

PHILOSOPHY · SCIENCE · RELIGION · THE ARTS

TheoSophia

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WHY ARE WE HERE?

In the Service of All

The Path Ideal

Forgiveness

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.

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Cover
Tree
Mike Birdy
Pexels

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FORGIVENESS

THE MEANING OF *THEOSOPHY*

The term *theosophy* is derived from two Greek words, *theos*: 'divine' and *sophia*: 'wisdom'. However, Theosophy is not some system of thought prescribed by a deity ruling from on high, but the 'Divine Wisdom' that dwells potentially and universally in the human spirit, unfolding gradually through the process of evolution. It is this 'Divine Wisdom' within us that stirs our desire to discover who we are and to answer the other big questions.

Theosophical Encyclopedia

But here, as at other times, in my life, I dare not purchase peace with a lie. An imperious necessity forces me to speak the truth, as I see it, whether the speech please or displease, whether it brings praise or blame. That one loyalty to truth I must keep stainless, whatever friendships fail me or human ties be broken. She may lead me into wilderness, yet I must follow her; she may strip me of all my love, yet I must pursue her, though she slay me. Yet will I trust her; and I ask no other epitaph on my tomb but "She tried to follow the truth".

Annie Besant

TSNZ SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY 2025

10-14 May, Auckland

THE THREE-FOLD PATH TO SELF-DISCOVERY

Balancing Knowledge, Devotion & Action

The One Reality manifests through the many, ensuring countless possibilities of expression and experience. Consequently, the paths of return to Oneness are as diverse as life itself.

In the Bhagavad Gita, a cornerstone of Hindu philosophy, three primary Margas or paths are presented:

- ~ Jnana Yoga (the path of Wisdom)
- ~ Bhakti Yoga (the path of Devotion)
- ~ Karma Yoga (the path of Selfless Action)

In this School of Theosophy we will explore the distinct characteristics of these three paths. Through meditation and other practices, we'll discover which approach is most beneficial for each of us, and learn how to consciously integrate them all.



Director of Studies
Juliana Cesano
(U.S.A.)

Juliana Cesano is a third-generation Theosophist who has been actively involved with the Theosophical Society's work for over 25 years. She currently serves as the National Secretary and Member Education Director of the Theosophical Society in America.

She is an international speaker, and her main focus over the past 15 years has been the transformational power of contemplative practices.

Register online at www.theosophy.nz/events

Or using the registration form in this issue

*Lovely days don't come to you,
you walk to them.*

Rumi

Why am I here?

This universal, age-old question continues to fascinate as we seek to find answers for ourselves through study and experience. Theosophy encourages people to explore questions about life, including why we are here. Acknowledging that the universe is a single, interrelated whole and every being is rooted in the same reality, theosophy claims that humans are pilgrims on a journey of spiritual evolution.

See: <https://theosophy.nz/membership/connect-society/what-we-do>

Those who have considered the vital question for *TheoSophia*, include contributors: Richard Sell (p.4), Tim Boyd (p.6), Nancy Secrest (p.8), Elizabeth Sell (p.12), the editor (p.15) and Vicente Hao Chin Jr (p.18). Richard Smoley writes about the value of forgiveness (p.20) and TSNZ members provide enthusiastic feedback from the 128th National Convention (p.16).

We hope your year has begun well and that autumn brings with it a bountiful harvest of rich discovery and ripe awareness as you read this issue of *TheoSophia*.

Pamela Zane

Editor

editor@theosophy.nz

Contributions of poems or articles 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

TSNZ YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/@theosophynz>

Here But Not Here

*The day after the first year
still the intensity of being
a year where time bequiles the senses
the moods and responses interact.*

*But what is time?
That elusive element when pursued,
yet inexhaustible, unrelenting
in hours long, days suspended.*

*One day after one year
It's still almost incomprehensible.
Almost. I know my friend
is in a different realm
a different consciousness.*

*Still the intensity of being
which will constantly vibrate beyond time.
Hold that seal of connection,
the interaction we all have
access to given conditions specific.*

*Situations where time can not
detract, cannot intrude.
One day after one year
does not apply.*

Clive Conland

*Memories and connections – on the
anniversary of the death of a special friend,
met through the Theosophical Society.*

DIARY DATES

2025

March 29	Grand Opening of the Theosophical Hall in Christchurch
May 10-14	School of Theosophy with <i>Juliana Cesano</i> (see p.2)
September 6-7	Immersion Weekend

Information can be found on our website under *events*:
<https://theosophy.nz/events>

FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2025		
June	Theosophy, an Impulse of the Spirit	1 April
September	The Discriminating Mind/Discernment	1 July
December	Living the Spiritual Life	1 October

Contact the editor at editor@theosophy.org.nz or
visit our website for the guidelines: www.theosophy.nz

EVOLUTION IS THE PURPOSE

National President of TSNZ, **Richard Sell** answers the universal question...



WHY AM I HERE?

This is perhaps the biggest question there is. It has fascinated Humanity for millennia and who has not pondered on this puzzling subject, hungry for answers? Yet, to a large proportion of the world it still remains unanswered as the daily grind of living takes our attention and focus away from the Eternal.

There are, however, answers to the riddle of life, which can be found by those that have 'eyes to see and ears to hear'. The sages of old delved deeply into the mysteries of the Universe and provided signposts which can be discovered in ancient texts and religious scriptures. These discoveries though, are often veiled in allegory and symbols and so are not easily understood unless a key for unlocking the code is also provided, usually by a Hierophant or worthy spiritual Teacher.

In the late 1800s a titanic shift occurred in the esoteric realms and what was veiled, became to a certain extent unveiled, as Theosophy began to externalise these mysteries. The seminal work of the time, written by Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB), was called *The Secret Doctrine*, which itself was based on ancient stanzas found in the *Book of Dzyan*, a book of unknown age and written in a sacred language called Senzar.

Receiving this knowledge into our eager grasp, we find there are abundant complexities to wrestle with but thankfully there are also statements which spell out the 'Why', in plain language. In a nutshell, theosophical cosmology explains the formation of the cosmos and humanity's place in this vast scheme of evolution and how the purpose of human life is the spiritual liberation of the Spirit:

It is the dynamic concept of the universe conceived as a living whole – the theatre of an immense ascending evolution of Consciousness, through all kingdoms of Nature, towards a progressive awakening in human individuals, destined to take in hand their own evolutionary progress.

In the infinity of time, worlds follow each other in a regular sequence of periods of activity and rest.

And for the human being, the alternate phases of life, death and rebirth afford the individual all the opportunities to develop – collectively – the unlimited potentialities of humanity and to return – individually, and with full consciousness – to the unique

central source of Life, Energy and Consciousness whence the whole cosmos eternally proceeds.¹

The vastness of time and space is a cyclical conundrum for the Human mind; one that has no beginning and no end, which Madame Blavatsky describes in the proem, or introduction, of *The Secret Doctrine* thus:

The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing" ... The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux.

It is upon a few of these small worlds that form our local Solar System, which we find as the playground for gaining experience and learning for Humanity. Other Kingdoms of Nature, also evolving in their own time, and their own manner, form part of this great continuum.

The time periods are vast, spanning into billions of years and our Humanity, in this Solar System is unfolding consciousness through three streams of evolution. Helena Blavatsky speaks of three lines, or streams of evolution which are interwoven and interblended at every point in the individual. These three evolutionary schemes are Monadic, Intellectual and Physical.

1) The Monadic or Spiritual, is concerned with the development and unfoldment of the Monad (Spirit), working in conjunction with -

2) The Manasic/Intellectual/Egoic, which essentially means the development of mind, and the whole psychological nature of the human being, and -

3) The Etheric/Physical form. The etheric is the blueprint for the physical body to consolidate around and the physical body is but the outer, most dense garment of Spirit, a vehicle for obtaining growth and gathering experiences throughout many incarnations. The Soul transforms the fruits and marrow of knowledge and experience gained in each lifetime in the transient world, into Wisdom that resides in the Eternal.

We can see from this that there is a lot more going on than we may realise.

Historically, humanity has been concerned mainly with this third aspect as a species, however there is now a rapid movement towards the second stream, being Mind or *Manas*. It has been written that the Atlanteans were primarily concerned with developing their emotional nature, whereas humanity today is required to develop its mental capacities (*Manas*). In recent centuries this has unfortunately propelled a lessening in importance of the spiritual nature within humankind to a certain degree. We need but compare the devotion to the Divine, in the Middle Ages, by the builders of the great cathedrals found across Europe, to today's perfunctory architecture in cities all over the world. We have lost that sense of grandeur, beauty and devotion to something higher.

It will, however, return in the times to come, I believe, for while the focus on developing our reasoning and analytical thinking is occurring at the present there is also the engagement of the higher mind occurring. Here we find abstract thought as an important function of the thinking process, ably assisted by imagination, leading to a widening of the mind and its capacity to understand which is particularly necessary when the Spiritual path is sought. This is so, because the ability to think in this manner opens the mind and allows the thinker to develop and utilise in turn, discernment, *Viveka* in Sanskrit. Through this practice the Soul begins to gather to itself Wisdom and Understanding. We are now entering the realms of Intuition and our Buddhist nature, which takes us closer to who or what we really are as Divine Spiritual Beings. As HPB wrote:

Man [humankind] is a spiritual being – a soul, in other words – and this soul takes on different bodies from life to life on earth in order at last to arrive at such perfect knowledge, through repeated experience, as to enable one to assume a body fit to be the dwelling-place of a Mahatma or perfected soul. Then, they say, that particular soul becomes a spiritual helper to mankind [humankind].

Although the perfected individual is the purpose of life, in this phase of evolution, it does not constitute the final end. When we lift our vision to the stars and gaze at the grand cosmic sea, we know too, that we have a continuing place in this vast array of evolution. Of the Universe, there is no beginning and there is no end, just periods of activity and rest. And in the periods of world manifestation, a *manvantara*, what is within unfolds and at its end, all life has risen higher one step, on the endless ladder of cosmic life.

