

- ▶ **THE IDEALS OF THEOSOPHY: FOUR LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE 36TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, HELD AT BENARES, IN DECEMBER 1911**

by Annie Besant

One of the primary introductory works on the subject of Theosophy.

- ▶ **THE WAY OF WISDOM**

by N. Sri Ram

Unrevised transcripts of talks on J. Krishnamurti's *At the Feet of the Master*, H.P. Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*, Mabel Collins's *Light on the Path*, and the *Bhagavadgita*, given on different occasions during the years 1956 to 1964.

- ▶ **A POLICY OF KINDNESS: AN ANTHOLOGY OF WRITINGS BY AND ABOUT THE DALAI LAMA**

These addresses, interviews and biographical essays reveal a highly pragmatic man, dedicated to the establishment of non-violent solutions to human problems in the personal and political arenas.

- ▶ **THE ROOTS OF PEACE: A STUDY OF HUMAN POTENTIAL IN RELATION TO PEACE**

by Viva Emmons

"...we must find out why it has taken us so long to learn the secret of living together in peace."

- ▶ **PEACE BY PEACE**

by Daisaku Ikeda, HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Arun Gandhi

"The real struggle of the 21st century will not be between civilisations, nor between religions. It will be the struggle between violence and non-violence."

Geoffrey Hodson dedicated his life to humanity through theosophy and made significant contributions to The Theosophical Society in New Zealand through his lectures, writing, teaching and activism. The National Section of TSNZ continues to publish his works, and the national library at Vasanta House is named in his honour as a reminder to all members of the Theosophical Society to never give up on the spiritual life, nurturing one's dedication to study, service and meditation. The potential latent in each one of us, is the hope of the world – that deep connection to all beings.



Two books of beautiful poetry recently reviewed by American TS member, **Nathaniel Altman**, are by writers familiar to TSNZ readers.

**P**oetry can be defined as a type of writing that formulates a concentrated, imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response. It focuses on the expression of feelings and ideas through the use of distinctive literary styles, sounds and rhythms.

As part of its innovative publishing program, the Theosophical Publishing House (TPH) in New Zealand has recently published two outstanding books of poetry by prominent members of the Theosophical Society whose gifts of creating poetry were widely unknown: *Poems of Bliss* by Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983), one of the TS’s most respected teachers and the author of over 60 books about Theosophy, healing, yoga and the angelic kingdom; and *Poems of Contemplation* by Elizabeth and John Sell, close associates of Hodson and editors of his collected articles, *Sharing the Light* (in three volumes).

John Sell was an innovative teacher and workshop leader and the author of *Practical Spirituality*, published by TPH Auckland in 2019, shortly after his passing. In addition to her editorial pursuits, Elizabeth was a modest yet tireless Theosophical worker, accomplished artist, and counselor to family and friends. As with Joy Mills, whose private poems were discovered, collected and published after her passing (*For a Wayfarer*, Quest Books, 2016), few people outside of close family and friends had any idea that the literary gifts of Hodson or the Sells included poetry.

*Poems of Bliss* was curated by Elizabeth Sell from a trove of Hodson’s unpublished writings that were discovered more than 20 years after his passing. In addition to being the only book of Hodson’s poetry ever published, what sets this little book of 36 poems apart from others is that they spring from the author’s clairvoyant investigations, which afforded him direct insights into the subtle realms and served as the wellspring of his deep personal yearnings for spiritual unfoldment. The result is a powerful yet intimate book that both educates and inspires. In *A Goddess of the Indian Sea*, the author writes of his clairvoyant impressions of a sea deva, whose partial message (rendered as poetry) follows:

You see all waves as separate  
Whereas in truth all waves are one;  
For there is but one great all-inclusive wave  
Which is all being.  
Find then the secret of the waves  
And you will find the secret of yourself;  
For what are you too but a wave,  
Part of the larger wave of being.

