

# *Theosophy* IN AUSTRALIA

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**The Theosophical Society** welcomes students or seekers from all walks of life, belonging to any religion or to none and who are in sympathy with its Objects. It was formed to assist in showing to people that Theosophy exists, and 'to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities'. Wisdom is known by a mind that is completely open. Therefore freedom of thought and open enquiry are given special emphasis in the Society. **Theosophy** essentially refers to 'Divine Wisdom', Sacred Knowledge, which is a transcendent state of consciousness. In a secondary sense, Theosophy is an ancient yet distinct stream of enquiry, exploring and interpreting the truths of existence in terms suited to particular ages, e.g. in the teachings of ancient India, ancient China, Platonism, Neoplatonism, and, since 1875, through the contribution of the TS. At the core of Theosophy is the principle of indivisible Unity underlying the diversity of forms.

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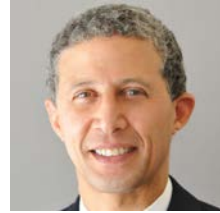
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### Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society

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

## From the International President

Tim Boyd



### **Implementing the Ageless Wisdom A Summary of the General Council Planning Meeting ITC Naarden, the Netherlands, July 2018**

#### **Mission Statement**

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

Since its founding in 1875 the Theosophical Society (TS) has grown into an organisation with membership, branches, and sections in more than 70 countries worldwide. The scope of TS activities has similarly grown and changed over the years, with publishing, education, programmes, lectures, TS centres, communication, and meetings assuming new forms to suit ever-changing times. One of the recognised features of our time is the rapid nature of change. Unlike the recent past, no nation, culture, or geographical location is unaffected by the currents of change sweeping the planet. This condition places strong demands on all of us. More is required

of us than mere repetition of past formulas or insistence upon ‘staying the course’ in maintaining the forms of previous activities. With all of its uncertainty, this is a powerful moment in which we are living. It is a time that cries out for the depth of understanding and potential for harmonious living that the Ageless Wisdom can provide. The question for the TS now, as in the past, is ‘How can we communicate this wisdom to the world in a usable way?’

Historically, the General Council (GC) of the TS has met for a few hours once each year – on the day before the opening of the annual International Convention at Adyar. This approach

has placed severe limitations on the ability for heads of national Sections to share necessary information, and allowed little or no time for meaningful dialogue on long range plans for the international organisation. In an effort to provide an opportunity for more extended planning, in 2015 a second meeting specifically devoted to strategic planning was added immediately following the close of convention. At the GC meeting in December 2016 it was determined that a 5-day planning meeting would be held in March of 2017 at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, the Netherlands. That meeting was primarily focussed on brainstorming – allowing the space for all manner of ideas to come to light and be considered. Mere ideas were not enough, and each of the more than 40 projects proposed at that meeting had people assigned to make them real.

During the course of the year the progress and difficulties of the various projects were monitored by a small coordinating team, charged with both reporting and helping to keep the work on track. Special attention was given to 11 priority projects. In the beginning of July this year we met again at the ITC in Naarden, this time as an official GC meeting. In all, 30 members (20 GC members and 10 invited participants) attended from a variety of countries: The

Netherlands, England, Belgium, India, the USA, Kenya, Finland, Sweden, New Zealand, the Philippines, Spain, Germany, Italy, Brazil, and Argentina. It is the intention to formalise these extended meetings as an additional annual meeting of the GC. The report which follows is a summary of this year's gathering.

### **1. The Policy Paper includes the Mission Statement of the TS**

The policy paper discusses the direction of the work of the TS, and will frequently be updated. All policies are, of course, subject to approval of the GC. A major feature is the mission statement included above, which emphasises the TS role in and for the world, the reason why it exists. It is extremely important, as it clarifies the task or role of the TS in the world, not only for TS members, but also for people at large. It also refers to the three Objects of the TS. For internal use it may have a strong impact, with a greater focus on our work, on what members and people can/should expect, such as our Lodge work. It clarifies that we are not to please the spiritual ambitions of our members, nor are we a New Age style of organisation. As a statement, it can be considered 'the other side of the coin' of our Freedom of Thought statement, being the practical implication of our three Objects. *Sections are requested*

*to include the mission statement in all TS publications, while TS writers are encouraged to write articles, giving their view on the statement.*

## **2.Introductory Books - Lowering Threshold for People at Large**

Many of the introductory books we continue to reprint are over 100 years old. While pearls of wisdom in these books are timeless, communication has changed considerably since, as has our approach to Theosophy. Many recently published books are for ‘seasoned’ TS members, whereas some of the introductory books deal more with the interest of the writer, rather than the reader. The public at large spends little time reading complex books to meet with initial interest. The plan is to publish a range of contemporary low-cost introductory publications (books, brochures, and other communication channels) with special emphasis on the spiritual life of the beginning reader, where possible making links with practical daily life. Thus theosophical concepts become recognisable for the reader in a modern, undogmatic way, thus raising interest, triggering further contacts, and deeper study. The publications, if possible translated in all major languages, can also be used for introductory courses in theosophical lodges.

## **3.Make TS Publishing Houses Future-Proof**

The publishing world has been undergoing very rapid changes due to the popularisation of e-books and the rising cost of printing and distribution. The different theosophical publishing houses are also undergoing difficulties in sustaining their operations. It has been deemed desirable that publishers explore areas where they can cooperate with each other, adapt to new approaches in publishing and distribution, and seek ways to increase the reach of theosophical literature in the world. The team on this project has proposed that there be one global e-bookstore for all theosophical books, taking advantage of the present capability of Quest Books USA to sell e-books on their site. This is now being explored.

## **4.Meditation Course for a Broader Public**

One of the services that the TS can offer is a meditation course for the general public – those seeking inner peace or equanimity. The team is now gathering time-tested practices that have been used within and outside the TS, and a few options will be recommended to the different Sections.

## **5.Establishing Theosophical Schools**

A major project that had been agreed upon is establishing theosophical

schools in various parts of the world. As a specific initiative, the General Council has approved founding a theosophical school in Adyar up to high school level to start mid-2019. In addition, new initiatives are now going on for new schools in the Philippines, Argentina, and Brazil.

## **6. Theosophy World: An Online Theosophical Resource Centre**

<theosophy.world> is an interesting website to explore all important theosophical resources, an exciting development in the promulgation of Theosophy and spreading the message of the ancient wisdom teachings. There is a large diversity of material ranging from articles to videos, e-books to photo galleries, early publications, quotes, poems, audio archives and much more. It also links to other useful like-minded websites, resource libraries and theosophical centres, becoming a truly central place to start searching from. New content is being added almost daily so students are advised to check it out by entering <theosophy.world> into the web browser. It is freely available to the general public and TS members alike. We hope the site continues to be a growing shared resource, valued by all theosophists and other truth seekers. It is currently in English but plans are afoot to make content available in other languages soon. Key questions are:

how to enrich the current site, what are reliable sources, how to take the current site forward, and get more support from Sections and members. If you have any content you would like to share or would like to improve, please email [content@theosophy.world](mailto:content@theosophy.world).

## **7. Internal Site-Sharing Best Practices within the TS**

Around the world many Sections have already developed many practices that have proven successful and effective in many aspects of theosophical work, such as membership record and lodge management, establishment of retreat centres or communities, dissemination methods, online courses, seminars, nurturing new members, and so on. Sections which have difficulties in these areas can learn from their experiences, difficulties, and successes. They do not have to start from scratch. A team is now compiling best practices on theosophical work from Sections around the world and this will be uploaded to a theosophical resource site. This will have restricted access and will be limited to certain officers of the TS.

