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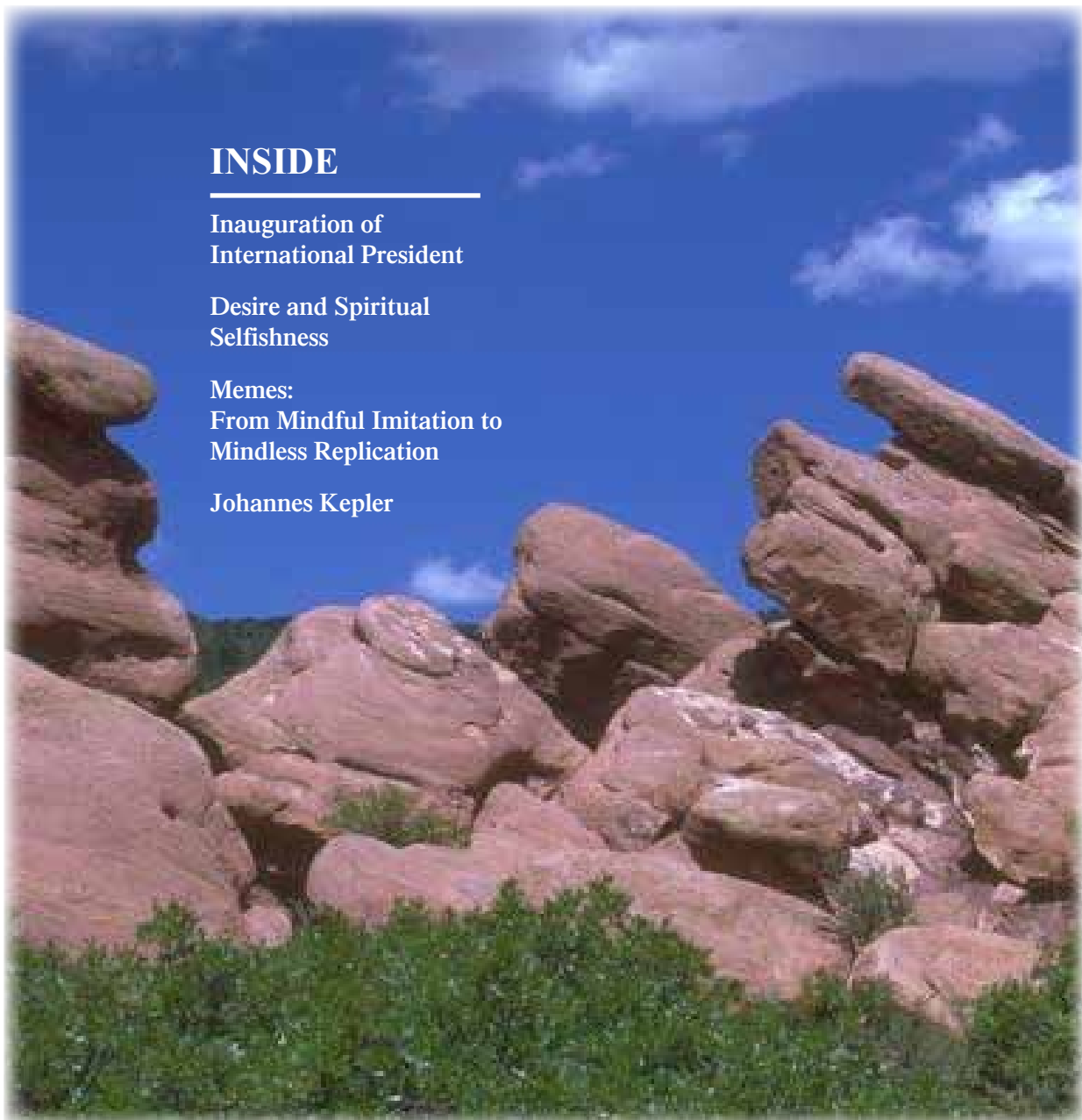
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Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

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

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1924)*

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title, 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1949)*

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The Theosophical Society welcomes students or seekers, belonging to any religion or to none, who are in sympathy with its Objects. The motto of the Society is 'There is no Religion higher than Truth'. The word Religion in this statement is a translation of the Sanskrit *dharma*, which among other things means practice; way; virtue; teaching; law; inherent nature; religion; and that which is steadfast or firm. The word Truth in the motto is a translation of the Sanskrit *satya*, meaning among other things, true, real and actual. It derives from the root *sat*, sometimes translated as boundless unconditioned existence.