*Poems of Contemplation* was originally intended to be a small collection of poems given as a memento to close family and friends after Elizabeth's passing in February 2022. Later it was expanded to include poems written by her husband, John. The collection includes 31 beautifully crafted poems on a wide variety of spiritual subjects, including the magic of nature, spiritual unfoldment, personal liberation, and the mystery of death. As a lover of trees, I am particularly fond of Elizabeth's *Meditation on a Cherry Tree*:

Can we be like those leaves  
 Cascading in beauty and brilliance,  
 Before our journey to heights Unknown?  
 Living fully in loveliness and joy  
 To our last moment, when we ascend and float  
 Away to realms anew.

Elizabeth carefully selected dozens of color photographs, drawings, and reproductions of her own acclaimed paintings to complement the poems that appear in these lovely books. Both were printed in the United Kingdom on glossy paper as deluxe paperback editions. For those who appreciate poetry, these two literary gems will provide a wealth of enjoyment, insight and inspiration.

First published in the Fall 2022 issue of *Quest* and reprinted here by kind permission.

**Poems of Bliss**

BY GEOFFREY HODSON

Auckland, New Zealand: Theosophical Publishing House, 2021.  
 99 pp., paper, NZ\$35 Postage within NZ included.

**Poems of Contemplation**

BY ELIZABETH and JOHN SELL

Auckland: Theosophical Publishing House, 2022.  
 65 pp., paper, NZ\$30 Postage within NZ included.

Nathaniel Altman has been a member of the TSA since 1970. He became a student of Geoffrey Hodson while attending the Krotona Institute School in 1971 and met the Sells in Adyar in 1975.



# 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.

**To order an annual subscription, or for back copies and internet banking information, email Maureen Paterson with your contact details including address and phone number at [thedigests@gmail.com](mailto:thedigests@gmail.com) or post a note to Theosophical Digest, Box 183, Kaeo 0448 or phone Maureen on 09 405 1653.**

*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, extends warm greetings to all TS and TOS members and friends in New Zealand.



At the January convention, the guest speaker Nancy Secrest, International Secretary of the TOS, gave two inspirational presentations: *In the Service of All* and *There is no Other*, the latter specifically for the TOSNZ. Nancy was also invited to draw the raffle winners. We all had a hearty laugh when she drew out her own name on the last draw. It was a great pleasure to have you with us, Nancy. We had so much fun. Other overseas visitors who attended the conference included Dianne Manning, current TOS Treasurer for Australia. It was heart-warming to meet and share our Theosophical journeys.

#### OUR THEME FOR THIS YEAR – SERVICE

The TOS exists to support the TS as the humanitarian arm, a place where social action as spiritual practice is valued and nurtured. It does all it can to help the TS make theosophical teachings of practical and transformative value in our country. TOS projects undertaken at local level have a special way of inspiring harmonious and vibrant teamwork. When we work together for the benefit of humanity something wonderful happens. We become aware of this vast intelligence, limitless supply of energy and love permeating our whole being. We merge in the Oneness of All. H.P. Blavatsky tells us,

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another. There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up. When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed. You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never replace you.

As a Society, we continue to support both our grassroots projects in New Zealand, and our longer-term projects overseas.

Your support makes a huge difference to many families and communities such as Child Sponsorship programmes in India, Pakistan and the Golden Link College in the Philippines. Grateful thanks to all our TOS supporters who give generously to help build a better life for those in need.

#### WINNERS OF THE RAFFLES

The following members were the lucky winners of the 12 raffles drawn at the conference: Ralph Atkinson, Clive Conland, John Byrnes, Catherine Austin, Carol Collier, Silvia Soto-Bussard, June Vallyon, Jo Atkinson, Penelope Foster, Susanna Roskilly, Barbara Zanarb, Nancy Secrest. Congratulations to you all.

