

# *TheoSophia*

December 2023 | Volume 84 No. 4  
SUMMER ISSN 1177-8032

**CYCLES**

**CHANGE  
and our response to it**

***Gentle Thoughts  
and a Gentle World***

**The Whisper of the Soul**



# TheoSophia



## FREEDOM OF THE SOCIETY

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

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

*Resolution passed by the General Council of The Theosophical Society in 1949.*

## 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 General Council meeting of the Theosophical Society.*

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

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President ..... Richard Sell

Vice-President..... Melanie Cross

*TheoSophia* is published quarterly and is received by members as part of their annual subscription. For further information and back issues, turn to page 31.

Published by: The Theosophical Society in New Zealand Inc.  
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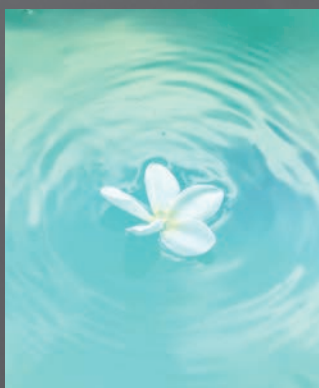
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127TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN NZ INC.

## OUR MYSTERY

EXPLORING THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

11 - 16 January 2024

At the Scenic Hotel Cotswold, Christchurch

Come and join us as we explore together to deepen our understanding of the Mystery of which we are all a part. Why are we here? What is our part to play? How do we open ourselves to the possibilities hidden within? What can we learn from others? This theme is at the very heart of Theosophy. We look forward to sharing together the journey of discovery.

### OUR SPECIAL GUEST BARBARA HEBERT



Past President of the Theosophical Society in America, Barbara Hebert is a third-generation theosophist. She has been a member of the Theosophical Society since the mid-1970s and active in local, regional, national and international theosophical work. In her professional life, Barbara Hebert has been an educator and counsellor, receiving her Ph.D. in Counsellor Education. She has served in a number of different roles as counsellor educator, including a private practice as a therapist and an adjunct professor at Southeastern Louisiana University.

Barbara's keynote presentation is: **THE SOUL'S JOURNEY: The Heart of Theosophy**

### VENUE

The convention will be held at Scenic Hotel Cotswold (Westminster Conference Room), Merivale, Christchurch 8014. The venue's conference room provides an elegant and relaxed atmosphere, surrounded by picturesque gardens.

Shared accommodation will be across the road at Acland House, Merivale.

Acland House is a boarding house run by Christchurch Girls High School and is an original historic homestead with adjoining dormitory wings.

### ALSO

- Presentations from various speakers, guided meditations and workshops.
  - An outing in Christchurch.
  - Time to share and chat over a cup of tea.

### FURTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE

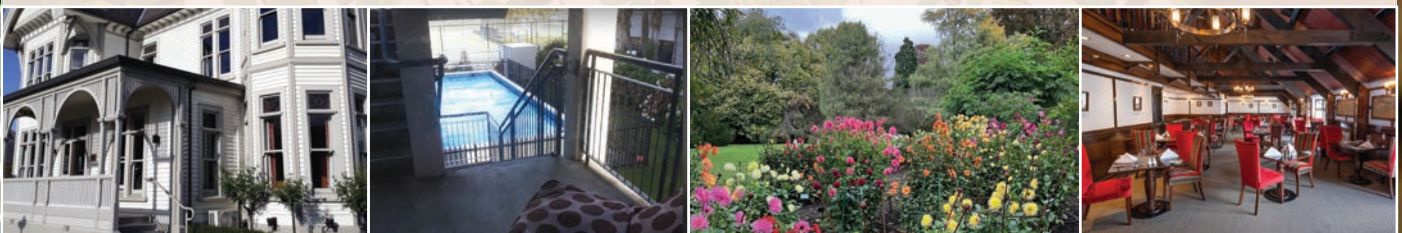
Richard Sell, National President

Susanna Roskilley, Canterbury Branch President

Plus other local and invited speakers including

John Vorstermans, Renée Sell, Susan Kaschula, Alastair Murray, Kirsty Morton and more.

REGISTRATION: see registration form in this issue.





**PROGRAMME**

- Special Guest speaker, Barbara Hebert
- Various TSNZ speakers for short talks and relaxing musical evenings
  - TOS Session
  - Q & A Discussion Panel
  - And more...

**LOCAL TSNZ SPEAKERS**



Richard Sell  
National President



John Vorstermans  
Auckland



Susanna Roskilly  
Canterbury



Alastair Murray  
Canterbury



Kirsty Morton  
Whanganui



Renée Sell  
Auckland



Susan Kaschula  
Canterbury



Jim Scrivener  
New Plymouth



Bill Keidan  
Wellington

**SPECIAL OUTING**

TSNZ and Canterbury branch are organising a trip for Monday 15 January to the Christchurch Earthquake Museum, the Arts Centre and the beautiful Christchurch Botanical Gardens.

TSNZ group outings are always popular to have a chance to enjoy some of the local sights, to relax and get to know and strengthen ties with members from around the country.

See more details of this special place at: <https://ccc.govt.nz/parks-and-gardens/christchurch-botanic-gardens>





## TSNZ GOVERNANCE BOARD

The following people have been appointed to the TSNZ Governance Board, effective January 2024 at the conclusion of the AGM.

Welcome to the new Board members:

SUSAN KASCHULA  
JOHN VORSTERMANS  
TONI WEIR



**WWW.THEOSOPHY.WORLD**  
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RESOURCE CENTRE

### THE UNIVERSAL KINSHIP OF HUMANITY

...each man and woman should strive to be a centre of work in themselves.

When their inner development has reached a certain point, they will naturally draw those with whom they are in contact under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a centre from which information and spiritual influence radiate, and towards which higher influences are directed.

From Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's writing on the *First Object of the Theosophical Society*: To form a nucleus of the Universal Kinship of Humanity, without distinction of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, sexual orientation, caste or colour. (Her words are edited here for gender neutrality.)



# Wise Men and Women

It's that time of year when we may reflect on those wise men of old and renew our own resolutions to learn more of the Ageless Wisdom. It's time in the history of the world too, when wisdom is not only desirable but necessary. Living in an interconnected world – the theme of this summer issue of *TheoSophia* – makes it possible for us to access wisdom easily but, at the same time, we need to be mindful of the destructive effects of some forms of easy communication that we can be exposed to. As students of theosophy, we aim to uphold the unity of all life and make wise and life-affirming connections (p.26).

Writing on subjects linked to *TheoSophia*'s theme are Richard Sell (p.6), Tim Boyd (p.8), Barbara Hebert (p.10), Radha Burnier (p.12), Geoffrey Hodson (p.18), Rohit Mehta (p.19), Titus Steenhuisen (p.23) and Richard Smoley (p.24).

There is still time to register for the 127th National Convention of the Theosophical Society in NZ (forms come with this issue) which is in Christchurch in January 2024. A great way to start the new year.

The Editorial Team of *TheoSophia* wish you and your friends and family, joyful holidays and a peaceful new year.

Pamela Zane  
*Editor*  
 editor@theosophy.org.nz

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)

## BORN WITH WINGS

*All those 'born with wings'\*  
 angels in the making  
 those of expanded thinking.*

*Through life their presence  
 flows as benevolent energy  
 melding and moving forward*

*Those eyes are deep, sincere  
 can reflect joy and sorrow  
 they know life's journeys*

*With wings of compassion  
 respect and love  
 they aid the paths we tread.*

Clive Conland ©

*\*From a phrase by Sufi poet Rumi: 'You were born with wings'*

### DIARY DATES

2024	
January 11-16	127th National Convention of the Theosophical Society in NZ Inc. National Convention 2024 Christchurch
January 12	TSNZ Annual General Meeting
April 25-28	School of Theosophy with Barry Bowden

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

### FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2024		
March	The Hidden Side of Things	1 January
June	Harmony and Tolerance	1 April
September	The Perfume of Theosophy	1 July

Contact the editor at [editor@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:editor@theosophy.org.nz) or visit our website for the guidelines: [www.theosophy.nz/](http://www.theosophy.nz/)



National President of TSNZ, Richard Sell looks at...

# HUMAN REGENERATION

## REFOCUSING OUR CONNECTION WITH ONE ANOTHER



As the global community becomes smaller and smaller, conversely, we connect in a plethora of ever-increasing ways and complexity. While some prove useful, they often do not make us happier; we can still feel lonely and isolated in a crowd. True connections are not being made so readily. Do we really see who the people around us actually are, do we look at humanity as a whole with different eyes and question our place in the world and indeed the cosmos? This refocus is something that humanity is starting to undertake, with many now realising that new paradigms and ways of being must be introduced and it slowly dawns upon our collective consciousness. The Piscean Age of individualism and all that goes with it such as competition and acquisition, requires a letting go as we move into new spaces. This does not mean we stop learning and growing, which is essential to our soul development, but collectively how we deal with externals must first be approached from a perspective of wholeness, and an internal position of centredness and harmony. The approach involves letting go of many things. The famous philosopher Lao Tzu said, "To become learned, each day add something. To become enlightened, each day drop something."