Theosophy is not defined in the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, or in any official document. It literally means divine wisdom, *theosophia*, but members of the Society are left to discover what it is for themselves, taking as guides whatever religions or philosophies they wish.

The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

- I. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
- ~
- II. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.
- ~
- III. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.

New International President

Tim Boyd

On the Watch-Tower *The Theosophist*, May 2014

Some of the greatest sages who have lived took special care to emphasise one particular point. Although the point has been expressed in numerous ways, the essential idea is that change is constant and unavoidable. Everything in this world changes. One would think that this point is so obvious that it need not be expressed so frequently and in so many different ways. However, it seems that for people who are wise there is a reason for this repetition. Those of us who with the years have watched our hair grow grey and our bodies change do not need to be convinced. The young among us witness the same process as their voices deepen, technologies change, and new levels of responsibility open up to them.

So, why such emphasis on the obvious? It seems that for us, even though we 'know' that change is inevitable, we have not learned to embrace it. The normal response is to resist and ignore. Whole industries have grown up around this mass desire to halt, or at the minimum slow down the onrushing tide of change. In the West, one of the fastest growing specialities in medicine is men's cosmetic surgery – a nip here, a tuck there, and a person's face can give the appearance of some surgeon's approximation of youth, but these people do not live any longer, or achieve higher levels of happiness during their span of years. In fact these sorts of procedures probably have little to do with how others see us, but are driven by how we want to see ourselves. This is merely one glaring example of our need to create at least an illusion of constancy and control in this fluctuating world.



Countless other examples can be seen with just a little thought – everything from a fixation with earning more and more money, the need for titles and recognitions, the desire for our hair to be darker, or lighter, the desire to be liked, to be highly thought of, to be pretty, to be smart. All of these reflect our need to connect to something greater than the limits of what we see.

Such behaviour is easy to criticise, or caricature. However, the Hermetic axiom stating that 'As it is above, so it is below' gives us some indication of a deeper meaning. A contemporary American writer, Jack Kerouac, made the point quite simply. He wrote, 'Nobody believes that there is nothing to believe in.' Deep within all of us there is a certainty of something that is changeless. Everyone feels this. The fact that its presence is hidden from us in the ordinary world causes us to act strangely. Not finding what we all dimly know is real, we project it on to the world in these various funny ways. Strange as it may seem, our confused grasping at eternal youth, endless abundance, perfect health,

knowledge, and power can be seen as a proof of their reality. What we Theosophists call Truth, is eternal, without limitation, perfect, everywhere present, and attainable by each of us. The drawback for us as human beings is our tendency to try to force the world to reward us with something it cannot give. The real need that lies beneath our striving is for peace, for wisdom, for a security that has its roots in the Eternal.

Recently within the Theosophical Society the immediacy of change has forced itself upon us. With our International President's passing, thirty-three years of leadership suddenly shifted. Following our extended election period we are now faced with adjusting to a new President. As with all such changes in the past, the TS will adjust and move forward. The work of the TS has not changed since its founding. HPB's comments on the Future of the Theosophical Society in *The Key to Theosophy* are worth considering:

Its future will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last, but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members, on whom it will fall to carry on the work, and to direct the Society after the death of the Founders. ... the great need which our successors in the guidance of the Society will have of unbiased and clear judgment. Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart. ... if the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years – tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now!

Clearly, we have much to do.



Public inauguration function for the new International President, Tim Boyd, at Adyar on White Lotus Day, 8 May 2014.