A special thank-you to all those who generously supported the TOS table at the conference by buying raffle tickets and items. Also, to the core TOS team, Renée Sell, Vicki Jerome, Sue Harrison, Graham Eden, who are much appreciated for all that they do to keep the TOS moving forward.

Finally, words of wisdom from Vimala Thakar, social activist and spiritual teacher,

The first, and perhaps only challenge is to become aware of who we really are as human beings. With awareness comes compassion and then right action flows. Committed to life in its wholeness – in which every element affects each other – we express our essential ‘relatedness’ by inspiring people to enquire and work together. Encourage projects that will lead to self-sufficiency. When we work from the heart, living our understanding, and work hand-in-hand, shoulder-to-shoulder, we form a non-violent global human society.

Nancy Secrest, convention key speaker and International Secretary for the TOS (right) with Past NZ Coordinator Renée Sell



The TOS Team in NZ: Renée Sell, Carol Collier, Sue Harrison and Vicki Jerome



At the time of writing, I had recently returned from the 2023 TSNZ Convention in Whanganui. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to gather together again. Well done to the National Section, Whanganui host Kirsty Morton and her team for the amazing speakers, delicious food, and authentic spiritual entertainment we all enjoyed so much. The title for the programme, *Our Journey – from Me to We to the Oneness of All* was beautifully expressed in the speakers’ presentations.

Love and Blessings to all,

Carol

*It is only when there is realization of our unity with our fellow-beings, and when the only motive is that of giving ourselves in such service as we are capable, that we can fill our lives with rich, helpful and creative action.*

*N. Sri Ram*

To help contact:  
CAROL COLLIER

Phone:  
027 668 4554

or  
Email:  
tos@theosophy.org.nz

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- Emergency Pakistan Flood Appeal \$.....
- TOS Christmas Convention Raffle \$.....
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- Pakistan Schools (Literacy Centres) support ongoing \$.....
- Golden Link College, Philippines \$.....
- Poems of Contemplation \$.....
- 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 website, a reminder to eat healthily while enjoying good food.

Whether eating casually or getting together for feasts, food is one of life's great pleasures. Vegetarian and vegan food is exciting and the way of the future!

Taking control of your health and quality of life starts with a plant-based diet. Vegetarians tend to have better health, live longer and have a lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and some cancers. Fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains are packed with antioxidants and phytonutrients and are not only your best bet for disease prevention, they can also be an easy way to reverse damage already done.

Vegetarian cooking can be as easy or as gourmet as you like. Getting to know a few key ingredients can be invaluable,

as can having a really great vegetarian recipe book or two. Favourite non-veg meals can often be modified with a little experimentation.

If you are new to vegetarian cooking, keep in mind including regular sources of such nutrients that you may have previously relied on animal products for, such as iron, protein, B12 and zinc. See our Health and Nutrition sections on-line for more information: [www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz)

Here is a popular recipe for savoury crackers. They are vegan and GF and great for entertaining with various dips. This is also a great snack for hikes!

## AMAZING SEEDS CRACKERS

**(Takes 40 minutes and makes 2 large baking pans)**

What you need for this simple recipe is a kitchen scale, in order to weigh the ingredients accurately. You can use one bowl, zero the scale between adding the next ingredient, then just mix everything in this one bowl, first the dry ingredients, then the liquids.

### DRY INGREDIENTS

- 120 gram sunflower seeds
- 120 gram flax seeds
- 60 gram chia seeds
- 55 gram pumpkin seeds
- 55 gram sesame seeds
- 90 gram chickpea flour (can be replaced with 70 gram tapioca flour or cornflour)
- 2 tsp raw sugar
- 1½ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp black pepper (coarsely ground)
- Optional: add spices that you like, such as chilli, zaatar, etc.