Thus, a *Monad* (Spirit) begins its evolutionary course in any of these great *manvantaras* at the bottom. It cannot begin elsewhere, because one cannot climb a ladder by starting at the top and going downwards. The Monad gradually unfolds around it sheaths of consciousness, appropriate for each sphere

through which it is at the time passing. It moves through all the Kingdoms of nature, ever onwards, ever upwards in a series of metempsychoses [or awakenings] and reincarnations through space and time. The Divinity within moves beyond our Human knowing, reaching higher, godlike and beyond even that, in a never-ending hierarchy of superior consciousness and from this mighty spiritual Being, spring new Monads, rays from themselves, like sparks from the Flame. These sparks leap forth into manifestation at the beginning of a new *manvantara*, one that will occur long into the distant future from now.

But within the small globe we call Earth, the place we call home, we find our own playground for the unfolding of consciousness and development of form. When the question is asked 'Why are we here?' we can find answers to satisfy this burning question across time.

REFERENCE

1 <https://blavatsky.net/what-is-death/#APPEN>



Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society, looks within.

A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

In the *Tao Te Ching* written about 500 BCE, Chinese philosopher and teacher, Lao Tzu made the statement: “The person who seeks knowledge grows more and more each day. The person who seeks the Tao (the Way) grows less and less each day.” My focus here, is on growing less, what that might mean, and how it is we might involve ourselves in that level of seeking.

When I was very young, I met a truly great lady, Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of former President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who navigated the country through the Great Depression and World War II. Mrs Roosevelt, a person in her own right with her own identity and her own views, was extremely active on behalf of a variety of different causes. My impression of her was that she was a very sweet, nice, old lady. It was only later that I came to understand something of her greatness, not just the greatness of her ideas and her work, but of the sacrifices that were required for her to do the things that she did. She was an activist for civil rights in the US at a time when that was unpopular. It was on the wrong side of the sentiments of the nation. She stood up for women’s rights and workers’ rights. She was the first delegate from the United States to the United Nations (UN) and was instrumental in the UN’s founding. She chaired the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, incorporating a great deal of theosophical thinking. Among those thoughts is that people should have four freedoms: of speech and worship, and from want and fear — big ideas.

When I first met her, I was a child, not knowing any of that. But during her visit she said something that stuck with me. It was a statement about the life of the mind. To her the mind was what was all-important, what enabled all other things in life. She spoke to us young people about a direction that we might want to consider for our growth, our becoming. She laid out three categories of mind, saying: there are small minds, and “small minds talk about people.” It is the idea that when we are at our smallest, we are picking and gossiping about others. Then there are average minds and “average minds talk about events”, things that happen in the world. And then she said, “Great minds talk about ideas.” So, this was her hierarchy of mind and to a large degree, this is useful. But there is another quality of mind that gets less attention. It relates specifically to the idea that

there is such a thing as a life within — qualitatively different from our normal, outwardly-turned way of living. In Zen Buddhist practice, there is an expression: “To the mind of the expert, there are few options. To the beginner’s mind there are many options.” The trained mind, conditioned through its expertise, its association with specific streams of information and knowledge, becomes limited, blinded to options for what might be described as reality.

I think we can all go back to a time of a beginner’s mind — a time when we were open, as yet unconditioned. To that mind that is learning something new, or seeing something for the first time, with fresh eyes, the possibilities are many, we could even say limitless. So, what I would really like to consider, is intuition. Not specifically *the* intuition, but an intuitive approach to something fundamental to all people. There is a universally shared intuition. It is not a theory *per se*. It is not something that has the stamp of scientific approval, but it is a universally shared deep knowing that each of us is a part of something more, something greater. We could call it a greater life. Whether it is proven scientifically or not, an Inner Life is undeniable.

All of us think, feel, see and hear. But we think, feel, see and hear at different levels, in different ways, to different degrees. In a family we have brothers, sisters — each one exposed to the same things, but seeing the world from a different perspective and responding accordingly. For some, the balance of their attention is rooted in the world of the senses — taste, smell, or touch — the material world. That is the focus — the place where people feel at home and make their home. Then there are others who live in a different world. They “hear the beat of a different drum” and live in a different world — parallel — but a differently sensed experience.

During the course of my life, I have known some people who have been deeply clairvoyant, which is not saying that they are infallible or 100% accurate, no more than you would say that someone looking at something with normal eyes is infallible and sees every aspect. Clairvoyance, literally, means “clear seeing” — people who see much as we do, but at a different level, in a slightly different dimension. Each of us dreams, whether we remember our dreams or not. We close our eyes, our consciousness retreats from its

involvement in the day-to-day world and we dream. In those dreams there is an unquestioned sense of their reality. There are some people who have the habit of what is described as lucid dreaming, which is to say, that they are fully aware in the dream — that it is a dream — and yet, still participate in the unfolding story and activities that go on in this other reality. We use the same language to describe a dream as we do to describe a trip to the grocery store.

Each of the world's spiritual traditions has scriptures. And those scriptures use the same language we use in talking about day-to-day things to try to describe things that are so far beyond our current perception that we would think there can be no possible connection. I am fond of stories from various spiritual traditions. Stories are a way of connecting us to a deeper wisdom that is unavailable in recounting information or sharing knowledge.

There is a distinct difference between information, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Sometimes we feel as if knowledge is the gateway to all other things. While it has deep value, it has been said that we can become knowledgeable from someone else's knowledge but we cannot become wise from someone else's wisdom. Wisdom is of a completely different order than knowledge. Wisdom is a perception of reality that so many spiritual teachers have come to try to communicate to us using the language of their time. So, we have for example, the *Bible*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavadgītā* — all using stories to try to touch something within us, to try and lead us to some deeper experience.

In *The Stanzas of Dzyan* — the basis for *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) — there is this statement using the language of fairy-tales: “The eternal parent, wrapped in her ever-invisible robes, had slumbered once again for seven eternities.” It is a beautiful image similar to the “once upon a time” stories that we share with children. But this is an image symbolising something that is indescribable. It points to a state prior to the formation of universes, prior to the manifestation of everything that we think of as real. “The eternal parent” — asleep, wrapped in the robes that would

ultimately become the material of future universes. It is a language used to describe something deeply, deeply interior — interior to the point of not even being in existence, as yet.

Even though we all share aspects of both of these inner and the outer dimensions we find that our effectiveness in speaking across this divide is challenging. Where does the outer life become the Inner Life? There is a quote from Helena Blavatsky, which speaks to this idea. The question is: How is it that we all can see things so differently, living in the same world? How is it that there are so many different points of view? HPB states: “Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for that time, the only realities.”

If our mind is rooted in the world of matter, things and jobs, while that is our focus, and the plane of consciousness in which we are active, that is what is real. Close your eyes, go to sleep, live in a dream — that is what is real. There is also the possibility spoken of in the spiritual traditions of the world that through our own efforts we can shift our centre of gravity to other, more interior planes of consciousness. The idea of this practice is not that we remove or separate ourselves from the world, but that it is possible to create an untroubled space that can become constant. It is an intuitive approach to being. There is an example of the hurricane or cyclone in Nature. They are huge, organised patterns of weather. They spin and all around them everything is in motion, but at their centre there is always the “eye of the storm”. From the human point of view hurricanes are quite destructive, but when someone is in the centre of the storm, they look up at the sky and it is clear, unclouded, completely calm. This is the possibility that the spiritual traditions of the world speak to.



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.

Nancy Secrest shares some of her reflections on the work of this valuable international organisation.

IN THE SERVICE OF ALL

THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE

PART 1



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

Annie Besant

This quote gives us much to reflect upon. In the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS), humanitarian aid is given from that place that is the All in each of us to the All in every other. Annie Besant, the second president of the international Theosophical Society, announced the founding of the TOS and published its provisional constitution in the February 1908 supplement to *The Theosophist*. This document stated the organisation's purpose and set forth a structure of governance. The provisional constitution of the TOS outlined an organisation of leagues, or groups. Within three years, there were over 60 recorded leagues around the world. They focused on such issues as animal welfare, education for the poor, the promotion of Braille, temperance, prison reform, and in India, the abolition of child marriage.

The document also acknowledged that Annie Besant had founded the organisation at the behest of members who wanted to put the First Object of the TS into action: "To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity regardless of race, creed, sex, caste, or color." This is still true today and is one of the main reasons for the existence of the TOS. Annie Besant acknowledged that her inspiration for founding the TOS might be found in an article written by a Master of the Wisdom, entitled *Some Words on Daily Life*, which H.P. Blavatsky had published in the journal *Lucifer*. It said:

Theosophy should not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical ethics, epitomised in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy *must be made practical*; and it has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless digressions, in the sense of desultory orations and fine talk. Let every Theosophist only do his duty, that which he can and ought to do, and very soon the sum of human misery, within and around the areas of every branch of your Society will be found visibly diminished.

Forget Self in working for others – and the task will become an easy and a light one for you.

While the Master's article and members' requests may have been the immediate inspiration for the founding of the organisation, Annie Besant herself had had a commitment to service since childhood. This was fostered by her teacher, Ellen Marryat. Miss Marryat came into Annie's life when she was eight. Annie's father had died three years before, leaving her mother under financial hardship. Her mother struggled to obtain for her son the education she and her husband had wished for him. There was scant money left for Annie's education. Miss Marryat was a maiden lady of large means looking for work which would make her useful in the world. She settled on teaching, and taking a fancy to Annie, invited her to study with her.

Miss Marryat proved to have a genius for teaching. Her methods were unique, without rote memorisation or dry questions and answers. Instead, the children were encouraged to learn from the life around them and to think for themselves. Annie flourished. Miss Marryat, a devout evangelical Christian, taught Christian values as well, including working on behalf of those in need. Therefore as a child, Annie Besant was taken to help the needy, the poor and the sick, laying a cornerstone for her future service work. By the time she became International President of the TS, Annie Besant had been a prominent social activist for many years. She worked for the betterment of the poor: better working hours, better, safer labour conditions, and women's suffrage.

Annie Besant brought her rich experience to the TOS in its formative years, and her writings often spoke of duty, altruism and selfless service. Her presidential address of 1907 asked the question: What of our practice? ... our

lodges should not be contented with a programme of lectures, private and public, and with classes. The members should be known as good workers in all branches of beneficent activity. The Lodge should be the centre, not the circumference, of our work. To the lodge for inspiration and knowledge; to the world for service and teaching.

The world was a busy place in those early years of the TOS. The North Pole was reached in 1908 and the South Pole a couple of years later. The first airplane flight was made across the United States, taking 84 days. The International Congress for Women was held in Amsterdam. There were race riots in Springfield, Illinois. In 1910, the 13th Dalai Lama fled Tibet from Chinese troops to British India, Gandhi was at work in South Africa, and in 1906 Finland approved women's suffrage.