From the National President



Linda Oliveira

On behalf of the members of the Australian Section, I was very pleased to send a letter of congratulations in early May to the newly elected International President of the Theosophical Society, Tim Boyd. The voting results were issued by the International Secretary on 27 April. Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups were notified of the outcome by our National Secretary on 28 April. A special e-Bulletin was also sent on that day to all members who are on our distribution list, just after the results were received. C.V.K. Maithreya received 4242 votes and Tim Boyd received 7190 votes. Tim Boyd was elected President for a term of seven years from the date of assuming office. A public function for his inauguration was held at our International Headquarters on White Lotus Day, 8 May. Featured on the previous two pages are some pictures of this occasion as well as the first 'On the Watch-Tower' column by our new President, from the May issue of *The Theosophist*, which introduces him to members in this new role. Extracts from 'On the Watch-Tower' will continue to be published in *Theosophy in Australia* as in the past.

The main items in this issue include a more introspective article contrasting personal and spiritual desire; one on natural philosopher Johannes Kepler; and a contemporary observation of society through an examination of memes. It is the latter on which I would like to comment briefly.

Dr Olga Gostin mentions in her engaging article that memes are units of culture, evolutionary principles, which explain the spread of ideas, beliefs and cultural phenomena generally. Essentially they are reproduced by imitation. We pick up on memes regularly and mimic them. Language, for example, evolves quite rapidly, particularly in specialist areas such as



IT. Certain often-used terms become memes which feature strongly in our collective psyche. iPads and smartphones are now significant cultural memes. What is being dealt with essentially in the article concerned is one aspect of conditioning (a subject which is mentioned regularly in TS circles), using the modern terminology of memes. Of course, this can have both positive and negative implications.

Consider that within the TS we have a set of cultural memes – ideas, beliefs, images, et cetera. The iconic bas-relief elephants on the main building of the International Headquarters are one example, as are photos of well-known Theosophists. Then again, ideas talked about in this Society may become easily reproduced beliefs. But is belief enough? It may be quite easy to 'imitate' another member, declaring that we share a similar belief without completely thinking it through. Perhaps because we feel we want to belong. We might assume that something is so, simply because many members believe it. But is imitation of other views sufficient for one who aspires towards Truth? An imitated belief falls short of that interior knowledge which becomes a conviction of the deeper Truth about something.

A former TS member declared in a recent exit survey, 'I don't believe in reincarnation and I know this is one of the fundamental beliefs of the Theosophical Society.' Sadly, it was clear that this person did not understand the nature of our Society, which holds no official beliefs. Reincarnation may indeed be a belief for many members; others may go further and be absolutely certain about its veracity. However, it is always useful to assess anything we are presented with in the TS carefully for ourselves; otherwise our responses may simply be a form of cultural conditioning.

Desire and Spiritual Selfishness

Edward Abdill

In fragment 1 of *The Voice of the Silence* we read, ‘Kill out desire; but if thou killest it take heed lest from the dead it should again arise.’ But if we had no desire to act, we would become the living dead. Surely that is not what the text is suggesting.

The Sanskrit word for ‘desire’ is *kāma*. According to Theosophical teaching, *kāma* is one of the seven principles or aspects of human nature. These are localised fields within universal fields. Each of us is a microcosm, a miniature macrocosm, and as such we contain within us all the principles that the universe contains. Although the fields are nonmaterial, each one is associated with a type of matter that responds specifically to it. We can see matter being affected by a field when we observe a bar magnet close to iron filings. The filings line up along the field. The magnetic field visibly affects iron filings, but it does not visibly affect other material. The iron filings are a kind of test object that reveals the presence of the magnetic field.

The etheric double, a field closely associated with the physical body, affects protoplasm. This can be seen in the incubating chicken egg: a pulsation begins at the exact spot in the egg where the heart will be formed. The field ‘moulds’ the heart in the same way that the magnetic field ‘moulds’ the iron filings.

In addition to the etheric field, which affects the physical body, we have emotional, mental, and spiritual fields. Each of these has a particular type of matter that responds to it. Nonetheless, all these fields affect the physical body in some way. Perhaps that is because from a Theosophical perspective there is only



a single field acting in different ways on seven different states of matter. Could it be that this ultimate unified field is consciousness itself?

