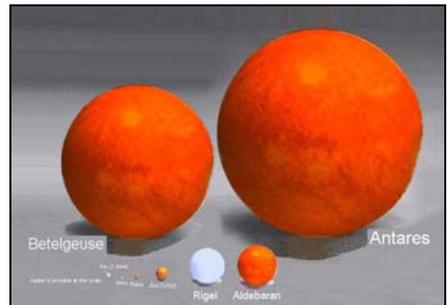
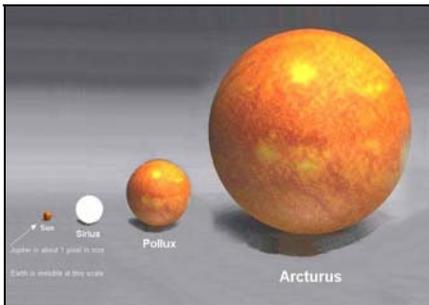
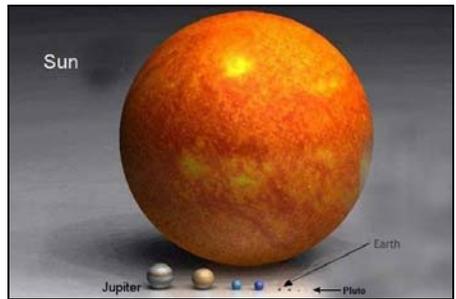
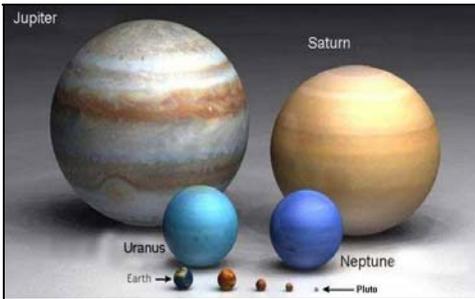
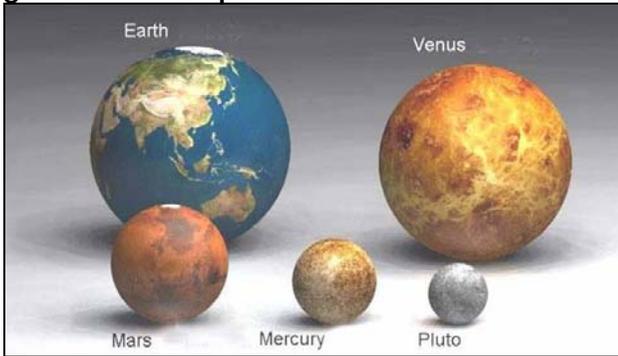




# Contact

The members' newsletter of the Brisbane Theosophical Society  
2008 Issue 4 – October-November-December

## Cosmological Size Comparisons for the scientifically minded



# Brisbane Theosophical Society

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## **BOOKSHOP & LIBRARY:**

Closed on Public Holidays

Monday.....10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Tuesday.....10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Wednesday.....10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Thursday.....10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Friday..... 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm  
Friday.....6.30 pm to 7.30 pm

The programme of Lodge meetings is enclosed and is also placed on the Lodge website which will always be the most up-to-date source of information. Whenever there are changes to the programme an email circular is sent to all people who have given us their email address.

The Theosophical Society has no official statements of belief. It encourages members to seek the truth by various avenues, but always subject to respect for others. Hence, all views expressed in these pages are entirely those of the authors – not of the Society.

## ***President's Notes*** - Noel Bertelle

It seems only recently that I wrote in this year's first Contact magazine that the Festive Season had 'passed in a blur'. As I write these notes, I find myself pondering that most of 2008 has gone in a similar fashion. With some hesitation I now wish you all a Merry Christmas, trusting the remaining three months will not therefore be influenced to pass in a similar blur!

We have had, I believe, a productive year to date but there is always plenty to be done; more so because we are the custodians of a very large and ageing building which needs continual care and attention. Additionally we have a number of study groups, a significant library and weekly public meetings to organize, not to mention an actual business to administer. My deep thanks to all those sincere and selfless folk who have contributed during the year.

That said here are some important items for your consideration.