At this time, vast numbers of people were suffering under the weight of horribly long work hours, meagre wages, child labour, oppression of women and those of other ethnicities, crime, and war or the threat of war. The newly formed TOS leagues worked to alleviate the suffering caused by these and other societal woes.

A CHANGED WORLD

Today the TOS concept of leagues has given way to project-focused collaboration in its principal areas of concern: education, peace, social services, healing, arts and music, animal welfare, the environment, and emergency relief. Even more recently, helping those who have been affected by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has taken centre-stage in our work, along with aid to those who have been displaced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The world has changed since 1908, partly thanks to the efforts of members of the TS and the TOS, who focused on service as spiritual action, lived the First Object, and made it practical. The citizens of many countries in today's world enjoy shorter work weeks, better wages, better health care, housing, educational opportunities and religious freedom than our forebears. The work continues. There are still places in the world where some of these basic rights have

yet to be realised. But all in all, in many respects, the world is a better place today than in years and centuries past.

In a 2015 talk, Diana Dunningham Chapotin, then International Secretary of the TOS, said, "Because the media bring almost instantly into our living room reports of acts of great violence committed on the other side of the globe, we have the impression that the world is an increasingly dangerous place to live. In fact, individual and collective violence has been steadily declining over the past thousand years. The number of wars and the number of deaths through war all over the world has been going down for many centuries *proportionate to the number of people on earth.*" She said that while "*we need to be careful of statistics ...* it can be reliably said that today's citizens are far less at risk of being killed or subjected to violence than a century ago and far, far less at risk than a thousand years ago" (emphasis added).

Because of rapid advances in media and the ease and speed of travel, the planet seems a much smaller place nowadays. The pandemic we have experienced over these last few years showed us its negative effects, with the Covid-19 virus being transmitted at lightning speed worldwide.

At the same time, over the last few years, many of us discovered Zoom and other meeting media that allowed us to improve our communications and remain in touch with each other. We travelled virtually, with Adyar and other conventions, conferences, and online talks given by various TS Sections accessible worldwide. TOS online programs were presented in India, the Philippines, Argentina, the United States and Ukraine, with speakers such as Tim Boyd, Deepa Padhi, Nancy Secrest, Sivaprasad K., Rekha Shardar, and others. This has allowed us to reach many more people than localised, physical programmes did.

As the world gets smaller in this way, it is easier to see that we all have the same basic rights to shelter, food, clean water, opportunities to provide for ourselves and our families, human dignity, respect, justice, freedom, and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. The smaller the world



becomes, the more we understand each other, and the more apparent the oneness of all life becomes to us. We know that by serving others, we serve ourselves. We can see that service work goes beyond feeding the body or the mind. It is a spiritual path that, when trodden consciously and selflessly, serves the giver as much as the receiver.

This is reflected in the twofold purpose of the TOS, which remains the same today as at its inception: 1) The unselfish service of the needy and suffering and 2) The inner transformation of the server. Radha Burnier, late International President of the TS, wrote:

The Theosophical Order of Service was founded by Dr Annie Besant in 1908 so that the sum of pain in the world may be reduced, to some extent at least, and at the same time help its workers to learn, through their service and the attention they pay to the quality of their work, to purify the mind. The Order of Service has therefore a double purpose. From this point of view, it is not merely the doing of work which is important but the manner in which it is done and the purity of purpose behind it.

Today the TOS is active in 36 countries doing humanitarian work based on spiritual concepts. Today, as in the beginning, TOS workers find a joy and a freedom in their work. Let's take a look at some of it.

THE UNITED NATIONS

To begin with, you may not know of the TOS's longstanding interest in the United Nations. The TS and TOS have supported the UN since its inception in 1945 as well as its predecessor, the League of Nations. In fact, Annie Besant became one of the first members of the League of Nations Union in England. The TOS's UN committee produced a brochure printed in October 2011, outlining the support shown to the UN by every TS president since Besant. Support for the UN is also shown through local TOS celebrations on UN Day, and our former Spanish-language coordinator, the late Fernando Pérez Martin, published more than 30 issues of a newsletter about the UN's actions. Currently, the TOS is exploring affiliation with the UN as a nongovernmental organisation (NGO). If pursued, this process will take a few years to realise. Ironically, our diverse reach may preclude us from being able to join, but we are looking into it.



TOS Healing Group (USA)



SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

One of the service areas shared by the TOS and the UN is the promotion of peace. We all know of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although the TOS does not involve itself in politics, we are dedicated to giving humanitarian aid wherever necessary. During this past year, letters from the TOS Ukraine asking for assistance have been shared with directors and presidents of the TOS worldwide. Here is a quote from a recent one:

As a result of the armed attack on Ukraine and damage to civilians, residential buildings and communications, many humanitarian problems have arisen. As of today, June 28, 2022, about 3 million civilians live out of the country as refugees, and about 10 million civilians left their homes and moved to the western regions of our country, becoming internally displaced persons (IDP). In addition, those villages and cities which were under occupation and then returned to Ukrainian administration are essentially destroyed and those people need support. So all these people need help: water, food, medicine, housing, basic necessities.

Today, our TS members actively cooperate with social organisations (NGOs) and also organised our own TOS activity to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. The TOS in Ukraine received letters of sympathy and support from all corners of the world. In its annual report, the Ukraine TOS expressed "heartfelt gratitude to all who responded with their hearts to our trouble!"

AID FOR VICTIMS OF WAR

The organisation has also worked in relief of victims of other war-torn regions. Since 2013, the TOS in Italy has been active with projects to support the Syrian people fleeing war. The projects responded to emergency requests from Syria's Bab al-Salam refugee camp. The work the TOS in Italy has been doing to aid Syrian refugees has inspired much interest and respect. The Italian TOS has sent medicine, food, clothing, much needed

footwear, tents, and firewood to those in camps and on the road. Of vital importance is the presence of Dr Ali Nasser, a Syrian refugee now living in Turkey with his family, who immediately offered medical assistance, especially for children. At the suggestion of Dr Nasser, and thanks to the commitment of other associations and many donations, two containers with the functions of a pediatric clinic were installed. The clinic, managed by him, is still active today and has been fully funded by TOS Italy.



Dr Ali Nasser



Nancy Secrest is the International Secretary of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS). She encountered Theosophy in her early twenties and joined the Theosophical Society in 1980. Nancy lived and worked at the Krotona Theosophical Institute in the USA 1987- 88. She was National Secretary of the Theosophical Society in America from 1988 through 1990. A Public Accountant by profession, Nancy served as National Treasurer of the TSA for 18 years and is International Treasurer of the Theosophical Society. Nancy became International Secretary of the TOS in 2014. Since then, she has travelled in the USA, Europe and Asia giving presentations, talks and workshops on TOS. Her articles and talks have been published in *The Theosophist* and other theosophical publications.

Questioner: *“How should we treat others?”*

Ramana Maharshi: *“There are no others.”*

THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE

5TH TOS CONFERENCE

The role of service in shaping the future



Vancouver - Canada

27 - 29 July 2025

Elizabeth Sell left us some very deep thoughts to consider

THE PATH IDEAL IS WHY WE ARE HERE

Theosophy teaches us that our life's purpose is to evolve towards perfection or Adeptship, over many lives through the process of reincarnation and karma and also the road to long-term happiness. The Path is the way to achieve our goal, the Master Morya explains, and also that 'the Path is the hidden Life and Light of the world'.

If this were not to happen within the Theosophical Society, it would take out 'the Heart and Soul of Theosophy'. Wide acceptance of the Path Ideal and the reality of the Masters of the Wisdom, would be the greatest gain for the Theosophical Society and we learn would have wide and far ranging effects. The greatest need in our world is to have spiritually enlightened people, guides and helpers at all levels but eventually for us all to reach Masterhood and Adeptship, which is our goal.

However we must always remember that our accepted responsibilities for this life, must always come first. This is a part of our spiritual journey and should be done with love and compassion, to the best of our ability. In *Sharing the Light* by Geoffrey Hodson, the Master Kuthumi lets us know that 'in the midst of small duties and loving kindness will, through these faithfully fulfilled, rise to greater measure of duty'. The Path is always open and we are told that the Master is always here and within reach of each one of us.

No-one is ever overlooked, the law says, and the Masters are looking for people to assist along their spiritual pathway. We may falter along the way with a fall but we are assured that from every fall an added ability or talent will be gained. The further we grow and expand, the greater will be the knowledge we receive, that we may proceed further along the Path with its unfolding life and light within. For the human being who is aware and presses on in spite of difficulties on the Path, it is said that:

He grows in vision, in determination, in understanding, and also in compassion and idealism. His very soul is alight. His heart is aflame. Duty becomes his guiding star. The glory of his future Adeptship begins to illumine his present life. His lamp is lit.

Sharing the Light Vol.1, p.17 G. Hodson.

We continue on our progressive journey towards Life, Love and Light, filled with joyousness, peace and happiness towards our goal's end. We will one day be able to reach and know the Great Masters of the Wisdom, the Bright Stars in our firmament and proceed with their light, upliftment and love, to help our spiritual development and help enlighten our consciousness. Our lives of today will pass away but the best is yet to be for us, as we continue along our spiritual way. Robert Browning says in *Paracelsus* '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'.

One day, which can be hastened we are taught, we will meet our Master and in time join Him in Adeptship and then success will be ours. We are then able to radiate out love, light and peace to the world and all that inhabits it, helping and guiding others, while reducing the pain and suffering to all life here, while flooding the world with golden healing and spiritual light. This is our Journey of Return to our Home and the fulfilment of our goal over many lives. When we have all completed that Journey of Return, we understand that it completes the goal of our Light-Filled Solar Logos, who created our Solar System and our world and all that is in it, to this end of developing the evolution of All Life.

What requirements do we need? There are books to point out the way and help to guide us onwards. The Esoteric Section also exists to help those who seek to follow the Path Ideal and the Way to the Masters of the Wisdom. The ES, as it's known, can help us when working and living in the world and trying to develop our spiritual selves alongside of that. Madame Blavatsky gives us the guidance we need in *The Golden Stairs*:

'A clean life, an open mind, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for all. A readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human progression which the sacred science depicts. These are the Golden Stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb to the Temple of Divine Wisdom.'

