

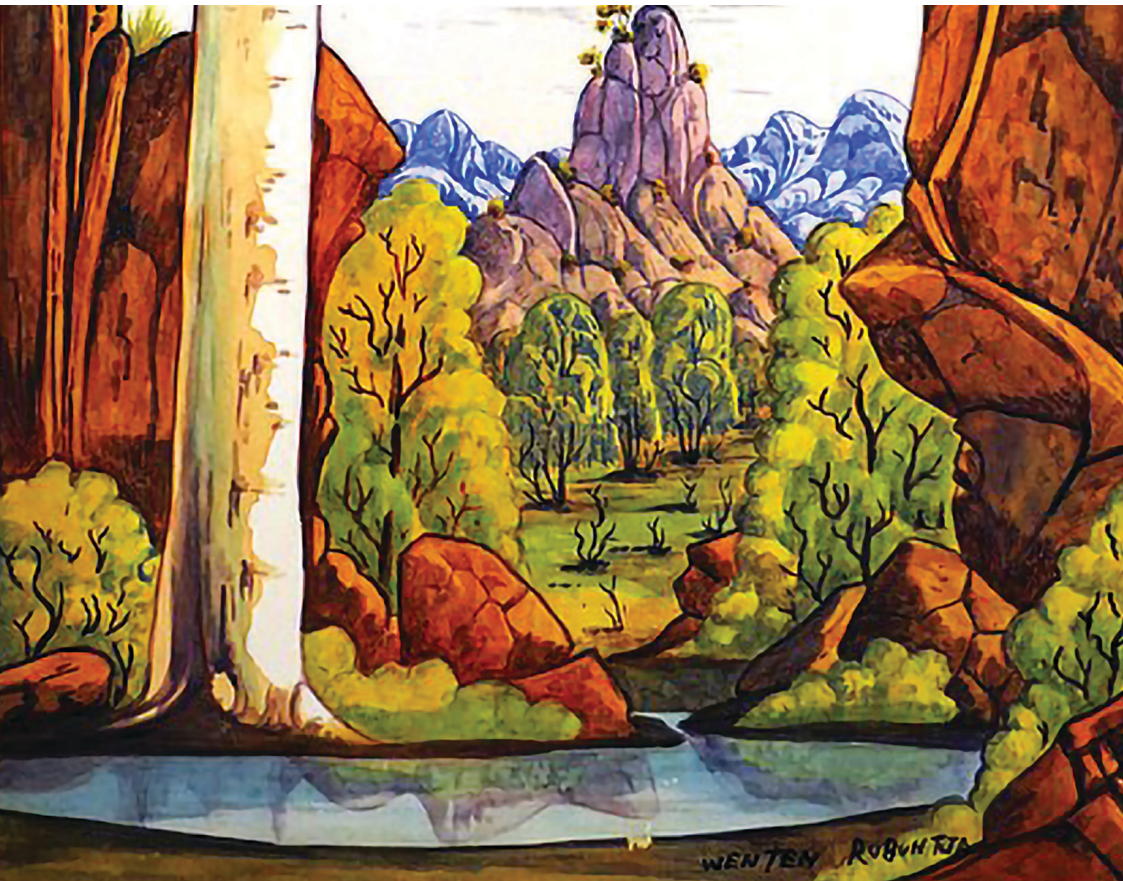
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INSIDE From the National President
Traditional Knowledges and Ageless Wisdom
Let Us be Like the Sky
Some Interesting Gems from the Theosophical Society
Report on New Zealand School of Theosophy April 2023

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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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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 National President

Stephen McDonald



Recently, I received news that our International President, Tim Boyd, will be visiting Australia and touring the Section in early 2024. As his visit will coincide with our annual national convention in Perth, Tim has agreed to attend as a featured speaker for a few days. As any of you who have heard him would attest, Tim is an accomplished and captivating presenter. I'm sure his presence at the 2024 convention will make it a special occasion. The theme of this convention will be "The Wisdom Traditions, the Great Teachers, the One Life". This theme is related particularly to our first and second objects, and will give scope to speakers around a wide range of topics. There is advance notice about the convention in the Calendar of Events section in this issue of the magazine. Please ensure you register early for this event.

If you are unable to make it to Perth, Tim Boyd will be doing a quick tour of most of the major TS centres around Australia, commencing directly after the national convention. Please

endeavour to attend his presentations and hear him speak. It will also be a perfect opportunity to ask your friends to come along to your lodge (branch). Look out for further information from your lodge (branch) with specific dates for his visit.

Our next national event will be held at The Springbrook Education and Retreat Centre, Queensland, in October. The theme for the presentations will be "Astronomy and Astrology: What we observe and what we experience". Each of the presenters have expertise in their particular field. Kevin Davey is a specialist in the field of astronomy and gave a very popular presentation at the recent convention in Adelaide. Nicky Bassett is a well-known presenter at Brisbane Lodge and has worked professionally in the field of astrology for many years. Simon O'Rourke, our National Education Coordinator, will support Kevin and Nicky with some Theosophical perspectives on astrology. This event is open to both members of the TS

and to non-members. The programme will start on Thursday evening and finish on Saturday. You can read more about the programme and find some information about each of the speakers in the Calendar of Events section. Your early registration helps us plan for catering and transport.

This issue of *Theosophy in Australia* features some of the talks given at the Adelaide National Convention in January this year. Olga Gostin's presentation was one of the highlights of the week. Her discussion of "the Wisdom of the Elders" and their holistic worldview that focussed on the oneness of all things, demonstrated the Theosophy that is embedded in the ancient traditions. The questions Olga raises remain pertinent, as they did when Suzuki and Knudson wrote about them in the '90s, 'how do we access and engage effectively with traditional knowledges, and how do we apply such broader understanding of our interconnectedness in the all-encompassing Oneness?'. How do we best value and respect this knowledge within the context of our modern society?

Phillipa Rooke's talk looked at the powers latent in humanity and the potential pitfalls of psychic abilities for their own sake. The student needs to be free from the self-centred

focus of living before those abilities have any value or usefulness. Rather than spending energy on developing powers, the person needs to spend time understanding the nature of the 'self'. Only with freedom from a self-centred focus will the powers of the higher realms become relevant and useful. Phillipa distinguishes between the cultivation of psychic abilities and the cultivation of spiritual abilities in a simple and meaningful way.

Finally, there is a whimsical article by Tinh Van, one of our volunteers who helps us at the national headquarters. She was ably assisted in her compilation of this wonderful historical piece by our librarian, Jennifer Hissey. Van has combined a number of classic tales of TS history using the same theme of gems, both literally and figuratively. Read on to discover this delightful and entertaining story. In the next issue of *T in A* there will be a transcript of one of the talks at the Adelaide Convention given by our featured speaker, Richard Silberstein.

Traditional Knowledges and Ageless Wisdom

Olga Gostin



Introduction

It is thirty years since the publication of Peter Knudson and David Suzuki's *Wisdom of the Elders* (1992). In this ground-breaking book the authors engaged with a wide variety of Indigenous worldviews as expressed in formal traditional knowledge systems (as relating e.g., to botany, zoology, astronomy, pharmacology) as well as stories, legends, and esoteric/spiritual contexts amounting to what they collectively call 'the wisdom of the elders'. In his foreword, David Suzuki acknowledged his training as a western scientist and the reductionist and associated paradigms that define western scientific method and its remarkable achievements. At the same time, however, he recognised that despite the advances in science at many levels, the benefits to humankind have been rather limited as evidenced in the 'immense problems of economic disparity, malnutrition, prejudice, alienation, loneliness, violence, poverty, and drug abuse' that have increased rather than diminished' (1992: xxiii). Specifically, Suzuki raised the alarm at

'the rapid and catastrophic degradation of the planetary biosphere'(ibid). His prescience hardly needs elaboration as the planet experiences a world-wide surge in floral and faunal extinctions such that it has been dubbed the Sixth Extinction Event; unprecedented droughts and catastrophic wildfires; rises in sea-levels and devastating flooding events. Most of these have arguably been traced to anthropomorphic causes driven by exploitative/profitteering practices: large-scale land clearing and/or mining by multinational companies or cartels, monocultures, water monopolies and the like, as well as huge increase in population.