***\* Annual fees are now due, to assist, please be prompt with renewal of membership for 2008/9.***

***\* The Annual General Meeting will be held on the premises at 11am, Sunday December 7. To vote you must be financial. As it is only financial members who can be counted towards a quorum, please make a big effort to attend.***

The election of Office Bearers will take place at the AGM and you will receive nomination forms by mail or e-mail prior to the event. If you wish to nominate someone be sure that you have their consent and that they have been financial members in good standing for the last two years. If you are nominated or desire nomination for the Committee, I suggest the following as desirable attributes:

- a sincere desire to further the work of the Theosophical Society and all that that entails, both as an individual and as a member of a group with similar ideals**
- a real commitment to attend monthly Committee meetings and a desire to utilize one's talents, as applicable, towards the aims and objectives of the group**
- an ability to attend and to assist as often as required at weekly (Friday) public meetings.**

I sincerely believe that an applicant should be able to say "Yes" to at least two of the above – three would be nice. Also, do not be discouraged if you feel you lack experience (you may not be the best judge). Remember too, that it is often more important to have a real desire to help further the work in which you have come to truly believe, than it is to possess skills which may be acquired as you go.

Now on a lighter note, Marie and I had the good fortune to go overseas earlier this year, in particular to Holland and Italy. We paid a short visit to the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden. At that time of year it is holiday time in Holland and we had arrived just prior to the commencement of some major events. So, after paying our respects we then took great pleasure in exploring the substantial grounds (a beautiful, lush, green forest in fact), in which the Society buildings are situated. Later I met with the President of the Naarden-Bussum Lodge who was extremely complimentary about our Brisbane programme of meetings and events. We left some of our local and national literature with him for the future reference of their Committee. In Italy we enjoyed the generous hospitality of Carolyn and Geoffrey Harrod, spending real quality time with them travelling and exploring much of the amazingly beautiful country side and absorbing the incredible atmosphere and indescribable charm of towns and villages in the Umbrian and Tuscan regions.

In closing I'd like to remind you that we have a Christmas Break-up on Friday December 12 at 7.30 pm. I look forward to seeing you there and wishing you **Merry Christmas** in person.

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## **MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2008-2009 are now DUE**

Single \$55

Pensioner/Student \$45

Couple \$85

Pensioner Couple \$75

Joining Fee \$5

Please Note: Members must be financial for Sep 2008 to Sep 2009 to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

## PEACE AND HARMONY THROUGH UNITY

*The following is an extract taken from an address given by our Lodge President, Noel Bertelle, at the Rosicrucian Centre on 'Unity Day', 20/7/08. It was attended by six interested organizations.*

Although I will be addressing the above subject from the Theosophical perspective this day is a day of Unity, it is our **UNITY DAY**. And Unity by its simplest dictionary definition means Oneness; 'the state or quality of being one' or 'the forming of a whole from separate parts.' (Collins English Dictionary)

Now words such as these can be frightening to those who tend to adopt a defensive or protective position on behalf of their particular group or organization. But they do not suggest we should all join the one family or adopt the doctrines of another's philosophy or belief system. Rather they suggest we should start with mutual agreement and harmony, recognizing that each individual treads his or her own particular path and knowingly or not, is indeed seeking Unity through Oneness. Moreover, Unity does not mean all thinking alike, but being able to agree to differ so that the result is Unity without uniformity. Whether I lean towards Theosophy and you towards another understanding is, for the moment, quite irrelevant if our intent is to work towards 'Peace and Harmony. Unity then, in the sense of Oneness, must become the natural conclusion we reach as we each tread the spiritual path.

In acknowledgement of that Theosophy has no desire to lead anyone away from their chosen belief system, but rather to provide a deeper understanding of it. Indeed, some lovely examples of this come from the early days of Theosophy and are recounted in Sylvia Cranston's biography of Madame Blavatsky. Cranston relates for example, the story of Mahatma Gandhi who was lead by Theosophy to study his own Hindu roots and in particular, one of its great texts, *The Bhagavad Gita*. According to Cranston's account, in his early days in London where he was studying law, he was apparently more interested in fashion, frolicking and learning Western ways than becoming a lawyer, believing that Indians should become more like English men. But whilst in England he met two theosophists, they talked to him about *The Bhagavad Gita*, which he had never read in its original Sanskrit, or indeed in his native language. Subsequently it became so important to him that it greatly influenced his many decisions as he fought to free India from British rule – Gandhi affirmed for example, that his philosophy of ahimsa or harmlessness came from that text. Gandhi was taken by the same two theosophists to meet Madame Blavatsky. He then read her book *The Key to Theosophy* and it convinced him that he should start reading more books, in particular about Hinduism, which he had not done due to an idea, fostered by missionaries, that his own religion was rife with superstition. Later he became an associate member of the TS and while in South Africa in 1893 had daily religious discussions with a group there and sometimes addressed their meeting. When he left he affirmed that he fully intended to spread as much information about theosophy as possible.