A powerful component of the emotional field is *kāma*, loosely translated as ‘desire’. Essentially, *kāma* is our emotional nature. It includes, but is not limited to, craving and desire of any kind. We may crave physical sensation, food, drink, companionship, prestige, power, or a soul mate. We may even crave fine art and music. Craving is not the same as appreciation. To appreciate fine art and music is not the same as craving them. The problem is the attachment to the objects of craving – the ‘I-can’t-live-without-it’ feeling. These attachments will inevitably cause us pain. The indisputable fact is that everything changes, both in the physical and in the psychological world. ‘This, too, shall pass’ has no exceptions, not even in the subjective realm of the psyche. If we are attached to or identified with anything, psychological pain is inevitable when the object of our desire changes. How easy it is to see this, and yet how extraordinarily difficult it is to accept it.

In directing us to ‘kill out desire’, *The Voice of the Silence* is not asking us to kill out emotion. If you read *The Mahatma Letters*, you will discover that the Masters Koot Hoomi and Morya show strong feelings. They are

not cold, emotionless people. In letter 92 we read that Blavatsky's glowing description of Morya as 'an Apollo of Belvedere' caused him to 'start in anger, and break his pipe while swearing like a true Christian'. (References to *The Mahatma Letters* in this article are to the chronological edition, edited by A.T. Barker and Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.)

In addition to our emotions we have minds. This mind – known in Theosophy as *manas* – can become focused on and identified either with *buddhi*, the spiritual nature, or with *kāma*. When it is identified with *buddhi*, it is called *buddhi-manas*, and along with consciousness itself, *ātma*, it is said to constitute the reincarnating individual self. But when the mind is focused on and identified with *kāma*, it is called *kāma-manas*. This is the animal soul or the lower self, and it perishes sometime after death.

Since we are localisations of universal fields, does this mean that the universe behaves as we do? If not, what is the difference?

To say that *ātma-buddhi*, the most spiritual aspect of reality, 'desires' anything would be misleading. It would be more accurate to say that *ātma-buddhi* wills something. It is intentionality rather than desire. While these two things are related, they are quite different. In the universal sense, intentionality involves what is truly right for the whole. That is quite different from personal desire. So we might say that the one is similar to or a reflection of the other, but we can no more say they are identical than that the reflection of the moon on the water is the moon. *Ātma-buddhi* wills the universe into existence. It desires nothing. If we identify with *kāma*, we may use our willpower to get what we want. If we identify with *buddhi*, the divine will may be expressed through us. In that case, the divine will neutralises personal desire.

Personal Desire

The personal ego, the 'me', is composed of our bodies and what might be called our 'thinking/feeling' nature, *kāma-manas*.

Kāma is an essential part of our nature. It propels us to act. If we did not act, we would wither away and die. Acting generates karma, and the karmic results of our actions enable us to learn. Some believe they should not act to help others on the grounds that this is interfering with that person's karma. But the wise have told us that inaction in a deed of mercy is a deadly sin. It is not a desire to act that causes a problem; rather it is our identification with our desires and our attachment to the objects of our desires. The following example may help illustrate this point.

Let us say that we have planned out our day. Even if the tasks before us are unpleasant, we want our plan to go as we have set it up. We want to finish our work; we want to finish it on time; and we want to have a feeling of satisfaction with a job well done. Yet, to paraphrase the poet Robert Burns, 'the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry'. When they do, we are likely to become upset. The upset comes because we are attached to the desire to have things go as we planned them. Avoiding attachment to desire does not mean that we should not act. It would be foolish to say that that we should do nothing or that we do not care about our plans. We *do* care. However, if our plans are blocked, can we accept that fact even if we are not happy about it? Can we say, 'What needs to be done *now*?' and get on with it without emotional upset? Can we say, 'Few things matter much, and most things don't matter at all' and mean it? If we cannot, we are attached to and identified with our desire.

Whenever we feel angry, upset, fearful, anxious, or frustrated, we are reacting to blocked desire, *kāma*. *Kāma* is not only a desire to possess something; it can also be a desire to reject something. We may desire to possess a lover, but we might just as well desire to be free of an enemy. Minor flare-ups of *kāma* happen so often during the day that we are generally unaware of its tremendous power over us. Examples abound. Traffic jams, flight delays, loss of personal property, being jostled by crowds, and disruptions of our daily routine provide opportunities for us to notice whether or not we are attached to our desires.