## **8. TS Centres**

The Theosophical Centres that have been established around the world are some of the unique gems of the TS.

While every centre is unique in its own right and often autonomous in its governance structure, they also have much in common. Several have been in operation for generations and have rich histories. The centres can be regarded as theosophical laboratories, where activities and programmes are intended to make manifest the mission and objects of the TS. The intention of this project is to implement strategies that will enhance the strength and vitality of these valuable resources in the 21st century. The emphasis of the project is on volunteering, programming, information-sharing, and collaboration. Minor Lile has been appointed as TS Centres Coordinator to facilitate this project. Minor and his wife, Leonie Van Gelder, were managers and residents at Indralaya, a theosophical centre in the US, for nearly twenty years. He can be contacted by email at [mlile@theosophical.org](mailto:mlile@theosophical.org).

### **9. Harmonising Core Teachings**

For the past one hundred years, certain basic theosophical teachings that have been popularised in the TS have internal contradictions or have terms or nomenclatures that have different meanings and have caused confusion among new students of Theosophy. Examples of these are the use of the words Monad, astral body, Logos and the different versions of the principles

of the human being, life after death, et cetera. While it is not the intention to make final definitions, which would contradict the freedom of thought declaration, recommendations for initial use for new students can be useful. A team has been tasked to solicit the opinions of writers, leaders and scholars to hopefully come up with proposed harmonisation of basic teachings for introductory theosophical literature. Whatever recommendation the team proposes will not be taken as an official position of the TS.

### **10. International Speakers List**

The list of international speakers is aimed to create an authorised list of international speakers, who are competent and available to be invited to give lectures or seminars, or conduct schools or workshops. The list would be updated yearly by a team at Adyar, and introduced at the December Council meeting. Recommended criteria for an international speaker have been created. These criteria are very important, as each speaker acts as a representative of the international TS. The aim is also to create a policy for funding the travels. Travels should generally be covered by the inviting Section, possibly supported by the regional Federation. Overseas travels may be considered to be funded.



The aim is also to support Sections or Federations in weaker areas to encourage theosophical study.

### **11. Self-Transformation Seminars**

The Self-Transformation Seminars have been conducted in about 20 countries and facilitators have been trained in 10 countries. They have been found to be useful and effective as a seminar offered by the TS, both for members and the general public, for personal development and spiritual growth. The plan is to encourage more Sections to conduct this seminar and to train more facilitators who can transmit this to the public.

### **12. Animal Rights and Welfare**

Nowadays many animals are being bred solely for production, therefore society accepts factory farming as a means for producing meat. Humankind should know by now that animals do have emotions, can feel pain, and that some animals even have a level of self-awareness and a remarkable sense of justice. Knowing this, the TS should not remain silent about the indescribable suffering that is inflicted on our younger

brothers and sisters. Although the TS as an organisation cannot align itself with any movement, it is imperative that we help cultivate an informed awareness of this issue. A working group created a concept manifesto dealing with this theme: 'A society without any animal products would be ideal.' Primarily because of the appalling suffering caused to animals, a vegan diet is what we strongly propagate, with its obvious environmental considerations and benefits.

### **Future Outlook**

The Theosophical Society is part of a movement that is planetary in scope. As we learn to move toward a collaborative approach in our work, our effectiveness and relevance will grow. Now, as in the past, our greatest resource is our committed members. We look forward to an exciting development within the TS, where teams all over the world are working together across a range of projects to fulfil the Theosophical Society's mission of serving humanity. New projects will be added in due time. This most important process will be coordinated, followed, and approved by the General Council.



## From the National President

Linda Oliveira



A major recent development for our Society is its new Mission Statement, which has been developed and approved by the General Council, the Society's international governing body, for widespread use. This, and additional information about the current projects of the General Council, are shared by International President Tim Boyd in this issue.

A certain mystery surrounds the historical figure Apollonius of Tyana, who is the subject of one of the articles in this magazine. Apollonius had a certain Dharma to perform in the world at that time, his legacy somehow living on in certain Sacred spots today. Among other items, one of our members shares her challenges in exploring the nature of truth, which we are all seeking in different ways.

Something that never fails to impress me is the level of commitment of many members to our Society, resulting in numerous hours of personal time devoted to service for the TS in diverse ways. In some instances, I have been told by members that they want to give something back to this organisation because it has impacted their life substantially. In this issue we honour two such members – one from Perth,

and another from Adelaide – who departed this physical realm a few months ago. It is often only after the passing of friends that some of the main threads of their life are gathered together and we have a better understanding of the extent of their contribution.

Also, eleven members of our Section attended the recent World Congress in Singapore. The Congress programme was based on the theme 'Consciousness, Contemplation, Commitment: the Future is Now'. It included an interesting mix of talks, workshops and cultural sessions, culminating in a varied and informative half day tour of Singapore. International President Tim Boyd and the three other international TS officers were all in attendance. Special acknowledgement must be given to Sanne Chong, President of Singapore Lodge, and the Lodge's members, who did an excellent job of organising the Congress and welcoming members. In all, one hundred and seventy-three members were in attendance from many countries and it was a very happy and harmonious gathering. A selection of photos appears on page 100.

[Comments on this issue of up to 200 words are welcome and may be published.](#)

## Theosophy and Apollonius of Tyana

Antonio Girardi



Although there are not many historically reliable sources regarding the life of Apollonius of Tyana (born in Cappadocia around 4 BCE and died in Ephesus around 97 CE), there are many traces of evidence of him being a highly literate person, not separated from the concept of benefiting other beings.

His life was dedicated to what we can describe as a ‘purification’ and as a revival of pagan thought at its highest qualitative and philosophical level.

There are many elements in Apollonius, that make us think of the existence of considerable traces of that Eternal Wisdom about which H.P. Blavatsky (HPB) spoke: in this precise sense we can talk about a theosophy of Apollonius of Tyana, but bearing in mind the distinction between the ‘historical’ Apollonius and the ‘mythical’ Apollonius.

The main elements of the former were passed on by Philostratus, who lived

between 165/170 CE and 244/249 CE, well after Apollonius. There are then a series of indirect evidences, among which one of the most significant examples was the exaltation of Apollonius by Philon, two centuries after his death, as a prophet of a mystical cult founded on communion with God.

Apollonius’ works did not reach us in their original version; we are talking about *Initiations*, *Oracles*, and *Hymn to the Memory*. It seems that one of his astrology treatises was translated into Arabic in the 9th century. Also the *Life of Pythagoras* is attributed to him.

The framework of Philostratus’ work, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* <sup>1</sup> is based on the fact that, for most of his life, Apollonius was accompanied by a loyal disciple, Damis of Nineveh, who kept a very detailed diary of all the major events. When Damis died the manuscript remained unknown until one of his descendants handed it in to the Roman empress Julia Domna,

who in turn commissioned Philostratus to publish it, after giving it a proper literary form. Many critics are inclined to regard this story as a concoction of Philostratus and Julia Domna.

