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## The Service Link 2001

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**President:** Radha Burnier

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Diana Dunningham Chapotin

# Editorial : the aftermath of September 11, 2001

**D**o you remember where you were on September 11, 2001, when you heard about the terrorist attacks on the United States? Do you think that your theosophical philosophy influenced the way you perceived them or the questions you asked yourself in the days that followed?

Our first response, like that of everyone else was, of course, shock. We were horrified at the depths of cruelty and aggression to which humankind seemed to have sunk, and at the devastation wrought in thousands of lives. We were also deeply concerned about the international implications and repercussions. Those of us with television sets remained in front of the screen for hours trying to understand what was happening. We felt deep grief for people we had never known.

But what about a little later, when the world began reflecting on the causes of such monstrous acts? As Theosophists, did we find ourselves seeking a 'spiritual' response to the tragedy?

In October 2001, our International President, Mrs Radha Burnier, wrote in her *On the Watch-Tower* article in *The Theosophist*:

The disaster engineered by terrorists in the United States could be responded to in one of two ways: either as a national humiliation and calamity demanding powerful retaliatory action, or as a clarion call for a unified worldwide pledge to abolish not only terrorism but all other barbaric forms of violence and profiteering. . .

In an interview with Anne K. Simpkinson, Thich Nhat Hanh, the well-known Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, said:

We can begin right now to prac-

tise calming our anger, looking deeply at the roots of the hatred and violence in our society and in our world, and listening with compassion in order to hear and understand what we have not yet had the capacity to hear and to understand. When the drop of compassion begins to form in our hearts and minds, we begin to develop concrete responses to our situation.

Radha Burnier and Thich Nhat Hanh are socially engaged spiritual leaders, however. While suggesting that it is necessary for each of us to face the violence in our own natures, they do not shy away from the thorny political questions. Radha says:

Our [theosophical] expositions are sometimes deemed abstract and not related to contemporary situations. Therefore we have to consider – without adopting the hit-and-miss 'practical' solutions which are generally preferred and which frequently generate new problems – how the light of the wisdom teachings can be cast on the serious problems of the present day.

Thich Nhat Hanh was asked: Do you believe things happen for a reason? If so, what was the reason for the attacks on the U.S.A.? He responded:

The deep reason for our current situation is our patterns of consumption. U.S.A. citizens consume 60% of the world's energy resources yet they account for only 6% of the total world's population. Children in America have witnessed 100,000 acts of violence on television by the time they finish elementary school. Another reason for our current situation is our foreign policy and the lack of deep listening within our relationships. We do not use

deep listening to understand the suffering and the real needs of people in other nations.

What measure of truth lies in these ideas? Can we look deeply at our own contributions to the problems of consumerism, violence and deafness to other nations? Terrorism is clearly the symptom, not the disease. Whatever the outcome of the armed retaliation to the September 11 attacks, the long-term solution will reach across the way we live our lives and regulate our economies, societies and freedoms. It will involve a redefinition of the

concept of 'globalisation'.

On September 13, 2001 in the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, journalist Seumas Milne wrote: 'Inside America, the Trade Centre, the Pentagon, Camp David and Capitol Hill are all seen as symbols of global US power and prestige, of the triumph of democracy. Outside, in the Muslim world, they are popularly regarded as symbols of terror and oppression.' Do we understand why many Muslims have this perception? Have we studied the religion of Islam, including its popular, exoteric forms, sufficiently deeply

to have any real understanding of the outlook of its adherents? What effect does the imbalance in economic and military power in the world have on the way countries regard and be have to ward each other? Trying to understand the atrocity of September 11 is not to excuse it. What are our own feelings about America? Can we examine our attitude to ward her and make sure that we are not harbouring any of the resentment and envy that fuelled the attacks against her?

While we need to face the 'new fears and reactions that have cropped up in the inner world of the human psyche', as Radha Burnier suggests, we need also to take an active interest in the international scene, engage with political issues and dilemmas and be willing to take thoughtful personal stands in a compassionate spirit. If we can't find ways to help resolve the world's outward problems, how do we imagine that anyone else can?

But what, you may ask, can Theosophists do about the failure of Muslim societies and the fanaticism bred by fundamentalist Islam? One young Theosophist *is* doing something, you will be interested to learn. Rekha Nahar, a Bangla Deshi living and working in the Philippines, recently took the initiative of getting in touch with a progressive Muslim organization working for peace and reconciliation in Mindanao, a region of the Philippines where there has been armed conflict amongst the Bangsamoro people. By attending a forum, contributing to discussion and getting to know the other participants, she was invited toward the end of the three-day gathering to improvise a short session demonstrating elements of the peace education programme of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines. Considering that Rekha was one of only five women present, that she was not observing Muslim dress code, and that she was facing men from opposing factions in Mindanao, she was understandably nervous. All

**Care to join one of the many groups of Theosophists praying for a world at peace?** Write to the Peace Department of the TOS in America. Theosophists from all countries are welcome to join the Peace Department, which offers the following projects:

**Artists For Peace:** professionals and amateurs engaged in some creative field, such as visual art, writing, music, poetry, dance, etc., use their skills and talents to promote global peace. Members provide samples of their work for inclusion in Peace Department publications and on the website and participate in simple projects for peace suggested by the Department Director. Members receive a complimentary newsletter subscription four times per year.

**Circles For Peace:** members daily meditate for personal and planetary peace, and network and correspond with each other. They receive a quarterly newsletter which contains a meditation theme, inspirational items, member news, and suggestions on ways to be of further service.

**Gardeners For Peace** design and maintain peace gardens on their properties. The gardens are then used as meditation sites and/or animal sanctuaries. Members receive mailings containing items of horticultural interest, as well as other gardening projects for peace in which they may participate.

**Peace Action Network** members perform 'simple actions for a more peaceful and compassionate world'. These actions might include letter-writing campaigns, product boycotts, or humanitarian efforts. Previously, members have addressed such diverse issues as the militarization of outer space, the condition of women in Afghanistan, child labour and sweatshops, and human rights abuses in Tibet.

Membership in all projects is completely free of charge and open to any interested person, Theosophist or non-Theosophist, from any country of the world. **For information on any of the above projects, write to: Mrs. Deni Gross, Director Theosophical Order of Service Peace Department, 2668 Plow Road, Birdsboro, PA 19508-8247 USA, or send an e-mail to [cfpeace@hotmail.com](mailto:cfpeace@hotmail.com) and include your postal mailing address. For more info, you can also visit the TOS website at <http://www.theoservice.org>**

went well, however, judging by new opportunities that have since opened up: Rekha has been invited to act as facilitator at a future forum and to assist two organizations in developing peace education curricula in Cambodia and West Bengal.

The September 11 attacks showed us beyond a shadow of doubt that nuclear power plants and bomb arsenals are extremely vulnerable. As deterrence, all the warheads and anti-missile systems in the world are no match for the penknives and cold rage of terrorists. If nothing else, this should convince us that nuclear arms and power need to be phased out as soon as technically possible. Germany has already begun a programme of eliminating its nuclear power plants by the mid 2020s. Campaigning for the development of alternative sources of energy is something we can all do and there are citizens' groups that would welcome our help.

Another striking outcome of the September 11 attacks was the sudden willingness of the international community to co-operate in tracking down the hidden financial assets of terrorists, as well as of white collar criminals, drug dealers and money launderers. 'Globalisation' now no longer seems automatically to admit free-market assumptions about banking secrecy and tax havens.

Such issues of international finance may seem remote to Theosophists personally but the only reason profiteering continues to flourish is because the citizens of the world allow it. We allow it as consumers, investors and voters and there is only us to stop it. Long-time Theosophist, Robert Anderson, of Tauranga, New Zealand, devotes a great deal of time to denouncing international fraud and dishonest multi-corporate lobbying tactics. He alerts public opinion not just in his own country but all over the world by writing to prominent figures, politicians, newspapers, organizations and, of course, friends.

He provides valuable information to dozens of people on a daily basis by e-mail.

Does this kind of grass roots work seem only indirectly connected to the attacks of September 11? In your heart, do you still fear that individuals are powerless to influence the course of world events? Perhaps we need to distinguish between short-term and long-term responses to events. There will be short-term (often military) responses to acts of naked aggression against sovereign states, but these are like an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Theosophists find their true place at the top of the cliff, working on long-term solutions to world problems in order to head off disasters

before they occur.

If the September 11 attacks did not convert us overnight into world citizens engaged 'at the top of the cliff', it is hard to imagine what will. Compassion is not limited or constrained to choose sides. Compassion is not compassion if it does not give rise to *action*, however.

*Diana*

★ ★ ★

To serve is a privilege very few enjoy.  
RADHA BURNIER

## The Silent Minute

**D**uring World War II, millions of people all over Britain and the Commonwealth joined together in a silent minute to pray for peace. In those dark days of war, the Silent Minute became a network of light and hope in the hearts of many.

Today, the Silent Minute has been revived to promote peace all over the world. Mrs Dorothy Forster of London, England, invites us to enter into a minute of silence at any time, day or night, at least once a day.

Words are not necessary to enter the silence, she says. However, for those who would like to start with a prayer, she suggests:

*Source of my Being, help me to live in Peace and save my home, the Planet Earth.*

We all have within us an inner sanctuary, a place of stillness. It is good to enter this space of ten, especially at times of stress or confusion or in difficult situations.