### LIQUID INGREDIENTS

- 375 ml boiled water (=375 gram)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 Tbsp tahini paste (raw)

### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the oven on 180°C
2. Prepare 2 large oven baking pans, covered with a baking paper. You can use flat cookie baking pans or the standard oven pans.
3. Mix all the dry ingredients in a large bowl.
4. Pour the liquid ingredients into the bowl and mix well. The mixture should be quite runny.
5. Pour half the mixture on each baking pan and flatten it with a spatula neatly.
6. Bake each pan for about 40 minutes, until it looks brown and crispy. Let it cool down and break into pieces.
7. Keep the crackers in an air-tight container. The crackers would keep fresh and tasty for about 2 weeks, but there is no chance that you won't finish them by then...

[www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://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](http://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](mailto: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
<input type="checkbox"/>	A1 To live to benefit mankind – H.P. Blavatsky.....	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	B4 Peace – A. Besant.....	___
<input type="checkbox"/>	A2 Invocation – A. Besant.....	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	B5 Rainbow – C. Jinarajadasa .....	___
<input type="checkbox"/>	A3 The Gayatri.....	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	C1 The Holy Ones Invocation – A. Besant.....	___
<input type="checkbox"/>	A4 The first step – H.S. Olcott.....	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	C2 The Dew is on the Lotus – Sir Edwin Arnold .....	___
<input type="checkbox"/>	A5 Only as we go out (blue font) – N. Sri Ram.....	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	C3 The Golden Stairs – H. P. Blavatsky .....	___
<input type="checkbox"/>	B1 The World Mother – A. Besant.....	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	C4 The Rainbow Bridge.....	___
<input type="checkbox"/>	B2 Only as we go out (white font) – N. Sri Ram.....	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	C5 Unity – A. Besant.....	___
<input type="checkbox"/>	B3 O Hidden Life – A. Besant .....	___			

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

Name:..... Total amount: .....

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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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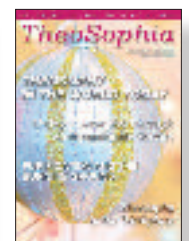
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# Theosophy

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>

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#### AUCKLAND

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Meetings: Theosophy Exploration - Mondays 7.30pm  
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Contact: Ph 09 524 7994 / hpbpres@theosophy.org.nz  
President: Renée 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](mailto:theosophycanterbury@gmail.com)  
President: Susanna Roskilley  
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#### DUNEDIN

*Venue:* 469 Hillside Road, Caversham  
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Contact: 03 455 6917 / [thedunedin@gmail.com](mailto:thedunedin@gmail.com)  
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Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/dunedin-lodge>

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Contact: Maureen Paterson (09) 405 0707 / [farnorththeosophy.president@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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: Sue Harrison 027 976-1563 / [hawkesbayts@gmail.com](mailto: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 / [tsewplymouth@gmail.com](mailto:tsewplymouth@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](mailto:palumbo@xtra.co.nz)  
President: Catherine Austin  
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](mailto: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: [tswlgtn@gmail.com](mailto:tswlgtn@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](mailto: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 / [mjccross2014@gmail.com](mailto:mjccross2014@gmail.com)  
President: Paul Henderson  
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/whangarei>

### STUDY CENTRES

#### DANNEVIRKE

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

#### INVERCARGILL

Contact: David Simpson (03) 213 0424

#### NELSON

Contact: Jan Lowe 022 123 4920 / [momentumsigns@gmail.com](mailto: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.com](mailto:jmrwordplay@gmail.com)