HPB in *The Theosophical Glossary* chooses instead to believe in the thesis of the diary of Damis of Nineveh.<sup>2</sup> Her opinion on Apollonius of Tyana is very positive, she actually describes him as: ‘a wonderful philosopher ... an ardent Pythagorean’.<sup>3</sup>

It is not of secondary importance at this point to refer to Blavatsky’s considerations. She soon emphasises the dimension of sobriety and the deep ethical nature of Apollonius who, following the principles of the tradition of the Pythagorean School, remained vegetarian for his whole life, without drinking wine and wearing only fibre clothes. She then extols Apollonius’ thaumaturgic qualities, which were the result of his initiations at the temple of Asclepius in the Aegean and of his journeys in the East.

According to the description in *The Theosophical Glossary* Apollonius was also a man of miracles, able to heal, also to foretell events in detail as well as producing powerful talismans for the benefit of humanity.<sup>4</sup> Such were Apollonius’ powers that Justin Martyr asks in dismay:

How is it that the talismans (telesmata) of Apollonius have power, for they prevent, as we see, the fury of the waves and the violence of the winds, and the attacks of the wild beasts; and whilst our Lord’s miracles are preserved by tradition alone, those of Apollonius are most numerous and actually manifested in present facts?<sup>5</sup>

HPB also talks about the Apollonius talismans in *Isis Unveiled*, in numerous and articulated passages which include in-depth studies on Apollonius’ life, work, and thought.<sup>6</sup>

It is precisely in *Isis Unveiled* that we can fully understand the dimension of Apollonius of Tyana’s theosophy, especially where Blavatsky states:

Like Buddha and Jesus, Apollonius was the uncompromising enemy of all outward show of piety, all display of useless religious ceremonies and hypocrisy ... If we study the question with a dispassionate mind, we will soon perceive that the ethics of Gautama Buddha, Plato, Apollonius, Jesus, Ammonius Sakkas, and his disciples, were all based on the same mystic philosophy. That all worshipped one God, whether they considered him as the ‘Father’ of Humanity who lives in man as man lives in him, or as the Incomprehensible Creative principle; all led God-like lives.<sup>7</sup>

She detects also what she calls ‘the mistake’ of Apollonius; here are her words:

His great mistake was to confine [his truths] too closely to the higher classes of society. While to the poor and the humble Jesus preached 'Peace on earth and good will to men', Apollonius was the friend of kings, and moved with the aristocracy. ... If, like the Christian Saviour, the sage of Tyana had by preference sought the companionship of the poor and the humble; and if instead of dying comfortably, at over one hundred years of age, he had been a voluntary martyr, proclaiming divine Truth from a cross, his blood might have proved as efficacious for the subsequent dissemination of spiritual doctrines as that of the Christian Messiah.<sup>8</sup>

Within the theosophical tradition other authors also have taken an interest in Apollonius, but possibly with a different breadth as well as very different objectives from the ones revealed by HPB. First of all one must remember C.W. Leadbeater who expressed an original and in some respects stimulating thesis. He affirms:

An advanced disciple of the Lord Christ took birth in the year 105 BC ... as a son of Joseph and Mary; and to him was given the name of Jesus. He remained in charge of that body until it was about thirty years of age and then handed it over to the Christ, Who occupied it for the three years of His earthly ministry. The disciple Jesus was reborn as Apollonius of Tyana, just about the date usually assigned to the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>9</sup>

The name of Apollonius is also connected to some other circumstances within the theosophical field around Wawel in Cracow. Dr George Arundale, who a year later became the President of the Theosophical Society after visiting Poland in 1932, actually wrote about it:

There exists in Cracow a Spiritual Centre, established 2000 years ago by Apollonius of Tyana. It is a kind of geyser from which incessantly flow streams of spiritual forces ... This makes the city even today a Spiritual Centre which will become in the future the focus of these forces for the whole of Central Europe.<sup>10</sup>

Always within the theosophical field it was asserted that in order to fight the increasing atmosphere of deep and obscure negativity that was developing in Europe in 1935 after the coming of Nazism, it was necessary to proceed to the 'reawakening' of the Wawel occult centre (the so-called 'Lotus of Wawel') and thus, the power connected to the talisman that was placed there by Apollonius of Tyana.<sup>11-12</sup>

This coincided temporally and symbolically with the death and the days of the funeral rites of the Polish hero, Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, beloved by his compatriots. Actually, from 12 to 18 May 1935 – and this is history – the entire Polish nation followed



Pilsudski's coffin in the journey from Warsaw to Wawel Cracow, where the great Marshal still rests, in the tomb placed in the Cathedral's crypt.

The highly positive outlook of HPB on Apollonius of Tyana, coincides with that of the whole esoteric tradition. According to her the positivity and the importance of Apollonius's work is also due to the fact that, during his journey in the East,

Apollonius had been directed by a king to the abode of the Sages, whose abode it may be to this day, by whom he was taught unsurpassed knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

And actually Apollonius affirms on this point:

They [the Sages at issue] lived on this earth and at the same time out of it ... I always remember my Masters and I travel around the world teaching what I've learned from them.<sup>14</sup>

It is really interesting to highlight the theosophical and Neoplatonic elements present in the life and the work of Apollonius of Tyana, as it is reported to us by Philostratus, within what we could describe as a solid Pythagorean structure. We have already mentioned the sobriety and ethical nature of Apollonius. It is worth now con-sidering his adherence to the Platonic outlook of the dialectic contrast between the One (the Good, the perfection, the harmony of the Universe, God) and the Dyad (the bad, the disorder, matter). The religiosity of Apollonius was intense; it was founded on the transition from purification to an original catharsis, from the mundane element to union with God. All of this with a clear outlook on evolution proceeding according to the principles of karma. Apollonius affirms precisely:

It seems to me that he who appears at the house of God with a good conscience must say this prayer: 'Oh gods, give me what I'm owed.' Most people indeed, O priest, are owed the good, the wicked the opposite.<sup>15</sup>

And more: 'Oh gods! Let me own very little and long for nothing.'<sup>16</sup>

In the teachings of Apollonius the soul becomes divine through ascesis [the practice of self-discipline – Ed.]; it gains prophetic powers and the virtue to direct the course of Nature with magic. The authentic intimacy

with God derives from the purity of inner meditation, with no recourse to sacrifices or cult practices. These aspects fully show us the breadth of mind of Apollonius, an outlook that is not solipsistic, but that wishes instead to be always shared, we could possibly say ‘for the benefit of all beings’; this also when the interlocutor does not appear of great sensibility. Apollonius affirms:

The soul is immortal and is no possession of your own, but of Providence, and after the body is wasted away, like a swift horse freed from its traces, it lightly leaps forward and mingles with the light air, loathing the spell of harsh and painful servitude which it has endured. But for you, what use is there in this? Some day when you are no more you shall believe it. <sup>17</sup>

According to Apollonius the content and the method tend to combine in order to generate a ‘direct’ perception regarding the search for spirituality and the relationship with the sphere of the Divine. On this point Philostratus reports to us an anecdote:

A man who ruled Cilicia sees Apollonius under the pretext of being ill and of needing the help of Asclepius. He so presented himself to Apollonius, who was taking a walk on his own and he told him: ‘Recommend me to the god’. And he replied: ‘Why do you need someone to recommend you, if you are

an honest man? The gods love virtuous people and welcome them without intermediaries.’ <sup>18</sup>

A further theosophical aspect of Apollonius is the fact that he was a real bridge between the East and the West thanks to his journeys. Apollonius of Tyana affirms:

I saw the Brahmins of India who live on the earth and don’t live on it. They stay indoors with no walls and possess nothing but the belongings of all men. <sup>19</sup>

As to reincarnation, the Pythagorean outlook of Apollonius also tends to agree with the highest oriental outlooks. <sup>20</sup>

Moreover, a dimension of real tolerance belonged to Apollonius of Tyana; he never actually expected from others adherence to the rigid rules of conduct that he imposed on himself. This can be deduced, for example, from the fact that he never tried to convert Damis to the vegetarian diet, but only asked him to respect his choices. The sense and the importance of the common work were also present in Apollonius.