David Suzuki 2015, Leadnow Canada (Wikimedia Commons - Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0)

Back in 1992, Suzuki and Knudson drew attention to the value of what they termed ‘native ecologies’ embedded in a holistic worldview that focussed on the oneness of all things – animate and inanimate. In their widespread research among First Nations people, they drew attention to the sense of place and veneration for the land as a sacred entity, coupled to a strong ethos of human interconnection not only through kinship between humans but also embracing plants, animals, and inanimate objects as part of a web of interconnectedness. All these Indigenous cultures also held a profound sense of the cyclicity of life, many believing in reincarnation, and hence, the obligation to sustainably maintain the patrimony of future generations. As Suzuki reflected: ‘Scientific expertise is so narrowly focused and specialized that it can barely comprehend the[se] dimensions and the interconnectedness of life’ (1992:xxix). It follows that ‘our economic and materialistic imperatives... have effectively alienated us from the very things that sustain us’ (1992:xxxv). Suzuki concluded his foreword with a dire warning: ‘We need a radically different way of relating ourselves to the support systems of the planet. My experiences with aboriginal peoples have convinced me, both as a scientist and an environmentalist, of the power and relevance of their knowledge and worldview in a time

of imminent global ecocatastrophe’ (ibid).

The question then becomes: how do we access and engage effectively with traditional knowledges, and how do we apply such broader understanding of our interconnectedness in the all-encompassing Oneness?

Defining Indigenous / Traditional Knowledges

In 2012-3 the University of South Australia held two symposia on Indigenous knowledges, focussing on water sustainability and wildfire mitigation. In her talk entitled ‘Respecting the integrity of Indigenous knowledges’, Professor Irene Watson asserted that she ‘would like to see...a more respectful relationship towards what is now a frontier of contested knowledges’ (2017: 46). Specifically, she sought the dissolution of frontier/silo mentality, and a shift to a philosophy of sharing and caring, with Indigenous philosophies and traditions being given due recognition and respect. In an arguably too rigid polarisation, Watson describes western-centric frameworks where knowledge is often recognised for its immediate commercial value, while Indigenous knowledges bind people for the benefit and sustainability of future generations. This duality, she argues, poses a real problem for recognising Indigenous knowledges within a

western framework by exposing the tensions between individual and collective rights. Whereas ‘Aboriginal principles of recognition... include reciprocity, balance and plurality (2017:47)’, Western concepts prioritise individualism, copyright, and commercial advantage as a central concern of recognition.

To elucidate her stand, Watson defines Indigenous knowledge as follows:

Indigenous knowledge is created, acquired, or inspired for traditional economic, spiritual, ritual narrative, decorative or recreational purposes, and is transmitted from generation to generation, and is regarded as pertaining to a particular traditional group, clan, or community of peoples, and is collectively originated and held (2017:48).

This definition invites several questions: if knowledge is created and pertains to a particular group, what commonalities can apply in a continent like Australia that featured no fewer than 260 different cultural groups at the time of European contact? And most importantly in this time of environmental crisis, is there any realistic avenue for cross-cultural engagement between the dominant western paradigm and traditional cultures whose members are diversely embedded in the fabric of modern

Australia? The answer to the first point about commonalities despite the diversity of Indigenous cultures (not only within Australia, but world-wide), is their underlying ethos of engaging with country not as owners but custodians. More importantly, all First Nations people, from the Sami in Finland to the San in southern Africa or the Kaurna of the Adelaide plains, see an integral link between all life forms: animal, vegetable, mineral and human. While different cultures necessarily explain and express these interconnections differently, all adhere to the same holistic transcendental worldview: that all aspects of life, including animate and inanimate features, form part of a greater, indivisible totality that transcends individual cognisance or aspirations. As theosophists we recognise this intuitive sense of the overarching Oneness of all things. It is the recurring theme in Krishnamurti’s last journal: Referring to the quality of a tree, Krishnaji reflects: ‘[I]f you have no relationship with the living things on this earth you may lose whatever relationship you have with humanity, with human beings. We never look deeply into the quality of a tree...’ (1993:9). It is also the view of Bill Neidjie, revered Gagudju elder, when he states “Look at the tree, I am he” or Arrernte artist Emily Kwame who paints “I am

yam". It is this holistic worldview that Suzuki and Knudson identify as the wisdom of the elders, and I would suggest that it is the loss of this sense of interconnectedness that accounts for much of our current socio-political and economic crises and social disparities. We have shifted our understanding and role as custodians of the land to profit-seeking management; and we have degraded the notion of brotherhood by labelling and othering those who do not meet our socio-cultural norms. Before addressing the second question: what chances of meaningful cross-cultural engagement between Indigenous and western cultures, I think it would be helpful to give a few examples of how the holistic paradigm operates in a real-life Indigenous setting.



Australia: Aboriginal Culture by Steve Evans (Wikimedia Commons - Creative Commons Attribution 2.0)

The holistic paradigm or interconnected worldview

At the core of Traditional Knowledges (TKs) is the inseparable connection between a local people (Mob), their

land (Country) and their creation stories (Dreaming) that form the essence of a triune relationship. All other cultural traits derive meaning from that core. Remove or incapacitate one element, and the other two become well-nigh meaningless or dysfunctional. In real-life an individual would grow into an understanding of these paradigms through intimate connection to country and intergenerational learning over a lifetime of acquired and shared knowledge, both formal and informal. Some of the learning, as for example, which plants are edible and/or poisonous, which have medicinal properties and how to apply them, would naturally arise during everyday life. Other aspects might involve gendered knowledge and be accessible selectively at times of initiation, while still other forms of knowledge are embedded in stories that act as triggers for wider application.

An example of the latter, since we are on Kurna country, is the story of Tjilbruke, an important ancestral hero mourning the death of his nephew Kulultuwi who had violated a local taboo. As he carried his nephew's body down the (now-named Fleurieu) peninsula, Tjilbruke would stop at intervals, deposit the body on the ground, and weep. Fresh water springs emerged at each place of grieving, near the cliff face or at sea-level. All Kurna people

conversant with Tjilbruke's story will ipso facto have a location map of fresh water sources along dry stretches of the peninsula: an informal lesson in geography, hydrology, and a roadmap for survival. Similar foundational stories or Dreamings/Tjukurpa (e.g., Seven Sister Dreaming) occur right through the continent embedded in local environments, redolent with facts, connections, and integrated knowledge. Across the continent also, there are certain recurrent themes and practices, reiterating the overarching sense of the unity of all things, material and immaterial.



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Another widespread paradigm, for example, is the notion of health as a combination of physical, social, spiritual and mental wellbeing – notions that have only lately become part of established western medical practice, poignantly highlighted by the surge in mental illness following

the COVID-19 pandemic. Some First Nations practices have translated this profound understanding in the (cross-cultural) analogy between good health and successful handling of a Toyota where the driver at the steering wheel is integrally connected to the four wheels that represent access to family/kin, spirit, Dreaming, and country. It follows therefore, that where one or more of these attributes is missing or malfunctioning, the individual will effectively fall ill. Not all stories are utilitarian – some carry moral messages or seek to make sense of abnormal features: like the so-called Sickness Country of the Jawoyn of the Northern Territory that was later shown to be associated with uranium-rich deposits. Others remain obscure or enigmatic, defying so-called rational interpretation. Just as for Indigenous paintings, there are layers upon layers of meaning and these unfold only as individuals graduate in wisdom and understanding. Against this complex and often esoteric background, is there really room for cross-cultural engagement and meaningful dialogue?