What is he talking about here? It may be attachments to people and possessions or status and such like. Hindu philosophy discourses about this refocus from the small self to the encompassing of the Divine. The *Bhagavad Gita* speaks of it thus:

Being free from attachment, fear and anger, becoming fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me and thus attained My divine love.

We can see from this stanza, the essence we are trying to discover within is the pure heart. Purification can be achieved by giving up attachment, fear and anger. A movement in position and attitude from self-absorption and self-centredness which creates separation, is needed. Our transformative efforts lead us towards this purification by resting our being in a place of love, compassion and thoughtfulness towards others. In doing so we let the Divine into our life and try to know our true Self more deeply and truly – where its presence becomes closer than hands and feet, closer than breath. An open mind and a pure

heart are essential for this work.

The refocus away from individuality to the whole of humanity requires a change in mindset and view; a wider view is called for. How do we see our relationship with the world? We are all connected, interconnected in fact according to the ancient wisdom teachings, all is one unity in a radical way, which is difficult for us to imagine without first-hand experience, but what we do to another, we do to ourselves. We are cells in the body of some greater Divinity. Our mind for example on its own does very little, we but tap into the Universal Mind for our inspiration and genius. The Universal Mind is shared although we may not know it.

There are connections that exist, but we are unaware of them. Take for instance the mycelium network. This almost invisible network connects individual plants and trees together consisting of microscopic threads called *hyphae*. There are trillions of them, under each step you take there are about 300-miles of them. This web, much like the world wide web of the internet, allows plants to communicate with each other. They can feed each other transferring water, nitrogen, carbon and other minerals. They support each other and protect each other. Humans too can interact on different levels with this kingdom. In the 1973 eye-opening book *The Secret Life of Plants*, authors Peter Tomkin and Christopher Bird describe "a fascinating account of the physical, emotional, and spiritual relations between plants and man." Such awakenings pertaining to the deep ties humanity has with nature encourage us to act with care and responsibility towards plants and all such life. With the growing abundance of pathogens and viruses, humankind may, in the future, be beholden for the survival of our species to fungi or yet other undiscovered species for healing. If the interconnectedness of ecosystems has taught us anything, it is the lesson of symbiotic co-operation.

Co-operation and group work are keynotes of the Aquarian Age. This is new to many who may not like to work in teams, however there are many instances to be seen where group decisions are superior to individual decisions alone. Pooling skills, talents and experiences enhances our experience of life and association with nature. Assuredly it is a journey that will take a long time. Along the way we will learn helpful things and will need to let go of



worn-out beliefs and conditioning – dropping things, as Lao Tze advises. So, we look into the mirror and discover who we are and what we want to become. Transforming ourselves helps extend the branchlets of the human connecting structure or network. It makes us grow stronger, more united. We see and think of humanity more as One and less as disjointed, inharmonious parts. Thus, that part of our nature or higher mind, which knows unity and experiences it, is connected with our Buddhi state within.

With growing love in our heart, we begin seeing our sisters and brothers in a different light, each with their own uniqueness and struggles as we all have. Tolerance for our kin's weaknesses grows but perhaps at some stage, tolerance itself becomes acceptance of what is, because tolerance still retains elements of judgment with it. Our words matter, they convey meaning. Words can offend, they can bridge gaps, they can cause hurt, and they can heal broken hearts and spirit. The use of language, choosing our words with care, fosters a quickening of cooperation and connectedness between people. If we were to try and make a start on our mission of refocussing our view, this might be a wonderful place to begin.

Our awareness of the crisis that is in front of us at many levels is also a key starting place. The recognition of regeneration of the human spirit and what is critically needed from each of us is the illuminating subject of literature from past international presidents N. Sri Ram and Radha Burnier. N. Sri Ram tells of its importance in *Human Regeneration*:

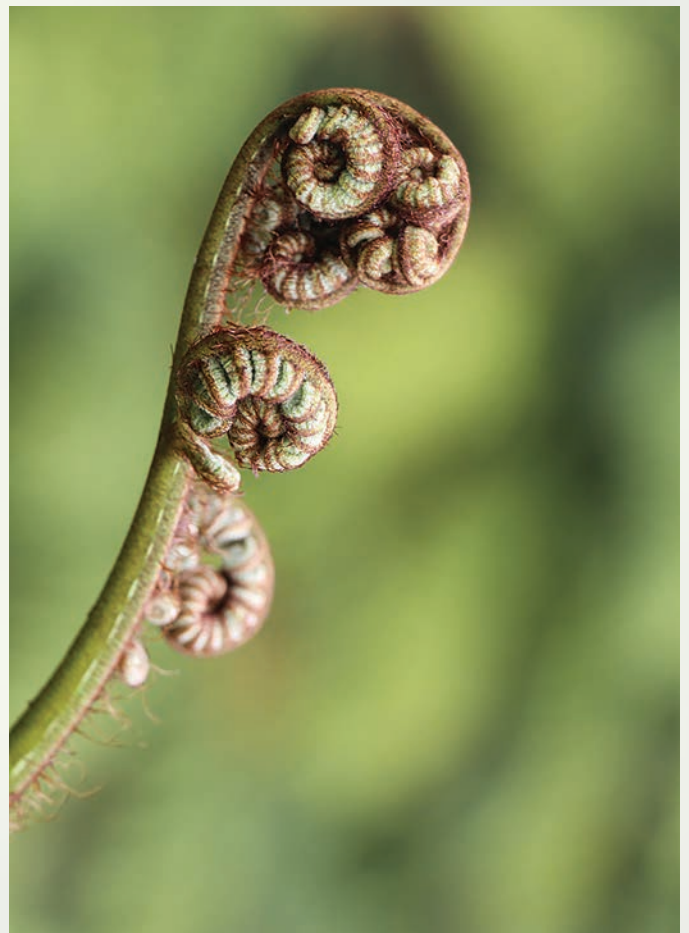
The Masters of Wisdom, who aid evolution, although They are interested in all changes that make for human progress, are especially concerned with the spiritual regeneration of mankind, which is of fundamental importance. Because, when that takes place, all else follows. The forces that are brought into play in the regeneration will themselves have their effect on the external conditions. But if the changes are merely external, after a time they may all be lost or undone. There have been various golden ages in the history of humankind, epochs when life was tranquil, when people were happy and kind and good; but all of them have vanished, and we have come into this strife, the present confusion and misery.

We can see that epochs of greatness and darkness will continue to roll on through time unending, but to what avail if humanity does not possess the ability to move beyond these limiting factors? Perhaps it is like an incoming tide in that each advance takes us a little higher, a little closer to the heights of where our evolution is leading and as we become more spiritualised, the tide recedes just a little less. In this manner we evolve and get to

where we are going, but we can hasten this journey by our own attention to human regeneration and the work that entails – by working on our own nature and view. Sri Ram says that if we forget ourselves, progress will become easy, it will take place swiftly and naturally because it then becomes a process of unfoldment from within and we realise the truth uttered in *Light on the Path*, 'Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously but open to all that is good and true and beautiful'. In tandem, our terrestrial world can become a better place to live and experience the unfoldment of consciousness, as we become more connected with each other in cooperation with the Divine Plan and nature. The looking glass is staring back at us, will we blink and move on, or will we smile back with understanding, and begin the journey?

There is no other in this world.  
Each is a separate form,  
but One Spirit lives and moves in All.

Annie Besant





# CYCLES

Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society, considers the deep and fundamental.

In the first chapter (Proem) of *The Secret Doctrine* (SD) H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) makes a couple of important statements. One of them consists of three fundamental propositions. Her assertion is that a clear apprehension of these three fundamental ideas is a prerequisite for an understanding of the overarching occult system of thought. In brief the fundamental propositions are:

1. THE ONE ABSOLUTE REALITY, said to be unthinkable and unknowable.
2. PERIODICITY, OR THE CYCLIC NATURE OF EVERYTHING.
3. KARMA AND REINCARNATION “the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul ... through the Cycle of Incarnation (or ‘Necessity’) in accordance with cyclic and karmic law.”

I would like to examine the second of these Propositions, which relates to ‘periodicity’, more familiarly called ‘cycles’ — in Nature, within ourselves, and cycles of consciousness. The fact that something is described as ‘fundamental’ or as a ‘law’ should be more of a motivation for us to ask questions than to sit back and accept.

What is it about cycles that make them so fundamental? Anyone who gives even the slightest attention to this matter will be very familiar with cycles as they impact us individually. Every day we wake up in the morning, every night we go to sleep. Sleeping and waking links with the broader cycle of the Earth’s rotation on its axis resulting in day and night. Within our own body there are circadian rhythms, our ‘biological clock’, that correlate with this greater cycle of day and night. From the physiology of the body’s organs right down to the individual cells, there are interlinking daily rhythms. Seasons come and go, and come again.

The idea of pointing our attention in this direction is that the process of consideration links us with the greater body of Ageless Wisdom teachings. We tend to think of these cycles as repetitive. It is the nature of cycles that they repeat. Sometimes we become fixed in our understanding such that we see day and night, or sleeping and waking, as an on-going fixture of reality.

The ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, made the statement that “No man ever steps in the same river twice”, for the reason that each time we put our foot in the river not only are the waters composing the river not the same, but the person stepping into the river has changed. This idea of cycles should cause us to think of change. Although they are repetitive, they are not static. There are three things that HPB says are eternal — space, duration (from which we derive our understanding of time), and motion. Movement and its corollary, change, are eternal.

In Buddhism there is a strong emphasis on understanding *samsâra*, the cycle or wheel of birth, death, and rebirth, we are trapped in by virtue of our ignorance. Life after life it repeats and we experience similar self-caused sufferings. But, it, too, is not static. As we recognize the possibility for enlightenment, we enter a different, more expansive cycle, beyond our current capacity to understand.

HPB’s purpose in presenting these three fundamental propositions was so that we could properly introduce ourselves to the system of thought that underlies occultism, which involves more than thinking. Confinement in the realm of thought severely limits our interaction. We can be knowledgeable without being wise. So, for our purposes, particularly as members of the Theosophical Society (TS), what draws us here is some deeper purpose than mere acquaintance



with a system of thought, however vast it may be. The question arises: What is it that not only leads us to this system of thought, but which transforms such a system into a spiritual path? What is the catalyst that transforms knowledge, even of the highest type, into something more?

In the language of mystical traditions there is a term that comes up time again and again. Within us the catalyst that moves us toward some requested, even demanded, union with our source is 'longing' — sometimes expressed as aspiring or yearning. The great mystic Rumi made the statement: "I could have never known what love is had I never felt this longing." He was not talking about romantic love, but about the love of the Divine Beloved — the mutual love flowing between the lover and the Beloved. Our sense of separation is the beginning point. We know our connection exists, but somehow the linking thread has become weak.

In the Christian Bible there is a beautiful story that talks about the journey of the soul, the story of "The Prodigal Son". It is the story of the soul moving from a state of oneness, to incarnation, and then the return, enriched by experience, to a state of oneness.

The key moment in the entire story occurs when the soul, which has travelled from its Divine home to the Far Land of incarnation in flesh, awakens from its deep involvement and fascination with all things worldly, and remembers the "Father's House", the condition of being united. Remembrance and longing initiate the journey of return. Longing for that seemingly lost or diluted sense of union with our source, expresses itself as a spiritual path, or genuine religious living.

These are some of the ways that we see the influence of this catalysing factor of longing. I do believe that very often what moves us into this theosophical setting is a keen awareness of that quality within ourselves. Over time we allow what begins as a flame to be dulled down to an ember.

In *Light on the Path*, Mabel Collins addresses the quality of longing. First, she says, 1) "Desire only that which is within you"; then, 2) "Desire only that which is beyond you." The two seem to be incompatible! Then she says, 3) "Desire only that which is unattainable." We are asked to think

about these graded steps. To clarify the idea of the unattainable it says: "You will enter the light, but you will never touch the Flame." If we persist, listen, and actually hear, ultimately, we "will enter the light", but its source is unattainable.

As a final point she speaks about the nature of "asking". We are told to ask, to request deeper wisdom, deeper connection. She says that people are always asking for something. It is the nature of being human to want and to ask for it. Mostly such requests go unrealized, because the request is made with the mind only. It is not made from the deeper sense of longing. She says that to ask in a genuine way is to feel "a hunger within", a yearning of spiritual aspiration. When we ask in this manner, we are responding to a soul hunger that requires nourishment. The hunger is our aspiration to move in the direction of spirit.

*Light on the Path* begins with the admonitions to "Kill out ambition", "Kill out desire of life", and "Kill out desire of comfort", then goes on to list the many things and many ways that we *must* desire. One deals with personality, another one with reality. To end with HPB's Proem in SD: "Such are the basic conceptions on which *The Secret Doctrine* rests."



Reprinted with permission from  
*The Theosophist*, December 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.





Special guest speaker at January's TSNZ convention is **Barbara Hebert**, American National President of the TS. She considers this challenging reality.



## CHANGE and our response to it

Change is a part of life: few if any things remain static. For this reason, theories of change exist in many areas, including business, education, healthcare and psychology. They may help us to deal with changes more effectively.

Organisational psychologist Kurt Lewin created a model for management of change that is frequently used in business. Lewin's theory requires looking at the various aspects of a given situation, setting aside prior knowledge, and replacing it with new information.

Lewin's three-stage model includes the following steps: *unfreezing*, *change*, and *refreezing*. For example, a business unfreezes its current process in relation to a given situation and looks deeply into all procedures related to it. Once this analysis has been completed and more efficient processes are identified, the business makes changes. After these are in place, the business then refreezes the newly implemented processes.

While each of these stages involves certain pragmatic steps, the emotional response of the people involved is worth exploring in more detail. To explore it, we can look to the Change Curve, a model that is also frequently used in business. Based on Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's work in grief and loss, the Change Curve model has four stages. The first, identified as *status quo*, is the situation in place when people are first introduced to upcoming change. The response is frequently shock or denial. Stage two, disruption, occurs when individuals begin to realise that change is actually going to happen. At this point, many begin to experience fear and anger as well as resentment and concern. Some may protest, while others may even resort to active resistance. Stage two is a difficult time for many and if not controlled can spiral into chaos.

*Exploration* is the third stage of the Change Curve, and it is the turning point. During this stage, individuals begin to let go of their fear and start to explore the changes that are occurring. They begin to experience both the positives and the negatives of the new situation. They test the changes for themselves, determine how they will apply to their own jobs and lives, and discover how they must adapt to them. As this exploration continues, many individuals begin to accept the new conditions and feel some degree of optimism.

The final stage is *rebuilding*. At this point, individuals have accepted the changes and are now committed to them. They are rebuilding the ways in which they work.

Some might wonder why I have gone into such detail about these business models, but it seems to me that they can help explain what many are experiencing in our world today.

Recent and current events have focused the attention of many on the need for change. In fact, we are watching it happen before our eyes. We see people in various stages of that change and experiencing a wide variety of feelings about it. These feelings range from concern to outright anger to optimism and hope for the future. We also see people exhibiting behaviours that stem from those feelings.

If we look at the Change Curve model, many people today probably fall into the second stage: disruption. They have realised that change is happening and are experiencing fear, anger, resentment and concern. It may even feel as if the world is in chaos and that everything is falling apart. However, we know that there are other stages to follow: exploration and rebuilding. We don't know when they will occur, but we know that they will. This provides a solid foundation from which to view the changes that are happening and also gives us hope for the future.

For students of the Ageless Wisdom, learning about change models can be valuable. The Ageless Wisdom teaches that apart from the Ultimate Reality, change is a constant in the universe. Lao Tzu reputedly said, "Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like." All of life is on a pilgrimage that requires change, growth and expansion. In order to create something new, the old must be taken down or even destroyed.

We are also taught that what happens in the macrocosm is mirrored in the microcosm. As life continues to unfold and expand, so too do we unfold and grow. To allow for growth, the old ways must go. This applies not only to life but also to our own consciousness. We must let go of our old ways: our thoughts, perspectives, perceptions, conditioning, and so on.



In the Theosophical Society, we frequently talk about the importance of self-introspection for seeing what needs to be discarded as we move forward. This time of transition brings self-introspection into the spotlight. In this process, we look at all aspects of ourselves. We may look at what keeps us attached to the status quo, or at the origins of our thoughts, that is, our conditioning. Our families, those who teach us, our friends, and even the society that surrounds us have conditioned us to have certain expectations about life and other people.

What do we think about the way life should be lived or the way in which we should relate to others? Where did these ideas originate? As young children, were we encouraged to see others as dangerous or different, or less important? As young children, did we receive messages that in order to be safe, we need to be in control of others and the world around us?

As human beings, we will likely experience some sense of disruption in relation to the many changes that are occurring in our world. There is nothing wrong with experiencing such feelings. Humans have them for a reason, and they must be experienced and acknowledged. Then we can move forward.

In this process, self-introspection can enable us to understand our reaction to change and facilitate our adjustment to it. It may help us avoid the extreme reactions of many others. Without it, we may find it far more difficult to deal with the emotions that arise.

For me, this is part of our work on the spiritual path, for which self-introspection is essential. This work involves accepting change as well as experiencing the feelings engendered by it. Through self-introspection and manoeuvring our way through the changes and the experiences, we learn and grow. Our consciousness expands; as a result, the consciousness of all life expands as well.

We can learn to deal with change in many ways: studying the Ageless Wisdom, finding models of change that speak to us, listening to our own inner voice, and self-introspection. Regardless of how we do it, we must deal with change, and we must change. As painful and uncomfortable as it may be, let us all embrace the opportunity for self-awareness and change. Let us move forward together.



For more about Barbara Hebert and her contribution to TSNZ convention 2024, see page 2.

Let us move forward together.





Radha Burnier wrote about how to build a better place to live in.