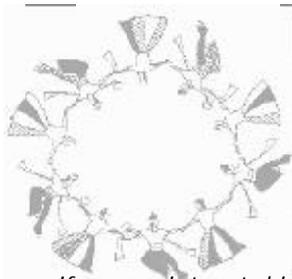
Two million people have joined this shining network for peace. Shall we join them?



**More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.**

**ALFRED TENNYSON**

The Silent Minute  
P.O. Box 6046  
London W2 6GB  
UK



## WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE TOS AROUND THE WORLD?

*If you are interested in the activities of different TOS groups, this long report from the international secretary and the Spanish language coordinator will tell you what has been undertaken in the past year. It may recount more than you wanted to know! On the other hand, you might pick up a worthwhile idea to try out in your own community. . .*

**T**he TOS was founded by Annie Besant in 1908 in response to the wish of a number of members to 'organize themselves for various lines of service, to actively promote the first object of the Theosophical Society'.<sup>1</sup> Although not as widely represented throughout the world as the TS, much work of social significance has been achieved through the TOS over the decades, in such fields as animal welfare and vegetarianism, theosophical education and parenting, hunger and medical relief, ecology, planetary peace, healing, the arts and music. Since the TOS's inception, fund raising efforts of members have resulted in significant sums of money being donated to humanitarian causes around the world.

As Spanish language coordinator, Mr Fernando Pérez Martín has continued this year to do much to support the work in South America. The TOS is active or embryonic in 9 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay. Fernando has sent introductory material on the TOS to all Spanish-speaking Sections, inviting those where there is no group to consider forming one. On her TS lecture tours in Latin America, Terezhina Franca Kind has been en-

couraging service work and it is hoped that TOS groups can be started before long in Paraguay and Colombia. Members in this part of the world principally tackle poverty and related social problems, with special attention to underprivileged children. A number of TOS groups, such as those in Bolivia, Costa Rica and Uruguay, also engage in healing, peace and animal welfare work.

### Argentina

National Director Silvia Blajer reports that the TOS has been very active in supporting a number of non-governmental organizations that receive no government help at all. Large quantities of clothing, food, household goods, furniture, bedding, toys and medicines have been collected and donated to such groups as the Salvation Army, the Luis Farinello Foundation and the Braulio Moyano Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital. Food, medicines, cleaning products and cash were also do-

nated to an animal welfare group.

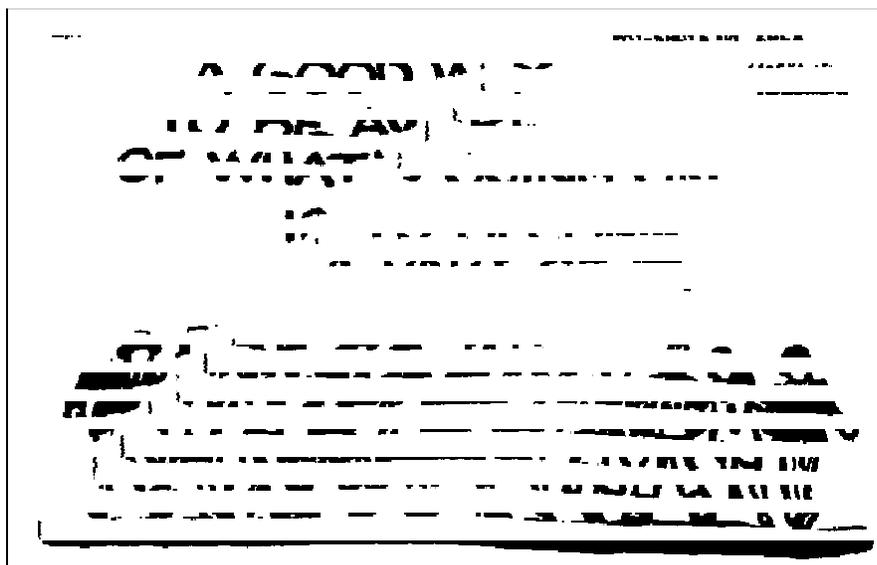
### Chile

Established recently, the TOS has initiated several lines of work: family and health, animal welfare, social service and ecology. Activities have been organized in each area. The TOS healing ritual is performed regularly and 80 people have been on its list already.

### Cuba

Teams have been formed for action in different domains. A group of members have gathered regularly to study the TOS healing ritual preparatory to performing it. Lodges outside Havana have been invited to join the healing work, which includes some research into contemporary scientific developments in the field. A list of healing plants has been started for those interested and a small area at Section HQ set aside for growing some medicinal herbs. A number of members are meditating regularly for peace.

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*TOS workers in Sydney with Mrs Radha Burnier, International President of the TOS*

Clothes and medicine have been delivered to people in need.

#### **East & Central Africa**

The TOS has been doing fine work for many years on the poorest continent on earth. AIDS is a major problem and having a devastating effect on the young population. TOS National Director, Mr Himatlal Doshi, reports that by the year 2010, Africa is expected to have 40 million orphans. Although the extended African family is traditionally highly resilient, absorbing parentless children lovingly, the situation has become so serious that it can no longer cope with the challenge. The inevitable result is overwhelming numbers of street children.

The TOS in Kenya gives generous material assistance to various Homes: for the care and education of these children, for abandoned girls and mothers, and for the elderly and disabled. It also sponsors the education of a number of stu-

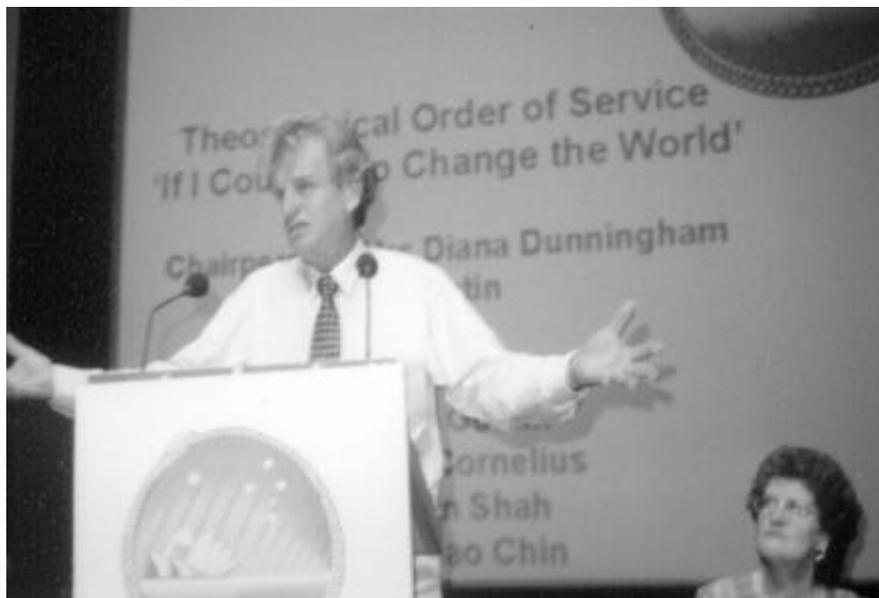
dents at the Starehe Boys Centre in Nairobi. Over a hundred orphans have passed through the Centre's secondary school over the 20 years the TOS has been supporting it.

The TOS provides lecturers for

schools on the subject of ethics and character building. About 3000 students were reached this year. The TOS also arranges public lectures by visiting personalities on such practical subjects as naturopathy, acu-



*TOS workers gathered at American TS HQ in July 2001, including TOS National President, Jean Gullo (front right)*



Bill Crews speaking at TOS evening at the Sydney World Congress in January 2001

pressure and health through yoga. Its members visit the families of the bereaved, providing scriptural readings and devotional hymns, and sharing a theosophical perspective on death. The TOS healing ritual, amongst others, is performed on full moon days.

In addition to charitable work, the TOS in Tanzania organizes an annual elocution competition in schools on spiritual and environmental subjects. The TOS in Zambia organizes an essay competition, thus hoping to sow seeds of theosophical thought amongst the young.

This year the TOS in East & Central Africa received a donation from the TS in Australia. Direct support of this nature forges bonds amongst members of the Theosophical family and gives encouragement to local TOS groups working faithfully at grassroots level.

#### France

The TOS currently sponsors the education of over 100 children and Tibetan refugees in India. This year, it found sponsors for the education of a further 9 children from Orai (Jalaun), India, establishing fraternal ties with the local group of the TOS there, led by Mr K.L. Gupta.

37 boxes of clothes, medicines and books were sent to India, Togo and the Order of Malta, and some direct donations were also made to facilitate the local purchase of medicines. In response to the call for help after the earthquake that struck the region of Gujarat in India in January, the TOS collaborated with the



Zeneida C. da Silva  
Principal of the Children's Home run by  
the TS in Brazil

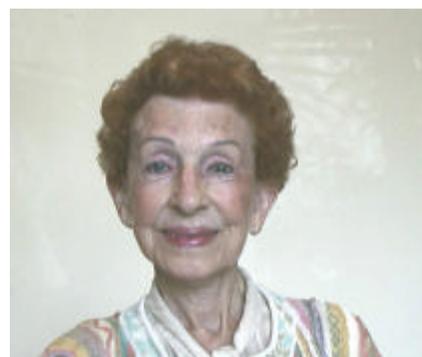
Indian Embassy in Paris to organize a fund raising concert of Indian classical dance. A sum of approximately \$US7500 was sent to Adyar to help with relief work, including donations from individual members of the French TS.