Another example, chronicled in Cranston's biography of Blavatsky, is that of

Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru became a member of the TS and like Gandhi became interested in the great scriptures of his country through his Theosophical contacts. In his autobiography he tells that at age 11 he had a new tutor who influenced him greatly. Nehru attended weekly meetings of theosophists and although he was too young to understand fully, he nevertheless became interested in theosophical ideas. Among other things they studied Hindu scriptures, the Buddhist Dhammapada and the Greek philosophers and mystics and this awakened a desire in him to understand more about religion, particularly Hinduism which had now been elevated in his understanding. He commenced the study of their great books – *The Upanishads* and *The Bhagavad Gita*. He became a member of the TS at 12 and has stated that he owes a great debt to Theosophy.

Then in 1983, as Cranston relates, Nehru's daughter, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, gave the Besant Lecture at the TS in Adyar, India and in it she remarked that

The Theosophical Society is a fellowship of seekers. Its contribution to India's culture and political rebirth is well-known. The gentle strength of the quest for truth enabled it to withstand opposition and misrepresentation in its early years. Perhaps that is what attracted my father to it.....and probably the message of theosophy had much to do with his universalism, his reverence for different faiths and his repugnance for any kind of fanaticism. (p196)

Indeed the history of the Theosophical movement is a fascinating one, it has had a profound influence on our world, as Indira Gandhi's words suggest. But what is Theosophy? The word Theosophy is translated from the Sanskrit term Brahavidya. This translation consists of two Greek words, Theos meaning God and Sophia meaning wisdom. Its first use was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD in Alexandria by the Greek philosopher, Iamblichus. He used the term to mean the inner knowledge concerning the things of God which were taught in the many Mysteries. The word today has been popularized by the Theosophical Society, founded by Madame Blavatsky, Colonel H.S. Olcott, W.Q. Judge, and others.

It is a word which signifies knowledge of Brahman, or the Absolute. This knowledge of Brahman, though it may be called by other names, is Universal. It is found for example in the East in the Upanishads and the Hindu philosophies, in the West in the philosophies of Pythagoras, Plato and other Greek philosophers; it is found, too, in Ancient Egypt and in certain Mystical teachings which are known to have existed in the early days of Christianity. Put simply, *theosophy refers to the great truths that have been realized by sages throughout the ages*. Or, as it was recently described in a pamphlet published by the Theosophical Society, entitled *The Spirit of the Theosophical Society* -

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. ***Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any.*** (To which I would add as an aside, that Theosophy does not claim ownership of any religion, or indeed *claim to be a religion*, for that matter. Indeed, the official motto of the Theosophical Society, is that '***There is no religion higher than Truth***') To continue my quote, Theosophy... offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and

more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching us to know the Spirit as ourselves and the mind and body as our servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

In sum one could say that Theosophy is grounded in the principle of Unity – it looks for the underlying truth, it seeks for that principle by which all things are one (and I mean that in an *essential*, not a 'lowest common denominator' sense); and it understands that that oneness exists throughout all life in its manifold disguises of matter, or form.

Reflecting this understanding, The Theosophical Society itself is an International Organization established well over a century ago in 1875 and is dedicated to the promotion of brotherhood and the encouragement of the study of religion, philosophy and science, so that we may better understand ourselves and our place in the universe. The Theosophical Society has no dogma and stands for the complete freedom of individual search and belief. All it asks for is sympathy with its three objects which are

- 1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour**
- 2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.**
- 3. To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.**

The application of these objects will (potentially) lead the seeker to the understanding and realization of the Oneness or Unity of all Life. In doing so it will also lead the seeker quite naturally to a life of service – a life circumscribed by deep compassion, understanding and love for one's brothers and sisters. Indeed, Theosophy today does its best to revive the very ideas of self-sacrifice for the sake of humankind, so clearly demonstrated by the ideal that is expressed in Hinduism as Mukta the Liberated Soul, and in Buddhism by the Bodhisattvas. At the same time it acknowledges that such an ideal is not necessarily for all individuals at their present stage of spiritual development.