Selflessness is a quality that we all need to develop along with meditation, love/wisdom and service to others. We need to share whatever wisdom or knowledge that we have acquired. We leave those we share our learnings with, free to accept or reject it as they see fit. One way to help keep an open mind, is to suggest that 'this is a working hypothesis for your consideration. Please don't reject it but hold it lightly and see what life brings to either confirm or deny it, in the years ahead.'

We can use our spiritual will to make ourselves meditate and to make the effort to serve more widely, helping where we can. In our spiritual search for progression, we learn about the Holy Grail that aspirants search for. However the Grail is within you and that's where we must delve deeper into ourselves to contact it. Service, the last of the three, can be done in many ways. Some can spread the wisdom teachings and spread Theosophy in the world. However for some of us it may be in a less obvious way but still important nevertheless. For example help/service may be making or helping with supper or putting out and returning chairs to their place. Creating a beautiful environment is another service, like bringing flowers to brighten up the room or tending gardens outside. Those with the gift of music can share to help uplift the environment of meeting places and maybe on more social occasions.

In a wider field any actions that contribute to peace and the oneness of humanity or to help those in poorer places with their needs, are important areas of service along with humaneness especially concerning children and animals. Service can be done at all levels i.e. etheric, astral, mental or spiritual. Meditation is also a service to others when healing or radiating love, light and peace out to the world, increasing its tranquillity and peace and the awareness of the unity of all life.

Our development and increased abilities must be shared selflessly in the service of others and not kept just for ourselves. The Master Morya shares and enlightens us saying 'Aspiration to be ever more effective in the service of others is the quality which causes and helps us to advance.' We can start slowly, one step at a time, to continue this journey we are all on. As the Chinese proverb says, 'One small step starts a journey of a thousand miles.'

There are three words that may be helpful on our pathway – they are: try, love, and stillness. In trying we learn through our successes and failures, which helps our progression and development. If we continue to try with what we have learned, then greater success will come and be ours. The Master Kuthumi encourages us in the *Mahatma Letters* saying 'One word for aspirants: Try' and this we can all do. Next comes love which is a key word which includes sharing, giving, helping and compassion, which are all aspects of love, and includes also upliftment and open-heartedness within its sphere. Christianity teaches to 'Love one another' and so we need to share and give love in all its forms, to all those around us and also to those we do not know, who we see need our help and compassion. A greeting with a smile is uplifting and as the saying goes – a smile is a curve that sets everything straight.

Stillness is the last of the three words and will come to the mind if given the opportunity. In deepening stillness we can find and contact our Inner Selves. This can lead to awareness, realisations and inspiration when we can attain it. 'Be still and know that I am God' (psalm 46.10), as we strive for the ideal of the Quiet Mind. From that deep stillness flows radiant light, inspiration and 'Universal life', we are told. We need to reduce the consciousness of the lower self as much as possible and focus on the deep stillness within our Higher Selves, it explains in *Light of the Sanctuary*. It is our privilege to know about the Path and the journey towards it and how to make progress along it, once found.

Let our lives be filled with the light, wisdom and the uplifting experience of Theosophy. As we travel

Selflessness is a quality that we all need to develop along with meditation, love/wisdom and service to others.

Let's journey on
together, helping
and supporting
each other and
the world

and progress on our pathway onwards to our final goal, let us try to follow Geoffrey Hodson's words in *Sharing the Light* Vol.3, p.78:

There are many kinds of love,
And many kinds of light,
And every kind of love makes
A glory in the light.
There is a love that gives it rest,
But the love that leads life upwards
Is the noblest and the best.

Let's journey on together, helping and supporting each other and the world, making the Theosophical Society a Beacon of Light for humanity and all life on our planet.

..... ❖❖❖
FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

Light of the Sanctuary G. Hodson
Practical Spirituality John Sell
Sharing the Light G. Hodson
The Mahatma Letters C. Jinarajadasa - Or
The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett
The Masters and the Path C.W. Leadbeater
The Path to the Masters of the Wisdom G. Hodson [available in *Sharing the Light* Vol.3]
Voice of the Silence H. P. Blavatsky
The Yogic Ascent to Spiritual Heights G. Hodson



Elizabeth Sell was a long-serving member of The Theosophical Society in New Zealand. She presented Theosophy at her local centre in Auckland and wider afield in New Zealand. Elizabeth was editor of *Theosophy in New Zealand* magazine for many years, a wonderful artist and supporter of the Theosophical Order of Service as well as a poet. She was co-compiler and editor of the three-volume set *Sharing the Light*, of seer Geoffrey Hodson's work and compiler and editor of the books *Practical Spirituality* by John Sell, *Initiates, Initiations and the Path* and *Poems of Bliss* by Geoffrey Hodson.

Pamela Zane recalls when she was put on the spot

WHY YOU ARE HERE in three-and-a-half minutes...

While attending a meeting, I received a phone call during the morning tea break from a young family member. We chatted for a few minutes then she said in a low, serious tone, 'It all comes back to that question: Why am I here? I really *need* to know. I don't know why I'm here.'

Sensing real desperation in her voice and knowing she had suffered a series of painful losses and deep grief, I glanced at my watch. Three-and-a-half minutes before the meeting resumed. So, I told her, best I could.

The way I see it, you are here to see wonders, hear sounds, taste flavours, smell odours, feel the rough and smooth, speak, sing, dance, communicate, to be a human being in a human body. You are experiencing living: knowing love, hate, joy, despair, dread, regret, longing, disillusionment, loss, discovery, learning, forgiveness, delight, thankfulness, hope and more. While multiple events enthrall and occupy you in various ways, you are learning what it means to be both a mortal human and an eternal being.

While all this is happening, you may be under the illusion that these life activities are 'what it's all about'. They are important for our growing as humans and developing in wisdom. As humans we like to feel good so we search for ways to achieve that. Sometimes the ways turn out to be destructive. Other times they are full of goodness and bring growth and recovery.

But the learning that truly matters, in the light of eternity, occurs as we encounter and respond, sometimes desperately, to crises and opportunities for spiritual growth. This is when we learn to 'rise above' it all. These times can be fraught, dangerous, scary and hard. It is when we most need to reach out for extraordinary help, from others more enlightened and from the source of wisdom, within us and beyond. As we learn to access this help and reach out, or upwards, or inwards, we extend ourselves and we evolve. As we evolve, we also contribute to the evolution of this world.

We can accelerate our learning through interactions with others, loving, caring, studying, giving service, praying, meditating, reflecting, making mistakes, saying sorry, forgiving ourselves and others, succeeding, knowing joy as well as pain and anguish and being grateful for the good. And doing it all whole-heartedly.

Some tough experiences entice us into new places of insight and growth. As we grow, we seek direction. I want to set some kind of spiritual Sat-Nav toward the divine. Sometimes I go way off track but my intention remains firm.

So, while we are distracted with the experience of being human and possibly deluded into thinking it is the most important thing for us, we have opportunities here to fulfil our being-in-this-world tasks in small ways; we can help, give hope and encouragement to others, and incidentally grow in grace. This all happens inevitably, as we set the direction towards good.

Uniquely special and much treasured dear one, simply, you are here to BE. And you are already doing that. Whole-heartedly. Bless you.



Pamela Zane is the editor of *TheoSophia*. With a background in education, dance, drama, art, religious studies, psychology and writing, Pamela follows a mystic path and is a life-time member of Theosophy Whanganui.

Extracts from members' feedback from the 128th TSNZ National Convention
with the theme...

EMBRACING WHOLENESS ~ AWAKENING OF THE HUMAN HEART

I haven't been to a TSNZ Convention for a few years – and what a great convention to choose to attend. It was a tonic to reconnect with long term members and meet new ones. Wow, the speakers were all wonderful – great communicators and caring people sharing their knowledge freely. They all spoke so well on the theme that I came away uplifted and wanting to do, and be, so much better at life. I was mesmerised by the wonderful surprise entertainment put on at HPB for us. Roll on the next convention, I look forward to meeting you there! - Fiona Brodie

Inclusivity, wholeness and creativity were three radiant qualities that beamed out contagiously throughout, uplifting our group experience. A unified voice from our Univer-soul heart said, "It's like coming Home".

Sitting in a field interwoven with heart, mind and purpose we absorbed presenters' beautiful gifts of new language such as 'holotropic attractor patterns', 'metacrisis to metamorphosis' and my favourite 'mustibations!' inviting us to choose between doing what we're told we must do and asking ourselves when we last did something original. Dr Jude Currivan's 14 minute A Radical Guide to Reality co-created film shared how scientific evidence is converging with universal wisdom teachings, revealing how our entire Universe meaningfully exists and purposefully evolves as an interdependent and unified entity. If you could not attend the convention, watch this illuminating film on YouTube (to update your worldview, check out www.wholeworld-view.org) With grateful thanks to everyone. - Julia Ewer

It was a blessing for me to attend the National Convention and witness how all presentations complemented one another, embracing the theme and creating a wholesome experience. I was inspired and learned something from every presenter. The highlight for me was Dr Jude Currivan, who touched my soul with her vision, knowledge, vibrant and positive personality. Many thanks to the National Office for creating opportunities for connections and spiritual growth, and for organizing quality accommodation, food and entertainment. - Valentina Teclici

The theme had a living, tangible presence within the convention. Presentations were seamlessly interlinked by the very nature of the content and heartfelt delivery by presenters. Jude Currivan's inspired presentations gifted an expansion of thought and possibility. It was a privilege to present art works along with fellow artist Helen Dynes. It is truly significant that art and creativity are becoming more present with theosophical offerings and I was heartened by the positive response. The spontaneous, personal sharing of presenters and audience alike, interwoven with more theoretical teachings offered a synthetic blending of heart and mind, art and science: a critical blend for humanity's future unfolding. A big thank you to the leadership and team who worked so tirelessly for this all to happen. - Suzanne Vesty

Our Convention was to be an opportunity to open our hearts and embrace wholeness. That it was, and more. Days of heart learning, inspiration, interacting, having fun, mixing and mingling created an atmosphere of Unity. Can you imagine theosophists dancing to Abba music or passing a kiss on the cheek from one person to another round a circle? We did! We have strengthened our bonds, energised our hearts and experienced personal growth in our walk towards Oneness. Our gratitude must go to TSNZ and HPB Lodge. Congratulations and thanks for a memorable event. - Helen Sussmilch

We had a very pleasant, cordial time at this gathering of our TSNZ family and attendees from overseas. All speakers added to the theme and quality of our Convention with comprehensive, well researched dissertations. Our days together were rewarding and enlightening. We had a wonderful display of art work from two members and our evening sessions were entertaining. We were spellbound. - Savita Bhana



Special International invited guest, Dr Jude Curriuan.