#### India

The TOS is widely represented,

with its many active local groups administered in regions. This year the National Secretary, Mr P.K. Jayaswal, visited groups in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Kerala. Some new groups were formed and TOS activities energized. The overall membership has increased.

Work centres largely around health care and education for the poor. Healing groups have become more active and some new groups have formed. National Director, Mrs Saraswati Narayan, reports that when the region of Orissa was affected by a severe cyclone last year, the regions of the TOS, as well



Elvina Northcott, new coordinator of the  
TOS in Brisbane, Australia. The pace is  
lively under Elvina's direction.

as many individual members, responded generously. 'Unfortunately, soon after came this year's Gujarat earthquake disaster', she says. 'I'm happy to say that all the regions again rose remarkably to the occasion. Money, clothing, etc. were sent and many members individually, and regions with their teams, visited Gujarat and tried to help to the very best of their ability. They have continued to send help right throughout the year.'

#### Italy

There are currently 36 active groups, an increase of 5 on last year. The education of nearly 100 needy children is sponsored and donations are made to a number of educational projects abroad, including for the distribution of TS books in Eastern Europe. 27 groups, involv-



*The Brisbane TOS is a member of the Men of the Trees Association and the two collaborate regularly in 'Greening Australia' projects.*

ing nearly 250 members, perform a meditation for world peace and 12 groups, involving over 80 individuals, regularly perform the TOS healing ritual. 13 groups participate in the work of the Italian Vegetarian Association and 23 groups organize assistance for the ill and elderly. 7 perform the World Mother ceremony. National Director, Luigi Marsi, sends his annual report to all TOS National Directors and TOS General Secretaries throughout the world for their information and interest.

**Pakistan**

In spite of the dynamic and professional management of the honorary secretary, Mrs Fareeda Amir, and her team, the TOS has suffered some major setbacks this year. The Save The Children Fund continues to phase out its educational sponsorship as it increases its work with Afghan refugees. The TOS's largest overseas sponsor, an American organization, has not sent its annual donation. The political tension arising from the bombing of Afghanistan in the pursuit of international terrorists has had immediate repercussions on the work of the TOS in

Pakistan, as overseas supporters, unsure of conditions, have stopped donating. The TOS is grateful, however, for the fund raising efforts, prior to the attacks of September 11 in the USA, of the TOS in England, France, Ireland and Spain. Theosophists in Australia currently sponsor the education of 25 students and New Zealand members sponsor 10. A donation from the TOS in England was particularly generous, as was one from the Vancouver Branch of the TS in Canada.

In addition to finding sponsors

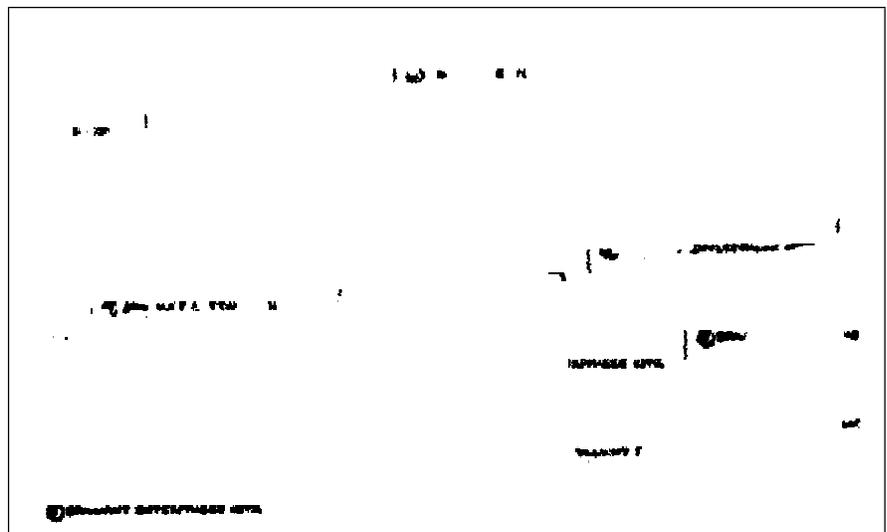
for the education of over 450 school children, the TOS in Pakistan runs a Montessori School. Numbers of pre-schoolers increased this year from approximately 140 to over 180. The TOS continues to run its free medical clinics in a slum area of Karachi, paying the salaries of two doctors each working 21 hours per week. Reading instruction is given to the poor in 9 literacy centres. Help has been given on a regular basis to 42 families and elderly people who have no proper means of support.

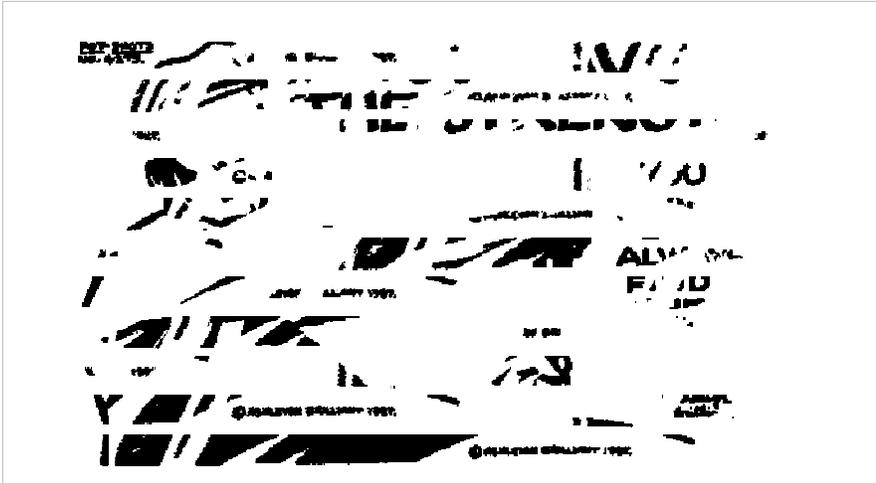
The TOS is continuing its efforts to build up its endowment fund, in order to have a minimum capital base with which to ensure the continuity of all its projects.

**Philippines**

The TOS runs kindergarten schools in three different cities. Most of the children are from very low income families. It also grants scholarships to students from poor families. In this past year, 227 students from primary to university level have been supported, two thirds of them girls. Out of these 227, 40 college and university level students are sponsored by a French humanitarian aid association started by Sister Emmanuelle, a Roman Catholic nun, and the rest by members and friends of the TOS.

For the past five years, youth camps for teenagers have been organized in different cities with activ-





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ities designed to foster self-awareness and a sense of responsibility in the community. Teaching methods employed by the TOS in its educational work have proved so successful that a demand has arisen for a school based on these approaches. Land was purchased last year and construction started in October. The Golden Link School will be operational by the second half of 2002 starting at kindergarten level. Every year a higher class will be added until the school covers the whole secondary level curriculum. The school is located in an economically depressed area, and will cater to the less privileged sectors of society. Theosophical values will be an overt part of the education offered. Australian Volunteer International (AVI) has sent a volunteer to help prepare the curriculum for the Golden Link School and to teach better English to its future teachers. Robyn Vercoe, who has been assigned for 2 years as from September, is also helping the TOS's high school and college level students with their studies.

In July 2001, Sister Emmanuelle sent 4 French volunteers for three weeks to help with TOS community projects in Camarin, Caloocan City.

The Health and Nutrition Programme for malnourished children continues in a number of economically depressed communities. This is a community-based project that involves providing nutritional food, multi-vitamins and medical support to severely underweight children. TOS workers also run informal classes on parenting, basic



Candi Phillips, director of the animal welfare department of the TOS in America

nutrition and related topics.

### Spain

38 members participate in 'Circles For Peace', an activity initiated by the Peace Department of the TOS

in the USA that now has many links around the world. Three branches also perform group meditations for peace. Three branches perform the TOS healing ritual and two collect and deliver used clothes for the needy. This year the TOS in Spain collected money to help the TOS in Pakistan.

### Sweden

This year Mrs Radha Burnier appointed Birgitta Stålhammar National Director of the TOS. Members collaborate with an organization called Lethjälpen and give assistance to a boarding school and community home in Riga, Latvia. The boarding school cares for about 150 children aged 6-16, half of them orphans and the rest with parents in prison, prostitution, or severely alcoholic or ill. The community home is a kind of group-living and home training for 8 teenagers who have completed their years at the boarding school.

### USA

The TOS has 7 active departments: Animal Welfare, Arts & Music, Ecology, Family, Healing, Peace and Social Service. Each department head shares news and information in the TOS's journal, For the Love of Life. Projects are many and varied. The Theosophical Healing Network led by Susan Stumpf, for instance, sends names daily to several of the more than 60 individuals or groups who perform a healing ceremony. The Peace Department, international in scope, has initiated yet another project this year: Artists For Peace. Already 33 artists from 11 countries have been recruited. The National President of TOS, Mrs Jean Gullo, has a big job co-ordinating the work of the 7 departments, in addition to publishing the 80 page journal three times a year.