In respect to this, let us hear some words from an earlier International President of the T S, C. Jinarajadasa - words which I believe also clearly express the ideal we address today

...the Theosophist is characterized, first, by a profound belief in the existence of a Divine Wisdom which explains all the intricate processes of Nature: and secondly by a determination to be an agent in God's Plan for (humanity). The Theosophist therefore, is essentially a reformer engaged in the most strenuous forms of social service. His chief gospel, as an active man or woman, is the Universal Brotherhood of all Humanity. The Theosophist realizes that in any relation between human beings, whether within the family, the community or among nations, if ever there is any infringement of the Law of Brotherhood, the result must inevitably be evil for both the individual and for all among whom the individual lives. Therefore a conscious attempt to understand what is best for the Whole, and not only for the part, becomes the constant endeavour of the Theosophist. The ideals of his philosophy give him a fuller guidance in the intricate affairs of life than he will

find (elsewhere). (p22)

Wherever Theosophists meet, their fundamental purpose is to understand the workings of God's Mind and the aim of this understanding is dual. First, it is to adjust themselves in their characters so that their minds will work parallel to God's Mind. But secondly, it is also to help others to adjust themselves in a similar fashion to God's Mind. (p25)

Jinarajadasa goes on to suggest that, if our ideal is to -

*....help ... bring mankind to Liberation*, then it is necessary to plan and work together as a band of brothers (and sisters) linked to a higher dedication of human and divine service. This is the reason why, *if mankind is to be freed from its miseries of ignorance, poverty and degradation, men and women must band themselves together to solve these problems.*

The realization of Universal Brotherhood is itself a natural corollary of the Theosophical understanding of the oneness of all life. As Madame Blavatsky puts it in the proem to her monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine ... **the first principle of theosophy is** that there is an “**Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable Principle**” the “**one absolute Reality**”, which underlies all manifested, conditioned being. “**This infinite and Eternal Cause.....is the rootless root of all that was, is, or ever shall be**”. *This one Reality is the source of all consciousness, matter, and life in the universe.* (p5)*

Theosophy, to quote another Theosophist, this time a contemporary one - John Algeo, the current International Vice President –

...theosophy views (life) as the relationship or interaction between consciousness and matter. When consciousness bends to matter and matter responds by moulding itself to conscious forms, the result is life. No particle of the universe, however small or isolated, exists without matter, consciousness and life – not fully developed perhaps, but there in essence. So within all manifested being is the **one absolute be-ness**; behind the manifold and varied universe is the one Reality. (p7)

And to move on a little further now, Theosophy is not simply a theory; it is also very much a practice. As John Algeo says elsewhere, 'Every theory implies action' ... (p7-8) and, Theosophy is a theory – a way of looking at the world – but it *implies* a practice – a way of passing through the world.' (p5)

And as a practice it is transformative, recall for example Jinarajadasa's words that *Theosophist's work to adjust themselves in their characters ... so that their minds will work parallel to God's mind.* Surely that means self-transformation? Let us look at this a little more closely. I quote John Algeo again;

The oneness of reality includes the oneness of humanity. And the oneness of humanity (*and here we link with today's theme of Unity directly*), the oneness of humanity requires that we live so as to honour that oneness, to promote it, to be brotherly to our fellows. Thus the first fundamental proposition of The Secret Doctrine implies the first object of the Theosophical Society and the first object of our Society is, **to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.** It is (therefore) no accident that the object of brotherhood was placed first on the theosophical agenda... (It is) the *raison d'être* of the Society...  
...If we accept the first and fundamental proposition of the theosophical theory – the oneness of reality – **we are driven inescapably to the practice of brotherhood.** But, to

espouse brotherhood without knowing why is mere sentimentality; to proclaim belief in the radical oneness of reality without living in brotherhood, is hypocrisy. The theory and practice must go together. Thus the first proposition and the first object together imply service as an aspect of theosophical life.

So we can see that the first object of The Theosophical Society grows out of the fundamental understanding that, “**behind the manifold and varied universe is the one Reality**”. Which leads naturally, as John Algeo and Jinarajadasa point out to a life of service: for indeed when we live for the whole and not the part, we are inherently serving.

We can also see that in order to understand what theosophy actually is, we need to recognize that it is not simply theory, it is not *philosophy* – but lived practice. Unity, oneness, tolerance, compassion, brotherhood– these are not simply truths to be sought out and understood, but living realities that transform individual and collective existence. Hence Theosophy is the understanding that we are truly one: that another is **as oneself**, though perhaps an as yet unknown aspect of oneself. And when we live the truth of this principle we will be brought to the Wisdom, or to God, or however you would like to term ‘It’. Such wisdom is our Divine heritage (*Theo-Sophia*) to be accepted as a gift through the Ancient Wisdom. Such Wisdom is the wisdom of the **One Reality**.