## GENTLE THOUGHTS AND A GENTLE WORLD

Within the discipline of no-self “Study results in humility” (vidya vinayam dadati), this dictum is known all over India. The absence of self-importance is the mark of a person of learning and true culture. But the sentence also lends itself to the interpretation “Learning leads to discipline” – not a discipline imposed from outside by scripture or other authority, but the discipline of no-self. From a spiritual point of view, all study must be a process of learning and not a matter of absorbing other people’s ideas, of memorising passages and accumulating information. Learning must bring about internal change and growth of understanding.

If study does not lead to the purity of selflessness, there is no real learning. But when there is learning, discipline comes naturally with it. We may take as an example the study of such a subject as the unity of life. If the study is theoretical, nothing is accomplished. But if we learn through study to reflect over our experiences in daily life, and are guided by a sense of unity in our relationships, we learn to live composed and orderly lives. The feeling of unity strengthens sympathetic and compassionate attitudes and debars us from taking certain kinds of actions. When unity is felt, is it possible to hurt another – not only another human being, but even an insect or an animal? Harmful actions are impossible for one who is sensitive to the truth of unity. So, the discipline of harmlessness becomes a natural part of our life to the extent unity is experienced.

Most people, particularly in the Western countries, do not like the word ‘discipline’. They feel it is an inroad on their freedom. In the East, where people accept the idea of a disciplined life, duties are performed as part of a religious routine and not much attention is given to relationships. Therefore, in this age of information, both Western and Eastern societies are chaotic, rampant with the indiscipline of egoism.

Seeking higher knowledge while ignoring the need for discipline is a form of ignorance. Knowledge springs from within, from the Self, which is a state of knowledge or wisdom. But for that knowledge to manifest itself, what is termed the personality or lower self must be disciplined and subordinated to the true Self. The personality has often been compared to turbulent horses and restless monkeys. Allowed to have its way, it will lead away from knowledge. But with discipline, it learns to serve the Teacher within.

According to Theosophy founder, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB), instruction which will lead to Divine Wisdom cannot be given unless certain conditions are complied with and rigorously carried out during the years of study. Real spiritual teachers do not accept disciples when there is unwillingness to fulfill the necessary conditions. HPB gives a list of what she calls the most efficacious means of attaining true knowledge and preparing for the receipt of higher wisdom: meditation, abstinence, the observance of moral duties, gentle thoughts, good deeds, kind words, good will to all, and entire oblivion of self. In the Mahatma Letters and elsewhere there are similar lists. Any one of these put into practice



renders the consciousness of the student much more receptive and sensitive. Then all instruction received from a teacher or an external source is assimilated and turns into teaching that we give to ourselves. It is the same as what our wisdom-nature tells us. No discipline that does not arise from one's own understanding and study is effective.

Many important teachings are very simple, but people choose not to understand them. The teaching about harmlessness, for example, is known to Christians, who have been told, "Do not kill". The Buddhist discipline prohibits the causing of injury. Other religions also uphold the principle of nonviolence. But most people interpret these instructions to suit their convenience, and therefore their religious practices do not result in transforming them. Only by adopting a way of life that quiets the brain and mind and leads to clarity of perception does theoretical instruction become true knowledge.

The points HPB made could be dismissed as commonplace. We may say, "We know we should have gentle thoughts," but do we reflect over the importance of these two words, not only for ourselves, but for the world? Do we realise that we are continually populating the world with our thoughts and influencing others? To build a gentle world there must be gentle thoughts.

As mentioned, the serious study of the unity of life eliminates restless and harmful activity. Similarly, the study of karma, if earnestly pursued, will bring about a change in our lives and lead to a state of peace and harmony. Understanding karma means abstaining from every form of malevolence and taking care that the influences we shed are gentle and helpful. The last condition that HPB mentioned – entire oblivion of the self – will not come suddenly, but when the other points are followed up, the little self is subdued and the mind becomes humble and naturally disciplined and thus open to the higher Wisdom.

#### THE FAR VISION

According to recent reports, the influx of young Tibetans into India continues. Children arrive in Nepal and elsewhere after making an arduous and dangerous trip over Himalayan passes at the coldest time of the year, because the winter weather deters the Chinese soldiers from manning the posts. Although the absence of the soldiers is an advantage, the intemperate climate and the nature of the terrain put the children at high risk. Yet the parents send them over, hoping for the best, which is a proof of the extreme difficulties and afflictions to which the Tibetans who remain in their homeland are subjected.

Despite all, their revered Head, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, continues to affirm his faith in a nonviolent approach to gain freedom for his people. He says, "For us Tibetans, the path of nonviolence is a matter of principle. And I am convinced that this approach is the most beneficial and practical course in the long run." Those who are acquainted with the Dalai Lama know well that he means what he says. The nonviolent approach is not a political card he is playing in the absence of better ones. It is a different way of thinking. No one else is better informed about the conditions in Tibet than he. The continuing repression and the utter disregard of human dignity and rights surely call forth his deepest compassion. But he seeks no remedy that in the long run will cause more damage than good. Last year, he stated uncompromisingly that the most devastating cause of human suffering, of deprivation of human dignity, freedom, and peace, has been the culture of violence in resolving differences and conflicts. According to him, the challenge of the next century is to deal with conflict through dialogue and nonviolent means. This is what he practises and



Do we realise  
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advocates without equivocation. Such far vision is very rare indeed. The Lord Buddha taught that a peaceful mind alone can deal with and dissipate every form of aggression and injustice. Violence in meeting violence is what most human beings believe in and this epitomises human history. The world is therefore no nearer to freedom from suffering and cruelty. Throughout the world there are intractable problems and unending conflicts because hatred gives birth to further hatred. The Dalai Lama significantly declares:

A new way of thinking has become the necessary condition for responsible living and acting. If we maintain obsolete values and beliefs, a fragmented consciousness and self-centred spirit, we will continue to hold on to outdated goals and behaviours. Such an attitude by a large number of people would block the entire transition to an interdependent yet peaceful and cooperative global society.

The above statement is undoubtedly that of a far-seeing world leader who stands above the petty policies and manipulations normally adopted by those whose minds are not illumined by the sublimity of true religious teaching.

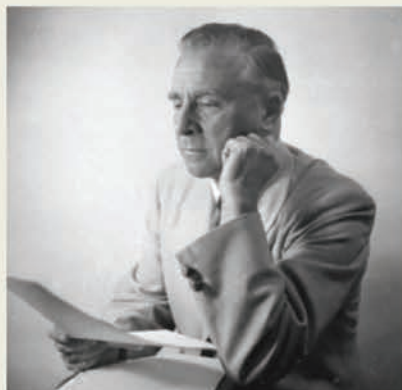
From TSNZ website



Radha Burnier became International President of the Theosophical Society in 1980. Radha was Director of research and publications in the Adyar Library and Research Centre 1959-1979. She held a Master's degree from Benares Hindu University and an honorary Doctor of Literature degree from Nagarjuna University. Radha lectured internationally. In her youth, she was a classical Indian dancer. Radha Burnier passed away in 2013.



## The Geoffrey Hodson Library



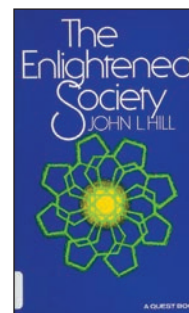
Make 2023 your year to commit to reading and studying more theosophical literature. The Geoffrey Hodson library at National Section's Vasanta House has the widest range of spiritual, theosophical and esoteric material available in New Zealand, all of which is free for members to access. For those outside 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.

## Living in an Interconnected World

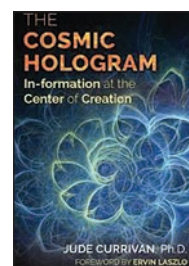
### ► THE ENLIGHTENED SOCIETY by John L. Hill

"...not only is the individual getting better, but so is society. The end result could be an enlightened society, one that has become integrated, non-judgemental, and compassionate."



### ► THE COSMIC HOLOGRAM: IN-FORMATION AT THE CENTER OF CREATION by Jude Currivan

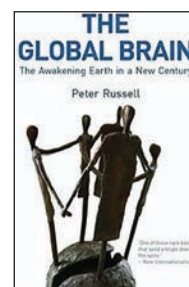
"Demonstrating how information is physically real, the author explores how consciousness connects us to the many interconnected layers of universal in-formation, making us both manifestations and co-creators of the cosmic hologram of reality."



### ► THE GLOBAL BRAIN: THE AWAKENING EARTH IN A NEW CENTURY by Peter Russell

"We've seen the power of the internet to connect people around the world in ways never before known. This remarkable book argues that the billions of messages and pieces of information flying back and forth are linking the minds of humanity together into a single, global brain: a brain with astonishing potential for the Earth."

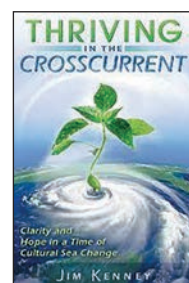
"Peter Russell ... weaves together modern technology and ancient mysticism to present a startling vision of the world to come, where humanity is a fully conscious superorganism in an awakening universe." (publisher)



### ► THRIVING IN THE CROSSCURRENT: CLARITY AND HOPE IN A TIME OF CULTURAL SEA CHANGE by Jim Kenney

"Sea changes ... are daunting but richly creative periods, with at least three recognisable benchmarks:

- a dramatic increase in cultural complexity;
- a growing awareness of the interdependence of all with all; and
- a variety of new multi-perspectival approaches to knowledge and action."