Apollonius of Tyana, although some sources are uncertain, deserves thus to be remembered not only for his miraculous powers and his talismans, but for his highly ethical, philosophical outlook entirely leaning towards a universal outlook of life with a theosophical attitude.

## Endnotes

1. Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Italian Ed.: Filostrato, Vita di Apollonio di Tiana, Adelphi Edizioni, Collana Biblioteca Adelphi, Milano, 1978.

2. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, Italian Ed.: H.P. Blavatsky, Glossario Teosofico seconda edizione, Editrice Libreria Sirio, Trieste, 1985, pp. 21, 22, 23.

3. 4. 5. *ibid.*

6. H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, Italian Ed.: H.P. Blavatsky, Iside Svelata, Accademia di Studi Teosofici, Trieste, 1994, traduzione a cura di Edoardo Bratina; cfr. riferimenti dell'Indice Analitico a p. 407.

7. *Idem*, p. 478 e 481 del 1° volume.

8. *Idem*, p. 479 del 1° volume.

9. C.W. Leadbeater, *The Hidden Side of Christian Festivals*, The St Alban Press, Los Angeles, London, Sydney, 1920, p. 29.

10. G.S. Arundale in *Przegląd Teozoficzny (The Theosophical Review)*, Warsaw, 1932.

11. K. Chodkiewicz, *The Cracow Occult Centre*, Italian Ed.: Cfr K. Chodkiewicz, *Il Centro occulto di Cracovia*, Edizioni Età dell'Acquario — Bresci Editore, Torino, 1975.

12. See the testimony of Wanda Dynowska in *The Theosophist*, Adyar, India, August 1942, pp. 361–371.

13. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, Italian Ed.: H. P. Blavatsky, Glossario Teosofico seconda edizione, Editrice Libreria Sirio, Trieste 1985, p. 22.

14. Giancarlo Tarozzi, *Apollonius of Tyana in The Cracow Occult Centre*, Italian Ed.: Giancarlo Tarozzi, *Apollonius di Tyana in Il Centro Occulto di Cracovia*, Seconda Edizione italiana a cura di Giuditta Dembech, Edizioni L'Ariete, Torino, 1991, p. 51.

15. 16. 17. 18. 19. All the quotations to which these notes refer are drawn from the volume listed at note 1.

20. See volume at note 1 (Cfr volume di cui alla nota 1, Libro III:19; pp.154–155).



Antonio Girardi has been a member of the Theosophical Society since 1980 and the General Secretary of the Italian Section since 1995. He is the chief-editor of the *Rivista Italiana di Teosofia*. He has written three books on theosophical subjects. He has also edited the book *La Società Teosofica: storia, valori e realtà attuale (Theosophical Society: history, values and current situation)*.



## The Trouble with Truth ...

Pamela Peterson



‘**T**ruth is manifold and infinite. It cannot be exhausted by any presentation.’ This statement, made by N. Sri Ram during his 1965 tour of Australia, confirms to me what I have long considered to be the elusive nature of this phenomenon called truth which theosophists seek, clerics preach, philosophers theorise about, intellectuals discuss; and the court witness, however humble, swears on oath to tell.

### What is this thing called truth?

What is this thing called truth? The search for something unidentified must surely amount to an exercise in futility. Nevertheless I shall share with you my journey in search of truth which goes back to early childhood, and has remained a matter of intrigue ever since.

Truth, assumed to be known by the child, had to be told on all occasions. ‘Tell the truth’ was repeated like a mantra. There were dire consequences

for not doing so. Some had their mouths washed out with soap. Boys, deemed to be the worst offenders, were belted in order for the truth to be dislodged. Telling the truth was a praiseworthy virtue, worn like a badge of honour. Of course there were those who went out of their way to be super-virtuous, offering unsolicited truths.

William Blake wrote: ‘A truth that’s told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent.’<sup>1</sup> An old French adage questions whether every truth needs to be shouted from the mountain top. Or does it? Is failure to reveal an unsolicited truth in the same category as a sin of omission?

When asked for an opinion, consider the dilemma of giving a truthful answer which could be hurtful. The Dalai Lama suggests that sometimes it is better to remain silent!

Rather than answers, there seem to be more and more questions. For exam-

ple, is there such a thing as Absolute Truth, or is truth always subjective, conditional, reliant upon perception? This is an important issue in the case of the court witness, sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, who can at best give his perception of the truth which may influence the decision as to the guilt or innocence of the accused. For example, was the accused in fact trying to stop the victim from jumping over the cliff, rather than pushing him over, as the witness insists? Had the accused just pulled the blood-stained knife from the chest of the victim she had discovered, rather than first having plunged it in? What is perception? What is truth?

I would like to return to my personal journey with truth, touching on a different angle. From an early age I was sent to Sunday school where biblical texts had to be learnt by rote. Understanding of the text was incidental and not explored, at least in my experience.

Upon reaching secondary school, I began to think about some of the texts implanted in my mind. One in question was: 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'<sup>2</sup> Having just learnt about Galileo, I wondered what he had thought of this as he spent the last eight years of his life under house arrest following his trial by the

Inquisition. Not a good incentive for revealing the truth!

Another saying, attributed to Jesus, was a cause of greater concern. It is written that he said to Thomas: 'I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.'<sup>3</sup> Firstly this seemed to be very much out of character in view of the general picture presented of Jesus as a loving, compassionate, all-embracing person. More importantly, my closest friend was Jewish. There were two Chinese, non-Christian girls in my class. Were they really to be beyond salvation, excluded from the kingdom of heaven? Or were there different truths in their religions? Was heaven perhaps divided into real estate enclaves for various religious groups?

Reference to the *Oxford Dictionary* revealed the following definitions of truth:

1. Conformity with fact.
2. Agreement with reality.
3. True statement or account.<sup>4</sup>

Clear examples of the above immediately came to mind: Sydney is the capital of New South Wales. Water expands when frozen. The volcano erupted. However, I had trouble with the following definition which seemed to me an example of tautology:

4. True religious belief or doctrine.

This, together with definition No.5: ‘Spiritual reality as the subject of revelation or the object of faith’, suggested that there is a difference according to whether the word ‘truth’ is being defined in an everyday or religious and/or spiritual context; perhaps ‘small t’ and ‘capital t’ truth.

Would there perhaps be a consensus among the various religions as to the real nature of truth? Research revealed the following:

### **Religion**

In Christianity truth is based on the history, revelation and testimony from the Bible which conservative denominations believe to be infallible and inerrant; others that it is always true on important matters of faith. Others again are of the opinion that passages of the Bible must be interpreted in the context of the language, culture and time in which they were written. The Roman Catholic church allows the Pope, who is considered infallible, to override literal interpretations of the Bible and make pronouncements on matters of faith and doctrine. There are as many other views as denominations within the Christian faith.

In Judaism there is no unilateral agreement among the different denom-

inations. For the Orthodox, truth is the revealed word of God, as found in the Torah and to a lesser extent in the Talmud. Hasidic Jews believe truth is also found in the words of their rabbi. In Conservative Judaism, truth is not defined so literally, its nature varying from one generation to another, depending on circumstances. Not every statement in the Bible is true. In the more liberal Reform Judaism, truth is not exclusive to the Torah, elements of truth existing in almost every religious tradition. The Bible is at best a document, parts of which may have been inspired, but with no particular monopoly on truth, or in any way legally binding.