Carol Collier presenting on the TOS.



Shona Hammond Boys.



Suzanne Vesty sharing with participants.



National President Richard Sell with International guest Dr Jude Curriuan.



One of the many great times during Convention 2025.



Final evening entertainment with Josh Helm on Cello and students.



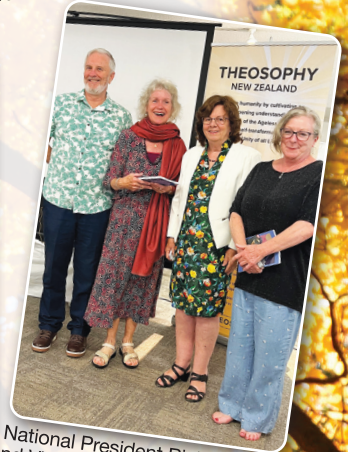
Renée Sell, Jude Curriuan and Shona Hammond Boys.



Kirsty Morton.



Jude Curriuan with TSNZ member Stephanie Mayes.



National President Richard Sell and Vice President Melanie Closs thanking Artists, Suzanne Vesty and Helen Dynes for their special Art Display.



Murray Stentiford.



Guest performer Kelly Lim Harris at HPB Lodge Auckland.



Donna Willard-Moore.



National President Richard Sell and Vice President Melanie Closs.

KINSHIP

The First Object of the Theosophical Society promotes the ideal of Universal Kinship, states Vicente Hao Chin Jr

In 1881 the Theosophical Society (TS) adopted a simplified version of the Objects of the Society, the first of which was: "To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity." Although modifications to the wording have taken place over the intervening years [including replacing 'Brotherhood' with the more inclusive 'Kinship'] the central theme has remained unchanged for more than a century.

Currently, in New Zealand we are using the term 'kinship' to denote the idea of a shared world view and special bond among theosophists. 'Kinship' has the advantage of not being gender specific and is thus more inclusive. It is also at the level of spiritual practice that theosophists are urged to develop a sense of kinship and oneness recognising the One Life we share.

That the Adepts who inspired the founding of the Theosophical Society gave fundamental importance to this Object of the Society is evidenced by several letters of the Mahatmas. "The Chiefs want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity', a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds." (*ML*, p. 39.) The Adepts sometimes lament at the failure of the early members of the Theosophical Society to grasp the true intent of this first object. In 1880, the Mahātma Koot Hoomi wrote:

The term 'Universal Brotherhood' is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us... It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind: and it is the aspiration of the true adept. (*ML*, p. 20)

The concept of universal kinship rests upon the idea of the One Life, the fact that all humanity shares a common life. In an interview with Charles Johnston, Helena P. Blavatsky stated (using the male pronouns to represent all people, which was accepted usage at that time):

"...Universal brotherhood rests upon the common soul. It is because there is one soul common to all men, that brotherhood, or even common understanding is possible. Bring men to rest on that, and they will be safe. There is a divine power in every man which is to rule his life, and which no one can influence for evil, not even the greatest magician. Let men bring their lives

under its guidance, and they have nothing to fear from man or devil." (*CW viii:408*).

She also characterised this essential brotherhood as "a kinship which exists on the plane of the higher self," not on the outer personal or physical self. She felt that if this view of kinship is universally accepted, most social evils and international conflicts would disappear.

How is this to be carried out in practical life? H. P. Blavatsky states that the Mahatmas had laid certain guidelines for the practical working of the ideal of Universal Brotherhood in the following (archaic) words:

He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share this last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself, he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery, he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own – is no theosophist. (*CW viii:171*)

Some letters of the Mahātmas seem to imply that the term 'Universal Brotherhood' also refers to the Brotherhood of Adepts and their co-workers. In writing about the consent to form an Anglo-Indian Branch of the Theosophical Society, the Mahātma Koot Hoomi states:

But this consent, you will please bear in mind, was obtained solely under the express and unalterable condition that the new Society should be founded as a Branch of the Universal Brotherhood and among its members, a few elect men would – if they chose to submit to our conditions, instead of dictating theirs – be allowed to begin the study of the occult sciences under the written directions of a 'Brother'. (*ML*, p. 30)

Thus, the changes in the wordings of the First Object of the Theosophical Society seem to be relevant to this dual definition of the term 'Universal Brotherhood' during the early years of the Society:

1881: To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.

1888: To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

1896: To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

In general, the term 'Universal Brotherhood', now 'Kinship', is understood by theosophists as the kinship of the whole of humankind, rather than a non-discriminative brotherhood of a particular band of spiritual people.

BACKGROUND TO THE FIRST OBJECT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The phrase 'Universal Brotherhood', reflecting the nomenclature of the times, appeared as the First Object of the Theosophical Society in 1881, as follows:

Firstly, to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, the obvious philanthropic value of which must be beyond dispute, while the esoteric significance of a union formed on that plan, is conceived by the Founders, for reasons derived from a study of Oriental Philosophy, to be of great importance.

In August, 1890, Blavatsky stated:

Everyone entering the society is supposed to sympathise with the theory of essential brotherhood; a kinship which exists on the plane of the higher self, not on that of the racial, social and mental dissimilarities and antipathies. These elements of discord pertain to the physical man and are the result of unequal development under the law of evolution.

UNIVERSAL KINSHIP IN THE MAHATMA LETTERS

The Mahatmas in their letters to A. P. Sinnett stated on several occasions that the Theosophical Society was meant to promote the Universal Brotherhood. For example, Mahatma K. H. said "it has been constantly our wish to spread on the Western Continent among the foremost educated classes 'Branches' of the T.S. as the harbingers of a Universal Brotherhood."

Especially at the beginning of his correspondence, A. P. Sinnett was reluctant about the usefulness of this aim, and advised to remodel the Theosophical Society on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism, something the Mahatmas decidedly refused.

It is important to notice the word 'universal' along with 'kinship'. Master K.H. defined it as "an association of 'affinities' of strong magnetic yet dissimilar forces and polarities centred around one dominant idea." The aim of the Theosophical Society is not merely to bring together people of a certain race, ethnicity, creed, gender, sexual orientation, caste or colour but to gather different kinds of people around a central aim, without distinctions. This attitude is also valuable as a spiritual practice.

From an article by Vicente Hao Chin Jr and *Universal Brotherhood* – Theosophy Wiki theosophy.world



Vicente (Vic) Hao Chin Jr is an acclaimed international theosophical leader, speaker, educationalist and writer. He is the past President of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines as well as the Indo-Pacific Federation of the TS. Vic is the author of *The Process of Self-Transformation* and has compiled and edited the chronological edition of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. He is Editor-in-Chief of the *Theosophical Digest* and Associate Editor of the *Theosophical Encyclopedia*. Vic is the President of Golden Link College, a theosophical school in the Philippines, envisioning the integration of self-transformation and academic learning, which he initiated and established in 2002.

The concept of universal kinship rests upon the idea of the One Life...

FORGIVENESS

Richard Smoley, editor of TS America's *Quest* magazine, urges letting go of grudges to reap untold benefits.

If you truly realise
that your grudges are
pointless and harmful,
many of them will
vanish overnight.

Spiritual struggle takes many forms: the Dark Night of the Soul, the confrontation with the Shadow, wrestling with angels and devils, the battle on the field of Kurukshetra, and so forth.

Most people on a spiritual path have faced such confrontations. Nevertheless, I believe, you can realise that in many of these cases, you are merely making problems for yourself. Indeed the more grandiose forms of struggle often consist of elaborate means of avoiding this truth.

Life often seems to constitute a string of problems. One is solved, only to be rapidly replaced by another. This list is never-ending and self-perpetuating. Many of the practical problems of life are unavoidable. But what about the ones we create for ourselves?

Grievances are perhaps the most common form of self-created problems. Holding grievances is useless and harmful – like drinking poison and expecting it to kill someone else, according to a Buddhist proverb. Yet it is frequently the hardest habit to break. Why? Because of the unconscious belief that holding grievances is somehow of benefit. Usually this is an attempt at defence: some level of the mind believes that grievances are armour; without them we would be at the mercy of a cruel world.

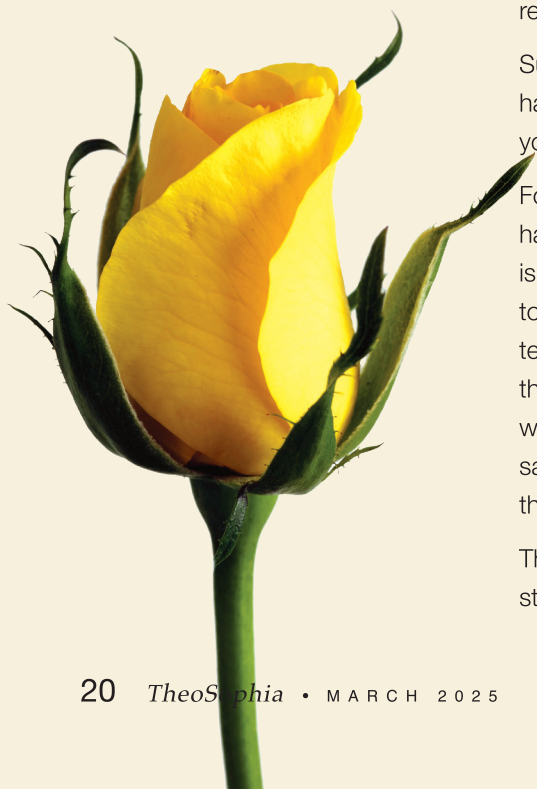
Of course this is ridiculous. In fact, our grievances are our greatest points of vulnerability. (Look at the history of any nation ... if you have any doubts about this matter.) To overcome them, the first step, is insight: you have to recognise the damage that you are suffering from your grievances. You cannot merely pretend that you understand this fact or indulge in empty moralising about forgiveness.

The second step is to see when you are holding grievances (in the moment, of course). This can be difficult. If you are quitting smoking, you can easily know when you have a cigarette in your hand and when you don't. With internal matters, it is not so simple. It requires a rigorous inner attention and honesty.