*The Bhagavad Gita* expresses this quite simply by stating that the proper understanding of Unity is ... **the overwhelming perception of the unity of all life in the One Self**. This is called in some traditions - the Mystic Marriage.

My focus on this Day of Unity is very much on the first fundamental principle and first object of the Theosophical Society; the formation of a Universal Brotherhood, and how this inherently implies a life of service – for in the realization of the Oneness of all Life is the realization that when we act we do not act for self alone.

Let us look at the shape this service might take. And at this point I don’t want to get into a lengthy discussion of the finer points of what it means ‘to serve’ or ‘to act’ in the world. Indeed if we follow the wisdom of the Bhavagad Gita for example, it suggests that we are never ‘not acting. In other words even when we think we are being inactive or doing nothing, we are actually doing something. Now I’d like to look at the idea of service; action in a more obvious, literal sense.

An outstanding example, is a group related to the Theosophical Society, called the Theosophical Order of Service – and this is one way that theosophists more ‘actively’ serve humanity (though of course there are many, many other ways and degrees of service that we can offer, indeed as I’ve just hinted, we are perhaps never ‘not serving’).

To elaborate on the Theosophical Order of Service, I have some words from its National Director, Carolyn Harrod

*The Theosophical Society, with its emphasis on complete freedom of thought, officially maintains neutrality in controversial political and social issues.*

*Within this context, an early International President of the Theosophical Society, Dr Annie Besant, founded the Theosophical Order of Service in 1908 to provide a forum where members could air their views and take stands on affairs of public interest. It naturally followed that the TOS also offered an avenue in which people could engage in creative, practical and humanitarian action in promoting the first object of the Theosophical Society: the formation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood. The intention was that discussion and subsequent action by members of the TOS would be in the light of spiritual principles and the ideas (ideals?) of the theosophical philosophy - one source of unity beyond outward differences; the interrelatedness and interdependence of all forms of life; and the ordered unfoldment of the cosmos in accordance with natural law.*

*Immediately on its foundation, TOS members became active in issues within their communities such as working to abolish child parentage in India, improving attitudes to working class children in Britain, improving slums and prisons in the USA and building an anti-vivisection lobby.*

*Today the TOS remains an international organisation, active in most countries where the Theosophical Society is represented. Each country is autonomous and organised to meet the needs of its own communities. It sees itself as the service arm of the Theosophical Society where members can work together to put theosophy into action.*

*In Australia, the service work chosen by our TOS groups is principally related to five focus areas: social service, animal welfare, world peace, healing and environment. Throughout Australia, TOS groups engage in a wide range of service projects and activities as well as making donations to various causes. In some activities, members contribute individually in ways and at times that suit their particular circumstances. Other projects involve members in group activities and provide opportunities for them to not only work together but also to enjoy each other's company and friendship. As well as working at a local level, members raise funds to support educational, social and animal welfare projects run by TOS groups in developing countries.*

*For example, Australian TOS groups currently fund seven home-literacy schools organized by the TOS in Pakistan. This Literacy Program enables children, young girls and women who have had no opportunity to pursue even a basic education, to attend classes. Reading, writing and arithmetic are taught by a teacher who holds classes at her own house which is in the same locality as the students. The TOS provides training, teaching materials, and basic items like a fan, water cooler, sitting rugs and a small salary to the teacher.*

So you can see that the work of the Theosophical Order of Service is an outstanding and explicit example of theosophy in action (and there are many others, countless examples at the individual level). And perhaps the greatest example of Theosophy in action in terms of sheer impact and scope was to be found during those formative years. Indeed, it could perhaps be said that the real contribution of the Theosophical movement, its service to humanity, has yet to be truly measured, for the work begun in those early years has a momentum that carries on to this day.

So before I conclude my talk, I'd like to return to Sylvia Cranston's biography on Blavatsky and the early years of Theosophy. You'll recall that Indira Ghandi alluded to the great contribution made by theosophy to India – so to continue and expand from this, Cranston relates how the T S quickened the flow of information about

Asiatic religions and helped restore self confidence in the wavering minds of the Asiatics themselves. The influence of the West and its militarism had been very strong and many educated people in India, and Sri Lanka, also in Japan, felt they were being compelled to adopt Western systems and customs. Christian missionaries had visions of countless conversions.