Does non-attachment to desire mean that we should not plan? Nothing could be further from the truth. Planning for the future is common sense. Knowing something of inevitable cycles, we can plan ahead. Our plans may or may not work out as we hope, but that should not prevent us from being as sensible as possible.

Perhaps the most difficult attachment to avoid is the attachment to those we love. True love goes out without hooks. Attachment, however, makes us want to keep something or someone exactly as they are for our own emotional comfort. If we love a spouse or a friend without attachment, we can let them go when they move out of our lives or when they die. When we truly love someone, we want what is best for them; and sometimes it is best that they die. Our grief, although it is natural, is evidence that in addition to our love, we have become attached to having their physical presence with us.

Some might say that desires are normal and there is nothing to be gained by trying to detach ourselves from them. Rather than accept or reject that point of view, we might consider what sages have called 'the eternal now'. From a scientific as well as a Theosophical point of view, everything in the objective world is moving, and moving equals change. Nothing stays the same even for a nanosecond. When we have what we want, we are happy. We don't want anything to change. But we can no more prevent our lives from changing than we can stop the earth from spinning on its axis. Our desire to keep things as they are, and the impossibility of doing so, produce psychological pain. Sages say that if we avoid becoming attached to the objects of our desire, we will be able to enjoy life to its fullest. Blavatsky once said that the Theosophist should have a deep appreciation of the sensate world, but a calm indifference to it. This indifference might mean a complete acceptance of constant change. Early in *The Secret Doctrine* we read, 'Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration.' The current scientific view is similar. Theoretically, there was no time before the Big



Bang. What we call 'time' is our experience of motion. Without motion there can be no time. But we are so rooted in our experience of time that it is difficult to realise that time is perpetual motion within an eternal now. In letter 15 of *The Mahatma Letters*, Koot Hoomi writes:

Past, present and future! Miserable concepts of the objective phases of the Subjective Whole, they are about as ill adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving.

To be able to accept change and yet find life joyful, it may be helpful to get some sense of what Koot Hoomi calls 'the Subjective Whole' or the eternal now. There is no doubt that this can be realised, at least momentarily, through meditation. Seeking to find the root of our own being in the Eternal can lead to Self-realisation. It can free us from identification with the constantly changing world while allowing us to enjoy this world. When we have had flashes of insight into the eternal background, it becomes easier to accept and enjoy the changing foreground. Then, when our plans fall apart and what we have enjoyed is gone, we can more easily accept the situation because we now know that we are rooted in the Eternal now. This is no easy task. In fact it may be one of the most difficult tasks we ever face. Even after having had a flash of insight

into the Eternal, we may find that that insight fades and we slip back into our accustomed way of thought.

It is easy to fool ourselves into believing that we have rooted ourselves in the Eternal now when we have not. In one episode of the comic strip 'Agnes', we find Agnes at school. Her teacher asks for the assignment, but Agnes does not have it. Agnes is convinced that she is now enjoying every moment with joy, and the fact that she does not have her assignment does not bother her one bit. But when the teacher makes her stay after school to finish the assignment, Agnes decides that her moments of joy are turning sour. As is often the case with us all, Agnes has deceived herself.

The 'human passion' is both personal desire and spiritual selfishness. While personal desire is deplorable, it is far less dangerous than spiritual selfishness. One sign of spiritual selfishness is the desire to acquire knowledge and power for oneself. If the desire for personal enlightenment is so strong that it prevents us from fulfilling our responsibilities, we have fallen victim to spiritual selfishness.

Spiritual Desire

Having touched on the problem of *personal* desire, we may now look more closely at *spiritual* desire or what Koot Hoomi called 'inner spiritual aspirations'. When *The Voice of the Silence* says, 'If thou killest [desire] take heed lest from the dead it should again arise', it refers to killing ordinary selfish desire only to have it reincarnate as spiritual or inner selfish desire. This is not the same as spiritual will. Spiritual will is essential to spiritual development. In fact, in letter 126 Koot Hoomi directs us to have 'an iron, never failing determination and yet be meek and gentle, humble and have shut out from [the] heart every human passion, that leads to evil'. The 'human passion' is both personal desire and spiritual selfishness. While personal desire is deplorable, it is far less dangerous than

spiritual selfishness. In letter 64 Koot Hoomi describes this more dangerous form:

There are persons who, without ever showing any external sign of selfishness, are intensely selfish in their inner spiritual aspirations. These will follow the path once chosen by them with their eyes closed to the interests of all but themselves, and see nothing outside the narrow pathway filled with their own personality. They are so intensely absorbed in the contemplation of their own supposed 'righteousness' that nothing can ever appear right to them outside the focus of their own vision distorted by their self-complacent contemplation, and their judgment of the right and wrong.