Cross-cultural engagement

In the same symposium to which I have referred, Veronica Arbon speaks about knowledge and research, and the need to push the boundaries of science by embracing Indigenous knowledges and the need to ‘decolonise our

country'. She elaborates: 'our country has been overrun with cattle, it's been overrun with weeds, it's been overrun with the knowledge of others' (2017: 67). The problem for Arbon is how to engage with traditional knowledge, to share, disseminate and pass it on with cultural integrity and due respect to rules of consent, while maintaining its fundamental spiritual connection or essence (*kurruna*) that is anchored to an innate relationship with Country (2017:68-9). What distinguishes TK is that it is not a theoretical standpoint or school of thought but that it is embedded in the real life of every member of that cultural group. As Arbon puts it: 'Relationships, Country, roles, reciprocity – all are Indigenous knowledges...[T]hey are beyond economic and beyond the social, and beyond the political and beyond the psychological. So, knowledge is much broader; it's everything' (2017:71). The implications that flow from TK are self-evident: walk your talk, there is no compromise. 'This engagement with and within our own knowledge is how that knowledge gets created, re-created and affirmed' (*ibid*). Arbon's reference to the re-creation of knowledge is interesting: there is room for dialogue, expansion, and transformation but the process must be based on respect and nuanced intercultural dialogue. Above all, there must be recognition

that TK have real credentials based on surviving the test of time – no less than 60,000 years of continuity in this vast continent. I doubt that even the most optimistic of us, gathered here, envisage that humanity will survive another sixty millennia... At the very least, this begs our attention to respectfully engage with the knowledge-holders of such *proven* successful survival on the planet.

Particularly in recent years there *has* been greater recognition of the expertise of First Nations people in managing their environment, especially through their universal and elaborate use of firestick farming and associated land management practices that mitigated against wildfires, ensured biodiversity, and the proliferation and management of food sources. This prompted historian Bill Gammage to refer to Australia as the *Biggest Estate on Earth* (2011), acknowledging the highly managed environment at the time of European settlement, and suggesting that it was Europeans who created wilderness by forcefully repudiating fire management practices and inviting the unregulated proliferation of highly flammable 'wilderness' areas with dense undergrowth. Elsewhere, mindless clearing of land, commercial monocultures and mining resulted in unprecedented erosion, interference with water regimes and upset the

balance of ecosystems that had been in place for thousands of years. Today there is far greater acknowledgment of the wisdom of these ancient practices, and First Nations rangers are increasingly appointed to help manage and/or restore environments ravaged by wildfires, intrusive weeds, and/or introduced species like buffalo, camels, donkeys, foxes, cane toads, or rabbits. Increasingly there is a recognition that partnerships based on the integration of traditional and western knowledges offer a real option to address some of our most pressing environmental problems. Even so, the fact remains that there is a yawning gulf between the cultural context of TKs and modern Australian society: a gulf as basic as demographic parameters (~ 1 million inhabitants at the time of invasion against 26+ million today) or as fundamental as a primarily spiritual worldview clashing with western materialism, with very different expectations of lifestyle, standards of living etc. Is there any possible reconciliation between these two paradigms and where do they stand in relation to the Ageless Wisdom?

Conclusion: A microcosm of the Ageless Wisdom

I would argue that the question is not *whether* the two worldviews can be reconciled, but that they *must* be reconciled. We are at an existentialist crossroad. Let us return to our starting

point and the *Wisdom of the Elders* in which Knudson and Suzuki clearly spell out the difference between traditional and scientific views of the natural world (1992:1-19). Referring to ‘the underlying interconnectedness of the universe’ – that they acknowledge is increasingly echoed in modern science, but not with the holism and/or urgency that is required – they itemise the key points of traditional knowledges in considerable detail, summing up: ‘They (TKs) remind us however metaphorically, of the shared origins of all forms of life, the ecological integrity of natural systems, and the ancient bonds of kinship between human beings and other species. They underscore the fundamental relationship between life and land. They illuminate the cyclic temporal processes of nature, the role of ordinary human beings in maintaining precarious balances, and the prospect of sinister, long-term consequences in the wake of human greed, hubris, and neglect’ (2007:3). This, I would argue, is the ethical key to our many current social, political, and economic challenges. The answers lie not in the specific details of TKs or scientific discourse and discoveries, but in the spirit or *insight* that informs and underlies such worldviews. This will require a major paradigm shift. It is refreshing therefore to read the reflexion of a contemporary

environmental geologist: “In the modern world as the quantity of data grows exponentially, not everyone is aware that data is not information, information is not knowledge, knowledge is not understanding, and understanding is not wisdom” (Glikson 2021:96).

In acknowledging the primacy of spirit/insight, I endorse and paraphrase the definition of wisdom by our President Stephen McDonald: Wisdom means more than acquired knowledge of the world. It transcends the words we use to express our thoughts and ideas. Theosophy refers to the ‘Ageless Wisdom’ which does not rely on learning or the accumulation of knowledge, but relies on *insight* (2022:74, my emphasis). In this our President echoes Mary Anderson’s definition of Ancient Wisdom in the *Theosophical Encyclopaedia* where she states that Ancient Wisdom “involves the right use of knowledge rather than the knowledge itself” (2006: 677). This parallels the view of Krishnamurti (1987/1993:37) that knowledge springs from thought evolved over time, and as such remains shackled by cultural constraints, impeding access to instinctive truth. It is precisely this intuitive, holistic and spirit-full insight that characterises traditional knowledges. Whereas the Ageless Wisdom purports to be all-encompassing and cosmic in its

reach, TKs apply similar principles at a microcosmic level: each culture is steeped in its own rendering of Ageless Wisdom. Like leaves on a giant tree, myriads of TKs contribute to the pulse of the tree of which they are an integral part. It is high time for western and other modern dominant cultures to adopt a different paradigm of what it means to be human.



Sunset and Tree, 2012, Bessi (Pixabay). Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication)

As we face existential threats at ideological, environmental, and socio-economic levels, it is both sobering and challenging to realise that there are alternative models for long-term survival on this planet. As Joy Mills puts it in her seminal lecture *Now is the time to be human*, to be human implies the capacity to make choices. “Our continuing to be human, and the development of our full human potential, will depend on the choices we make... We must not only learn the truth; *we must suffer it*. This suffering is the bearing of the fruit of our choices”

(1971 in 2008:66, my emphasis). This is the ultimate gift of insight that we must glean, and apply, from the Ageless Wisdom and traditional knowledges. Mills challenges us to adopt no less than “a complete transformation of consciousness marked by the awakening of a new mode of thinking. In embracing this challenge, we are invited to become cocreators in the making and remaking of the world” (op. cit. 221-2). Interestingly, a similar challenge is raised by Bernard Salt in *The Weekend Australian*: “Sometimes the future isn’t simply an extension of the past. Sometimes there’s an inflection point, a time when the pathways of the past give way to a different kind of thinking” (2022:27). Let us boldly meet, embrace, and suffer that challenge.

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Profile

Of mixed Belgian-Russian parentage, DR OLGA GOSTIN did her undergraduate studies in social anthropology in South Africa before obtaining a scholarship to the Australian National University. From 1963-65 she did research into resettlement and cash cropping among the Kuni of Papua, obtaining her PhD in 1968. A post-doctoral exchange at Moscow State University honed her interest in syncretism and cultural change. She was part of the foundation of Australia's first specifically designated tertiary program for Indigenous Australians in 1973 and remained associated with it for the next 40 years. In 1992 she obtained her Master's degree in Environmental Studies from Adelaide University. She remains passionately interested in social justice and environmental issues. Olga has been a dedicated member of the Theosophical Society since 1970.