Yet this situation changed quite quickly and unexpectedly when a few men and women from the then dominant races appeared among them. This was of course, Blavatsky, Olcott and Sinnett. (Sinnett was also one of the founders of the Theosophical Society). They were announcing their admiration for the ancient wisdom of the East. Madame Blavatsky praised Buddhism and Hinduism, Colonel Olcott wrote a "Buddhist Catechism", and A.P. Sinnett published a successful book entitled *Esoteric Buddhism*. This was theosophy in action in quite a brilliant manner and such service assisted mightily the Buddhist cause, in particular.

India's renowned philosopher – President S Radhakrishnan in 1940, spoke of the astonishing resurgence of Hinduism and Buddhism in which the Theosophical Society had played a large part. He said -

When, with all kinds of political failures and economic breakdowns we (Indians) were suspecting the values and vitality of our culture, when everything around us and secular education happened to discredit the value of Indian culture, the Theosophical Movement rendered great service by vindicating those values and ideas. The influence of the Theosophical Movement on general Indian Society is incalculable. (192)

Colonel Olcott for example, worked particularly hard promoting education in Sri Lanka. Only 2 Buddhist schools existed in Ceylon in 1880 when H P Blavatsky and Olcott visited. By 1890, largely through Olcott's efforts the Buddhist schools numbered 200. He had been so successful in reviving Buddhism in Sri Lanka and also in Burma that in 1888 a Committee of Japanese Buddhist priests invited him to do the same work in Japan, pleading that he should "put courage in the hearts of our young men to prove to the graduates of our colleges and Universities....that Western science is not infallible and not a substitute for the natural sister of religion." Olcott taught and lectured there for four months, stimulating such interest that it became a national event.

In India in 1885 the Indian National Congress was born and under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, it became the dominant power leading to the hour when India regained her freedom. Gandhi told his biographer, Louis Fischer, that the top congressmen were all theosophists. In fact one of them Allan O. Hume was hailed as the father of the Congress due to his strength of purpose, his service and his leadership, all used to achieve the objectives of the congress. Such indeed is theosophy in action. Gandhi also explained to his biographer that "Theosophy is the teaching of Madame Blavatsky. It is Hinduism at its best. Theosophy is the Brotherhood of Man".

So, this hopefully gives you a sense, a taste of the fascinating and important history of The Theosophical Society. And it is a living history. I really feel that the enormous impact of its service to humanity has yet to be measured, for it continues. It should

be quite clear that to theosophists, theosophy is much more than a philosophy about brotherhood and oneness and higher things, *it is a living practice*. Through its three objects – and of course today we've focused mainly on the first object, though we've also touched on the second and unfortunately, due to time restraints, we have neglected the third. It is through the pursuit of these objects that students of Theosophy may be transformed into true *theosophists*. Though of course it should be said that one does not have to be a member of the Theosophical Society, or the Theosophical Order of Service for that matter, to be a theosophist. The Society is one way, it is an aid, and members will choose the emphasis that best suits them, *but the Society is not the thing itself*.

In closing I would like to quote from the Theosophical pamphlet to which I referred earlier, to illustrate that the living of the Theosophical life clearly means the living of that Unity we have all been talking about today.

The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together people of goodwill whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

I believe that the practice of theosophy is a wonderful and fulfilling way to lead one's life. It is a means by which each individual can discover the life they were meant to lead - both in the service of humanity and in the way in which they can best assist the development and subsequent fulfilment of the Divine Plan. Theosophy therefore, unfolds in each individual's life in a variety of ways as an expression of Unity. Now I wish to share some unifying and inspiring words from Swami Vivekananda, who most will know was a highly respected teacher of the Vedanta, and a leading disciple of the great Indian saint, Sri Ramakrishna

**...I am sure the day will come when separation will vanish and that Oneness to which we are all going will become manifest. A time must come when every (person) will be as intensely practical in the scientific world as in the spiritual, and then that Oneness, the harmony of Oneness, will pervade the whole world. The whole world will become jivamukta – free whilst living. We are all struggling towards the one end through our jealousies and hatreds, through our love and cooperation. A tremendous stream is carrying us all along with it; and though like straws and scraps of paper we may at times float aimlessly about, in the long run we are sure to join the Ocean of Life and Bliss.**

Noel Bertelle



## Headquarters Building Adyar SCHOOL OF THE WISDOM CLASSES

The sessions of the School of The Wisdom for this year will be held, as usual, at the TS, Adyar, Chennai, India.