One sign of spiritual selfishness is the desire to acquire knowledge and power for oneself. If the desire for personal enlightenment is so strong that it prevents us from fulfilling our responsibilities, we have fallen victim to spiritual selfishness. In extreme cases, a parent may neglect a child in order to visit a guru or attend a religious rite. Among Theosophists we trust that such cases are rare, but less extreme cases are common. We may consider some cases from member meetings of the Theosophical Society. For example a member might insist that meetings contain information helpful to him or her personally while ignoring the needs of others. Their unstated desire can be summed up thus: 'I know what we need to do to make our meetings more spiritually useful, and I intend to override the views of others in order to get what I want.' In addition, many of us participate in group discussions, but sometimes the desire to get our view across is so strong that we monopolise the meeting, oblivious to the time we are taking and to the fact that we are keeping others from participating.

Not every member of the Theosophical Society can attend meetings. Some members who support the Society by their dues and good will do not have the interest or time to support it actively. Other members face responsibilities that prevent them from attending. In such cases, spiritual selfishness might, ironically, mean going to a meeting rather than carrying out these responsibilities.

Certain members are able to attend most meetings but choose to come only when the subject matter appeals to them. If they think they've heard it all before, they won't go. The late Emily Sellon, a prominent Theosophist and former Vice-President of the Society in America, was once asked why she attended member meetings once a week. The enquirer asked her, 'What do you get out of it?' Emily replied, 'It is not what I get out of it. It is what I can contribute to it.'

We do not have to give a lecture to contribute to a Theosophical meeting. Participating in a discussion is also a contribution. The expressed thoughts of individuals in the group provide food for thought, even when the ideas may seem foolish to us. If we try to understand our fellow members, we might discover what is behind an apparently foolish statement. For example, it may come from a rigid belief system. If so, rather than becoming annoyed with the speaker (a sign of blocked desire), we might state our own view calmly and without animosity.

In many organisations members complain that the meetings are uninspiring and the subject matter is boring. The charge is always the same. 'They' don't present interesting programmes. Who are 'they'? It is generally only the few who take responsibility to organise the group and schedule programmes. Anyone who has ever tried to get volunteer help for any organisation knows how difficult that task is. Jiddu Krishnamurti once said, 'You are the world.' In the Theosophical Society we may say, 'Each member is the Theosophical Society'. There is no 'they', only 'we'. The Society is what each of us makes of it.

We often forget that the primary purpose of the Theosophical Society is to 'form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity'. It is easy to believe in universal brotherhood from our armchairs. It is not easy to experience it shoulder to shoulder with fellow members. Nearly every meeting of the Society gives us an opportunity to ponder spiritual principles. Perhaps the presenters are not eloquent. Perhaps they are not well informed. Perhaps

they present mistaken notions. Nevertheless, you and I have an opportunity to present our own understanding of the topic. Together we can reach toward the inner states of consciousness, where it is possible to get insights into truth, where, despite our diverse opinions, there is a deeper unity. Even if the meetings occasionally seem to be boring to the bitter end, we are not there to be entertained. We are there to build the bonds of brotherhood and to contribute what we can, either silently by thought or verbally as food for thought.

Universal brotherhood cannot be achieved by acting from an emotional base, even though our emotional state may be profoundly and positively affected by our efforts to reach deeper states of consciousness. An awareness of universal brotherhood can only be achieved through a realisation of unity in the deepest states of consciousness. Pondering spiritual principles together is a means toward that end. The Prayer of St. Francis says, 'It is in giving that we receive'. If we look only to receive, we will, as the Gospel says, 'be sent empty away'. Spiritual selfishness will have doomed us to failure.