# The Possible and the Necessary

Joy Mills

*'Some good things have happened to us this year. The trouble is we haven't happened to anything.'* So wrote a correspondent recently, commenting on activities within a TS branch. There is, of course, a vast difference between letting things happen and making them happen. It is essentially the difference between following the

**Yet so many good things are happening to us just now — opportunities that have seldom if ever been available, challenges that test our commitment; it is for us to happen to all these good things!**

path of hope and choosing to walk the road of risk. For hope is sustained by the possible, out of unquenchable faith that whatever may happen to us will find us prepared and able to meet the event. Risk, on the other hand, means the abandonment of worn-out certainties and, with a certain humility and a fresh provisionality, seeking ways for achieving the necessary.

Even to accomplish the possible takes some courage. Not everyone is willing to undertake the possible, for it can mean some slight discomfort to one's personal patterns, some interruption of personal pleasure. To assess what is possible for engaging in theosophical service means to take the measure of ourselves, our resources, our capacities, our talents, our weaknesses, our strengths. Yet so many good things are happening to us just now — opportunities that have seldom if ever been available, challenges that test our commitment; it is for us to happen to all these good things!

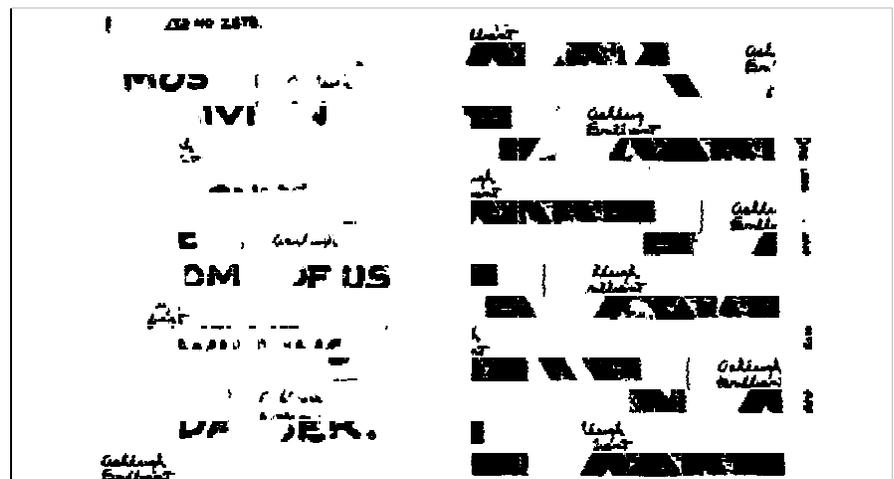
**There is, of course, a vast difference between letting things happen and making them happen.**

But beyond the possible, what is necessary? Early in the correspondence with A.P. Sinnett, one of HPB's Mahatmic teachers wrote: 'We are playing a risky game and the stakes are human souls'. (See The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, Letter 9.) The crises of our times demand more than what is possible, for we are still involved in that 'risky game'. We dare not shrivel our dreams to match our deeds; rather our ideals should always exceed the possibility of our acts. Only when we cease to take the measure of ourselves against what is possible and forget ourselves in a total commitment of all we are and all we have for what is necessary will we truly measure up to humanity's needs.

Whether we opt for the continuum of tension and anguish or for the continuum of peace and love is the choice before us. There are risks either way. It is possible to fail in our efforts and we can take the risks of failure. But it is necessary that we succeed and our risks should be those of ultimate triumph. For the

Theosophist can never be content with letting things happen, however good or promising the events may be. We must happen to the world in such a way that we, becoming inwardly transformed, transform the world. This is not to say we must become activists in every good cause (though activist we may become on occasion and if we so choose), but that we are active (at least in thought for thought itself is an active power) at every moment in that single cause which is the enlightenment of all humanity. 'To live to benefit mankind is the first step', The Voice of the Silence reminds us.

It is possible to do lip-service to the ideal of brotherhood; it is possible to repeat the worn-out certainties of book learning; it is possible to continue the same routines, the same types of programmes, the same methods of study, the same kinds of presentations, year in and year out. It is possible to be satisfied that we are doing the best we can, to be satisfied that we are too small, too weak, too lacking in talent or ca-



capacity, to do more, to be satisfied that occasionally some really good things do happen to us. But the unrest around us, the desperation of human need, the urgency of human hunger (not simply for bread, but for the bread of wisdom), demand we move beyond the possible to the necessary.

**We must happen to the world in such a way that we, becoming inwardly transformed, transform the world.**

It is necessary that we be willing to live out, in daily encounters, the very essence of brotherhood. It is necessary that we probe the old truths for new meanings that can only emerge in the revelation of our lives. It is necessary now that we speak clearly, convincingly, meaningfully, in terms that will alert the mind and awaken the heart to a new mode of being which is compassion incarnate. It is then not impossible to conceive that one day it will be said that humanity, in the 21st century, turned from the madness of war, poverty, pollution, greed, to the sanity of peace and understanding not only because the light of Theosophy shone upon the world, but because there walked in the world Theosophists whose lives gave forth the fragrance of love, the beauty of caring. Yes, because we hap pened to the world in its hour of need.

Extracts re-printed from Theosophy in Australia, September 1994



What burdens Mother Earth most are not the mountains, nor the oceans, nor the giant trees, but the minds that will not melt with the suffering of others.

NAISHADHA CHARITA

## Fund Raising With Flair

Floyd Kettering, member of the Theosophical Society in America, lives at the National Headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois. Floyd is financial manager at the HQ and one of the longest serving members of staff. What is less well-known about Floyd is that he devotes almost all his spare time to acting as treasurer and board member for the Humanitarian Service Project (HSP), a non-profit corporation dedicated to helping the forgotten needy in DuPage County, the district in which the TS is situated - one of the most affluent in the United States.

The HSP was started by Floyd's wife, Karole, a TS member since 1972. It began life at the HQ of the TS itself in 1979 but quickly outgrew the space available and now has premises of its own close by, with plans for further expansion. There are 3 full-time staff, 2 part-timers (college interns) and a hundred regular volunteers. The Theosophical Society continues to allow the HSP to use its Publishing House warehouse for sorting and packing tons of food, toys and books at Christmas.

What does the Project do?

The HSP provides groceries and gifts to needy families during the holidays, delivers food, household and personal necessities throughout the year to more than 80 senior citizens with incomes below the

poverty line, and despatches gaily wrapped gifts to 625 disadvantaged children on their birthday. The goal of the Project is to help eliminate the persistent pain, despair, fear, worry and humiliation that the cycle of poverty brings. Seniors and children in greatest need are identified by the County Department of Human Services, with whom the Humanitarian Service Project collaborates closely. Their web site is an interesting one: [www.humanitarianservice.org](http://www.humanitarianservice.org).

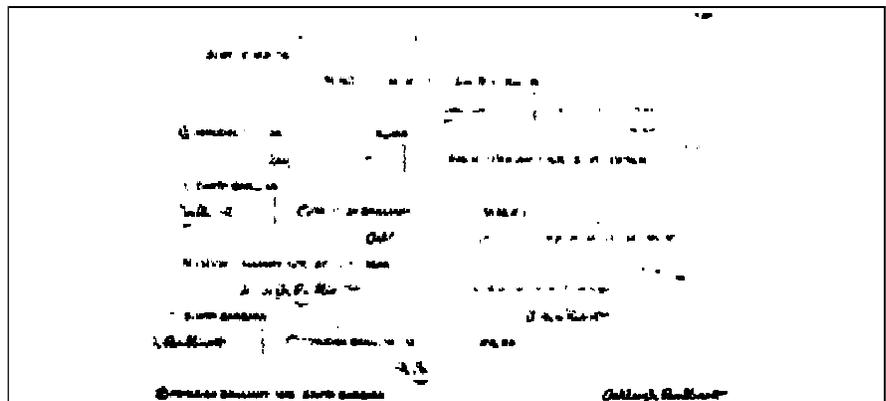
**A remarkable feature of the Humanitarian Service Project is the degree of public enthusiasm it inspires.**

Volunteers are vital, of course, in keeping costs to a minimum. Organizations and businesses from all around DuPage County and the Chicago area donate toys, food and time. Hundreds of individuals give their services. Elderly persons and children are 'adopted', gifts wrapped, groceries sorted and delivered, literature distributed, funds raised. . .

The TOS wishes Karole and Floyd strength and continuing joy in their work.

Donations may be sent to:

The Humanitarian Service Project  
1425 S. Neltnor Blvd  
West Chicago, IL 60185



Lo que deseo es sentirme valiente y aventurero, pero sin realmente tener que arriesgar nada.