Let Us be Like the Sky

Phillipa Rooke



Transcript of a talk presented at Theosophical Society's National Convention in Adelaide in January 2023.

I'd like to address an aspect of the third object of the Theosophical Society, that of 'Exploring the powers latent in humanity'. We shall look at it from my understanding, tease it out a bit, then look at how we can in some way put into practice the important message to which I believe it directs us.

From what I gather, during the time that this statement has been part of the Third Object, there has been more than

one way of interpreting just what those powers latent in humanity are.

I think the word "power" can be a bit loaded in our day and age. Power in the context of our conversation here means,

- Ability to do or act
- A particular faculty of body or mind

We might then, call a "power" an accomplishment or an ability, and not as meaning having power over someone or something.

Looking now at "latent" which qualifies power,

- Hidden; concealed; present but not visible or apparent.
- Below the surface, but potentially able to achieve expression.

Perhaps from this we could describe a latent power as an ability which has not yet woken up. Going back to the third object, it suggests that humanity has abilities which are not as yet awake. There are potentialities hidden within us which we are yet to discover. It is exciting to go on a journey of discovery, and that is the gift of Theosophy.

From my understanding, that aforementioned “more than one interpretation of latent powers” has basically had two camps: those who think of it as meaning the waking up or development of psychic abilities; and those who would apply it to meaning the cultivation of our spiritual abilities. These two can be interconnected, in that Krishnamurti and the *Yoga Sutras* say that the deeper we go into meditation, there is the possibility that psychic capacities can arise. They can accompany the spiritual journey. However, ... there are many warnings in spiritual literature, not to be seduced by psychic abilities, and not to be side-tracked by the seeming glamor of them. Krishnamurti says that they should be treated as childish toys because unless one is very careful, they can be utilised for personal benefit, for personal exploitation. The *Yoga Sutras*

warn of being distracted into turning outward and away from the spiritual journey, rather than progressing further. Associated with the idea of psychic abilities is that of the energy of kundalini. Again Krishnamurti, who I believe always speaks from his personal experience, says that before getting involved with this energy it is necessary that one has absolute righteous behaviour, must never get angry, must never think about oneself and must be founded in goodness, otherwise if that energy is released it will destroy oneself and the world.



Meditation 2016 (Pixabay - Activedia)

It would seem that in trying to cultivate these energies and abilities before one has spiritual wisdom, before one is completely free from any hint of selfishness, one is asking for trouble. If we approach such abilities with wanting them for ourselves, we are in the realm of ‘desire’. These abilities are still part of the psycho-physical aspect of our seven-fold being, and are associated with the lower quaternary,

with the phenomenal, and as such they are limited. They should not be something we decide we want, but can sometimes be a by-product so-to-speak, of the spiritual life and under those circumstances may then be guided and directed by the Higher Self from which that possibility of being ‘founded in goodness’ would come.

In a letter from *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, T. Subba Row points out to A.P. Sinnett that we would be taking a very low view of Occult Science if we were to suppose that the mere acquirement of psychic powers is the highest and only desirable effect of occult training. The mere acquisition of wonder-working powers can never secure immortality for the student of Occult Science unless he has learnt the means of shifting gradually his sense of individuality from his corruptible material body to the incorruptible and eternal Non-Being...



A.P. Sinnett 1909 (Wikimedia Commons – Public Domain)

And what of the ‘cultivation of our spiritual abilities’. What has been mentioned so far is: absolute righteous behaviour; never getting angry; never thinking about oneself; and being founded in goodness. Very fine attributes to aspire to.

‘Absolute righteous behaviour’ requires the effacement from our being of all that is un-righteous, not virtuous.

‘Never getting angry’ requires the removal of all anger from our being, and all irritability, thereby uncovering the spiritual quality of equanimity.

‘Never thinking about oneself’ requires self-centredness to be expunged, in order that we may live not for the self, but for all humanity.

To be ‘founded in goodness’ needs all that is not good in us to be obliterated.

Here I think we see the fundamental difference between the cultivation of psychic abilities and spiritual abilities. The former is the desire to have special gifts added to us, the latter is a process of uncovering and removing all that is getting in the way of our journey towards Truth. This latter process of removal in order to cultivate the spiritual in us, is what I believe the second half of the third object is directing us to.

Chuang Tze makes the point that the scholar accumulates, the Sage negates.

The whole process of the unfoldment

of the manifested world which has brought us deeper and deeper into materiality, is sometimes described as us adding veil after veil to cover the face of Truth. Those who would see Truth, must therefore go through the process of negation, the removal of the accumulated veils.

Do we have the ability to remove all that covers the face of Truth, or is that still latent within us? Have we as yet, 'woken up' the ability in ourselves, to see just what we are, how we are behaving, how we are thinking and feeling and even where we are, at any given moment? We would all have experienced this ability of true seeing from time to time, I'm sure, but is it possible that this seeing, this degree of awareness can be continuous? Of these two abilities, 'seeing' and 'removing', the 'seeing' has to come first, then this 'seeing' leads to 'removing'. In a sense, true seeing actually is negation.

We can only start from where we actually are and engage with the quality of our own being. This is forever our starting point from moment to moment. And that quality of being can change from moment to moment. One moment all is serene, then a few words are spoken, or someone does something and all of a sudden annoyance, or even anger is experienced. It is in that moment, that moment of annoyance, when annoyance can be truly seen, if

we are awake enough to be present to it. When we are aware of feelings that we don't like, can we then at that moment go into that unpleasant feeling as deeply as possible, without pushing it away? If we have cultivated the ability to truly see into the depths of what is disagreeable to us, then the negation can follow. We can be very grateful for those moments of reaction, because they give us the mirror by which to see ourselves.

True seeing is being able to see impersonally, like a non-involved observer. It's the ability to observe the perishable body, its thoughts and emotions, and not be 'sucked into' whatever is going on in thought, but to remain detached, and therefore uninfluenced and able to see the truth of the situation. Thought can often prevent true seeing. It can carry us off into the past or into some future fantasy, taking us away from the actuality of the present. E.g., when we go for a walk, are we noticing where we are and what's going on, or are we lost in our heads?

Life is about movement and change and it requires great vigilance on our part in order to 'keep up' with those changes occurring in our own being, and I believe that, paradoxically, vigilance needs to occur within a state of ease.

I'd like to share with you a little verse which I have found very helpful. It reads:

Be like the sky
 Holding onto nothing
 Resisting nothing
 Just allowing
 All suffering is resistance.

To me it is an invitation. An invitation to end suffering. An invitation to become that open conduit for Spirit, “like the Sky” and allow it to work within us. Ultimately, it directly challenges our sense of BEING a separate self. Being “like the Sky” may feel like being asked to be “something other”, being something which we are now not. Being what we are with all our thoughts and feelings gives us the overall feeling of being distinctly ourself. “I do this”, “I think this”, which is often referred to as the “separate self”, but perhaps since we are not in actual fact able to be separated from life, the distinct self may be a better description. Because



Bird silhouette flying in the sky by Matthew T Rader 2008 (Wikimedia Commons - Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0)

we experience this distinct self, we are able to perceive that there is something other, so the distinct self and the something other go together. They are two aspects of the one experience. We cannot leave behind that distinct self, but its quality can change.

The second line of the verse is “Holding onto nothing”. What are the implications of those three little words? If we are to hold onto nothing, this would mean the elimination of acquisitiveness, of wanting things for ourself, of clinging to our beliefs, our ideas, our possessions. Holding onto nothing allows the possibility of change, and of the unimpeded flow of Life within us. It’s a process of letting go, of coming to a state of ease. Perhaps our conditioned behaviour, which is full of those veils of preferences and predispositions, needs to be examined. These preferences are the reason that we choose to resist things, people, ideas, hence the verse advises “holding onto nothing, resisting nothing”. The ‘holding onto’ and the ‘resisting’ nothing are two sides of the same coin so-to-speak, and if fully honoured, would reveal the spiritual quality of being at peace with whatever happens, of resting in non-reactivity, but with a clear perception of the truth.