Such honesty is even more important than forgiveness. It is no good to tell yourself you have let go of a grievance when you have done nothing of the kind. Better to face the truth: you are still holding on to your grudge, even if you realise that it is doing you no good.

For many people, grievances against others are the easiest to release, especially if they have to do with the past or with people with whom you have no more contact. If the issue is a serious one – involving, say, abuse by family members – it may require psychotherapy to fully resolve. It is somewhat harder to release grievances against oneself. Most of us tend somewhat toward self-punishment; moreover, at some level we mistakenly believe that holding these past failures over our heads will save us from future ones. There is a word for holding grievances against oneself: *regret*. But a Uighur (Chinese Muslim) proverb says that a man with regrets is not a real man. There is a huge gulf between learning from the mistakes of the past and punishing yourself for them.

The third type of grievance may be the most insidious one: holding grudges about the state of the world. G.I. Gurdjieff noted the tendency of modern humans “vainly-to-become-



sincerely-indignant” (to use his idiosyncratic punctuation). Its cause? The absence of the “instinctive-sensing-of-reality-in-its-own right.”

There is a blurry line here. It is between genuine compassion for the suffering of others and the belief (yet again hidden from consciousness) that one has to feel indignation as a moral responsibility. Much of this belief is nothing more than the ego trying to convince itself that it is a good person.

How can you tell the difference between these two impulses? Genuine compassion manifests itself in some form, even if only as an ephemeral and unnoticed gesture of kindness. “Vainly-to-become-sincerely-indignant” is the stuff of Facebook posts and Twitter rants.

Releasing grievances can be a long and arduous process, requiring the “searching and fearless moral inventory” of the Twelve-step program, although it need not be. What will make the difference is the strength of the insight. If you truly realise that your grudges are pointless and harmful, many of them will vanish overnight. But if parts of your character hesitate and doubt this truth, the process will be longer and more painful.

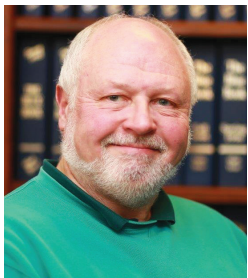
I wrote about this issue in a short book, published several years ago, called *The Deal: A Guide to Radical and Complete Forgiveness*, which sets out a simple process for releasing grievances. I would urge you to read and work with this book if you feel this issue has had any hold on your life.

By the way, I did not dream up *The Deal* because I thought it would be nice to write a book about forgiveness. It was a process that I had to go through myself beforehand; only afterward did it occur to me to turn it into a book. Of all of the spiritual work I have done and the struggles I have gone through, I would say that this process of releasing grievances has been among the most important and has by far given me the greatest benefits.

Quest, Editor’s Desk-Summer 2021.

Our Search
for Truth
must be
continuous...

Annie Besant



Richard Smoley has decades’ experience of studying and practising esoteric spirituality. He 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*.

As far as we can discern,
the sole purpose of human existence
is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.

Carl Jung



Helena Petrovna Blavatsky left us a classic guide...

THE GOLDEN STAIRS

A clean life, an open mind,
 A pure heart, an eager intellect,
 An unveiled spiritual perception,
 A brotherliness for all,
 A readiness to give and receive advice and instruction,
 A loyal sense of duty to the Teacher,
 A willing obedience to the behests of TRUTH,
 Once we have placed our confidence in,
 And believe that Teacher to be in possession of it;
 A courageous endurance of personal injustice,
 A brave declaration of principles,
 A valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked,
 And a constant eye to the ideal of human progression,
 And perfection which the secret science depicts –
 These are the golden stairs
 Up the steps of which the learner may climb
 To the Temple of Divine Wisdom.

The Golden Stairs is a writing taken “from the letter of a Master” that Theosophy founder, H. P. Blavatsky published. It was first presented in 1888 as a private document to members of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, as a guide to Chelaship. The text was made public for all to read in 1890. These simple words have profoundly inspired generations of Theosophists.

<https://theosophy.wiki>



WHY ARE WE THEOSOPHERS HERE?

What is our purpose and where are we going?

These questions challenge us and lead us on to further exploration.

The Theosophical Society in New Zealand is an organisation that encourages the exploration of the important questions in life, such as: who are we, why are we here, and what is our purpose? We do not claim to have all the answers to these questions, rather we endeavour to explore and come to our own understanding of them.

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 OBJECTS

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Kinship of Humanity, without distinction of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, sexual orientation, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.

OUR ETHIC

The society holds that our every action, feeling and thought affects all other beings and that each of us is capable of, and responsible for, contributing to the benefit of the whole.

OUR VALUES

Altruism

Respect

Diversity

Recognising the Oneness of All Life

Co-operation

Integrity

OUR GOALS

1. To encourage ongoing exploration of Theosophy.
2. To create greater visibility of the Theosophical Society.

WHAT THEOSOPHERS DO

1. As explorers, theosophers endeavour to understand some of the hard questions of life, coming to a personal understanding of such questions as:

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What is the purpose of life?

2. As theosophers, we come together and share with others our understanding of life and its mysteries.

3. We explore religions in a comparative manner so that we may reveal the essential teachings we find in them all. Most we find are very similar and lead us to see the common message.

4. We also study modern science, psychology which gives us another insight into the nature of reality. Theosophy suggests that we are a mirror of the universe and thus in understanding the universe we learn to understand ourselves, or learning to understand ourselves we learn to understand the universe.

5. We study nature and learn to understand its laws and its cycles which gives us insight into our own cycles.

6. We study the mind and that which lies beyond the mind, which many Theosophers believe is our real self.

7. We put into practice methods to help us understand all these things in our lives.

8. We serve the world through our understanding that to change the world, to make it a better place, we must start with ourselves.

9. We endeavour to put into place practices which harmonise with the laws of nature and the universe as we learn what they are through our own experience.

These are some of the things that Theosophers do. However, above all we hold to the important concept that each of us is a reflection of the universe itself. We all express an aspect of the universal reality which is unique to where we are on our journey in life today. We respect each person's journey, our expression of this being our understanding at this present point in time, based on our experiences which will continue to grow and develop. Above all we believe in the freedom of each person on their journey with each having the complete freedom to accept

or reject whatever they will, as part of their theosophical journey. We do not judge anyone.

As an organisation we have Centres throughout the country. Each is unique in their approach to the study of Theosophy, yet each is endeavouring to fulfil our Objects in the way that they understand.

As individuals we can study theosophy of the ages, search through the myths, legends, the writings of the past, we search through modern science; we find that wisdom flows like a river from one generation to the next. Yet for the beginner it is not so easy to find. It requires effort to be able to distinguish the wisdom from the mental condition of life. It requires one to develop real discrimination between the false and the true wisdom.

Wisdom has been defined as an ability to make right choices, often these decisions are made without complete information. Yet, the wise men and women of history knew that we must turn to faculties beyond those of sense and reason in dealing with questions of truths and values. Feeling and intuition are as important faculties, as are sensation and intellect, if not more so. Is wisdom as easy as making good choices?

Theosophical wisdom points to realities exceeding the power of human words and concepts. Yet it employs words, for it indicates that the answer to the problems of human existence do lie, so to speak, in certain directions.^[i]

Robert Ellwood



Deva as described by G. Hodson.
Artist: Ethelwynne M. Quail.

These “words” that Robert Ellwood refers to, give us clues of how to look, where to focus attention and how to live to enable us to awaken an inner perception that can comprehend the realities of Theosophical Wisdom. Words themselves, for many of us, speak only to the rational mind where we look at their meanings to convey understanding; however in the universal language, words represent symbols which speak to a different faculty of comprehension from the rational mind when it is awakened. It is the awakening of this part of ourselves which is one of the first steps we take if we are to experience the Theosophical wisdom we talk of. Some of our original Theosophical texts and many of the Sacred Texts of the world give clear instructions of how to awake, how to centre our consciousness in our true Self. This awakening comes about through our ethic, the kind of life we live and the deliberate placement our attention – being mindful or fully present, as the Buddhists would say. For example, if our attention is constantly through our senses and rooted in desire, it becomes all but impossible to awaken because our senses move our attention to the world of the senses and away from our higher faculties. Our attention must be turned in a different direction and our focus moved to that which we have lost or is hidden in the shadows of our Self.

We use words to describe concepts like oneness, the unity of life, periodicity or the cycles of nature, karma: the universal law of balance or cause and effect. These give us some intellectual understanding of the deeper wisdom underlying Theosophy. How can we understand these concepts if we have not truly experienced them, perceived their reality?

We can look at the concept of periodicity or the law of cycles as an example. If we look at nature we see the ever-repeating cycles of summer, autumn, winter, spring. We look at the moon and we see how the phases of the moon's cycles affect us psychologically, how the full moon affects our moods and emotions and how the new moon brings a calmness which quiets the mind and allows for focused meditation. When we look around us and observe nature, can we see the cycles of its separate parts? Even the concept of reincarnation is built upon this concept of periodicity, the continual cycle of birth, life, death, birth, life, death... always repeating; however never exactly the same, for there is also an aspect of growth, of evolution, of transformation in all this.

When it comes to theosophical principles there are many lists of the basic concepts. They do not all agree, however it is surprising how much commonality we do find in such lists which suggests that there are indeed some core ideas held by many of the people in the theosophical tradition.^[ii] That there is a difference in the wording of these lists shows that theosophy is understood and expressed in different ways and from individual perspectives.

Modern theosophy was introduced to the world by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky with three fundamental propositions put forward at the beginning of her work, *The Secret Doctrine* where she suggests we endeavour to fathom the depths of theosophy. Briefly they are summarised by Robert Ellwood as follows:^[iii]

Ellwood gives us a list, which is central to today's approach to theosophy, and includes such things as:

- We are part of one incomprehensible Reality which underlines and unites all that is or can be.
- Galaxies, solar systems and planets evolve over immense cycles.
- The individual human, sometimes called 'The Pilgrim', moves through these galaxies and worlds over many lifetimes in response to karma and the necessity of experiencing many aspects of

reality, before returning to the Source, the One.

- There are those who are well advanced on the path of human evolution who have amongst them a reservoir of the wisdom of the world. This wisdom is accessible to all earnest seekers.
- Growth is more than intellectual learning. It involves also initiation or inward transformation and living in accordance to universal harmony, and the realisation of our Unity.