Islam considers the Koran, the central text, to be the book of divine guidance, the word of Allah revealed to Muhammad, an inimitable miracle and the truth of the religion.

In Hinduism generawly, truthfulness is the ninth of the ten attributes of Dharma, relating to speaking only what one has seen, heard or understood. However, the essence of truthfulness is far deeper. Truth is the One Reality and existence which is directly experienced when the vision is cleared of dross. In the Rig Veda it is stated: ‘Truth is One, though the sages call it by many names.’ The Rishi discovers what ex-

My search in religions for a clear definition of truth having proved fruitless, I turned for an answer to philosophy, the great quest for unchanging principles, hoping for unanimous agreement among a selection of famous philosophers on such a fundamental principle as truth.

ists as the truth of one's own Being, the Self, and as the truth of the Being of God.

The Two Truths Doctrine in Buddhist tradition differentiates between two levels of truth: a relative or common sense truth, and an ultimate or absolute spiritual Truth. Both forms are co-existent. Some schools hold that the Two Truths are ultimately resolved into non-duality as a lived experience, and are non-different. A point of interest here: The Buddha said: 'I was born into the world as the king of truth for the salvation of the world.' However Jesus said many years later: 'I am the way, the truth and the life...' Could this perhaps be an example of reincarnation?

Jainism has an interesting system of 'not-one-sidedness'. There is one Truth which only enlightened beings

can see in its entirety, unenlightened beings seeing only one side of the truth. However there are multiple vantage points from which truth can be viewed, therefore multiple truths about any particular thing, even mutually exclusive truths. These claims are then synthesised. Therefore 'in a certain way', each claim of one truth or another, or both, may be true. The 'Jekyll and Hyde' personality could be an extreme example of the complexity of character found in all of us.

### **Philosophy**

My search in religions for a clear definition of truth having proved fruitless, I turned for an answer to philosophy, the great quest for unchanging principles, hoping for unanimous agreement among a selection of famous philosophers on such a fundamental principle as truth.

Socrates, the first person to bring the problems of human beings to the centre of philosophical enquiry, believed that truth is something that should not only be discussed, but lived, embodied and practised. Eternal, unchanging and absolute, it has nothing to do with opinions which are temporal, changing and relative. Truth and moral virtue are inscribed within the soul of every human being. Therefore the task is learning to

cultivate the soul with the aim of realising this implicit understanding of the truth.

Plato believed there is an absolute Truth that exists somewhere, in some way, in reality, but was doubtful about whether or not people would ever be able to find and discern this truth.

The Rationalists tried to find truth through analytical reasoning, independent of experience. Voltaire declared:

When we say that the blood circulates, ... we simply acquiesce in the truth which is demonstrated, and the whole universe will be of the same opinion. Such is the character of truth, which belongs to all time and to all men. It is only to be produced to be acknowledged, and admits of no opposition.<sup>5</sup>

Marcus Aurelius seemed to doubt the possibility of finding the truth, suggesting that whatever we hear is an opinion rather than a fact; and whatever we see is a perspective rather than a truth.

Friedrich Nietzsche was of much the same opinion, believing that truth is obscured by the interpretation of all things by whoever is wielding power at any particular time.

Immanuel Kant advocated having the courage to use one's own reason to find

the truth, whereas Arthur Schopenhauer believed preconceived opinion, prejudice, to be the barrier to its discovery.

## Theosophy

Disappointingly, I was only to find many philosophers with many opinions, just as in the various religions. Completely disillusioned with the prevarications of religion and philosophy, a few years ago I found a glimmer of hope in the accidental discovery of the motto of The Theosophical Society: 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth.' Eagerly perusing the words of its founders, I discovered Henry S. Olcott's statement in the preamble to the original by-laws of the Society: 'Its [the TS's] only axiom is the omnipotence of truth, its only creed a profession of unqualified devotion to its discovery and propagation.'<sup>6</sup> Truth remained unidentified.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky made numerous statements, including:

'Theosophy is synonymous with EVERLASTING TRUTH.'<sup>7</sup> I needed a definition of one or the other.

'Theosophy, if meaning anything, means truth.'<sup>8</sup> This element of doubt was confusing.

'It (Theosophy) seeks the one Truth in all religions, in all science, in all experience, as in every system of thought.'

<sup>9</sup>This suggested that truth has yet to be found.

*‘Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the UNIVERSAL MIND, he can get nought on earth but relative truth ... from whatsoever philosophy or religion.’*<sup>10</sup> seemingly contradicted the previous statement.

‘There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever in a world as finite and conditioned as man is himself. But there are relative truths and we have to make the best we can of them.’<sup>11</sup> sounded a somewhat conciliatory note.

In his Manifesto at the Ommen Camp, August 1929, Krishnamurti depicted truth as a pathless land, emphasising his belief in the necessity for man to arrive at truth by means of his inner power to understand the contents of his own mind, without reliance on any outside influence, be it religious, philosophical or psychological. An essentially lonely search.

George S. Arundale expressed a wider view: ‘The great search of the Theosophist is the discovery of truth everywhere and the exalting of truth everywhere.’

‘truth is everywhere. ... We must be able to dwell in antitheses.’<sup>12</sup>

John Algeo, a pragmatic Theosophist, guarded against holding theosophy

as an infallible statement of absolute truth, regarding it as a life view consistent within the individual, confirmed by experience and useful from a practical point of view.

The United Kingdom Blavatsky Theosophical Group, concerned about the inherent dangers of the widely accepted idea that there is no actual truth, truth being purely subjective and personal, came to the conclusion that the views, beliefs and concepts that we hold cannot be designated as our individual truth, there being only the absolute Truth, predating, underlying and transcending all else.

Finally, the conclusion of Tim Boyd, current International President:

In America, a young country, ... the attitude towards life is all about activity and motion. In India, an ancient civilisation, the approach is philosophical. People ask questions, analyse, and come to certain conclusions. In Latin America, there is a deep devotion to something they find value in. However these are superficial differences. At the core, everybody is united by their search for the truth.<sup>13</sup>

Though still on my journey to discover a definitive answer to the question of truth, the diversity of the above opinions remains a comforting assurance that I am not alone. Perhaps after all there is some truth in the suggestion

that it is the journey and not the destination which is important.

With this in mind I shall revert to the advice of one of my favourite writers and philosophers, Andre Gide: 'Believe those who are seeking the truth. Doubt those who find it.'<sup>13</sup>

### Endnotes

1. *Auguries of Innocence*, William Blake, Lines 53-54.
2. *The Holy Bible*, John 8:32.
3. *The Holy Bible*, John, 14:6.
4. *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edition.
5. *Philosophical Dictionary*, Voltaire, Vol.6, p.72.
6. Preamble to the original Bylaws of the TS, approved in New York on 8 September 1875.
7. *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P. Blavatsky, p.304.
8. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. IX, p.9.
9. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XI, p.339.
10. 'What is Truth', H.P. Blavatsky, *Lucifer*, February 1888.
11. *ibid*.
12. *Adyar Pamphlets*, No. 211.
13. Speech during a visit to Kochi, published in *The New Indian Express*, 6 December 2016.