Then we come to “just allowing”. What must we allow? Perhaps we need to allow the flow of life to come and

go, with as little impediment from us as possible. This would require a marked amount of attention. Where is the allowing when we are doing the ordinary everyday things of life? Perhaps then we may feel a sense of boredom, or just tune out, and become disengaged. Is it possible at those times to fully engage with the quality of being, and simply see the wonder, the beauty and the grace of being alive. The absolute miracle of it all! Perhaps this is the full-hearted graciousness of true allowing.

Why is “all resistance” equated with suffering? If, with our lack of equanimity, we stop the flow of life, energy is no longer moving. It becomes static, stuck. It clogs up the system like a log jam in a stream causing stagnation, adding something more to our conditioning, another veil which will eventually have to be removed.

How would it feel ... to be like the sky ... allowing everything to come and go ... and not be stopped ... fully allowing Life’s energy to flow freely through us?

How can we cultivate this wonderful ability in ourselves? Maybe we can set our alarms to “be like the sky time” so that we can have moments in the day when we properly engage with what is happening at that moment, and build into our day times when we look closely, and consciously enable

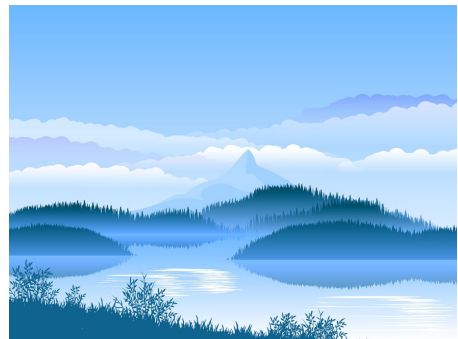
that free flow of energy and our co-operation with it. I think that making time to consider, contemplate, and try to put into practice this simple but profound idea can be of help in our spiritual journey.

This idea appears in many places in spiritual literature.

Chuang Tse says that the highest form of humanity uses “Shin” (heart/mind, essential being or spirit) like a mirror. It grasps nothing, it refuses nothing, it receives but does not keep.

When the geese fly over the water they are reflected in the water. But the geese do not intend to cast their reflection and the water has no mind to retain their image.

From the Advaita-Vedanta tradition: Clouds come and go in the sky, but the appearance and disappearance of the clouds doesn’t affect the sky. Your real nature is like the sky, like space. Just remain like the sky and let thought clouds come and go.



Lake, Mountain, Forest 2021 (Pixabay - Almeidah)

We don't actually have to DO anything except notice, simply seeing without interference, and from there, right action will follow.

So let us be like the sky
Holding onto nothing
Resisting nothing
Just Allowing.

References:

Concise Macquarie Dictionary 1982
The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett
Arranged and edited by Vicente Hao
Chin Jnr, TPH Manilla 1993. (Letter
No 64 pp 163/164)
You Tube talk – Jiddu Krishnamurti on
Siddhis and Kundalini

Alan Watts talks – “Way Beyond Seeking” and “Philosophy of the Tao”
You Tube - Annamalai Swami (1) Self Alone is Real – Read by Samaneri Jayasara

Profile

Phillipa Rooke is a past President of Brisbane Lodge, a former National Vice-President and State Representative. Her theosophical passions include meditation, Eastern spiritual thought, and the ever-unfolding journey of discovery of the essential unity of all things.

Some Interesting Gems from the Theosophical Society

Tinh Van

WITH THANKS TO JENNIFER HISSEY

1. Mark Lee was a longtime associate of Krishnamurti. He said in an interview:

“There is the understanding or belief that if nine semiprecious jewels are magnetized, they have powers to protect the person who holds them or has them or they can protect a place. Krishnaji believed in this or knew this.

And in India, in Brockwood and in Ojai he personally magnetized small caskets of jewels placed in gold and silver boxes. And these were then put into small plaster of Paris containers and buried in the north-east corners of buildings. And he left instructions as to how they were to be maintained. He wanted people to encourage them,

to talk to them, to surround them with affection and keep some kind of a contact going. So that continues at least in the places that I am aware of.”

Padmanabhan Krishna, another associate, added:

“Yes. Well, I know that he had some sort of contact with these jewels, even after they had been placed. I don’t know if he received vibrations from them, but Radha Burnier told me that once Krishnaji was walking past the Garden of Remembrance in the TS at Adyar with her, and he stopped there and said to her:

- Something has been changed here, and Radha said:
- No, sir, I have always seen it this way. He said,
- No, you find out, something has been changed here.

So, Radha went to John Coats who was then the President there and said, this is what Krishnaji said, has anything been done? John Coats said:

- Yes, there was this Dutch architect who came from Holland, and he said he could improve the looks of that whole garden and I gave him permission. When he moved one of the pillars, he found inside that a box containing jewels. He didn’t know what to do with it, so he brought it to me and it is still there with me.

So, Radha went and told Krishnaji this and he said:

- That’s it! It should never have been removed from there. It was put there by me and Amma (Annie Besant) for the protection of the Society.

So, Radha said:

- Sir, I can bring it back and you can replace it there.

He said:

- No, it’s useless now. Once it has been handled and moved, you can’t do anything with them, but you can bring another box with another set of jewels, and I can magnetize them and you can put them somewhere else in the Society and it will protect.

The north-east corner of the TS is along the path by the Adyar river going towards the sea.” (a)

We learn that the jewels were not necessarily polished, expensive specimens: a fragment or small chip is adequate for the purpose, things you can buy cheaply these days.

What are those nine semiprecious jewels? We can visit the legendary Star Amphitheatre in Sydney, built in 1923 - 24 and demolished in 1951, for the answer.

Papers in the archive at the Theosophical Society in Australia tell us that the foundation stone was laid by C.W. Leadbeater on the 28th of July,

1923. Beneath it, embedded in cement, lay tiny chips of unpolished stones (absolutely worthless in themselves), spiculae of diamond, sapphire, emerald, jasper, topaz, ruby, amethyst, turquoise and opal... (b)

So, who assembled these gems at the Amphitheatre and for that matter, at Adyar? It wasn't John Coats or Radha Burnier. Who, then? Now we know History has a twin called Mystery. Late in life, Krishnamurti regretted that some gems thus magnetized were left to die in India due to lack of care.

2. More about the Amphitheatre: as it was built for the World Teacher to use when He came, most, if not all papers written about it say:

- Krishnamurti talked only once there, and
- The occasion was in 1926.

But they rarely give the source or sources from where they get this information. It would require significant research to verify the information so often mentioned, quoted and accepted.

But here are the facts:

- Krishnamurti talked there not just once but two to three times. (c)
- And it was during the Easter holidays in 1925, not 1926. (d)

Checking Krishnamurti's movement in 1926, he appeared to be everywhere: in India, then Europe, then America.

But never in Australia. So much for trusting academic and official papers. Above are some gems in Adyar, and the Amphitheatre. What about the TS in Australia in general? Are there gems here? Yes, definitely. Read on.

3. You may not have heard of Sulamith Wülfing, but very likely you've seen some of her beautiful paintings. They have always been popular in Theosophical circles. As a child in Germany, this internationally renowned artist sat at the feet of her father, looking around at the walls of their living room lined with bookshelves full of theosophical books. The Masters' pictures hung on the wall and she heard him discussing theosophical principles, the Secret Doctrine, the Masters and many other esoteric subjects with his circle of friends. When she grew up Sulamith read those books herself, and graduated to Krishnamurti's writings, never knowing that one day reading would save her life.