Within the above lie some core foundations of Theosophy, which we investigate and endeavour to understand; for example, reincarnation, evolution of humanity, the growth of the soul, self-transformation, the conditioned nature of our personalities.

If one pursues these studies and investigates with honesty and depth, one will come to realise, in one's own way, the Unity of all in the universe and the depth of awakened consciousness; and further come to understand for themselves, the broad consensus points of the traditions. The point to understand is that these are the truths that one must learn for oneself rather than be accepted through dogma. Taking them simply on the authority of others, or of an organisation, is accepting them in blind faith where one does not know for themselves, what is true or not. We must investigate.

Theosophical teachings point to realities exceeding the power of human words and concepts. Theosophy is not the final Truth, but points the seeker towards Truth and each must find this for themselves.

From www.theosophy.nz

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- i. Theosophy: A modern expression of the ages; Robert Ellwood; First Edition, p.19
- ii. One of the many lists of Theosophical Principles <https://blavatsky.net/checklist-principles-theosophy/>
- iii. Theosophy: A modern expression of the ages; Robert Ellwood; First Edition, p. 20.

THE PŌHUTUKAWA JOURNAL

Finding solace in nature through all seasons

A new book by Juliet Batten

Here is a wise and poignant book that touches the reader at many levels. Juliet's journaling through the seasons, records her frustrations with bureaucracy as she attempts to gain access to her regenerating bush property and her determination to express her concern – and that of others – for the misguided destruction of precious trees, along with the associated birds, insects and other plants. Juliet's developing relationship with an ancient Pohutukawa 'in charge of the land' holds the key to her problem and leads to her allowing the Pohutukawa to teach her.

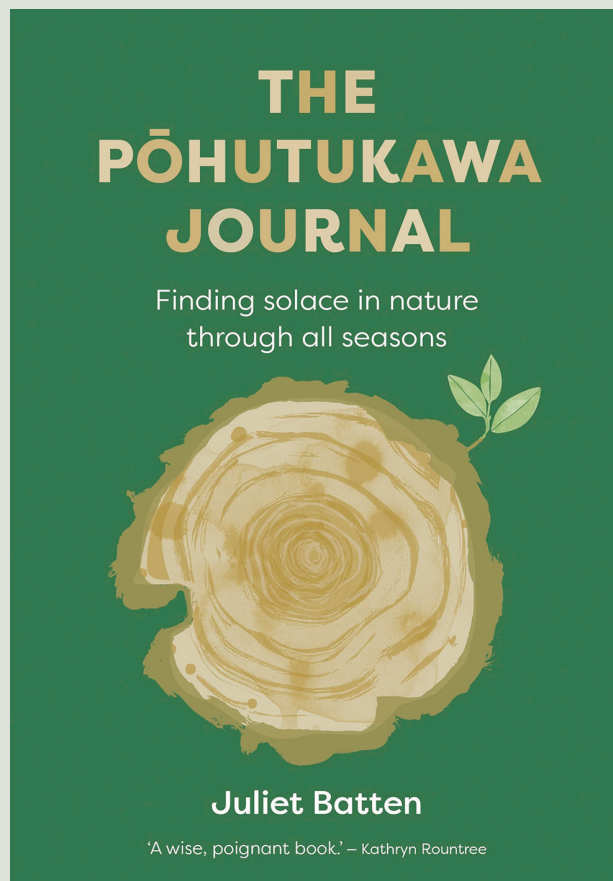
Juliet's belief in the solace that intimacy with all nature brings and her fervent hopes of sharing the bush with her grandchildren help to motivate her on a journey through Covid lockdowns and personal loss and heartache not only to achieve her own goals but also to inspire and encourage others to stop being 'paralysed by despair'. Elder activists finding strength in their grief become a group of 'Grieving Grandmothers' – willing to demonstrate their sorrow at the planned destruction of more trees.

In her usual direct writing style, Juliet invites the reader to accompany her on a learning journey through transitions and 'bumpy times'. We travel with Juliet as she keeps the journal 'to discover' herself 'anew each day and maintain a lively connection with nature'. We are implicitly invited to rediscover ourselves and perhaps to be more expressive of our concerns about the unrelenting destruction of nature around us. We are called to recognise the need for us to partner with nature as the world struggles to survive climate change and humanity's desire to ignore the needs of nature (and our need for nature). Although this is the third book in the Seasons of Life trilogy (after *The Pomegranate Journal* about ageing while fully engaging with life and *The Persimmon Journal* about letting go and recovering from isolation (Covid) this volume can stand alone and invites the reader's sustained interest.

The Pohutukawa Journal by Juliet Batten, inspires us to believe that when we encounter grief at the loss of any life (people or nature) we can draw strength from that grief to find solace in nature as we work to preserve it.

Reviewed by Pamela Zane.

THE POHUTUKAWA JOURNAL: Finding solace in nature through all seasons
by Juliet Batten
ISBN 978-0-473-71269-3
Ishtar Books 2024 - \$42
www.julietbatten.co.nz
www.facebook.com/JulietBattenBooks



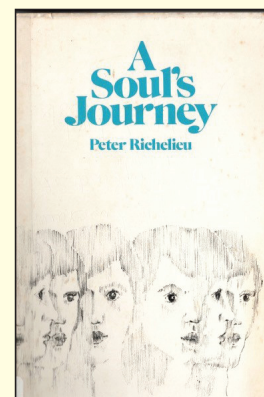
Author Juliet Batten has a PhD in English and taught English, Women's Studies and Environmental Studies at the University of Auckland before working for 26 years as a psychotherapist. She is the author of 12 books on the seasons, life stages and the sacred connection with nature.

Recommended Reading

A SOUL'S JOURNEY by Peter Richelieu

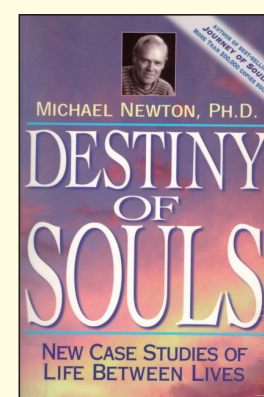
Hopeless after his brother's death, the author (Henry) is visited by a mysterious eastern teacher (Acharya) who proceeds to instruct him in the laws of life. After his initiation, Acharya then takes his pupil on a series of thrilling astral journeys, where he learns what kind of existence awaits human beings after death.

This is a very readable book, and gives insight into the nature and purpose of life and death, the devic kingdom, karma, reincarnation, evolution and the astral and mental sub planes.



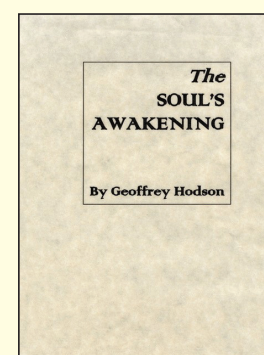
DESTINY OF SOULS: *New case studies of life between lives* by Michael Newton Ph.D.

Over many years Dr Newton developed his own intensive age regression techniques in order to effectively take hypnosis subjects beyond their past life memories to a more meaningful soul experience between lives. In *Destiny of Souls*, 67 people recall their life between lives through Dr Newton's personal work in spiritual hypnotherapy. Through their stories, we learn about our purpose on Earth, the links between soul groups and human families, why we choose certain bodies and the 'Council of Wise Beings' who interview us after each life.



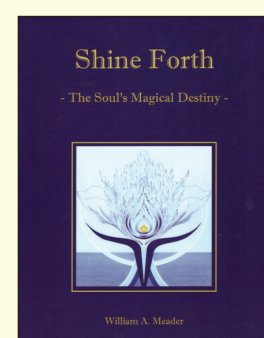
THE SOUL'S AWAKENING by Geoffrey Hodson

In this book, Geoffrey Hodson explains some of the more profound aspects of Theosophy, such as the nature of the human Monad, and the nature of the ego and causal consciousness. Half of the book is dedicated to answering questions put to Geoffrey by serious students on a wide range of metaphysical and occult subjects. Geoffrey writes with clarity and simplicity, but aims this book at those who already have some background in the deeper aspects of esoteric philosophy. This book will bring you to a deepening understanding on a wide variety of subjects, such the rays, the macrocosm and microcosm (with the human body as the microcosm), the aura, the symbolic meaning of the serpent, kundalini and the caduceus, the art of healing, chelaship and concepts such as the Bodhisattva and the World Mother.



SHINE FORTH: *The Soul's Magical Destiny* by William A. Meader

This book is rooted in the Trans-Himalayan system of philosophic thought, also known as the Esoteric Tradition. The metaphysical principles William describes in this book have equal application in all domains of human expression, from education, to science and the arts. This book is particularly directed to the process of spiritual creativity sometimes known as 'magic', and the recognition that the soul is the higher creative agency within every human being. It includes an in-depth examination of the processes used by the soul to creatively express itself through an individual's outer personality. William is particularly skilled at giving clarity to the complex subject of esoteric philosophy, and to its practical application in everyday life. This book is an enquiry into the dynamics of wholeness as an all-pervasive principle.





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



Carol Collier, TOS New Zealand's National Director extends a warm welcome to readers of this Autumn update.



Vice-President Melanie Closs (third from right) with some of the TOS team and supporters at the closing of the 2025 TSNZ Convention.

We had a lot of fun at the TSNZ convention 2025 held in Auckland in January. The theme of the Convention was *'Embracing Wholeness – Awakening of the Human Heart'* which fits in beautifully with the TOS Motto of: 'A Union of those who Love, in the service of all that suffers' – embracing love and service for all. There was a palpable feeling of camaraderie during this event. I have love and gratitude to you all for your generous support to the TOS table and the fundraising activities that we offered. By supporting these fundraising activities, you are directly contributing to our sisters and brothers in need and support of education that will blossom into the future. I have found real joy in working within the TOS World and am thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Congratulations to the winners of our very well supported raffles: Jim Scrivener from New Plymouth won first prize of the authentic Turkish scarf and crystal. Second prize went to Suzanne Vesty from Auckland who received the beautiful Quartz crystal cluster and Peter Baker won the silent auction of a small painting *'Discover the Light'* by Elizabeth Sell. Thank you to all those who supported these very worthwhile fundraising activities. Thank you to Richard and Melanie from TSNZ for their ongoing support of TOS activities at the convention. Special thanks also must go to Sue Mitchell and Renée Sell for their invaluable assistance at the TOS table at Convention.