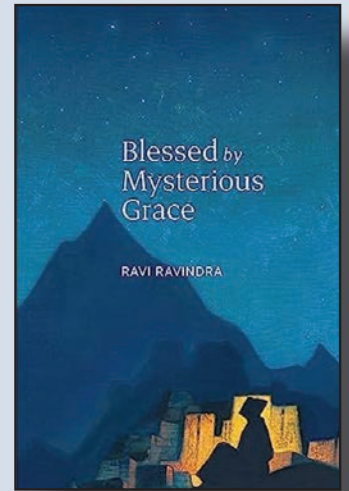




Holiday reading recommended by Renée Sell...

# BLESSED BY MYSTERIOUS GRACE

## The Journey of a Pilgrim



Ravi Ravindra's book *Blessed by Mysterious Grace* is both a delightful and illuminating read. It is a collection of highlights from Ravi's life where he describes his encounters with many remarkable people, including Krishnamurti, Kobori Roshi, Samdhong Rinpoche, Madame de Salzman and others. It is also clear that Ravi has a warm and long association with various persons from the theosophical tradition.

Some key things that stood out while reading *Blessed by Mysterious Grace* were both the diversity of Ravi's journey and the significance of the childhood experiences that influenced that journey. An example of this is found when Ravi's father makes the following comment after reading from the Bhagavadgītā: "I don't really know what this means. I know the words, they speak of something which is not in my experience. I hope that someday you'll meet someone who can teach you how to experience what these words really mean."

Ravi was a 12-year-old boy at the time and he acknowledges that these words have stayed with him. This single memory may well have been the catalyst for the impetus of his spiritual journey, asking the key question of 'What am I?' and opening the pathway forward.

The insights and views that have inspired Ravi in his search for Truth are told clearly and simply. He shares wonderful stories recognising throughout his life journey the importance of questioning in order to know 'who we truly are' and the value of this search.

The book is engaging, enhanced by the diversity of situations and events that Ravi has experienced. He has given a picture of his world and the pilgrim's journey which he has taken with curiosity and tenacity. A most thought-provoking read!

Reviewed by Renée Sell

Buy this book online at TSNZ Website: <https://theosophy.nz/shop>

Cost: \$39 and postage is free within NZ.



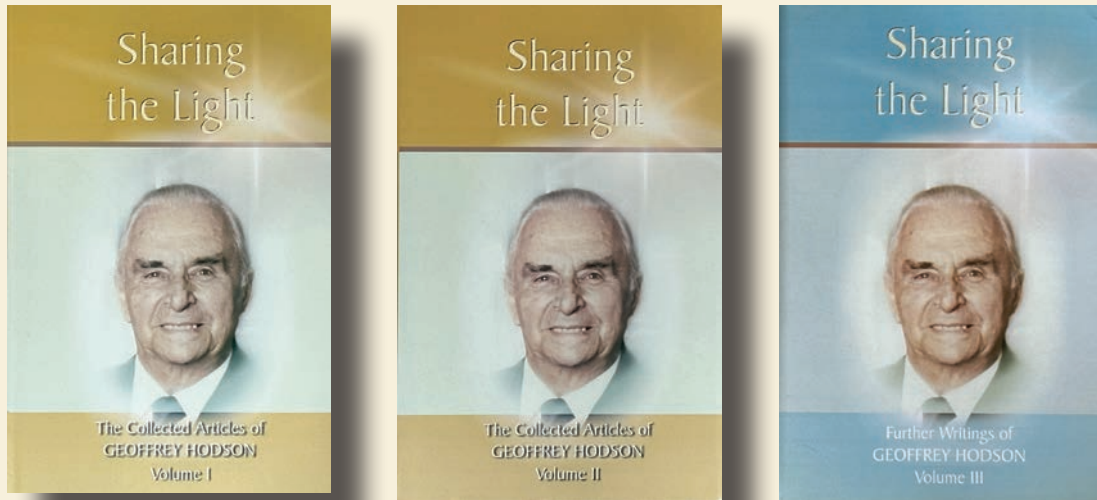
Reviewer Renée Sell is President of Auckland HPB Lodge Theosophical Centre and a student of the Ancient Wisdom, a National Theosophical speaker, past vice-president of the Theosophical Society in NZ and past coordinator of the NZ Theosophical Order of Service.



Ravi Ravindra was born in India and received his early education there. He went to Canada as a graduate student and later as an immigrant. Now he is a Professor Emeritus at Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he served for many years as a professor in three Departments: Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Physics. He was a Member of the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study in Shimla and the Founding Director of the Threshold Award for Integrative Knowledge. He has been a member of the Board of Judges for the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. He is a life member of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. Ravi has directed more than a dozen courses in the School of the Wisdom in Adyar, and many courses at Naarden in Holland, Krotona in USA and New Zealand. He was invited as the Chief Guest Speaker at the Indo-Pacific Federation Conference in Bali in November 2013. Ravi has published several books including *The Yoga of the Christ*; *Wisdom of Patañjali's Yoga Sutras*; *Science and the Sacred*; *The Bhagavad Gita: A Guide to Navigating the Battle of Life*; *The Pilgrim Soul: Search for the Sacred Transcending World Religions*.

See more details at [www.ravindra.ca](http://www.ravindra.ca)





## Sharing the Light Volumes 1, 2 and 3

Geoffrey Hodson, internationally known theosophy teacher and writer who has inspired the world with his message of enlightened living and spiritual life, has left a comprehensive collection of published articles, collected by John and Elizabeth Sell.

Arranged by themes, the books cover a wide variety of subjects such as spirituality, the path of discipleship, the Mystery Tradition, super-sensory perception, the angelic world, healing, political and global issues, parenting, karma, reincarnation, world religions, ceremonials, symbolism, the Theosophical Society and some of its leaders.

Geoffrey’s articles on practical living are particularly valuable, especially those on spiritual practice in modern life, including his views, for example, on the spiritual side of parenting and running a business.

The third volume in the series of the writings of Geoffrey Hodson consists of pamphlets, booklets and small books, many of which are not widely known. Included is a discussion with Geoffrey, not previously published and a booklet by Dr David Lyness who collaborated with Geoffrey Hodson on some original research.

The material in the third volume covers a wide range of themes including clairvoyant research, an overview of Theosophy, esoteric Christianity, the way to the Masters, the Mystery of Death, Reincarnation and Clairvoyance.

Some of Geoffrey’s most valuable insights are to be found in his practical writings on how to live a spiritual life. This material includes thoughts on health, parenthood, marriage and sex. There is a wealth of insight and inspiration for anyone who aspires to know what their purpose in life is and how to attain it.

For more about Geoffrey Hodson, see page 18 in this issue of *TheoSophia*.



These books are now available to buy online at TSNZ website: <https://theosophy.nz/shop>

Volume 1	\$60
Volume 2	\$60
Volume 3	\$39
Vols 1 & 2	\$100





The great Theosophist, **Geoffrey Hodson** wrote that, from a study of the writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, he conceived that, amongst other wonderful things, her guidance to us, her successors, might possibly be something like this...

## GUIDANCE

Do your best as a Theosophist to remove the ignorance of the world.

Do your best as a Theosophist to shed the light of Theosophy upon the world.

Do your best as a Theosophist to purify, refine and strengthen your own nature.

Conceive of yourself as always in training for far harder and greater tasks than those which you now perform, and live accordingly.

Meet your adverse karma valiantly and without a flinch.

Meet your favourable karma calmly and in self-control.

Do not be unduly moved by either. At the centre always be still.

Set the will to work on your personal failings and eliminate them.

Never be satisfied from day to day till they be gone.

Develop a valiant independence of all personal favours, yet be grateful for them when they come.

Inculcate in humanity a staunch adherence to the highest principles and ideas, for the moral standard is everywhere far too low.

Put the seal of perfection upon everything you do.

From Geoffrey Hodson's *Sharing the Light Volume 2* – p.574

The original was in *White Lotus Day* by Geoffrey Hodson – *American Theosophist*, 1953, vol. 41, issue 5 (May), p.85



Geoffrey Hodson (1886-1983) was a theosophical author and international lecturer, occultist and super-physical researcher, Liberal Catholic priest, Co-Freemason (32 degrees) and humanitarian. Born and bred in England, Geoffrey eventually became a New Zealand citizen living in Auckland and inspiring all those who met him. Information about his rich inner life is contained in his books: *Light in the Sanctuary*, *The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson*, *The Yogic Ascent to Spiritual Heights* and *Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition*.



# THE WHISPER OF THE SOUL

“The entire problem of our spiritual life centers round two themes:  
the vision of the whole and  
the right adjustment of the parts,”  
wrote the famous theosophist **Rohit Mehta**.