World War II came and her hometown was bombed. Sulamith fled to France and became a refugee. Being a German woman living in a French village she aroused suspicions, and the Resistance took her in for questioning, handling her roughly. Her interrogator at one stage demanded of her:

“What’s the truth?”

Exhausted and afraid, Sulamith mumbled in a daze, not really knowing what she was saying or even where she was:

“Truth is a pathless land.”

“You know Krishnamurti?” demanded her jailer, surprised. “Well, someone who knows and follows the teachings of Krishnamurti can’t be a bad person. (e)”

And so, her years of reading literally kept her from death.

By the way, the book *Sulamith Wülfing* by Marlene Maurhoff is a perfect gem in its own right and well worth seeking out.

4. The next gem is about psychometry. Geoffrey Hodson had two stones on the mantelpiece of his fireplace. One was collected from Derbyshire, in the centre of England. The other had been picked up from the southwest of Wales. The stones had been collected far from each other but now lay side by side. A friend who was a psychometrist picked up the stone from Derbyshire and “read” its terrible history. It had come from a place where ceremonies of human sacrifice had been performed, and Hodson was warned not to keep the stone. he promptly threw it in the fire.

After some time had passed, another psychometrist, knowing nothing

about the previous stone, picked up the second, Welsh, stone and “read” it. This psychometrist said the same things about this second stone, exactly as the first friend had described. Hodson concluded that it was a case of impregnation, the second stone becoming charged with the radiations from the first. The psychometrist had read not the stone but the magnetism with which it was charged. Technically it was false vision that had been misled the psychometrist. (f)

A similar case illustrates the facts clearer. Two friends A and B go to see a psychometrist, they sit down side by side and the psychometrist starts to read. He talks about A’s mother, what she does, describing her house, what she does for work etc. Every detail is wrong and A tells the psychometrist that her mother is nothing like his description.

Then B, sitting next to A, pipes up with the news that it was, in fact, a very accurate description of her mother. That is precisely what her mother does, what her house is like, and what she does for work. Everything that has been said is correct. Dora Kunz, noted Theosophist, clairvoyant and healer, explained that when energetic work is performed one to one the reading is simple and the psychometrist finds it easy to tune in to the things which concern that one person. When a number of people are

sitting close together in a group or meeting, it is not so easy. The reader may be getting flashes of impressions and pictures which are associated with different people. In such a case it may be difficult to sort out the individual person to whom a picture or impression belongs.

5. You ask for more gems at the Theosophical Society in Australia? Because you have such a nice aura with lovely colours, like a glorious sunset, here is a last, wonderful one. But you have to dig up for yourself this gem. Don't worry, you'll be given a clue, and the result will be worth the effort many times over. Guaranteed. Look up *The Theosophist*, March 1922, p. 619 and read the article *Remember Gaeta*. It was published a hundred years ago but is still relevant, and perhaps you could write for this magazine an interesting article about this extraordinary tale. Another gem could help us to read this true story with better understanding:

"...H. P. B. passed away suddenly, seated in a chair. As I helped carry the body over to a lounge I had a distinct impression that she had not "died", but had deserted the body instantly for a set purpose. She had told Claude Wright that she did not want to come back as a baby, and so the *chelas* were looking for a body which she could appropriate at the moment it was vacated by the

soul, though still organically in good condition." (Memorabilia of H.P.B., James M. Pryse, *The Canadian Theosophist*, March 15, 1935, p. 1- 5.)

6. Finally there are real gems at the HQ of the Theosophical Society in Australia. Like the gems of Krishnamurti and C.W.L.:

- They're hidden,
- You need to say Hello to them daily.
- But unlike the gems of Krishnamurti and C.W.L.:
- They're hidden, yes, but in plain sight, you don't need to dig them up.
- Their effectiveness is still intact after you discover them.
- They won't die if you don't say Hello to them.
- And more precious, they can talk, which is priceless.

Because they can talk, if you present them with questions, they will guide you, point you toward the direction where you can most likely find what you are looking for. That's not all. They can also give you more than you expect, that is, giving you without being asked, facts that you don't know existed and which are very relevant to your research. Maybe they're clairvoyant, I don't know.

That's why they're gems. They represent and preserve the 'corporate memory' and thanks to their works, the

library at the HQ has a good reputation internationally. Money can't buy this expertise, only service can, and in this case it's dedicated service to Theosophy.

So, visit the HQ of the Theosophical Society in Australia, say Hello to the gems there, and who knows, you might get their help to dig up some gems in the library for your enquiries. In the meantime, another archival dig has been organised... some sparks detected ... but the gem needs to be polished before being presentable to you on the magazine... Be patient.

Report on New Zealand School of Theosophy April 2023

Michael Svoronos

In April 2023 the New Zealand National Section sponsored an event for the 2023 School of Theosophy in the beautiful leafy suburb of Epsom in Auckland, New Zealand.

The theme was "Journey to Spiritual Search" where the guest was Dr Ravi Ravindra a prominent academic in Science Philosophy and Religion.

The daily sessions commenced with meditation led by Dr Ravindra that I found to be very helpful.

References

All can be found in the library at the HQ:

- a- *A Jewel on a Silver Platter*, by Padmanabhan Krishna. p. 234 - 5.
- b- *The Star in the East*, Oct 1923, p. 2
- c- *The Star in the East*, July 1925, p. 1 and 7.
- d- Letter 28 May, 1925, Dr. Mary Rocke, Director - *The Star Amphitheatre*
- e- *Sulamith Wülfing*, by Marlene Maurhoff, p.129.
- f- *The Herald of the Star*, June 1923, p. 236 - 242.



Theosophical Society in New Zealand
(Photo by Edwin Saldana)

There was much richness in Dr Ravindra's knowledge in the fields of philosophy and comparative religion across different traditions. His appreciation of the depth of the writings of St Paul where people are said to have both a spiritual and a material nature aligns with the Theosophical view as expressed by Helena P Blavatsky. Similarly, references made about giants in Philosophy such as Iamblichus Plato and Aristotle, whose

works I am familiar with, provided me with the assurance that Ravi's life-long pursuit of study and reflection in search for unbiased truth is superb.

Dr Ravindra's interpretations of sections of the Bhagavad Gita, that is the most revered work of the Hindu texts, assisted in my understanding of some of its allegories much better.

The five-day conference was fully booked with attendees from all walks of life with diverse cultural, educational and spiritual backgrounds.

The audience was actively engaged. It was also an opportunity for me to meet and connect with new friends.

The management and staff did a superb job in putting this together and arranging for Dr Ravindra's attendance including his partner Priscilla who complemented the event with the integration of body and mind exercises.

I have been fortunate and privileged to have attended this event in April 2023 and am most grateful for that.

Election of State Representative for South Australia/ Northern Territory, and Queensland.



State Representatives play a vital role by representing and liaising with Lodges/Branches/Groups/National Members in their electoral area, gathering information, views and questions to be shared at the bi-annual meetings of the National Council. State Representatives have the responsible role of policy making for the National Society. The position requires an understanding of Governance (training to be provided) as well as time and dedication preparing for and participating in meetings. As a Society we are grateful that members are able to provide this special altruistic service to our Theosophical organisation.

In accordance with Constitution Rules 19(1)(c) and 21, the current terms of office of the State Representatives for SA/NT (Gaynor Fraser) and QLD (Barry Bowden), will expire at the appointment of new State Representatives towards the end of 2023. Accordingly, nominations are invited for the election of one State Representative for SA/NT and QLD. The sitting State Representative for QLD is eligible for re-election not having yet served for the maximum of three consecutive terms.