Pamela Peterson, BA (Sydney University), retired secondary school teacher, who describes herself as a chronic questioner, has served for eight years as Honorary Secretary of the Blavatsky Lodge Executive Committee.



What the Society has hitherto done – its great merit in the eyes of some, and its terrible fault in the estimation of others – is to make people think. No one can for long belong to the Theosophical Society without beginning to question *himself*. ...The very air of Theosophy is charged with the spirit of enquiry. It is not the 'sceptical' spirit, nor is it the 'agnostic'. It is a real desire to know and learn the truth, as far as it is possible for any creature to know it who is so limited by his capacities and so biased by his prejudices as is man.

- Col. Henry Steel Olcott

## Know Thyself

Preben Sorensen



Humanity has mapped the continents of the world as well as the oceans and the stars of the sky, but the map of our own nature, conscious as well as unconscious, is still very incomplete and full of unexplored areas and dark spots. Or to put it in other words, we are a riddle unto ourselves.

A wise man was once asked: ‘What is the most important question a person can ask?’. He answered: ‘The most important and urgent question which a person should ask is: WHO AM I?’ Such a question brings about many more questions, for instance: Where do I come from?, Where am I going?, What is my task or mission in life?, et cetera.

It is interesting to note that the inscription ‘*GNOTHI SEAUTON*’, which means ‘KNOW THYSELF’, appeared in the forecourt of the ancient Temple of Apollo at Delphi.

A young seeker was interested in obtaining the answer to this question, so he knocked on the door of a spiritual guru. From inside came a voice, ‘Who are you?’ The young seeker replied, ‘If I had known I wouldn’t have come to knock at your door!’

The Great Ones tell us that we are mighty spiritual beings. For example, the Gospels record the following words from Jesus: ‘I said, Ye are gods’<sup>1</sup>; and from Saint Paul: ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’<sup>2</sup>. It is also interesting to consider the Lord Buddha’s statement ‘Look within, thou art the Buddha.’ So the great teachers throughout history have all said: ‘What I am, you can become.’ They have shown the way.

One of the greatest Masters who ever lived on this planet was the Egyptian Master called Hermes Trismegistus, meaning ‘Thrice-Greatest Hermes’. He was also called the Master of the



Masters. He is supposed to be the author of the Hermetic books stating many interesting principles. Among others: ‘As is the Inner, so is the Outer; as is the Great, so is the Small; as it is above, so it is below’<sup>3</sup> ... et cetera.

The great Hermes taught that the Creator somehow uses the same mould on different scales when creating the Universe and humanity. We know the saying in the Bible and other sacred scriptures that humanity is created in the image of God. We could also say that each of a man’s trillions of cells is created in His image. Furthermore, through a cloning process (which is not permitted, so far, when it comes to a human being), an identical body to the one whose cell was used can be created today. But there is an exception when it comes to our reproductive cells, in which case a division of cells takes place so that the newborn individual receives half a string of chromosomes from the father and half from the mother. Therefore a new, unique human being is born.

The ‘I’ with whom we usually identify only constitutes a tiny island in the boundless ocean of our psyche, according to the famous Swiss psychologist Carl G. Jung who states: ‘man’s problems, his inner and outer

conflicts, are due to this ignorance about his own psyche’. What is unconscious and unknown to us will not only frighten us as a rule, but will have a disproportionate power over us, coming from the depth of our being. By becoming aware of these deep-seated forces and complexes they will lose their power over us, and we can then use them in a dynamic and constructive way.

### Endnotes:

1. *The Holy Bible*, John 10:34, <https://www.biblestudytools.com>.
2. *The Holy Bible*, Col. 1:27, <https://www.biblestudytools.com>.
3. Hoskins, Ianthe, *Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy*, The Theosophical Publishing House Ltd, London, 1980.



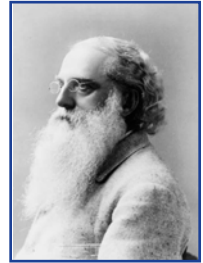
Preben Sorensen is a National Member from New South Wales and a former General Secretary of the TS in Denmark.

## A Non-Dogmatic Society

It is well-known that the TS was formed to show the world that Theosophy exists. However, in a Society which holds Freedom of Thought as fundamental, the great challenge is to achieve this non-dogmatically. Some perennial statements below from our Principal Co-Founders, H.S. Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky, highlight the importance of enquiry, non-dogmatism and non-sectarianism in our work.

‘We are of our age, and yet some strides ahead of it, albeit some journals and pamphleteers more glib than truthful, have already charged us with being reactionists who turn from modern light (!) to medieval and ancient darkness! We seek, inquire, reject nothing without cause, accept nothing without proof: we are students, not teachers.’

Col. H.S. Olcott, President-Founder, Inaugural Address (1875)



‘Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart. You must remember that all our members

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

H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (1889)

‘The Society’s members represent the most varied nationalities and races, and were born and educated in the most dissimilar creeds and social conditions. Some of them believe in one thing, others in another. ... the very fact of a man’s joining it proves that he is in search of the final truth as to the ultimate essence of things.

... On the other hand, the bigoted sectarian, fenced in, as he is, with a creed upon every paling of which is written the warning “No Thoroughfare,” can neither come out of his enclosure to join the Theosophical Society, nor, if he could, has it room for one whose very religion forbids examination. The very root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation.’

H.P. Blavatsky, ‘What are Theosophists?’ (1879)

‘The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself – the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry. Visible representative of Universal Theosophy, it can be no more sectarian than a Geographical Society, which represents universal geographical exploration without caring whether the explorers be of one creed or another.’

H.P. Blavatsky, ‘What are Theosophists?’ (1879)

‘Having no accepted creed, our Society is very ready to give and take, to learn and teach, by practical experimentation, as opposed to mere passive and credulous acceptance of enforced dogma. It is willing to accept every result claimed by any of the foregoing schools or systems, that can be logically and experimentally demonstrated. Conversely, it can take nothing on mere faith, no matter by whom the demand may be made.’

H.P. Blavatsky, ‘What are Theosophists?’ (1879)

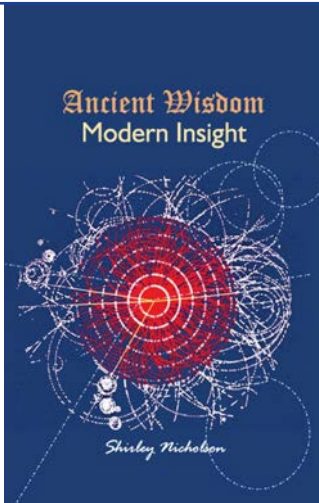
‘The Society has no wisdom of its own to support or teach. It is simply the storehouse of all the truths uttered by the great seers, initiates, and prophets of historic and even pre-historic ages; at least, as many as it can get.’  
*The Key to Theosophy*, Section IV

‘Members they are, by virtue of their having joined the Society; but the latter cannot make a Theosophist of one who has no sense for the divine fitness of things, or of him who understands Theosophy in his own – if the expression may be used – sectarian and egotistic way. “Handsome is, as handsome does” could be paraphrased in this case and be made to run: “Theosophist is, who Theosophy does.”’

*The Key to Theosophy*, Section II

## Education

Pedro Oliveira



## ANCIENT WISDOM MODERN INSIGHT

An Intermediate Course

Based on the book *Ancient Wisdom — Modern Insight* by Shirley Nicholson, this course contrasts key ideas from *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky with the insights of eminent scientists like David Bohm, Albert Einstein and Ilya Prigogine, and others. Cost: \$30. Includes a copy of the book (hardcover), 18 lessons, and postage within Australia.