#### 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>

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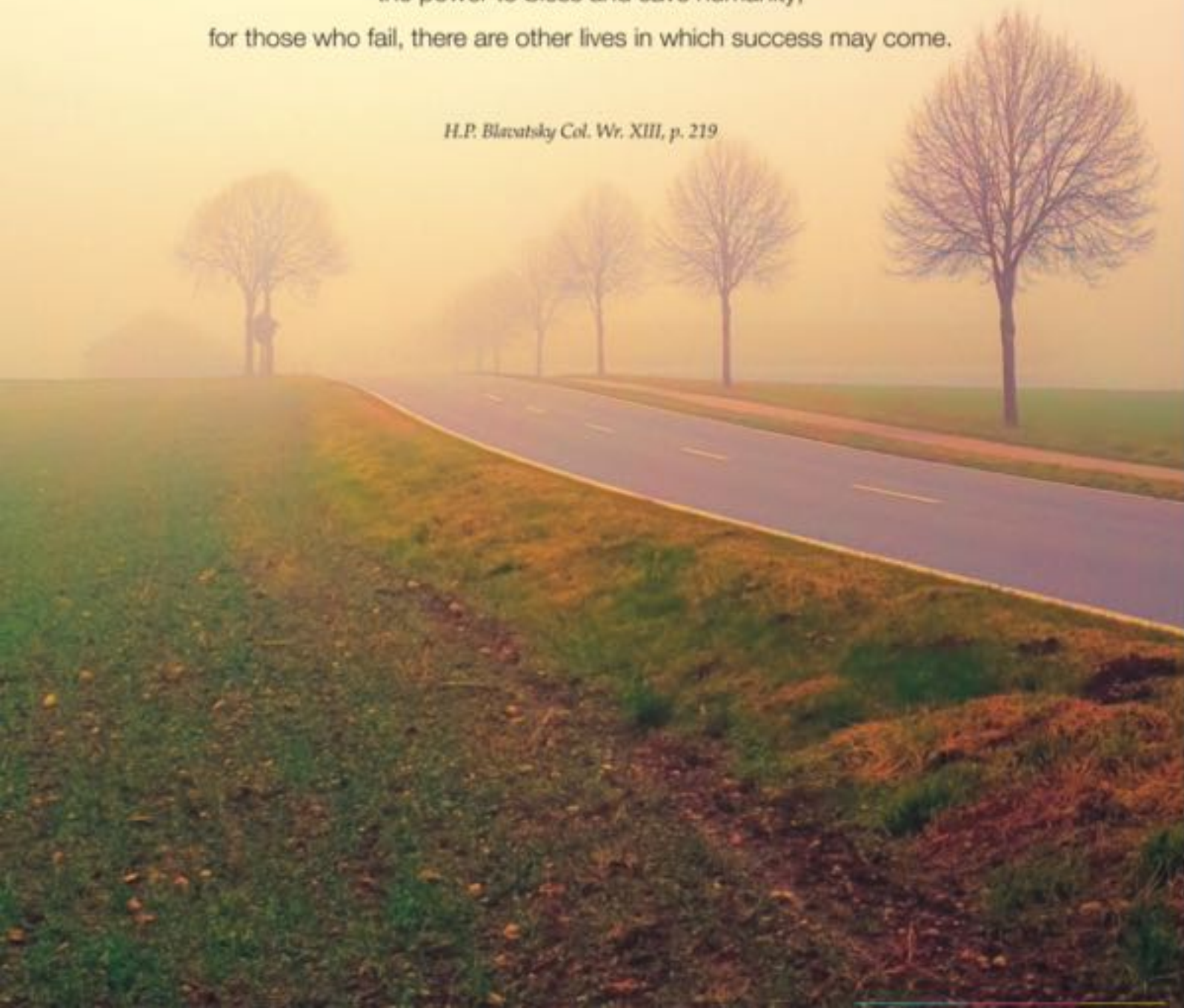
*Please Note: Due to Covid Restrictions, branch meetings may be postponed*

## THERE IS A ROAD

There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind,  
but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe.  
I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway  
that opens inward only and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore.

There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer;  
there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through;  
there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount.  
For those who win onwards there is a reward past all telling  
– the power to bless and save humanity;  
for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.

*H.P. Blavatsky Col. Wr. XIII, p. 219*



A human being is part of the whole, called by us 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He/she experiences him/herself, his/her thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his/her consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

*Albert Einstein*



March 2023