The term of office of the State Representative for TAS (vacant) will also expire at this time. Constitution Rule 20(2) states: “Provided that at any time when the number of Members in any Electoral State as referred to in Rule 21.1 of this Rule is less than thirty (30), that State shall not be considered as an Electoral State but shall be combined with an adjacent Electoral State as determined by the National Council until such time as its membership rises above thirty (30) whereupon it may be declared an Electoral State by the National Council.” The number of total members in the Electoral State of TAS have fallen well below 30. Accordingly, an election will not be held for the State Representative for TAS. This Electoral State shall be combined with an adjacent Electoral State as determined by the National Council at its next meeting in June.

Nominations may be made by a Lodge (Branch) in the relevant Electoral State, or by any two Members resident in the relevant Electoral State who have been Members in Good Standing for the two years immediately prior to the nomination.

To be eligible for election as State Representative, the candidate must be resident in the relevant Electoral State, must have been a Member in Good Standing for the last three years, and have served for at least one year on the Executive Committee of a Lodge (Branch) by the time of the election.

The State Representative elected in each State will represent the Lodges (Branches), Groups and Members in that State in all meetings and affairs of the National Council. They shall also liaise with all Lodges (Branches), Groups and National Members in their Electoral State and shall represent their views to the National Council and to the National Society Officers, as appropriate. As well, they shall receive and deal with representations from individual Members within their Electoral State, and shall refer the representations where requested or deemed necessary.

A photograph of the candidate, curriculum vitae, relevant biographical data, and a personal statement by the candidate, which may, for purposes of distribution, be edited in consultation with the candidate, must accompany all nominations. All nominations should be on Form 8, endorsed with the consent of the Nominee, and reach the National Secretary no later than close of business 22nd September 2023.

Copies of Form 8 in Annexure C of the Constitution may be obtained from the National Secretary.

Position of National Secretary



We are looking for someone to fill the position of National Secretary (NS), which will soon become vacant.

The duties of the NS are outlined in the Constitution of The TS in Australia. These include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- To take charge of the administrative functions of the national headquarters;
- To supervise the work of the staff of the national headquarters and payment of wages;
- To supervise the work of the bookkeeper;
- To prepare agendas and take minutes for the various governing bodies/ management committees of the National Society and undertake work on their behalf as required;
- Conduct elections in accordance with the Rules of the Society;
- To obtain legal advice on behalf of the National Society and liaise with the Section's lawyers as and when required;
- Draft the annual budget and manage the production of the Section's annual financial statements;
- Review legislation and governance requirements applicable to The Theosophical Society in Australia;
- Ensure compliance with the Rules of the Theosophical Society and all statutory obligations;
- Act as properties administrator for any properties owned by The Australian Section Theosophical Trust, unless anyone else is appointed to that position;
- While it is not mentioned in the Rules, the NS also renews the Section's insurance policies.

Selection Criteria:

- The NS must have been a member of the Theosophical Society in Good standing for the last five years at the time of his or her appointment and must reside within commuting distance of the national headquarters (there is scope

for some limited discretion by the National Council related to the minimum years of good standing);

- Proficiency in Microsoft office and MYOB;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Flexibility and adaptability;
- Good critical thinking and problem-solving ability;
- Qualifications and/or prior experience in business administration is desirable.

It is preferred that the successful applicant will be able to work at the national headquarters office in Surry Hills. A strong application from interstate may however be considered if a suitable applicant is not found within NSW.

The pay and conditions will be available on application. If you wish to discuss the pay and conditions before making your application, please email natsec@theosophicalsociety.org.au to arrange a suitable time for a phone call.

National Calendar of Events

2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

For TS members only

Dates: Sat 20 January – Fri 26 January 2024

(NB: to help contain costs, this convention is for 6 nights only, however, as 26 January is a public holiday, you may prefer to stay an extra night at the venue.



This may be prearranged with us at the time of your registration.)

Venue: St Catherine's on Park, University of Western Australia, Perth

Theme: *“The Wisdom Traditions, the Great Teachers, the One Life”*

Featured Speaker: Tim Boyd – International President of the Theosophical Society

Accommodation Rates: \$1,140 for **6 nights**, standard single rooms with shared bathrooms (all rooms are airconditioned).

Student studio rooms (with ensuite bathrooms and double beds) are also available for \$1,284 per person.

Hotel-style studio rooms (larger rooms with ensuite and queen/king beds) are available for \$1,524 per person.

These tariffs include all meals and morning and afternoon tea. All the above rates are per person for single occupancy of a room.

If preferred payment may be made by instalments (email request to Leo Ta as below).

Earlybird Registration Fee: \$20 if received by Thu 31 August 2023. All registrations received after 31 August are \$40.

Registration Forms: are available from our website – www.theosophicalsociety.org.au

Registration and Full Payment Deadline: for live-in registrants – **Fri 17 November 2023**

Enquiries: Leo Ta, Convention Secretary – office@theosophicalsociety.org.au

Early registrations are encouraged.

We look forward to meeting you in Perth.



SPRINGBROOK EVENT – OCTOBER 2023

For TS Members and Non-Members

Dates: Dates: Thurs 26 October – Sun 29 October

Theme: *‘Astronomy & Astrology: What we observe and what we experience’*

About: Often we see the stars in a materialistic way and miss the depth of meaning implicit in the universe. The ancients saw the same sky much as we see it now, but their interpretation of the heavens was full of inner significance. Let’s enquire together into the relationship between science and spirit and how the two have connections that ultimately bring meaning to our lives.

Presenters:



Kevin Davey –

Kevin Davey has taught science and mathematics at secondary schools in South Australia. He started an information technology company in 1990 and was awarded a Master of Science degree in astronomy in 2016 from Swinburne University of Technology. He has been a member of the Astronomical Association of South Australia since 1995, has provided a number of talks to their general meetings and had articles published in their magazine, *The Bulletin of the ASSA*. Kevin is a popular speaker and has presented on various aspects of physical sciences, astronomy and cosmology to the Adelaide Lodge and at National Conventions.



Nicky Bassett –

A second-generation Theosophist, Nicky’s vocation as an astrologer began in childhood observing the moon’s cyclic influence on the ocean’s tides. In 2000 she qualified as an astrologer with the Federation of Australian Astrologers and established an astrological counselling practice. She has presented lectures on astrology for the Brisbane Lodge and Sunshine Coast Lodge of the Theosophical Society and has taught introductory astrology for 7 years. Nicky also ran her own management consulting company for 20 years and has presented a variety of workshops and lectures in many parts of Australia for approximately 30 years.



Simon O'Rourke –

Simon O'Rourke has been a member of the Theosophical Society for 30 years with a strong interest in Theosophy and the Secret Doctrine teachings. He is currently the Education Coordinator for the Theosophical Society in Australia and is a former President and Treasurer of the Blavatsky Lodge in Sydney.

Cost: \$360 – includes all sessions, accommodation, catering and airport/station transfers.

For registration form: Stephen McDonald, *pres@theosophicalsociety.org.au* or (02) 9264 7056.



Theosophical Order of Service

*A Union of those who Love
- in the Service of All that suffers.*



The TOS Australia – May 2023 Update.

Hi to All, I hope everyone is keeping well.

Australian News:

TOS at the TS National Convention

In January the TOS was able to participate in the annual TS convention, this year held in Adelaide. It is the first time in a couple of years that TOS members have been able to get together and catch up with friends and colleagues. It gave us a chance to have the TOS AGM and to participate in TOS Presentation in the Convention. This year the talk was given by Barry Bowden. The title of his presentation was – ‘The Essential Journey of Service - The Path to Freedom’. It was well received by all present. Barry also presented the following day with a talk titled ‘Wisdom is the Lonely Journey



to the Heart'. This turned out to be a natural segue or follow on from his first presentation. Many thanks to Barry for his wonderful presentations.