***The HSP's ideas for fund raising are creative and fun. Perhaps some can be adapted to our own local charitable projects.***

## **Tried and True Hands-On Ideas**

- Seven year olds donated \$120 through their class Virtue Programme. Children were learning one virtue for each letter of the alphabet. When they came to the letters 'H' for Helpful and 'I' for Industrious, their teacher challenged them to be 'helpful' at home doing extra jobs, and 'industrious' by filling a box with the money earned. The children learned how 'J-joyful' it feels to give.
- The Student Council of West Chicago school donated \$192 through a four year project with the local electricity company. During the school year, the students evaluated the energy efficiency of their school. A report was written and sent to the electricity company who in turn gave an energy discount to the school.
- Students at an elementary and a middle school gave donations in lieu of holiday gifts for their teachers (at the teachers' request).
- Students at a Roman Catholic school collected \$300 on 'Totally Terrific Tuesdays' during the period of Lent. Tuesdays during Lent were designated as 'dress out of uniform' days. Students paid \$1 to not wear their regular uniform on this day.
- ETZ Chaim Synagogue Youth collected food in honour of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement.
- Elementary school students donated \$48 through a 'staff surprise drawing'. Staff members at the school donated surprises that the students bid on.
- Students from an intermediate school donated US\$96 by collecting loose change with the theme: 'Your Change Can Make a Difference'.
- A company called Dial America donated \$235 through company 'Dress Down' days, where employees paid to dress casually at work.
- Edison Middle School in Wheaton donated \$450 during Spirit Week. Each class sold Spirit Links. (Paper links sold for a dollar each.) Classes competed to see who could make the longest Spirit Chain with the links they sold.
- A Girl Scouts troop donated several large bags of household goods after leaders assigned each girl to bring a certain carefully chosen item. Another Girl Scouts troop donated 100 books by putting on a theatrical event and asking their parents and friends to donate a book for admission.
- Twelve year old school students donated \$1,369.93 in one day by bagging groceries for tips at a local supermarket just before a major public holiday.
- A high school club donated \$480 after conducting a marathon race in which participants obtained monetary 'sponsorships' to enter the race i.e. Friends and family members pledged their word to donate a certain sum for each mile the participant managed to run.
- The group in a high school calling themselves the Direct Action Club raised \$500 by partnering an ice-cream parlour. Club members mailed publicity brochures to area elementary schools encouraging them to buy ice-cream and confectionery on a specific day at the ice-cream parlour.
- A school donated a generous amount of food by having each class collect a certain type of food.
- A lady celebrated her 40th birthday by asking guests to bring Barbie doll items as gifts. She and her guests donated 58 dolls and 50 outfits to the Children's Birthday Project.
- A school organized a children's book drive, which provided welcome gifts for the Birthday Project.
- A primary school donated \$3,000 through an Exercise-A-Thon.
- Brownie and Girl Scouts create 'Birthday Boxes' putting cake mix, frosting, paper plates, balloons, hats, etc. in them.

# Devoted Workers



*Upasaka Khageswar Routrai, TOS,  
Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India*

**N**ot many Theosophists know very much about the dozens of TOS groups working in the villages and towns of India far from Adyar. Their activities are virtually unheard of around the Theosophical world. It is a challenge for the National Director and Secretary of the TOS in India to keep track of them all. The Annual Report runs to some 80 pages.

Mr U.K. Routrai is a member of one of the half dozen groups operating in Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Orissa State. Mr Routrai and his fellow members have been working tirelessly in the clean up operation in the wake of the super-cyclone that hit Orissa in late October 1999.

Natural calamities like flood, drought and cyclones are regular features in Orissa, but the cyclone that struck the coast was the worst in living memory. Winds blew at speeds of over 250 km per hour and were followed by torrential rains. A tidal wave 5-7 metres high left the port town of Paradeep under 15 feet of sea water and the return tide dragged thousands of people and animals into the sea. Roads, power supply and telecommunication systems, irrigation canals, forests, em-

bankments, schools and thousands of homes were wiped out.

The Indian Government and non-governmental organizations like the International Red Cross, Unicef and World Vision brought support in to the worst affected areas — Fatepur, Guamunda, Ambic and Baghari Ramtara — and local TOS groups such as Mr Routrai's tried to help some of the scores of peripheral villages where people waited in vain. Second hand clothes and shoes were gathered, and with donations received, cotton blankets and biscuits bought. Teams went out to distribute supplies in sometimes frantic conditions. 'Women and children swarmed our delivery vehicle,' reports Mr Routrai. 'Expectations were high but quantities limited, so the work was heart-rending.' The donations sent for purchase of food stuffs, generous as they were, came to less than what a single average Western family spends on groceries and household items in the course of a year!

What is happening now, over two years after the Orissa cyclone? Is the TOS still active in the clean up work? Have people picked up the threads of their lives? Consider these facts:

Hundreds of children have been orphaned in Orissa State. Thousands of cattle have been lost and thousands of hectares of paddy crop and other arable land destroyed due

to the salination caused by the tidal waves. Large areas of agricultural land are now infertile. Water sources, including tubewells, open wells and village ponds have been contaminated by sea water, and by animal and human carcasses. Many artisans and semi-skilled workers have lost their tools and work shops. The fishing industry has been dealt a crippling blow by the loss of many of its boats and nets. The loss of paddy, sugar cane, vegetable, coconut palm and betel leaf and other cash and subsistence crops has caused famine, especially in rural areas, where many are now forced to beg.

There are some 30 TOS groups active in Orissa State and though the international media have long stopped bringing reports on the devastation wrought by the cyclone, these bands of Theosophists are working as hard as ever to bring relief.

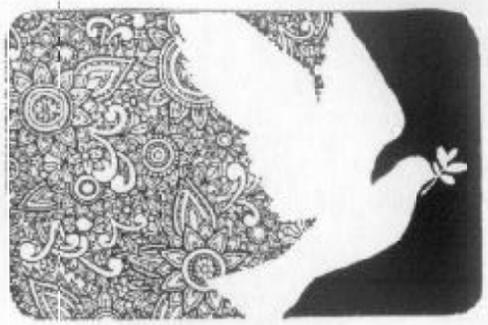
Mr Routrai advises that in the city of Bhubaneswar an important priority is getting children to school. If any TOS members around the world would like to make a simple, one-time donation to the educational work of the TOS in Orissa, they may write to the international secretary (see address on page 1) for information on a safe way of doing so, or else send a bank to bank electronic transfer to Adyar for forwarding.

## *Teacher Wisdom:*

*Pupils retain 90% of what they do  
70% of what they write themselves  
50% of what they say themselves  
10% of what they hear*

*The life of the spirit consists in giving continually. You cannot expect that spiritual life shall flow into you from above, unless the life you receive pours out from you in every direction.*

ANNIE BESANT



# Why PEACE POLES?

peace. He came to understand that thoughts, words and actions are alive and that they radiate energy.

Early Theosophists such as Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater wrote extensively on the power of thought, of course, especially on its effects on the atmosphere of the planet. Mr Goi also believed that the thoughts and actions of every person influence the destiny of humanity as a whole, as well as that of plants and animals. He saw the world as linked together by thought waves. ***The interconnectedness of all life is the philosophy behind the Peace Poles, as it is behind our theosophical teaching of brotherhood.***

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***They are a symbol of people's aspiration for peace and of their belief in the transformative power of thought.***

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**W**herever you go pretty much anywhere in the world, you may see what is called a Peace Pole — in churchyards, city centres, schools, hotels and in peaceful country areas. There is a huge multi-sided one with many languages on it outside the United Nations HQ in New York. There is one on Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 30 years. We have one at our Theosophical HQ in Adyar, Chennai, India, and a number of TS branches have one. The most recent Peace Poles planted and consecrated at the TS are to be found at the Johannesburg, Durban and Pretoria Lodges in South Africa.

So what are they? They are a symbol of people's aspiration for peace and of their belief in the transformative power of thought. They are an outward expression of the prayer for peace in the world. Made out of wood (three metres high, 100cm square, sanded, oiled and pointed at the top), the prayer 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' is carved in four languages on the four sides: Japanese, English and two others. By spreading the concept of this simple prayer, people are touched by it and many attempt to live and act in the Spirit of this message.

Peace Poles are the inspiration of Masahisa Goi, the Japanese founder of the World Peace Society, an organization affiliated to the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organization. Mr Goi was profoundly affected by the global destruction resulting from World War II. This prompted him to search for ways to respond to the cry of humanity for



Susan Kaschula

mony and world peace. At their own expense, they travelled to different countries to pray for peace and to assist in the dedication and planting of Peace Poles. Susan reports that the joy, generosity and commitment of these Japanese was humbling to her.

'Over this time,' says Susan, 'we met with a lot of opposition from fundamentalist groups -which was understandable, especially as South Africa had been in isolation for so long. New approaches from different perspectives do provoke violent reactions from some groups. This was the case with the Peace Poles, so that many that were planted were chopped down. Hoax telephone calls, threatening faxes and publicity were all part of the process at that time. But in spite of the extremist groups, mayors, some politicians and religious leaders were all willing to participate in planting Peace Poles and hosting peace prayer ceremonies in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe.'

Whenever Susan plants a Peace Pole, she tries to get it properly blessed and mentions that the Liberal Catholic Church has been most supportive of this. We hope to hear from her again with an update on her 'plantings'.

**MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH!**

Susan Kaschula, Assistant General Secretary of the TS in South Africa, makes Peace Poles herself and donates them, as she feels they must be given freely and with joy. She is often asked to make and plant them in homes, schools and other public places. Susan was first introduced to the concept in 1989. She was contacted by a Japanese Member of the World Peace Prayer Society. He invited her to help with the Peace Pole project in South Africa. At the time, South Africa was experiencing a great deal of violence and any peace initiative seemed worth trying, even if it did sound strange, so Susan felt she couldn't refuse. The next three years were packed full of extraordinary experiences for her. She was privileged to meet and work with some very dedicated and selfless groups of Japanese people, all totally committed to global har-

## TOS WEB SITES

### **The Theosophical Order of Service in Australia**

**Web address:** <http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/theohbt/tos.htm>

The TOS is a world-wide organisation committed to improving the material and spiritual condition of humanity. It also has a compassionate and constructive approach in dealings with animals and the environment.

### **Sydney branch**

**Web address:** <http://www.matra.com.au/~hpb/tos.htm>

Formed by Annie Besant in 1908, it provides opportunities for members of the Theosophical Society and others to help reduce suffering. Its approach is broad and it welcomes members from diverse backgrounds. The activities of the TOS in Sydney cover: fund-raising for a wide range of welfare groups, campaigning on particular issues, healing/therapy groups, supporting other organisations with similar aims.

### **Brisbane branch**

**Web address:** [http://www.gnharrod.com/brisbane\\_ts/brisb\\_tos.htm](http://www.gnharrod.com/brisbane_ts/brisb_tos.htm)

TOS activities include donating to various causes, writing to international bodies and governments about human rights issues, and taking an active part in a variety of local service activities. Members of the Brisbane TOS group are working, either individually or collectively, in a range of projects associated with community service, health, education, the environment, animal welfare and world peace. The TOS provides opportunities for members not only to work together but also to enjoy each other's company and friendship.

### **Theosophical Order of Service Brazil**

**Web address:** <http://www.sadhana.net/english.htm>

The TOS is not only interested in alleviating suffering, but also in instilling a spirit of altruism and compassion in persons.

### **Theosophical Order of Service Philippines**

**Web address:** <http://www.info.com.ph/~tspeace/tos.htm>

The Theosophical Order of Service in the Philippines has undertaken a comprehensive program for the upliftment of the less fortunate people in society through the following programs:

Intensive rehabilitation for severely malnourished children, vocational training for their parents, educational sponsorship and the running of schools, establishment of co-operatives, leadership training, values education with teenagers, healing, etc. Anyone interested in volunteering in the above service programs is welcome to contact us.

### **Theosophical Order of Service USA**

**Web address:** <http://www.theoservice.org>

The TOS offers a framework in which individuals may demonstrate practical and humanitarian action in a theosophical spirit, whether or not they are members of the Theosophical Society. We invite you to become acquainted with the Society, especially to glance at the 'Theosophical World View', which inspires TOS activities. You can find this and other information at: <http://www.theosophical.org>

The TOS has the following departments: healing, ecology, family, music and the arts, social welfare and peace. The official journal of TOS in the USA is For the Love of Life, currently published three times per year and mailed to members. Two of our departments publish their own newsletters. Our address is: P.O. Box 41584 Tucson, AZ 85717-1584.



### SUBSCRIPTION

Subscriptions to *The Service Link* may be addressed to The Service Link, Résidence Isabelle, 18 Avenue Berlioz, 93270 Sevran, France, at an annual rate of US\$3.00 (post paid). A free sample copy will be sent upon request. In the following countries, orders may be placed direct with national distributors:

*Australia:* Georgina Fode  
TOS National Director  
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Melbourne, VIC 3000 (Aus.\$5)

*India:* Mrs Saraswati Narayan  
TOS National Director  
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New Delhi 110 062

*New Zealand:* Mrs Lois Pollock  
P.O. Box 4049  
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*Philippines:* Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.  
Chairperson  
Theosophical Order of Service  
1 Iba St., Quezon City  
1114 METRO MANILA

*United Kingdom:* Karin Viney  
Theosophical Order of Service  
50 Gloucester Place  
London W1H 4EA (£2)

# The Good News Column

## Support Network Grows For Inmates Buddhist Practice

New York Times, 30/5/01

By Gustav Niebuhr

**T**ORMVILLE, N.Y. — In a room where the cinder block walls are painted white, 14 men sit in facing rows, each man on a small, round pillow, his legs folded, his gaze lowered. Nearby sits a robed Buddhist monk, a small altar at his back. The stillness is so profound it seems to muffle the blare of a television in the next room.

The Lotus Flower Sangha, as this group is called, is meeting deep inside the Green Haven Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison that houses 2,000 men convicted of serious crimes like armed robbery and murder.

Once a week, this group gathers with the monk, Geoffrey Shugen Arnold, who arrives from Zen Mountain Monastery in the Catskill town of Mount Tremper, to lead them in zazen, the sitting meditation that underlies a practice emphasizing emptiness, the insubstantiality of the self and the interdependence of all things. The men who participate say it is transforming.

'Through this practice,' said Bob Gashin Burgess, 45, a tall man with a goatee who keeps a small altar in his cell, 'I've learned a lot of compassion and respect for others. And Milton Pratt, 43, said there were times when he could not get enough of meditative sitting. 'It really helps,' he said, 'because when things are going really wrong, it

seems I come out renewed.'

. . . . Buddhist meditative practices have begun to take root inside the nation's prison system. . . . The Prison Dharma Network in Boulder, Colorado, has developed contacts with 250 prisoners across the country, sending correspondence and donated books. . . . The Buddhist Peace Fellowship in Berkeley, California, has worked with the San Francisco Zen Centre to sponsor meditation groups in eight Northern California prisons and jails. 'More and more people are being incarcerated, and conditions are brutal in many cases,' said Diana Lion, director of the fellowship's prison project. 'People are looking for

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**'I can't just look at life in terms of me,' he said. 'I have to take myself out of the picture a lot.'**

---

some way to find peace and solace and meaning in the midst of tremendous suffering.'

. . . . 'The Buddha was dealing with questions that are intrinsic to all human existence,' said Geoffrey Shugen Arnold. . . . 'Buddhist meditative practices,' he said, 'hold particular value at a time when most prisons offer little but punishment. It's abundantly clear to these guys that if anything's going to change, they're going to have to make it happen,' he said.

. . . . As many as 5,000 prisoners, seeking information about Zen,

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**'Buddhist meditative practices,' he said, 'hold particular value at a time when most prisons offer little but punishment. It's abundantly clear to these guys that if anything's going to change, they're going to have to make it happen,' he said.**

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have contacted the Zen Mountain Monastery, established in 1980 and now home to 12 men and women who are ordained in the Mountains and Rivers Order. In recent years, Zen Mountain has established a computer database with the names of 1,000 male and female inmates, linking each to a volunteer committed to at least three years of corresponding about Zen practices, answering questions, offering advice and lending encouragement.

Zen Mountain has also begun developing training manuals for inmates who want to develop meditative practice on their own. The first, dealing with sitting meditation, contains illustrations showing exercises designed to make it more comfortable for the novice.

Shugen Sensei, 43, . . . has been a monk at Zen Mountain since 1986. He began heading the Lotus Flower prison group six years ago. Typically, it attracts 15 to 30 prisoners, fluctuating as men are transferred or released and as newcomers arrive.

"One of the interesting characteristics of these sanghas is they go across all ethnic lines,' Shugen Sensei said. By contrast, outside the prison, most native-born American

practitioners form 'an almost exclusively white Buddhist population,' he said.

He said he did not forget that the men in the Lotus Flower group were convicted of serious crimes and that they left behind victims.

'One of the things I've always been aware of is, the victims are very much a part of this, because of the crimes,' he said. 'But the reality of our situation is, we care about everybody, but we're responding to who's knocking on our door.'

... One of the inmates, Anthony Zitelli, 39, said he began meditating a decade ago, thinking it

would offer him a path to self-understanding. But what it did, he said, was convince him that he needs to be concerned with the wider world and with others. 'I can't just look at life in terms of me,' he said. 'I have to take myself out of the picture a lot.'

Afterward . . . Shugen Sensei . . . reflected on Zen's message for those in prison and those outside. 'Nothing you do can be singularly about yourself,' he said, 'and once you see it that way, everything changes. Of all the things that Buddhism has to contribute, I think that's a profound thing for us.'

## SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

**O**n October 13, 2000, Emma Fearnside, co-ordinator of the TOS in the city of Adelaide, was given, along with four others, a 'Senior Australian of the Year' award for South Australia. The text of the award reads:

'Mrs Emma Fearnside (or Mick as she is affectionately known) has dedicated her life to social service and has spent 30 years of her retirement working tirelessly to help all creatures, great and small. Elected President of the Anti-Vivisection Union in 1967, her campaign against the then Council practice of passing stray animals on to laboratories for animal experiments, led to all Councils in South Australia ceasing this practice. Her activities also led to the Adelaide University considerably reducing the number of animals used in Medicine, Dentistry and Science, and to cruelty-free cosmetics and household cleaners becoming available to the South Australian public. Emma has also given tremendous service to other areas such as the Animal Welfare League, the Vegetarian Society and the Montessori Society. A



*Mick Fearnside  
Senior Australia of the Year*

dedicated teacher. . . Emma has helped countless children and adults who were unable to function in an ordinary classroom, due to minor handicaps or behavioural problems. At 92 years of age, Emma Fearnside's achievements are many. She is still actively involved in the Adelaide Theosophical Society, an organisation which provides practical help for the disabled and disadvantaged, promotes world peace, a compassionate attitude towards animals and concern for the environment.'