The daily struggle of the individual is indeed in the direction of finding a rightful place for every detail of his or her existence. This, in fact, is the problem of choice – the problem of good and evil. For that which is in its rightful place is good and that which is not in its rightful place is evil. But how can one know the rightful place of anything save in the background of the whole? Without the perception of the whole the only method the individual can employ for the adjustment of parts is the method of trial and error.

But this is an endless process, especially because the psychological setting of the person constantly changes. What is right in one setting may not be right at all in a changed setting. Therefore, in the psychological sphere there can be no established code, no set formula, indicating what is right and wrong in an absolute manner – that is, in a manner that could be applied to all circumstances. Thus there has to be a constant perception of the whole. In every setting the whole has to be discovered anew.

The whole can be discovered only in the interval – in the silence – between two sounds. In other words, it is only as we hear the melody that we get the perception of the whole. And when the melody is heard, it is easy to learn the lesson of harmony – the lesson of establishing right relationship between the parts. The question of fundamental importance in the spiritual life is, therefore, that of hearing the melody – of listening to the silence, of being aware of the “interval.” It is the interval that holds the key to the understanding of life. And the interval denotes a discontinuity. So, it is not continuity, but discontinuity, that reveals the meaning and significance of life!

How do we listen to the silence between two sounds? The instruction, which Mabel Collins’s book *Light on the Path* gives to the neophyte, is as follows:

Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you. Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men. Regard most earnestly your own heart.

We are asked to regard earnestly all the life that surrounds us – not one particular expression of life, but life wherever it expresses itself. This requires an extraordinary awareness of life at all the various levels of its expression. This is possible only under conditions of physical sensitivity, emotional responsiveness and mental alertness.

Unless a person is open and responsive in all parts of their being, they will not be aware of all the life that surrounds them – and without such awareness an earnest regard for all expressions of life would become impossible. To be aware of all life that surrounds us



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implies extending areas of one's own interest. Without a deep interest in life, an earnest regard for its expressions is unthinkable.

Now, usually our interest in anything takes the shape either of identification or of condemnation. It should be noted that condemnation, too, is a form of identification – for it is identification with the opposite of that which we condemn! But if our interest in a thing, a person or an idea is born out of identification, then it is only a reaction from our spheres of habit. Such a reaction may be positive or it may be negative; in the case of condemnation, we display a negative reaction.

Needless to say, all reactions emerge from certain fixed centres of the mind, and a fixed centre of the mind is its habit. A habit invariably dulls the mind as it does the senses, and with this dullness it brings a loss of perspective. An interest born out of habit can have no depth or earnestness about it. A mind conditioned by habit is lazy or indolent – it moves only within the limits of its cable-tow. Nothing outside this sphere is of any interest to it. It is quite obvious that such a mind cannot regard earnestly all the life that surrounds it. The mind that is circumscribed with reference to its sphere of interest loses a sense of proportion and thereby overemphasises a part. It is prevented from seeing the whole by the conditioning factors of habit.

Spiritual life is essentially a piece of beautiful architecture. In such an architecture there is a harmony – a sense of proportion. No part therein is over-emphasised nor is it underestimated. Every detail of such an architecture is in its appropriate place. When a part occupies its rightful place, then mysteriously the whole shines through that part.

And when the whole shines through it, it becomes tremendously significant. In a harmonious piece of architecture every part – even the smallest detail – is significant because of the presence of the whole. When

everything shines with the significance of the whole, then there arises a natural and an earnest regard for all life that surrounds us. It is the whole that imparts significance to the part, and a part becomes significant only when it occupies its appropriate place. Nowhere else can the part shine with the significance of the whole. Needless to say, it is the presence of the whole which calls our undivided attention to it.

It is not the size of a thing that matters. The thing by itself will remain unnoticed – it will not call out our earnest regard – if the whole is not present in it. And when the whole is present, the same quality will shine out from each detail. The difference between various things will then be only of quantity and not of quality. Thus, the instruction given to the neophyte to regard earnestly all the life that surrounds them cannot be fulfilled without discovering an appropriate place for each detail of their existence. And to discover an appropriate place for each detail is to have a vision of the whole. But how does one come to this vision of the whole?

Here *Light on the Path* asks the neophyte to “look intelligently into the hearts of men.” To look intelligently and to look intellectually are two different things. To look intellectually is to dissect, to analyse, to examine a thing or an event from a structural standpoint. Intellect can examine a thing only part by part – it has a static view – it splits up a movement into a number of still pictures. Intelligence, however, has a dynamic view, it can contain several things at a time, it can comprehend movement, it perceives the whole and, therefore, the appropriate place of each part.

*Light on the Path* says: “Intelligence is impersonal,” but not so the intellect. Intellect has a personal approach to people and things, for it is the product of time. It functions from the past and into the future. It operates within the sphere of continuity, for thought is its instrument and thought is rooted in



and motivated by the past. Its conclusions are based on the process of comparison and contrast. It identifies with that which evokes pleasant memories and it condemns that which stimulates unpleasant memories. And so, the judgment of the intellect is personal, colored by the memories of the past.

While intellect *reacts* from the past, it is intelligence that *acts* in the present. We can look intelligently only when the judgment of the intellect is put aside. To look intelligently into the hearts of people is to see *what* is. When we see people and things as they are, we cannot help loving them. Intelligence has a direct perception, and therefore, sees the fundamental nature of everything. It sees the whole. It comprehends the source from which life's expressions emanate. The intellect only sees the outer expressions, that which is manifested. But intelligence looks into the very source and, therefore, its judgment is based on the perception of the whole.

To look intelligently into the hearts of men and women is to see the source of action and not merely its pattern. In the source is to be found the intrinsic nature of everything. The pattern of action may be crude or refined but the source contains the original nature of everything. Our judgment of any pattern of action is bound to be faulty so long as we have not perceived the original nature of the actor who performs the action. The original nature of the actor is his or her dharma. An action, which emanates from this centre or source, is a natural and spontaneous action. It is intelligence – not intellect – that enables us to see the original nature of everything.

How do we call out this intelligence from within us so that we may be enabled to look into the hearts of others? It is only the person of intelligence who can tread the path. We are led to the understanding of the problem as we examine the third aphorism in this particular group, which says, "Regard most earnestly your own heart."

This instruction appears on a superficial examination to be rooted in selfishness. Is not a regard for our own heart a path of self-interest? But on a deeper examination this instruction is found to throw great light on the problem of intelligence. What does this aphorism, which asks us to regard most earnestly one's heart, mean? It asks the neophyte to be sensitive to the promptings of his or her own heart. We listen mostly to the mind, but never to the heart.

To listen to the heart is not to become sentimental nor does it mean an emotional or an impulsive reaction to life's environment. We can listen to the heart only when the projections and motives of thought and emotion are put away. Heart speaks only to a purified mind. Everything in its intrinsic nature is absolutely pure – it is only when something clings to it that impurity arises. Thus, mind becomes impure when the residue of an incomplete action clings to it. In other words, it is psychological memory that renders a mind impure. When the corruptible mind puts on incorruption, then does it become sensitive to the promptings of the heart.

Heart is indeed the seat of spiritual intuition. Intelligence is that state of human consciousness which is open and sensitive to the whisper of the spirit. One of the instructions given to the spiritual aspirant is to learn to meditate in the heart. To meditate in the heart is to be sensitive to the promptings of spiritual intuition. To meditate in the heart is to render the mind pure and transparent. It is to this purified mind that the heart conveys its secret and in the light of this secret all things become significant. He or she who possesses this secret regards all life earnestly – he or she has profound respect for everything and everyone, for he or she has learned intelligently to look into the heart of all phenomena.

If, while treading the path, in the midst of one's daily avocations, one could listen to the promptings of the heart, one would never miss the way. But the promptings of the heart

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must be obeyed. The neophyte must “regard most earnestly” the promptings of his or her own heart. In a given situation, in the solution of a problem, the heart speaks but once, and that, too, in a whisper. If the mind is insensitive to the whisper of the heart, then the spiritual pilgrim must struggle and toil in the dark, and every such movement in the dark is likely to lead the pilgrim astray. To disregard the promptings of the heart and to reject the guidance of intuition is to follow the path indicated by the projections of the mind. But the mind is caught up in the darkness of continuity. No fundamental spiritual transformation can arise out of its efforts. Its light is only “darkness made visible.”

But the light of the spirit shines ever in our midst. We shall perceive this light when the screens of the mind have been put away. It is only when the mind’s continuity is interrupted, it is only in that interval, that moment of discontinuity, that one can perceive the Light Ineffable and comprehend the mystery of its shining. If only we can listen to the promptings of the heart in the midst of our daily activities, then the treading of the Path will be an indescribable joy.



An excerpt from the book *Seek Out the Way: Studies in Light on the Path* by Rohit Mehta.



Rohit Mehta (1908-1995) was an Indian Theosophist well known for his work as an educator, lecturer, writer, and social activist who worked with Mahatma Gandhi. He served as International Secretary of the Theosophical Society, and as General Secretary of the Indian Section.