I look forward to the opportunity of catching up with everyone again in 2024 at the TS Convention in Perth where we will be holding the 2024 National TOS AGM.

It is also good to hear that there is still TOS activity occurring around Australia, particularly in Brisbane and Canberra – from whom I get news and activity notices. Keep up the great work. The heart will always strive to loving service even through times of tribulation.

International News:

On the international front we have now also had advice from TOS Italy that they are having problems with the distribution of funds to the Syria Relief project. This means that there are road blocks in place for getting funds to India, Pakistan and Italy (Syria), but we are still working to overcome these obstacles.

That's all for now.

Loving best wishes to ALL.

Be Safe, Be Well, Be HAPPY.

Cheers, George Wester

National Coordinator

Email: tos.australia@gmail.com



TOS members at Convention

The Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches

The freedom of Lodges and Branches is defined by the scope of the Society's Objects as well as its essential mandate to make Theosophy known as a practical living Wisdom, which can uplift human consciousness to a realisation of the Oneness of life. Therefore, although the Society has no official creed of its own and upholds freedom of thought, and while it is acceptable to invite some outside speakers who can contribute to the exploration of the Ageless Wisdom, it is not appropriate for our platform to be used by such speakers to actively promote other organisations or belief systems. Each Lodge and Branch was chartered by the International President to be a representative of the Society in its area. Its work and programme should reflect the character, altruistic ethos and spirit of the Theosophical Society.

Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (2019)

National Convention - Adelaide January, 2023



Picnic lunch at Mount Lofty Botanic Garden



Queensland Delegates



Gayle Thomas, Heather Fisher & Jean Carroll



Outing to Hallett Cove



Delegates at 2023 National Convention, Adelaide



West Australian Delegates: George Wester, Hana O'Rourke, Tina Hentisz & John Davey



Simon O'Rourke & Stephen McDonald



Phillipa Rooke & Bruce Cassidy



Tony Petcopoulos, Nicky Bassett, Simon O'Rourke & Hana O'Rourke



Theosophy Q & A – Edward Sinclair, Lucille Crocker, Simon O'Rourke & Stephen McDonald (facilitating)



Caroline Murdoch wires up Olga Gostin



Workshop led by Helen Steven



Cassandra Au & Peter Brereton, Nina Mazurek (background)

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

Email: tshq@theosophicalsociety.org.au

Web: theosophicalsociety.org.au

Campbell Theosophical Research Library:

Email: catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au

Facebook: [@TheTheosophicalSocietyInAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/TheTheosophicalSocietyInAustralia)

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Canberra Group, Certified 16/11/2019

Meet: Friends Meeting House, Crn. Bent and
Condamine Streets, Turner.

2- 4 pm, 3rd Saturday of the month

Coordinator: Gordon Herbert

Tel: 0466 464 064

Email: canberratheosophicalsociety@gmail.com

Secretary: Barbara Harrod

Tel: 0417 298 869

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)

Study Groups & talk on Wednesdays

(Program of all activities on website)

Telephone: Reception: 02 9267 6955

Email: adyar@tssydney.org.au

Web: sydney.theosophicalsociety.org.au/

Acting President: Dr Wendy Dixon

Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Office Hours: 10am-4pm Wed to Fri

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:

Meet: Wallsend Railway Goods Shed

(now Wallsend Enterprise Centre),

76 Cowper Road, Wallsend

1pm on third Saturday of the month.

President: Patricia Bolsover

0421 699 631, pat_bolsover@optusnet.com.au

Secretary: Jane Wilson

zoisite888@gmail.com

Web: newcastle.theosophicalsociety.org.au/

Blue Mountains Group, Certified 13/5/1997:

Meet: Members' Lounge, Blue Mountains

Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street (above Coles),
Katoomba NSW 2780

Meet first Wednesday of the month, 11am – 1pm.

Acting Coordinator: Stephen McDonald

Email: pres@theosophicalsociety.org.au

Gosford Group, Certified 11/11/1997

Meet: The Narara Community Centre,

Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250

8.00pm 2nd Tuesday of the month

Coordinator: Vivien Wareing

Tel: 0429 088 995

Email: vivienwareing@hotmail.com

Secretary: Roni Ostergaard

Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group, Certified 2/4/1996:

Postal address and meeting address:

c/- 31 Riviera Street, Avalon NSW 2107

1.30 pm 1st Saturday of the month

Please email to confirm meetings

Coordinator: Nila Chambers

Email: nilachambers@bigpond.com

QUEENSLAND

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000

Tel: 07 3839 1453

Meet: 7.30 pm Wednesdays, bookshop and library

open Monday and Friday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm and

Wednesdays 6 - 7.15 pm (see website for other events)

President: Bruce Cassidy

Secretary: Russell Preston

Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au

Web: brisbane.theosophicalsociety.org.au

Facebook: [@brisbanetheosophicalsociety](https://www.facebook.com/brisbanetheosophicalsociety)

Logan Group, Certified 9/4/2019:

Meet: Logan Hyperdome Library (meeting room

downstairs) 66 -70 Mandew St, Shailer Park.

Bimonthly on the first Thursday (4 – 8 pm -
including talk 6:30 – 7:30 pm).

Tel: 0418 755 496

Coordinator: Christine Gwin

Email: loganthosophy@gmail.com

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 14/10/2003:

Meet: Maroochy Community Centre, 4 George Street,
Maroochydore on first and third Sundays at 2 pm.
Email: theosophy.sunshinecoast@gmail.com
President: Kerry Oldfield
Secretary: Mary Margarit, 0422 878 379
Facebook: @theosophysunshinecoast

Toowoomba Group, Certified 10/7/2007:

Meet: East Creek Community Centre, 43 Kitchener St,
Toowoomba QLD 4350, Sunday 2 pm fortnightly
Annual Springbrook retreat each Spring
Co-ordinator: Anna Robb
Tel: 0427 751 464
Email: nemesisbarry@gmail.com

SOUTH AUSTRALIA**Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:**

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: 08 8223 1129
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au
Web: adelaide.theosophicalociety.org.au
Meet: 10.30am, 4th Saturday, Science Group, 7-9pm
every 2nd Thursday.
(Please contact Lodge for additional meeting dates.)
President: Colin Darcy
Facebook: @adelaidetheos

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

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
Tel: 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
Web: hobart.theosophicalociety.org.au
Meet: 7.30pm Mondays
President: Berry Dunston
Secretary: Grant Dale
Facebook: @theosophyhobart

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:

Meet: Room 4, 8 High Street, Launceston 7250
(School for Seniors building)
Usually on the 4th Saturday of the month,
commencing at 1.00 pm
Web: launceston.theosophicalociety.org.au/
President: Denise Frost
Tel: 0400 140 624
Secretary: Ruth Holt
Tel: 0448 397 246
Postal address: Launceston Lodge Secretary,
c/o 66 Flinders Street, Beauty Point TAS 7270
Email: launcestontheosophicalociety@gmail.com

VICTORIA**Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:**

Meet: 1st Flr., 234 Flinders' Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 03 8638 9007
Email: info@melbournetheosophy.org
Web: melbourne.theosophicalociety.org.au
Meetings: Every Saturday from 1.30 pm
Acting President: Stephen Fiyalko
Facebook: @MelbourneTheosophicalSociety

Mornington Peninsula Group, Certified 8/2/2000:

Meet: Mornington Community House,
3/91 Wilsons Rd, Mornington,
1st Sunday of the month,
(12.30pm meditation + library – 1.30pm presenter +
questions and comments)
Co-ordinator: Alice Oppen 0439 563 313

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
Web: tsp Perth.com.au
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
Library hours: Tues 6 – 7:15 pm, Wed - Fri 1 – 4 pm,
Sat 10am – 1pm.
President: John Davey
Secretary: Jean Dawson
Facebook: @TheTheosophicalSocietyInPerth

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.

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

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