## From One to All

**Dear Fellow Theosophists,**

I ran across some interesting information on the Web recently about the behaviour of geese and realized once again how much we can learn from Nature and our animal friends.

In the autumn when you see geese heading away for the winter flying along in the "V" formation, did you know that there is a reason why they fly that way?

- According to science, as each bird flaps its wings, it creates up-lift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.
- Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the power of the flock.
- When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose takes over.
- The geese flying behind honk to encourage those up front to keep their speed.
- When a goose gets sick or is wounded by a gunshot and falls out, two geese fall out of the formation and follow the injured one down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is either able to fly or until it is dead, and then they launch out with another formation to catch up with their group.

The next time you see a formation of geese, remember the positive results of harmonious team effort!

With kind greetings to readers,

*Tom*

Tom Davis  
General Secretary,  
TS South Africa

## 'Small service is true service. . .'

### A Tribute to Rosemary Larbalestier

*Small service is true service while it lasts:  
Of humblest Friends, bright creature!  
scorn not one;*

*The daisy, by the shadow it casts,  
Protects the lingering dew-drop from  
the sun.*

William Wordsworth  
*To a Child*

**W**hen Theosophists come into the TOS, they are seeking a context in which they can engage in practical and humanitarian action in a theosophic spirit, in which they can apply their Theosophy, or 'walk their talk', as American members might say. They are touched by the unhappiness they see around them, concerned about the state of the planet and convinced that Theosophy has light to shed on societal and individual problems.

Certain Theosophists are outstanding in 'walking their talk'. They know the principles of Theosophy thoroughly. They are inwardly strong and utterly dedicated to treading the spiritual path. They remain, however, infinitely tender, gentle and understanding of human frailty.

Rosemary Larbalestier of Wallasey Lodge in north-west England was perceived by her many friends and fellow Theosophists as one such as this. She passed away in January 2000 at the age of 69, after a struggle with cancer. She was President of her Lodge of the TS and of the NW Federation for many years, a founder of the Training Centre in the NW Federation which she helped to run for over two decades, and a member of the National Council of the English Section and the Executive Committee, on and off, for about forty years. She lectured in the different Federations



*Rosemary Larbalestier*

of the English Section and was many times a welcome visitor to the TS in Scotland.

It is not simply for her dedication to the Theosophical Society, however, that Rosemary is remembered. It is because she was remarkable for her unobtrusive personal service to others.

Rosemary served by her very presence. Wherever she went, the quality of her indwelling spirit was perceived; people who met her only once, and for as little as ten minutes, commented on her very special nature. She was dynamic and inspiring as a speaker and yet simple, honest and very human in her relations with others. 'Theosophy', she once said, 'has never solved my problems nor dried my tears but it's kept me on my feet and I'm very grateful.'

Her husband Peter Barton, a recent President of the TS in England, commented on this remark in the light of her life: 'I was blessed to know Rosemary intimately only for a short time but I do know that her personal life was an almost relentless succession of difficulties, not to say traumas, which would certainly have floored a lesser mortal. Rose-

mary never allowed her personal problems into the public domain, however. She wanted to be part of the work of the Great Ones through the Theosophical Society and her life was dedicated to that service. If the Society needed a service of any kind and Rosemary could give it, then she gave it unstintingly and without thought to the cost to herself.'

Irene Reid of Blackburn Lodge said this at the celebration of Rosemary's life that many attended: 'Even as a very young woman, Rosemary's warmth, compassion and concern for others endeared her to us all. She gave us great joy. She was love personified. Maureen Atkinson, her successor in the post of Federation President, likened her to the 'Federation Mother': 'She was always there when someone needed her. A quiet word, a hug – and she never forgot something you may have mentioned. Even when she was in hospital, she wanted to know how everyone was and how they were getting on. She was always thinking of others, never herself. All were aware of the very special qualities of a remarkable soul – whose living, quite spontaneously, helped in "showing to humanity that such a thing as Theosophy exists".'

Rosemary's fellow Theosophists salute her and wish her Godspeed.

### 'Hitch Your Wagon to a Star'

*Extracts from a message by Rosemary Larbalestier to the members of her Federation*

'Hitch Your Wagon to a Star': Well, why not? It's imaginative, it's challenging. At a time when the tendency is so often to level down, how

welcome instead is the suggestion to raise one's sights.

. . . . Don't lower your sights, compromise your principles or deny your dreams, whatever the price - and there may well be one. Standards, sensitivity, ideals tend to make one vulnerable.

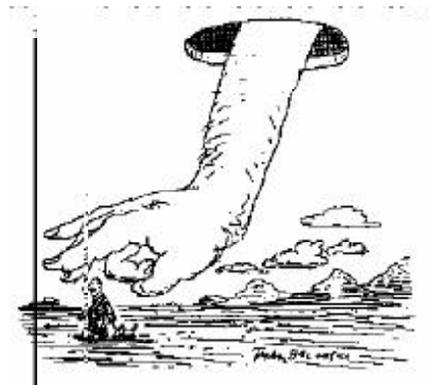
. . . . If walking the sunlit mountain top means that a valley of shadow awaits us, well so be it. Surely there must be another star somewhere? . . . Perhaps what is asked of most of us at the present time is that we hold true to our declared principles and do not betray them, even though we 'see through a glass darkly'. Yes, indeed, somewhere there will be another Star - higher, stronger, burning more brightly.

. . . . Recall those most vibrant words from our own *The Voice of The Silence*: 'Fix thy soul's gaze on the Star whose Ray thou art'. What more do we need? The Star to which we each hitch our wagon may be different. No matter, no matter. May your Star burn brightly in its heaven!



What burdens Mother Earth most are not the mountains, nor the oceans, nor the giant trees, but the minds that will not melt with the suffering of others.

NAISHADHA CHARITA



# Creation Expresses Divinity

If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter,  
floating above a field somewhere,  
people would come from everywhere to marvel at it.

People would walk around it, marvelling at its big pools of water,  
its little pools and the water flowing between the pools.

People would marvel at the humps on it, and the holes in it,  
and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it,  
and the water suspended in the gas.

The people would marvel at all the creatures  
walking around the surface of the ball,  
and at the creatures in the water.

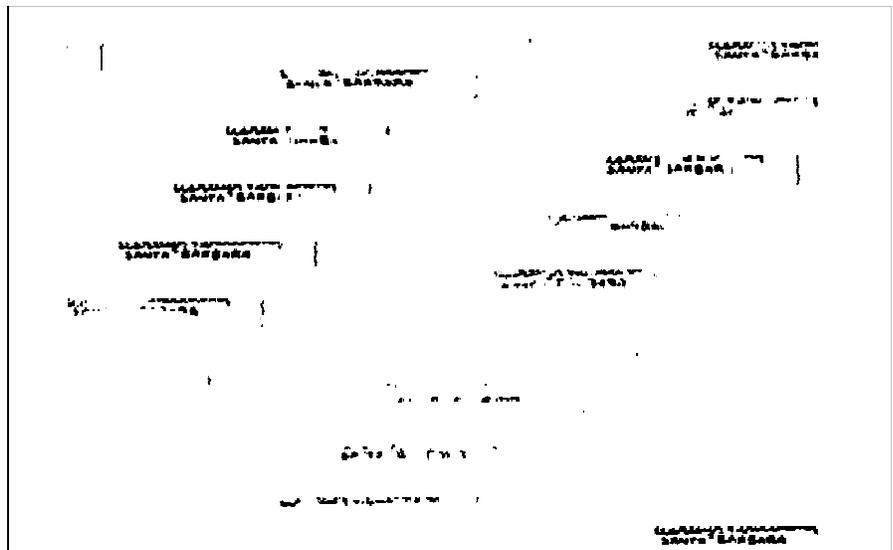
The people would declare it as sacred because it was the only one,  
and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt.

The ball would be the greatest wonder known,  
and people would come to pray to it, to be healed,  
to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to wonder how it could be.

People would love it, and defend it with their lives because they  
would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness,  
could be nothing without it.

If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter.

Author — Not known



# If I Could Help Change The World



*Kiran Shah  
TOS, Nairobi, Kenya*

**A**t the World Congress of the Theosophical Society held in Sydney, Australia in January 2001, five social service stalwarts shared the platform for the TOS programme, addressing the theme, 'If I could help change the world. . .' The evening had vigour! Kiran Shah represented the TOS in Nairobi. At the end of his talk, he shared some practical ideas:

When we look at the scale of planetary problems, we may wonder what as individuals we can do to reduce the suffering and misery. Change starts with individuals, however; all great changes have come about from small beginnings.

On this auspicious occasion of the new year, new century and new millennium, can we members of the Theosophical Order of Service begin something fresh to alleviate suffering, according to our resources?

Here are some suggestions which we may consider implementing in our lives:

1. I will set aside a certain percentage of my earnings to help the less fortunate in society.

2. I will sponsor the primary or secondary education of up to five needy children.

3. I will try my utmost to avoid

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

**ALBERT SCHWEITZER**

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polluting the environment. I will plant five trees every year, either in my neighbourhood or where they are most needed, and I will see that they are properly watered and cared for. I will encourage others to do the same.

4. If I have a business that employs staff, I will reserve a minimum of 5 percent of the positions available for disabled persons.