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## National Calendar of Events



### 2019 NATIONAL CONVENTION THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

for TS members

**Dates:** Sat 19 – Sat 26 January

**Venue:** Sancta Sophia College, University of Sydney



**Theme: 'Divine Wisdom in Theory and Practice'**

#### Featured Speaker: **Dr Julian Droogan**

Julian Droogan is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University where he teaches in Asia-Pacific Studies, issues of Religion and Politics and International Studies. Julian is also a visiting lecturer at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. He won the John Cooper Memorial Prize, which is funded by The Theosophical Society in Australia, at the University of Sydney in 2002, and again in 2005.

**Accommodation - cost recovery rates:** single rooms with shared bathrooms \$955.50 for 7 nights; twin or double ensuite rooms \$903 per person for 7 nights; single ensuite rooms \$1,165 for 7 nights.

A Convention payment plan is now being offered for members who would like to pay in instalments. For enquiries, please contact the National Secretary, Dara Tatray: [natsec@austheos.org.au](mailto:natsec@austheos.org.au) tel. 02 9264 6404

**Registration fee:** \$40 **Registration form:** <http://austheos.org.au/whats/>

**Registration deadline:** for guaranteed rooms, live-in registrants, Fri 30 November

**Enquiries to:** Jennifer Hissey, Convention Secretary  
email: [catalogue@austheos.org.au](mailto:catalogue@austheos.org.au)

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#### Next event, **Springbrook Centre:**

2019 School of Theosophy Theme: 'Seeking out the Way'

Dates: Fri 26 April (arrivals) until Thurs 2 May (departures). Details in next issue.

#### Next event, **Canyonleigh Centre: TBA**

## Images of the 2018 TS World Congress Singapore, 4-9 August



International President  
Tim Boyd



International  
Vice-President  
Dr Deepa Padhi



International Secretary  
Marja Artamaa



Question and Answer Session, left to right: Pradeep Gohil, Vic Hao Chin Jr., Linda Oliveira, Tim Boyd, Renee Sell



Indo-Pacific Federation President, Gerard Brennan



Two of the past Indo-Pacific Federation Presidents who were in attendance: Vic Hao Chin Jr. and Pedro Oliveira



Sanne Chong  
President  
Singapore Lodge



Lily Chong  
Singapore Lodge



George Wester  
Perth Branch

A splendid vision may come at unexpected moments of our lives, and we may hear with an inner listening the 'voice that is soundless'.

Joy Mills

When the doors of perception are cleansed, man will see things as they truly are, infinite.

William Blake



Reality has no continuity; it is from moment to moment, ever new, ever fresh.

J. Krishnamurti

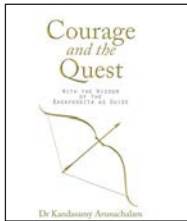
What I see in Nature is a magnificent structure that we can comprehend only very imperfectly, and that must fill a thinking person with a feeling of 'humility'. This is a genuinely religious feeling that has nothing to do with mysticism.

Albert Einstein



## Review

*Courage and the Quest: With the Wisdom of The Bagavadgita as Guide*, Dr Kandasamy Arunachalam, XlibrisAU, 2017, pb, 52pp, Amazon Australia, \$21.49.



Kandasamy Arunachalam – ‘Aru’ as he is known – is one of our most senior members. He is a past President of the Brisbane Theosophical Society, having joined the TS in 1984. Among other things, he has organised and conducted bi-annual retreats on silent meditation for Brisbane Lodge at the Section’s Springbrook Centre in Queensland. His book *Courage and the Quest*, published last year, has been accompanied by this summary:

Take the scriptures as the bow, the great weapon, and place upon it the arrow sharpened by meditation. Then having drawn it back with a mind directed to the thought of Brahman, Strike the mark, O my good friend – that which is



the Imperishable. Om is the bow. The atman is the arrow, Brahman is said to be the mark. It is struck by an undistracted mind. Then the atman becomes one with Brahman, as the arrow with the target (*Mundaka Upanishad*, Chapter 11, verses 3 and 4).’

The book has been very favourably evaluated at [www.pacificbookreview.com](http://www.pacificbookreview.com). The review concerned includes comments such as:

‘Dr Kandasamy Arunachalam has done a remarkable summation of religious themes, comparisons and extrapolations from many sources including the Koran, the Zohar, the Bible, the Buddhist Canon and the ancient Hindu Vedas and expanded upon with the Upanishads ...’

Also,

‘I particularly liked his dissertation on yoga. With the stillness of body and mind, one is shown how to see without using their eyes, and to hear without using their ears, but to view and hear from deep within their thoughts.’

*Courage and the Quest* is available at Amazon Australia.

## Remembering TS Friends

### Noel Duzevich



Noel Duzevich joined the TS in April 1980. Her considerable contributions to Perth Branch included the positions of President, Vice President, Librarian and Bookshop Manager. Noel conducted classes in Tai Chi and *The Secret Doctrine*, also presenting many lectures, and was awarded life membership of the Branch in November 2017. She has been described as ‘a lady of great personal dignity, spirituality and goodness, always dependable, always willing’ ‘always on the side of goodness’ and ‘very practical and capable’.

A fine student of Theosophy, Noel willingly shared new and interesting items that she had read or heard. She also made a significant contribution to the TS at the national level, volunteering for a number of years as a mentor to various students undertaking the Section’s national correspondence course. She attended a number of National Conventions and was also a member of the Editorial Committee of *T in A* for a considerable period. Her passing was on 11 July 2018.

### Audrey Brimson



Audrey Brimson was a qualified nurse and midwife. Born in the United Kingdom, she eventually moved to Australia with her husband, John. Audrey became a member of the Adelaide TS in December 1984, working at its bookshop for eight years. She became a member of the Lodge’s Executive Committee and held the offices of Vice-President for four years, Secretary for four years and President from 1993 to 1997. She presented programmes for twenty-five years, and video recorded many talks. In 1997, with declining finances, the Adelaide Executive Committee decided it needed to find new premises. It was Audrey who found the Lodge’s new building and undertook the negotiations to sell the King William Street address and purchase the current building.

At the national level, Audrey was also a State Representative on the Section’s National Council for six years, being an active and supportive contributor to the Council’s deliberations during that period. She passed on 26 May 2018.

## News and Notes



### Campbell Theosophical Research Library

The Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives at the National Headquarters is a treasure trove of information. Material is sent out regularly to enquirers, both within and outside the TS. PDF copies of articles can be supplied to enquirers on request: [catalogue@austheos.org.au](mailto:catalogue@austheos.org.au)

This year, we have referred a research fellow of the Presbyterian Theological College, Burwood, Sydney, to the Archives of the TS at Adyar for further information about **Professor John Smith** who was a very interesting figure in our Section's early history. Born in Scotland in 1821, in 1852 John Smith was appointed Foundation Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Physics at the University of Sydney, becoming the first Professor of Chemistry in Australia. Subsequently he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in 1856 and was made a Fellow of the Senate in 1861. Somewhat later, John Smith arrived in Bombay on January 13, 1882, with a

letter of introduction to the Founders from Emma H. Britten. He had the distinction of receiving a letter from one of the Masters of the Wisdom.