TSNZ member Titus Steenhuisen shares  
his poetic reflection

# VOW

However innumerable beings are,  
We vow to meet them with kindness and interest.  
However inexhaustible the states of suffering are,  
We vow to touch them with patience and love.  
However immeasurable the Dharmas are,  
We vow to explore them deeply.  
However incompatible the mystery of inner being,  
We vow to surrender to it freely.  
From this day forth,  
With Wisdom and Compassion  
As my lamp and staff  
I dedicate all my life energies  
To experience the Truth  
And support the evolution of humanity  
To a peaceful harmonious existence  
Liberating all living beings.

Tatyata OM

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Swaha

*This is the Buddhist mantra of the perfection of Wisdom.*



When learning to read as a child, Titus says he made progress when he used Theosophy books because it was inspiring for his mind and gave him self-confidence knowing there were other people thinking in a similar way as he did. Titus says the truth is easily abandoned or covered up. He writes from what he can remember and has distilled from teachings. Titus says that this is his path.





# ENLIGHTENMENT

## What is it?

Prolific author and editor of *Quest* magazine,  
Richard Smoley ponders the question.

Full disclosure up front: I know nothing about enlightenment. Although I have read and heard a good deal about it over the years, I realise it is a subject about which I am entirely ignorant.

The Buddhist monk, Ajahn Brahm, says there are nine things that an enlightened being cannot do: “store up possessions, intentionally kill any form of life, steal, perform sexual intercourse, tell a deliberate lie, and act improperly out of desire, out of ill will, out of delusion, or out of fear.”

This settles the matter. I am nowhere near this level and I have never met anyone who was. Moreover, according to the literature, full enlightenment – if there is such a thing – is a radically different state of consciousness from any we are familiar with.

All these things suggest that what I think I know about enlightenment has little to do with the actuality. Moreover, what I think I may know about enlightenment may be an impediment to realising it.

I write this just before the elections, so polls are thick in the atmosphere. Every poll shows a sizeable group of people who answer, “Don’t know,” to whatever question is asked.

Once I used to think that these people were ignorant not to have opinions about the most vital topics of our times.

At this point I’m not so sure. I remember too many times over the years when I was upset about some major issue. In the long run, I often learned that my opinions were based on supposed facts that had nothing to do with reality. As a result, I have become much more consciously agnostic about many of the great concerns of our times, no matter how obvious the “right” answer may appear to be.

Some say not knowing is an approach to enlightenment. After all, *avidya* – usually translated as *ignorance* but perhaps better translated as *nescience* or even *obliviousness* – is, according to Buddhist teaching, the primordial cause of suffering.

Clearly, we are dealing with something different here than ignorance, say, of historical facts or the laws of physics. The classic answer to this problem appears in a story about Socrates, recounted in Plato’s *Apology*. Someone sent to the oracle at Delphi – then held in the greatest esteem, consulted even on matters of high state – and asked whether there was anyone wiser than Socrates. The oracle replied that there was not. Socrates was puzzled by this reply. He could not understand what it meant, yet he was convinced that the god could not lie. Finally, he concluded, “None of us happens to know anything beautiful and good, but they think they know, knowing



not; but I do not know, and don't think I do. So by this little bit I might appear to be wiser." Yet Socrates was so wise that all the philosophers that came before him are lumped together as the pre-Socratics.

On a more homely note, the 19<sup>th</sup> century American humorist Josh Billings wrote, "I honestly believe it iz better tew know nothing than two know what ain't so" (a quote often attributed to Will Rogers).

Of course, there is a more active nescience – not knowing and actively refusing to know. Often it is a matter of knowing "what ain't so" and refusing to let that be challenged. The difference is that the not knowing of Socrates and Josh Billings admits the possibility of knowing and an openness to it.

Say you come across an unfamiliar word. Your insecurity may lead you to claim that you don't need to know it and that big words are pretentious. Or you can simply look the word up, and then you know it. Such is the difference between plain ignorance and nescience (a word that to me connotes an active resistance to knowledge).

How does this relate to enlightenment? From what I have already said, it's clear that I don't know. But it may go something like this: I look out at the world and assume that my opinion about it is correct. I see the tables, chairs, trees and flowers, and assume that I know what they are. But in reality, I see only the past – my past experiences and preconceptions about them.

One way out of this ignorance is to set aside this collection of data in my mind and see the world as it is in its immediacy – what some philosophers have called its "just-so-ness." At that point the world opens up some of its inscrutable richness.

It would be exaggerating to call this sense of greater richness enlightenment. But it may not be totally wrong to say that it is closer to enlightenment than the whirligig of thoughts, feelings and preconceptions in which we customarily live.

To conclude with yet another thing I don't know: is enlightenment permanent, stable, and irrevocable, as certain sacred texts seem to indicate? Or is it just another in an endless series of steps toward greater opening, knowing, and fulfillment?

In short, is there someplace where you stop, or is there always further to go?

Richard Smoley



...is there  
someplace  
where you  
stop, or is  
there always  
further to go?



Richard Smoley is the author of *Inner Christianity: A Guide to the Esoteric Tradition*; *The Dice Game of Shiva: How Consciousness Creates the Universe*; *Conscious Love: Insights from Mystical Christianity*; *The Essential Nostradamus*; *Forbidden Faith: The Secret History of Gnosticism*; and *Hidden Wisdom: A Guide to the Western Inner Traditions* (with Jay Kinney). Smoley is also the former editor of *Gnosis: A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions*. Currently he is editor of *Quest: Journal of the Theosophical Society in America* and of *Quest Books*.



Some notes on the modern theosophical movement  
founded in 1875 by **Helena Petrovna Blavatsky**.

## The Theosophical Society

### OUR VISION

To promote and enable greater awareness of living wisdom expressed through Theosophy.

### OUR MISSION

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

### OUR VALUES

- Altruism
- Respect
- Diversity
- Recognising of the Oneness of All Life
- Co-operation
- Integrity

To help carry out our mission, the Society presents for consideration a contemporary statement of the Ancient Wisdom called Theosophy. The Theosophical Society does not require its members to accept all or indeed any of the Theosophical teachings.

The motto of the Society is: "There is no religion higher than Truth." The term 'religion' in the motto refers to religion in its highest sense, inclusive of all life.

Theosophy regards the universe as alive and interrelated, with an intelligent order guiding the cyclical evolution of all life. The Theosophical Society in New Zealand supports the right of individual freedom of thought for every person and that any teachings are in no way binding on any member of the Society.

The ideals and principles of Theosophy are offered for consideration and members are free to accept or reject the teachings according to their own spiritual development. To be a member of the Society, one must be in sympathy with all of its objects. The Society offers a view of life that is remarkable for its comprehensiveness, coherence and timelessness, a contemporary formulation

of an ancient Wisdom Tradition that is the basis for a satisfying, productive life that enables those who follow it to discover their own inner nature and to contribute to the welfare of the world. This is represented in the Theosophical Worldview.

Although this Wisdom has been offered throughout the ages under various names and in many languages, its essence is fundamentally the same, however much its outer aspects and manner of presentation may vary. It especially points to the reality of a universal kinship and the imperative necessity of practising it. It also gives insight into the unexplained laws of nature around us and encourages each individual to delve deeply into our own hearts to cultivate the latent powers within. It is through the study of religion, philosophy and science that we can broaden our horizons so as to recognise the One Life in All.



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOCIETY

The Society promotes an underlying unity of life; it fosters religious and racial understanding by encouraging the study of religion, philosophy and science; and the enquiry of the spiritual aspect of life. The Society stands for a complete freedom of individual search and belief while promoting a willingness to examine any concept and belief with an open mind, and respect for other people's understanding.

In the modern Theosophical movement, the word Theosophy has been used with several different meanings:

- Theosophy is frequently used to describe the body of teachings that were given through Mme Blavatsky and other Theosophical writers. This body of knowledge is frequently called "modern Theosophy" (with capital T).
- Theosophy is also used to refer to the universal Ancient Wisdom underlying all religions, which can be found at their core when they are stripped of accretions, deletions and superstitions. This is sometimes referred to as "ancient" or "timeless" theosophy.

These two usages refer to a body of teachings transmitted by different sages, in different parts of the world and at different times.

Theosophia refers to a Divine Wisdom, that is, a state of consciousness in which the sage or mystic goes beyond his or her mind and gets a direct, supra-conceptual perception of Truth. This is the primary meaning of Theosophy.

It is important to note that the intellectual study and daily practice of Theosophy is only a means to reach the real theosophia or inner enlightenment. As we become more mindful of this, we open the door to a flash of insight which comes from the part of us that is Divine. The process of becoming more and more receptive to these theosophical insights is the spiritual path or journey.

## THE THEOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEW

The Theosophical Society, while reserving for each member full freedom to interpret those teachings known as Theosophy, is dedicated to preserving and realising the Ageless Wisdom, which embodies both a worldview and a vision of human self-transformation. This tradition is founded upon certain fundamental propositions:

- \* The universe and all that exists within it are one interrelated and interdependent whole.
- \* Every existent being – from atom to galaxy – is rooted in the same universal, life-creating Reality. This Reality is all-pervasive but it can never be summed up in its parts, since it transcends all its expressions. It reveals itself in the purposeful, ordered and meaningful processes of nature as well as in the deepest recesses of the mind and spirit.
- \* Recognition of the unique value of every living being expresses itself in reverence for life, compassion for all, sympathy with the need of all individuals to find truth for themselves, and respect for all religious traditions. The ways in which these ideals become realities in individual life are both the privileged choice and the responsible act of every human being.