Koot Hoomi has told us that selfishness, pride, egoism, and the want of self-sacrifice are the greatest impediments on the road to adeptship. As we begin to realise that attachment to the objects of our desire is selfish and brings pain, we will begin to free ourselves from it. We may by so doing come ever closer to the secret gateway that leads to the 'reward past all telling, the power to bless and save humanity'.



Ed Abdill, author of *The Secret Gateway*, is a former director of the Theosophical Society in America and past President of the New York Theosophical Society. He lectures for the Society throughout the United States and internationally. This article was originally published in *Quest: Journal of the TS in America*, Winter 2011.

Memes: from Mindful Imitation to Mindless Replication

Olga Gostin

This paper takes me into uncharted territory as I am neither a biologist nor a psychologist, but the connections raised by the concept of memes do invite reflections on the nature of culture, and more specifically, human interaction. I shall begin by defining the term, then move to an analysis of memes which have infiltrated the Australian psyche, as it were.

First, some definitions. The term ‘meme’ was coined by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in his famous book *The Selfish Gene* (1976). The word meme is a shortened form of the ancient Greek *mimema*, meaning to imitate, replicate or mime. Dawkins deliberately coined meme to parallel the term gene where the latter refers to the entity responsible for the transmission of biological traits. In contrast, meme stands for a unit of culture, an evolutionary principle, explaining the spread of ideas, beliefs and cultural phenomena generally. The essence of memes is that they are reproduced by imitation rather than genetically. They are the basic unit of cultural transmission through imitation and replication. Dawkins suggested further that self-replicating ideas or memes can develop their own agendas and associated behaviours. Examples of memes cited by the author include slogans, melodies, fashions and even the technology of building arches.

Just as memes are the counterpart of genes, but in the cultural field, so the derivative discipline of memetics arose in the 1980s, functioning analogously to genetics to explain existing belief patterns and the transmission of cultural ideas. Memetics is notable in that it is not concerned with the *truth* of ideas



and beliefs, but in their success as mutating replicators and their role in human cultural evolution. Proponents of meme theory suggest that they evolve by natural selection of the human psyche through processes identified in the transmission of genes, namely variation, mutation, competition and inheritance. While protagonists of memetics see it as a protoscience that can yield useful insights and valuable predictions into how culture develops over time (see the writings of Susan Blackmore and Daniel Dennett); detractors of meme theory denounce it as little more than yet another pseudoscience. I do not propose to buy into this argument which has been covered at length by scholars in the field. Rather I should like to explore two examples of memes which have become incorporated into Australian everyday life, though not without nuances or controversy. These are the flag, notably the Aboriginal flag, and the headscarf or hijab.

The Aboriginal Flag

Australia is rather singular in that it officially recognises not one or two but three national flags. I should like to explore the Aboriginal flag as a powerful meme in contemporary Australian society. The flag was designed in Adelaide by Luritja man Harold Thomas and raised at Victoria Square, Adelaide, in July

1971. At the time, Indigenous Australians were rallying nationally for the recognition of land rights, and in opposition to policies of assimilation and practices of covert racism. The famous Tent Embassy was established outside Parliament House in Canberra in 1972 and Harold Thomas' flag became the rallying beacon, heading the call for Indigenous land rights. The latter were recognised in the *NT Land Right Act* of 1975, though it was only in 1993 that the pre-1778 occupancy of the First Australians was officially recognised in the Mabo ruling and the ensuing *Native Title Act*. Throughout these decades the Aboriginal flag has been a rallying point whether on Australia Day (Survival Day for the First Australians); heading NAIDOC week marches, proudly flown over buildings housing Indigenous organisations and generally used as a common identity symbol on clothing, stickers and artefacts.

For Indigenous Australians the Aboriginal flag is a powerful meme. It represents a common Indigenous identity which in fact was non-existent in 1778 as the original inhabitants of Australia essentially identified with local kinship groups and communities rooted in their land. True, there were extensive trade routes, as well as song-lines and Dreaming tracts (stories of creation) spread over huge areas of the continent. But there was no sense of a single socio-political entity as encapsulated in the flag. Despite widespread commonalities in spiritual engagement with country through The Dreaming (which by definition were grounded in local communities) there was no universal Aboriginal value or belief system. It is interesting therefore that the most potent current Indigenous Australian meme was in fact a deliberate creation, literally stitched together as a rallying point in opposition to the dominant meme of White Australia.