### Some Highlights Around the Section

For those who might be curious about what is happening elsewhere in Australia, as a matter of interest a few highlights from a number of our TS centres during the past few months are listed here:

Brisbane Lodge, Wednesday 8 August, Min Chen: 'The Monk, the Monkey and the King - A Spiritual Journey in Legend and History'

Gosford TS Group, Tuesday 12 June, Linda Oliveira: 'Discovering the Diamond: Inner Disarmament'

Newcastle Lodge, Friday 13 July, Dianne Kynaston: 'Women of Spiritual Integrity'

Melbourne Lodge, 28 July, Dara Tatray: 'The High Aim of the Theosophical Society and Our Work Today'

Perth Branch, 2 August, David Millar: 'The Third Object of the TS'  
Adelaide Lodge has had regular study

groups on *The Voice of the Silence*, *The Mahatma Letters* and *The Secret Doctrine*.

Also, Launceston Lodge has presented a number of the Section's Media Library DVDs, followed by discussion.

### **New International Online Theosophical Resource**

International President Tim Boyd mentioned [theosophy.world](http://theosophy.world) on page 77 in his article, 'Implementing the Ageless Wisdom'. This is a unique resource for members and non-members alike bringing together in one site, or else through links, significant resources from around the theosophical world. It provides a number of substantial items of information at no charge including: articles, audio, brochures, downloadable eBooks, a photo gallery, poems, publications, quotes, study guides and videos. The site is well worth a look. Updates continue on a regular basis.

### **Australian Section's Facebook Page**

If you have not visited the Section's Facebook page recently it contains plenty of interesting material. You do not need to be a member of Facebook to access the page, which is updated regularly.

Recent posts include a quote from *The Light of Asia*; the flyer of the

2019 Annual Convention in Sydney; ; the July 2018 issue of *The Campbell Library Newsletter*; and the flyer for Dara Tatray's talk at Melbourne Lodge on 28 July on 'The High Aim of the Theosophical Society and Our Work Today'.

By the end of August the page had 1,456 followers, with many thousands of people viewing posts on a regular basis.

Go to <https://facebook.com/austheos>

### **Transitions**

We remember with affection the following long-time members who have passed away recently:

Sandra Browne, National Member, New South Wales - 26 July 2018.

Rt. Rev. Allan Bradley, National member, Brisbane - 27 May 2018.

The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.



## Section Directory

### Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404  
Fax: 02 9264 5857  
www.austheos.org.au

Campbell Theosophical Research Library:  
catalogue@austheos.org.au

### Australian Capital Territory

*Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:*  
Postal Address: c/- 53 Chataway Crescent,  
Fadden ACT 2904  
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent  
& Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612  
7.30pm 1st Monday of month (Feb - May, Sep - Dec)  
Emeritus Faculty ANU: 2.00pm 1st Saturday of  
month (June - Aug), discussion group 2.00pm  
3rd Saturday of month  
President: Dr Grahame Crookham  
Tel: 0490147020  
email: tificrook@tpg.com.au  
Secretary: position vacant  
Newsletter Editor: Janice Scarabottolo  
Tel: 02 6288 7656 email:janton@netspeed.com.au

### New South Wales

*Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:*  
Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 1590  
Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards  
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)  
Telephone: 02 92676955 Fax: 02 9283 3772  
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au  
www.tssydney.org.au  
Meet: 1.00pm Wednesdays  
President: Sally Gray  
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

*Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:*  
Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,  
Mayfield NSW 2304  
7.30pm 2nd Friday each month  
<http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/>  
President: Tony Buzek  
Acting Secretary: Dianne Kynaston

Tel: 0452 633 132  
Email: diannedeva@gmail.com

### Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: Members' Lounge, Blue Mountains  
Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street (above Coles),  
Katoomba NSW 2780  
Meetings every Monday, 2.00 - 4.00pm  
Coordinator: Jessica Gemmill  
Tel: 02 4782 4269  
email: helen.lambert1@bigpond.com

### Gosford Group:

Meet: The Narara Community Centre,  
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250  
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month  
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser  
Tel: 02 4339 7118, 0400 713 273  
email: marifraser256@gmail.com  
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard  
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

### Northern Beaches Group:

Postal address: c/- The Manor,  
2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088  
Meet: c/- 31 Riviera Street  
Avalon NSW 2107  
2.00 pm 3rd Friday each month  
Coordinator: Dianne Kynaston  
email: diannedeva@gmail.com

### Queensland

#### *Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:*

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,  
Atherton QLD 4883  
Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services  
Tablelands, 38 Mabel Street, Atherton  
otherwise 30 Mabel Street, shop 1  
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.  
President: Max Brandenberger  
Secretary: Chris Pang Way  
Tel: 07 4091 5156

#### *Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:*

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000  
Tel: 07 3839 1453  
email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au  
www.theosophyqld.org.au  
Meet: 7.30pm Wednesdays, library open 6.30-7.30pm  
President: John Harris  
Secretary: Phillipa Rooke

*Shine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004*

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,  
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556  
7.00pm Thursdays  
President: Pam Walsh  
Tel: 0427 713 061 (Pam Walsh)  
Email: theosophyshinecoast@yahoo.com  
Secretary: Jean Carroll

*Toowoomba Group:*

Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba  
1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday  
at 2:30pm each month  
(Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)  
Annual Springbrook retreat each Winter  
Coordinator: Gayle Thomas  
Secretary: Barry Bowden  
Tel: 0438 331 885

**South Australia***Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000  
Tel: 08 8223 1129  
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au  
www.theosophical.org.au  
Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of  
every month. Please contact Lodge for additional  
meeting dates.  
President: Travis James  
Secretary: position vacant

**Tasmania***Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:*

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000  
Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)  
www.theosophicaltas.websytle.com.au  
Meet: 7.30pm Mondays  
President: Helen Steven  
Secretary: position vacant  
Email: helen\_steven@live.com

*Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:*

54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston TAS 7250  
Postal address: as above  
email: launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com  
www.austheos.org.au/launceston  
Meet: 1.00pm Wednesdays except the week of the 1st  
Wednesday when meetings are held instead at 1.00pm  
on the 1st Saturday (see also website listing to double  
check time if there is a visiting speaker)  
President/Secretary: Denise Frost  
Tel: 0400 140 624

**Victoria***Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:* 126 Russell  
Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624  
email: info@melbournetheosophy.org  
Meet: usually 4th Saturday each month  
President: Edward Sinclair  
Secretary: Kari Torgersen

*Mornington Peninsula Group:*

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,  
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday  
of the month  
(12.00pm meditation - 12.30pm lunch + library -  
1.30pm presenter + questions and comments)  
Coordinator: Alice Oppen  
Tel: 03 5976 3815  
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

*Wodonga-Albury Group:*

Meet: Shop 6, Tower Place, High Street,  
Wodonga VIC 3690  
1st Tuesday each month  
Library hours Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm  
Coordinator/Secretary: Denis Kovacs  
Tel: 02 6024 2905

**Western Australia***Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*

21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000  
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104  
Email: tsp Perth@iinet.net.au  
http://www.tsp Perth.com.au  
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays  
President: Franco Guazzelli  
Secretary: position vacant

*Mount Helena Retreat Centre:*

1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082  
All enquiries to Perth Branch  
Tel: 08 9328 8104

**Theosophical Education  
and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Qld**

2184 Springbrook Road,  
Springbrook QLD 4213  
Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211  
email: info@tsretreat.com.au  
Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

## *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 of 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 (1924)*



## *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 (1949)*



## **The Three Objects of the Theosophical Society**

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

~

**II. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion,  
Philosophy and Science.**

~

**III. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature  
and the powers latent in the human being.**