TOS NZ has recently given a second donation to Here2Care in the Waikato. It has been very special to get to know Paul

Tierney from Here2Care and see the work undertaken with youth, community and education. If you would like to support this project, or if you would like a local project for your branch or community or just fundraise to support our existing activities, do not hesitate to reach out to me to discuss this or email me on tos@theosophy.org.nz

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TOS NZ YEARLY REPORT

- **TOS was present at various TS events:** Convention, Immersion weekend and NZ School of Theosophy.
- **Child Sponsorship programmes** in Pakistan and India – a total of 50 students. However, due to the difficulty with transferring funds to India, we are reviewing the Indian programme.
- **Two Qandeel School Literacy Centres** supported in Pakistan.
- Copies are still available of ***Poems of Contemplation poetry book*** by Elizabeth and John Sell with paintings by Elizabeth Sell (produced and gifted to TOS for fundraising).
- **Regular fundraising activities** continue, as we sell second-hand books and raffle donated items at National Events. Many support TOS projects through these various activities.
- **TOS articles and updates** appear quarterly in the TSNZ *TheoSophia* magazine.

- **The Waikato TOS Group in the Sanctuary on Marama**, have undertaken various activities at their venue and raised funds for a number of local projects.
- **Ukraine TS Emergency appeal** – funds sent.
- **Philippines – Golden Link College**, Geoffrey Hodson Scholarship programme supported.
- **India – New project initiated:** We are currently raising funds for the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School at Adyar plus sponsorship of a graduate of the OMHSS with college tuition and costs.
- **Here2Care Project** supported in the Waikato initiated.

Thanks to the TOS team in NZ, Renée Sell, Sue Harrison, Graham Eden and Melanie Sell who all do their parts and are greatly appreciated in keeping TOS NZ moving. Special thanks to Nancy Secrest and Tim Boyd, who both work tirelessly in their roles in the International TOS.

THANK YOU to all those who donate and support the projects and activities that TOS NZ supports. We wish you a peaceful year ahead.



First Prize raffle winner of the authentic Turkish scarf and crystal, drawn by special guest Shona Hammond Boys, was won by Jim Scrivener of New Plymouth. Jim is pictured here with Renée Sell, Carol Collier and Shona Hammond Boys.

A REFLECTION ON TRANSFORMATION

When we do all that we can to live in truth and love, compassion and gratitude, something comes to meet us. We cannot go to the next stage on our own, we only see parts of the journey and express the little understanding we know and value, but we can only go so far.

Only in the silence of that meeting, that pause... does it come! It does not come in the want, need, thought or striving, but simply in that precious moment when all comes together, we make that connection and fly – just as the butterfly emerges from its cocoon, opens its wings and becomes all that it can be. It is not the beginning, or ending of its journey.

As the butterfly needs the air to fly, so we need the silence or pause to rise above our limitations. The vision of the caterpillar and how it emerges into the butterfly is the human story, of our emerging within the silence in that precious moment, and becoming who we truly are.

TOS in NZ

To help contact:
CAROL COLLIER

Phone:
027 668 4554

or
Email:
tos@theosophy.org.nz

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Vegetarians Today

From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, Margaret Johns urges us to tread lightly on the world.



Lifestyles have changed since the formation of the NZ Vegetarian Society over 80 years ago. The aim of the Society was not only to publicise a kinder, more compassionate and healthier way of life, to support those who wished to follow that lifestyle and to improve the lives of animals in New Zealand, but also to bring attention to the cruelties involved in producing and slaughtering animals for food. Interestingly, many early members of the NZVS were also members of the Theosophical Society. Certainly, those following the teachings of the Masters and trying to tread the Path, wish to cause as little hurt and/or damage as possible to the world around them.

Vegetarianism and veganism are now accepted ways of life, no longer so difficult to follow but openly talked about and discussed. Societies like the SPCA, SAFE, NZAVS (Anti-Vivisection) and many other groups work hard to make people aware of animal rights and unnecessary abuse. Research also

shows the benefit of plant-based diets and with climate change, people are having to continually adapt and adjust the way they live. Let's all try to tread lightly on the world and make it a better place for all life on it.

If you would like to improve your own health and the health of those around you, look at how you are eating, what you are eating, where it comes from and how it is grown. How can you improve it? If you are not already eating a plant-based diet, try it out – sign up for the NZ Vegetarian Society 21-day plant-based challenge:

<https://www.vegetarian.org.nz/veg-living/21-day-plant-based-challenge>

– and if you need some fresh recipes, check out our website (<https://www.vegetarian.org.nz/veg-living/recipes>).

Try this recipe for something different:

TACOS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 pkt tacos • 1x 400g tin refried beans • 20 olives sliced • 3 Tbsp tomato sauce • Salt and pepper to taste (optional) • Lettuce, capsicum, to dress (optional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup cooked rice • 3 Tbsp tomato relish • Fresh coriander chopped, to taste • Peppers, cayenne pepper, to taste • Guacamole, to dress (optional) |
|--|---|

Pre-heat oven to 180°C.

Pre-heat tacos as per instructions.

Add all ingredients together except last two (optional) ingredients.

Heat in oven for 10 minutes or until warm.

Dress with lettuce, capsicum and guacamole if chosen, and serve.



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



Vasanta House Library



Books can be ordered from the lending library at TSNZ national office by contacting the librarian by email: library@theosophy.nz or telephone (09) 523 1797. The library is open on Wednesdays or by appointment on a Thursday.

Cost to members is the return postage of books. Non-members may join the library for a joining fee of \$50.

Vasanta House Accommodation

Short stay accommodation is available at TSNZ National Section, Vasanta House in Epsom, Auckland. Rates vary for members and non-members. The house requirements are vegetarian, smoke-free and alcohol-free. At certain times of the year Vasanta House is closed for events, Board and Management meetings etc. For bookings and more information please email the office at: office@theosophy.org.nz

*Men and parties, sects and schools are but the mere ephemera of the world's day.
TRUTH, high-seated upon its rock of adamant, is alone eternal and supreme.*

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

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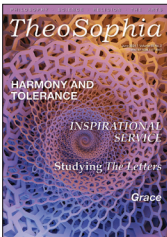
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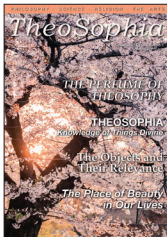
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Theosophy

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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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Freedom of Thought

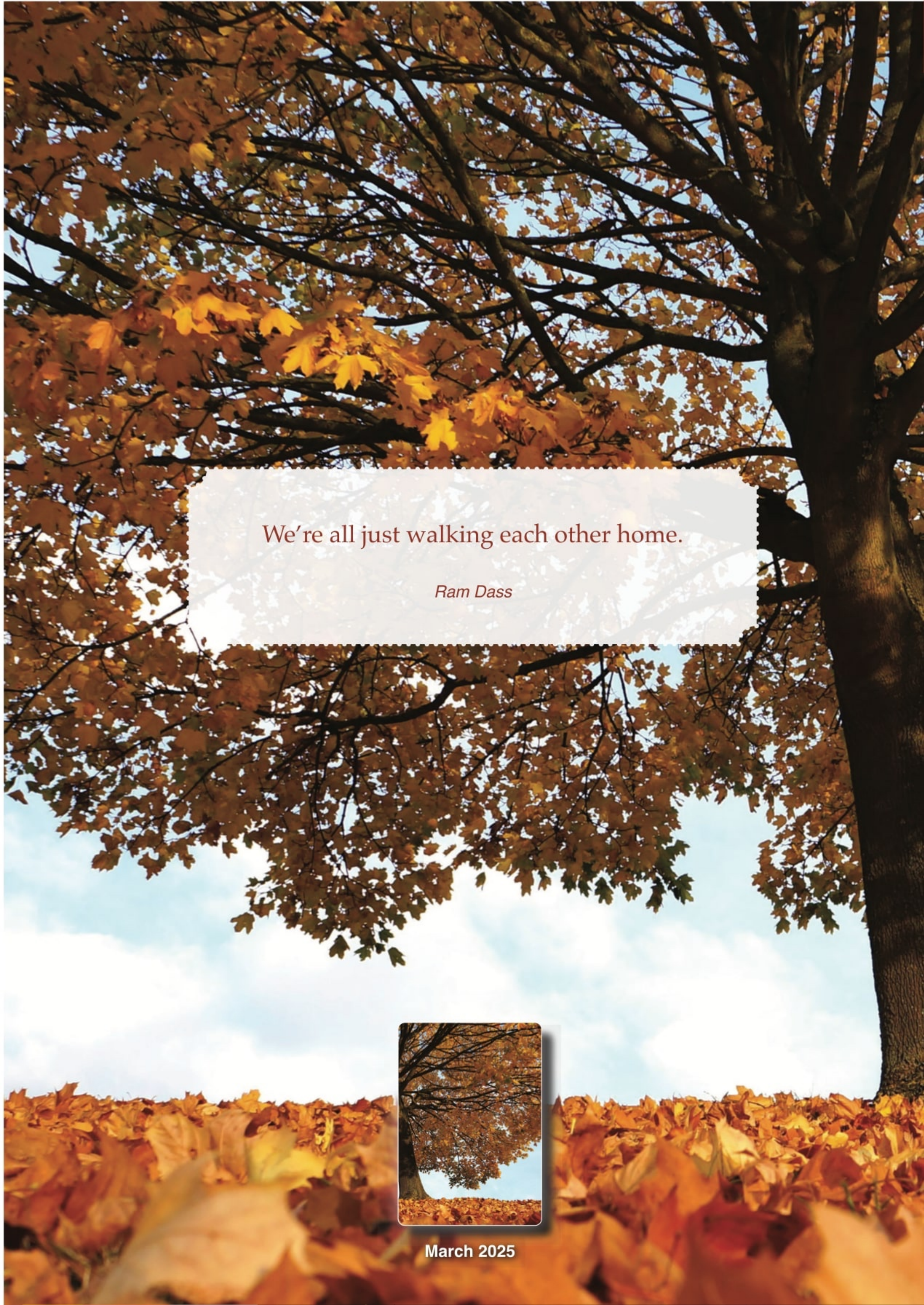
As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its Three Objects is the sole condition of membership.

No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other.

Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Resolution passed by the General Council of The Theosophical Society in 1924.



We're all just walking each other home.

Ram Dass



March 2025