5. I will contribute to the maintenance of rest homes in developing countries. Few elderly people who are poor have anywhere to go for care and thousands find themselves on the streets.

6. I will donate to orphanages for destitute children suffering from HIV, AIDS or other diseases.

7. I will not be a part of any corrupt practices, because corruption is

crippling the economies of many countries.

8. I will donate income-generating items to the poor in developing countries, such as sewing machines, spinning wheels, and tools for small craft workshops.

9. I will create awareness of healthy living through natural methods, which will include nutritious diet, exercise, relaxation and positive thinking. I will make people aware of the healing power that nature has abundantly implanted within us.

10. I will use the powerful energy of the mind to help relieve the suffering of others. I will resolve to send positive, healing thoughts for a few minutes every day to those who are ill, depressed or in other difficulties.



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# Saludos, Fernando!

**F**ernando Pérez Martín of Madrid, a former General Secretary of the TS in Spain, is currently national director of the TOS. He also acts as Spanish speaking co-ordinator of the TOS work in Latin America, supplying the burgeoning groups with resource material and support as they find their feet. Fernando has supervised the translation and distribution of the current edition of the TOS healing ritual, and a number of Spanish speaking groups are now performing it regularly. In response to requests for news in Spanish in *The Service Link*, he edits several pages of announcements and articles.

What does this key worker have to say about theosophically oriented service? What news does he have for us of TOS action in South America?

*The Service Link:* Fernando, you surely have your hands full with stimulating the TOS work in Spain. What made you take on additional tasks like co-ordinating the work in South America and editing pages for *The Service Link*?

*Fernando:* Spain has strong karmic links with the Spanish speaking countries in South America, dating from the time of colonization, an era of exploitation in many forms. It is a fact that we provided the peoples with a common language, but at what cost to indigenous tongues and cultures? We also took the terrible inquisition to them and, I might add, the 'sport' of bullfighting. This painful period is now history but it represents a tremendous karmic debt for Spain toward those on the other side of the Atlantic. The co-ordination of the TOS work in Latin America seems an opportunity to help balance, in a small way, the karmic relationship.

Theosophical work is a privilege



Fernando Perez Martin

and blessing, you know, after nearly 40 years of darkness in Spain. For long years the TS was not authorized to work openly and we had to gather in private homes or even in coffee shops, forming a sort of clandestine fraternity and always conscious of the possibility of being arrested and having our gatherings stopped. This unusual situation created a very special atmosphere and a rare bond amongst the members, which one can feel even today. Taking care of the TOS in Spain is a joy.

As for editing the Spanish pages in *The Service Link*, the aim is to link TOS workers around the world. Ours is a very beautiful idiom and the second most frequently spoken language in the Theosophical world. When the pages first appeared in *The Link*, a number of letters arrived from South America expressing en-

thusiasm and appreciation.

*TSL:* What is going on there?

*Fernando:* The number of countries where the TOS is represented by a National Director or at least a Correspondent has gone from three to nine in the past five or six years. The International President of the TOS, Mrs Radha Burnier, visits the Sections regularly and encourages practical initiatives to relieve human and animal suffering. Terezhina Franca Kind, who has done a great deal of travel for the TS in South America in latter years, constantly seeks to stimulate group service projects amongst the members - who are only too keen to find a practical outlet for Theosophy, in fact. We hope that TOS groups can be started before long in Paraguay and Colombia. Cuba has created seven teams. The TOS in Chile has its own e-mail address and web page already. Our brothers and sisters of South America are very friendly, warm and fraternal people and their exuberance in the service of others is inspiring.

*TSL:* What projects are you working on currently?

*Fernando:* I'm gradually trying to build up resource material in Spanish on a thematic basis so that when groups or individuals write saying they want to engage in action in a certain area - healing, peace, ecology, animal welfare, etc. - I can support them in their work and help them approach current issues in the light of Theosophy. Truly theosophical service work has a spiritual orientation. It springs from the conviction that love is the basis of all manifestation. 'Our work should be to proclaim fraternity, not as an ideal, as some beautiful dream born in the imagination of human beings, but as a reality, as a Law of Nature', wrote Mr Jinarajadasa. With the right approach, TOS workers can form a channel for higher forces.

*Life's most urgent question is, What are you doing for others?*

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# The Theosophical Order of Service

The Theosophical Order of Service was founded by Dr Annie Besant in 1908 to provide an opportunity for participation in activities which promote the first object of the Theosophical Society:

*To form a nucleus of universal brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.*

Defining itself as 'a union of all who love in the service of all that suffers', the TOS offers a framework in which the individual may demonstrate practical and humanitarian action in a theosophical spirit, and acts as a forum whereby members may air their views on affairs of public interest.

The TOS is international although not active at this time in all countries where the Theosophical Society is represented. Each section is autonomous and organized to meet the needs of its own communities. Members of the TOS need not be members of the TS. A variety of interests is welcomed. For further information, and written contributions to *The Service Link*, write to: Diana Dunningham Chapotin, TOS International Secretary, Résidence Isabelle, 18 Avenue Berlioz, 93270 Sevran, FRANCE. E-mail: [tosinternational@wanadoo.fr](mailto:tosinternational@wanadoo.fr)

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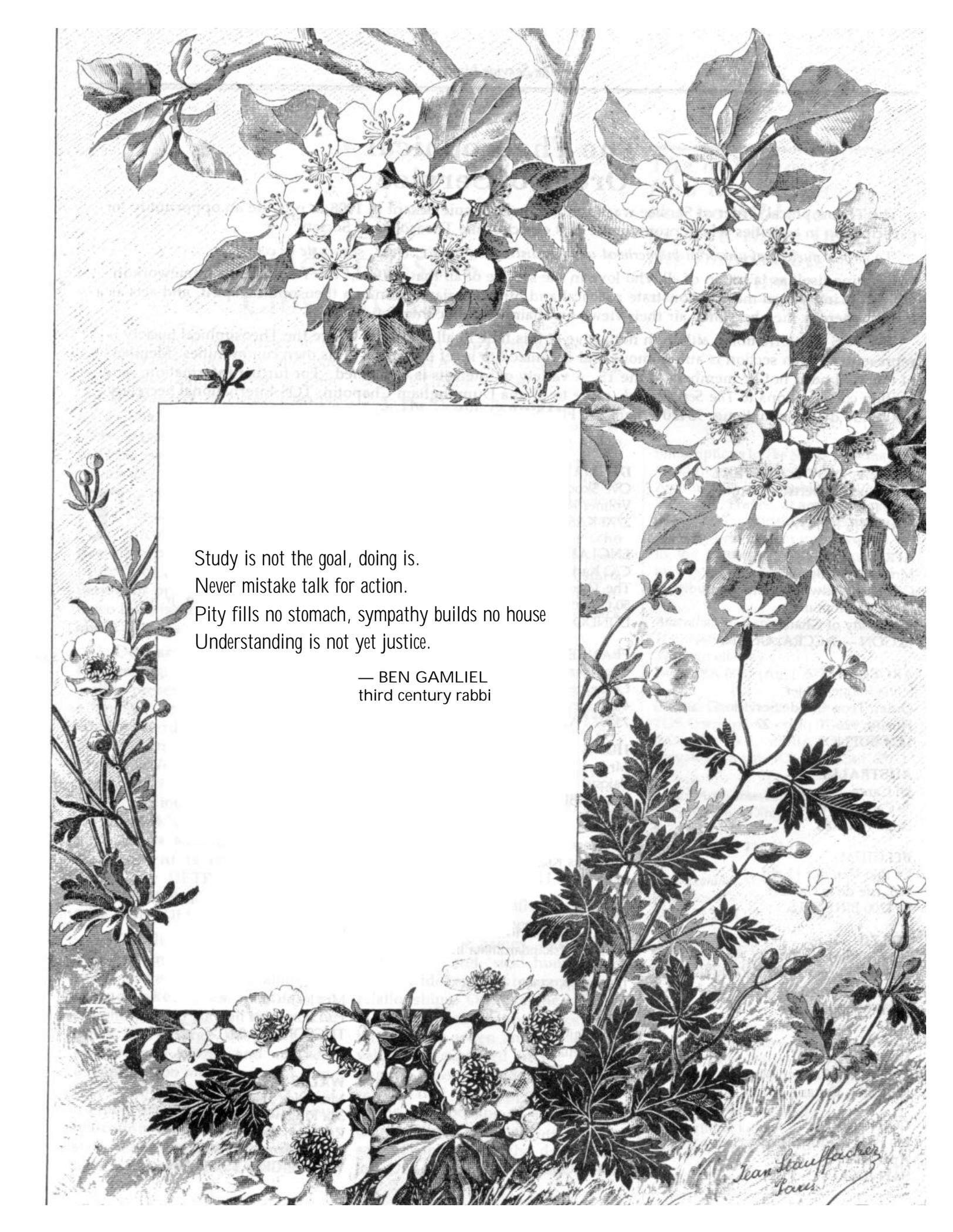
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Study is not the goal, doing is.  
Never mistake talk for action.  
Pity fills no stomach, sympathy builds no house  
Understanding is not yet justice.

— BEN GAMLIEL  
third century rabbi

Jean Stauffacher  
Paris