Central to the concerns of theosophy is the desire to promote understanding and unity among people of all races, nationalities, philosophies and religions. Therefore, all people, whatever their ethnicity, creed, gender, caste, or colour, are invited to participate equally in the life and work of the Society. The Theosophical Society imposes no dogma, but points toward the source of unity behind all differences.

Devotion to truth, love for all living beings and commitment to a life of active altruism are the marks of the true Theosophist.

*From [www.theosophy.nz/](http://www.theosophy.nz/)*

..... ❖❖❖ .....





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



Carol Collier, TOS National Director wishes all a Peaceful and Happy Christmas and looks forward to seeing you at the TSNZ Convention in Christchurch.



TOS group with International Secretary, Nancy Secrest (seated front between Carol Collier and Renée Sell) at 2023 Convention in Whanganui.

In New Zealand, December is generally regarded as the beginning of summer. Flowers are in full bloom and Pohutukawa trees, with their brilliant display of red flowers, look stunning along the fringe of North Island coastal areas. The days are longer and warmer so we engage in outdoor activities such as camping, swimming, hiking through the bush, or simply enjoying nature in all its glory. Many take their annual holidays over this period and for some, rest and relaxation are on their list of 'things to do'.

It has not been an easy year for some of our theosophical members both here and abroad. There have been floods, earthquakes, cyclones and escalating wars, causing loss of lives and much pain and suffering. The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) in New Zealand, together with the National Section and local Branches and Lodges, raised money to support people in their time of great need. Thank you to all those members and supporters who answered the call and gave so freely.

The Silent Auction for the artwork by TSNZ member and TOS supporter Helen Dynes, from Hawke's Bay Affiliated Centre, was won by Paul Henderson, President of Whangarei Branch. Congratulations to you Paul and thank you for supporting the TOS projects.

### THE WORK OF THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE

The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) in New Zealand is part of an international organisation that encourages interactive participation by its members and the public in service projects to relieve suffering wherever it is found. We are a volunteer non-profit organisation and serve by working individually or through local TOS groups to alleviate suffering in their local areas. We join with other TOS groups worldwide to help with humanitarian projects internationally and we support the programmes of others working in service areas of education, ecology, healing, peace, family, social services, animals, arts and music.

The TOS in New Zealand supports a number of overseas and local projects including for example, the child sponsorship programme in India and Pakistan. We also support two literacy centres in Pakistan, the Golden Link College in the Philippines as well as a number of emergency appeals in recent times: in Hungary and Ukraine. In New Zealand we have supported the Waikato Women's Refuge, He Puaawai Young Parents and a number of smaller projects. We continue to raise funds through donations, selling second-hand books, raffles and selling of a donated poetry book – to assist us with the support of the projects. An update of our activities appears regularly in *TheoSophia* quarterly magazine.

For more information email: [tos@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:tos@theosophy.org.nz)



# Thank you Marilyn Dale

It is with sadness that we say 'Good-bye' and a very big 'thank you' to Marilyn Dale, who has worked in secretarial roles since 2001 in the reception office at Vasanta House in Auckland, the National Office of The Theosophical Society in New Zealand.

Marilyn has retired and a special morning tea was given for Marilyn on 25th October 2023.

In her various secretarial roles, Marilyn provided cheerful and careful service to the Society and its members. As well as answering the phone, Marilyn maintained the branch membership lists, assisted with conventions and other events put on by the National Office and took the minutes at numerous meetings.

Marilyn's quiet efficiency and thoughtful help will be sadly missed at the office and by those visiting and staying at Vasanta House.

Thank you for your valuable service and we all wish Marilyn well in her upcoming retirement. Our heart-felt thanks and warmest wishes go with Marilyn on the next part of her journey.



At Marilyn's farewell: Peter Bullen, Graham Eden, Marilyn Dale, Richard Sell and Danika Plowman.

TOS in NZ

To help contact:  
CAROL COLLIER

Phone:  
**027 668 4554**

or  
Email:  
**tos@theosophy.org.nz**

The Theosophical Order of Service encourages  
self-forgetful service,  
and is the natural counterpart  
of the Theosophical Society's work  
to guide people to wisdom.

*Radha Burnier*



# Vegetarians Today

From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, Margaret Johns reminds us of ways to make the world a better place.

October is a special month in the NZ Vegetarian Society Calendar, World Vegetarian Day is celebrated on the 1st, St Francis Day (for animals) is the 4th. Voting for the Student Think Kind Competition begins on 1st and the winner is announced on World Vegan Day, November 1st. The NZ Vegetarian Society celebrates its official formation in October 1943, and the whole month is regarded as Reverence for Life Month. Reverence for life – this must encompass the whole of life on this planet Earth, from the tiniest mineral, even an etheric spark, to human beings and beyond: life energy pervades every living thing.

The reason the Society runs its Student Think Kind Competition is to encourage students to think about the world around us and how they can make it better, for plants, animals, the environment, and people. There was a lot of thought put into this year's entries. The hope is that the students will continue to think about what they do, what they eat, how they can help others and how they

can make the world a better place.

Considering deluges of rain this year to promises of droughts this summer, we need to take care of our environment, animals and people; rethink the way we eat and the way we live. The NZ Vegetarian Society has seen many changes in our country and the world, during its 80 years of work. It will continue its work into the future, assisting people to make changes in eating habits, becoming healthier and more compassionate as they change their way of looking at their food and the world.

The Society is again running its 21-Day Plant Based Challenge to help those wishing to change eating habits and the website is a click away, if you have a question or need help: [www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz) or [info@vegetarian.org.nz](mailto:info@vegetarian.org.nz) For those wishing to try something different for the summer months, here's a recipe from the *Veg~n Kiwi Christmas Cookbook*\*:

## Crumbed Tofu Cubes with Plum Sauce (makes 84 cubes with sauce)

### TOFU

- 750g firm tofu
- 2½ Tbsp soy sauce
- ¼ cup sesame seeds
- 1 Tbsp cornflour
- 2 Tbsp plain wholemeal flour
- 2 Tbsp oil

### PLUM SAUCE

- 3 cups red blood plums, peeled, chopped and de-pitted (tinned Plums 850g tin gives you 1½ cups, if sweetened, you don't need the sugar below.)
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ¼ cup (raw) sugar
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- ¼ cup water

### DIRECTIONS

#### Tofu

1. Cut tofu into 2cm cubes. Place in shallow container (with a lid) and pour soy sauce over.
2. Marinate tofu for several hours or overnight, turning occasionally.
3. Combine sesame seeds, cornflour and wholemeal flour in a bowl. Toss tofu in the flour mixture.
4. Heat oil in non-stick frying pan (or Air-Fry with a bit of oil spray). Add tofu and brown well on all sides.
5. Remove from oil and drain. Serve with Plum Sauce.

#### Plum Sauce

6. Place all sauce ingredients in a medium saucepan.
7. Bring mixture to boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Serve with Tofu!

\*If you would like a copy of the Cookbook, contact [info@vegetarian.org.nz](mailto:info@vegetarian.org.nz)

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.

*As time goes by, I become more and more convinced that the power of our service work will not be found in any of the projects or specific activities we undertake, but in the people and the quality of the mind that serves. In Buddhism there is the idea that any work that we do can be spiritual whether it is working in a soup kitchen serving meals, or working at home changing diapers and balancing the family budget. The determining factor is the mind. When we do something with the sense that the task and its outcome are not ours, but originate from and return to the Divine within us all, the work is transformed. It becomes something extraordinary.*

Tim Boyd

From the Fall/Winter 2008-2009 issue of *For the Love of Life*, the magazine of the TOS in the USA.

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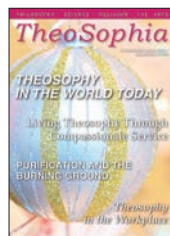
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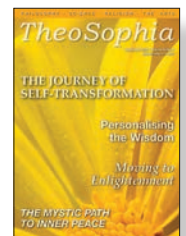
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# Theosophy

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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Printed by H&A Design & Print, Whanganui  
Telephone 64 6 345 3145

.....  
EDITOR OF THEOSOPHIA email: editor@theosophy.org.nz  
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN NEW ZEALAND website: [www.theosophy.nz/](http://www.theosophy.nz/)  
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# OUR HUMAN DESTINY

Our human destiny, it may be said, is to know. To know fully and wholly, not simply to theorise, but to know is to be the mystic.

To know is to encounter reality at every moment in time,  
in every place in space.

Out of that encounter, which is truly the mystic experience, arises naturally a new way of living, that is both simple and beautiful.

A way that is one of commitment to the cosmos,  
to our fellow human beings and to life itself.

A commitment of the personal self to the One Self  
seated in the heart of all beings.

*From Mystic Vision and Human Transformation by Joy Mills*





We are all  
just walking  
each other  
home.

*Ram Dass*



December 2023