The Application Form can be downloaded in Word or PDF format.

### “A Unique Occasion”



#### ***Elvina being presented with her Life Membership Diploma from President, Noel Bertelle.***

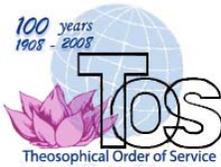
On the 16<sup>th</sup> July this year the Executive Committee of the Brisbane TS invited Members and Friends to attend a special morning tea to present Elvina Northcott with Life Membership to the Brisbane Lodge for all her years of service to theosophy. This unique occasion brought together four Life Members; Elvina, Pat Bailey, Dr and Astrid Arunachalam. (See Photos)

Elvina has been a member of Brisbane TS for 25 years and during these years of membership has worn many hats giving hours of her time in many different ways. As a Past President of the TS Elvina conducted many a Friday night lecture with great charm always welcoming and handling the most difficult lecturer or audience with great ease. In 1991 as President of Brisbane she was part of a team that attended the International Conference at the TS Headquarters in Adyar, India, to commemorate the Blavatsky Centenary.

For many years Elvina was on the committee for Hanworth Hospice at East Brisbane and it was not uncommon to see the lights burning brightly very early in the mornings at Hanworth every week while she sat and completed the weekly accounts for the hospice with Pat and Bill Bailey. When President of the TOS she was well acquainted with the many charities that the TOS supports. As an ex-nurse Elvina has devoted many years of her life supporting the disabled and intellectually disabled, spending many hours at SWARA, one of her favourite charities



One member remembers her attitude to theosophy as: “people can read as many books as they like but it is love and caring freely given that brings the greatest joy.”



# T.O.S. news

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Email: lynnettermuller@yahoo.com.au  
*President: Lynette Muller Vice President: Astrid Arunachalam*

## Opportunities to get involved

### ➤ Saturdays 4 October & 1 November Support our environmental project

All interested members and friends are invited to join in an afternoon of planting and maintenance at the Moorhen Flats Environmental Area. We work from 2pm to 5pm and meet on the corner of Deshon Street & Turbo Drive, Wooloongabba. Please bring gardening tools, hat, sunscreen, a cup and something to drink.

### ➤ Saturday 8 November Fundraising Christmas craft workshop

The third TOS art workshop will be held in the Brisbane Theosophical Society rooms (355 Wickham Tce) on Saturday 8 November 2008 from 10.30 am to 2.30pm.



This is your opportunity to create Christmas decorations, bookmarks, book-covers and wall-hangings. Have fun, meet old and new friends and contribute to TOS educational and social projects in developing countries!

Cost: \$10.00 (50% of this will be donated to TOS charities) This fee will cover the cost of materials.

Participants are invited to bring a vegetarian lunch contribution to share. Tea and coffee will be available.

To register, see Lynette Muller at the TS or email Karen Cipressi. cipressi@bigpond.com

### ➤ Saturday 6 December Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Brisbane TOS will be held at 10.00 am in the T.S. rooms. The meeting will be followed by a Christmas lunch. All interested people are invited to attend. Please bring a plate of vegetarian food to share.

### ➤ Saturday & Sunday 7 & 8 Feb. 2009 Working bee at Springbrook Theosophical Retreat Centre

Put this weekend in your diary. It is always enjoyable and satisfying. Details will be out early next year. To register your interest, contact Lynette Muller at the Brisbane TS or phone Astrid Arunachalam on 3262 3846.

### ➤ Keep those donations of food items for homeless women coming

We are collecting non-perishable groceries for women at the New Farm refuge who are moving into long-term housing. So far we have delivered six bags of groceries. If you would like to donate some grocery items for the next bags being delivered, please ask Lynette Muller or Astrid Arunachalam about what is needed. Most items on the list cost from \$1 to \$3.

### Donations to International TOS Projects

At the TOS planning meeting on 14 June, members decided to support the following international projects with donations in 2008.

- Golden Link School, run by the TOS in the Philippines
- Bhubaneswar TOS's social welfare programs in East India
- The Literacy Home-schools run by the TOS in Pakistan.

### Successful fundraising painting workshop

TOS Treasurer, Karen Cipressi, has conducted two highly successful painting workshops this year. They have raised \$100 for the Literacy Home-schools in Pakistan.



## His Holiness The Dalai Lama Reflects on Working Toward Peace

Today's world requires us to accept the oneness of humanity. In the past, isolated communities could afford to think of one another as fundamentally separate. Some could even exist in total isolation. But nowadays, whatever happens in one region eventually affects many other areas. Within the context of our new interdependence, self-interest clearly lies in considering the interest of others.

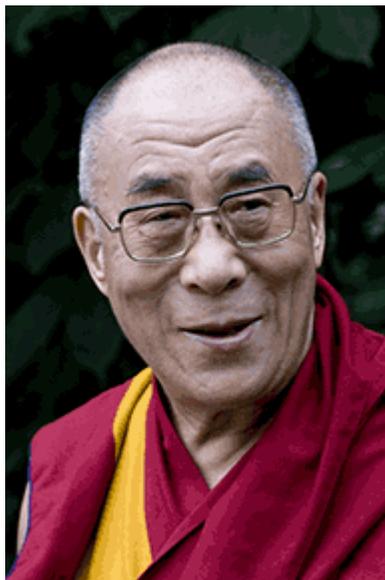
Many of the world's problems and conflicts arise because we have lost sight of the basic humanity that binds us all together as a human family. We tend to forget that despite the diversity of race, religion, ideology, and so forth, people are equal in their basic wish for peace and happiness.

Nearly all of us receive our first lessons in peaceful living from our mothers, because the need for love lies at the very foundation of human existence. From the earliest stages of our growth, we are completely dependent upon our mother's care and it is very important for us that she express her love. If children do not receive proper affection, in later life they will often find it hard to love others. Peaceful living is about trusting those on whom we depend and caring for those who depend on us.

I believe that the very purpose of life is to be happy. From the very core of our being, we desire contentment. In my own limited experience I have found that the more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well-being. Cultivating a close, warmhearted feeling for others automatically puts the mind at ease. It helps remove whatever fears or insecurities we may have and gives us the strength to cope with any obstacles we encounter. It is the principal source of success in life. Since we are not solely material creatures, it is a mistake to place all our hopes for happiness on external development alone. The key is to develop inner peace.

Actions and events depend heavily on motivation. From my Buddhist viewpoint all things originate in the mind. If we develop a good heart, then whether the field of our occupation is science, agriculture, or politics, since the motivation is so very important, the result will be more beneficial. With proper motivation these activities can help humanity; without it they go the other way. This is why the compassionate mind is so very important for humankind.

When you recognize that all beings are equal and like yourself in both their desire for happiness and their right to obtain it, you automatically feel empathy and closeness



for them. You develop a feeling of responsibility for others: the wish to help them actively overcome their problems. True compassion is not just an emotional response but a firm commitment founded on reason. Therefore, a truly compassionate attitude towards others does not change even if they behave negatively.

I believe that we must consciously develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. We must learn to work not just for our own individual self, family, or nation, but for the benefit of all humankind. Universal responsibility is the best foundation both for our personal happiness and for world peace, the equitable use of our natural resources, and, through a concern for future generations, the proper care for the environment. . .

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

In human societies there will always be differences of views and interests. But the reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to coexist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interests, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue. The promotion of a culture of dialogue and nonviolence for the future of humankind is thus an important task of the international community. It is not enough for governments to endorse the principle of nonviolence or hold it high without any appropriate action to promote it.

It is also natural that we should face obstacles in pursuit of our goals. But if we remain passive, making no effort to solve the problems we meet, conflicts will arise and hindrances will grow. Transforming these obstacles into opportunities for positive growth is a challenge to our human ingenuity. To achieve this requires patience, compassion, and the use of our intelligence.

*(Extract from a presentation to the United Nations Assembly by The Dalai Lama)*



There is no religion higher than human service and to work for the common good is the greatest creed. - *Albert Schweitzer*

My religion is very simple - my religion is kindness.  
- *His Holiness The Dalai Lama*

# The Theosophical Society

A worldwide body whose primary object is to promote Universal Brotherhood. The Society imposes no belief upon its members, who are united by a common search for truth. Its constitution declares three objects:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being.

The Theosophical Society has no official doctrine. All philosophies, religions and methods of spiritual practice are within its scope of interest but not endorsed. Material published in this journal therefore does not carry any endorsement or represent any official viewpoint of the organisation.

The Motto of the Society is "There is no religion higher than Truth".

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