It is equally interesting that mainstream Australia has not only acknowledged the validity of the Aboriginal flag by act of Parliament, but gives it due prominence in public places. The Aboriginal flag is thus a powerful meme for non-Aboriginal people too. The relevance of the flag, any flag, as a rallying

point of national identity is exemplified by the emergence of local flags within Indigenous communities as the focus of their communal identity and survival in the face of tremendous odds. I refer, for example, to the Ngarrindjeri Nations flag which was designed and raised at the height of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge affair in 1999 when a Royal Commission challenged the validity and veracity of women's cultural beliefs about specific aspects of fertility and birthing.

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The recognition of the Aboriginal flag has almost imperceptibly led to the acceptance of other practices which affirm the rights of the First Australians. This evokes Blackmore's description of the meme-complex (sometimes abbreviated as memeplex) as a collection or grouping of memes that have evolved into a mutually supportive or symbiotic relationship. In Australia, it is now widespread practice to open formal meetings, conferences and official engagements with an acknowledgment of country. The formula varies but generally runs along the lines:

I/We acknowledge and respect the (name) people as the traditional custodians whose ancestral land we meet on today. I/We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal people to country and I/we pay respect to the cultural authority of the Aboriginal people attending this gathering from other areas.

On formal occasions, an Indigenous spokesperson from the area may be invited to open the proceedings with a formal welcome to country, and on grand occasions, this may

even involve a smoking and/or welcome to country ceremony performed by local custodians. These related practices reinforce each other and emphasise the connection that all Australians have (or owe) to Aboriginal Australians. It is also noteworthy that, starting in early 2012, Australia's Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) has appended an acknowledgment to country after every TV news and other locally sourced broadcasts. The Aboriginal flag, welcome to country, acknowledging local custodians and smoking ceremonies all form part of a memplex that seeks to engage the wider community with the presence and ongoing relevance of the First Australians. How this is translated into real life and public policy is another matter and beyond the scope of this paper.

The Headscarf or Hijab

I should now like to turn to another meme that has captured the Australian imagination since the events of 9/11, notably the headscarf or hijab. Prior to 2001 there was relatively little attention paid to the way women chose to cover their hair. The events of 9/11, however, polarised public opinion as a culture of fear and jingoism took hold. The Bali bombings, the bomb attacks in London and Madrid, and the escalating 'wars on terrorism' in Iraq and Afghanistan helped to create, sustain and feed a culture of suspicion and fear against foreign 'others'. Specifically, Muslim people and Islam became the focus of attention given that most of the terrorists indicted or suspected of these terrorist acts were from that cultural group. The humble headscarf worn by some Muslim women became the external tangible focus of opprobrium and fear. Secularism has become the catch-phrase and the headscarf, imbued with a whole bundle of memes, has become the arch-enemy of secular values. At its simplest, the headscarf identifies a person among other women in a crowd, and then triggers a range of memplexes among observers relating to any or all of the following: Muslim faith, the oppression of women, arranged marriages, honour killing, genital mutilation, sharia law, militant Islam, 9/11, suicide bombings, terrorism. Not all wearers

of headscarfs experience negative reactions or verbal abuse, but many do, and research shows that public opprobrium against wearers of headscarfs increased notably after 9/11 and its sequel of bombings in Bali and Europe.

Deirdre Hayes has recently written a doctoral dissertation on that very theme aptly titled *Framing the veil: from the familiar to the feared*. In her superbly insightful examination of female veiling since classical times, Hayes defines framing as the way language, images, symbols and messages are encoded with meaning which becomes embedded in the widely held assumptions shared by people in a given society (2010:15). Importantly, framing often neglects to provide explicit evaluations of the event or issue, and is rarely concerned by notions of veracity or hurting the designated 'other'. Framing just is; it comes as a given. Framed images like the veil may trigger connections based on prejudice, popular narratives or jingoism. In fact there seems to be a close correlation between Hayes' notion of framing and Susan Blackmore's memplexes where both behave as cultural packages with inbuilt triggers based on shared beliefs, intended to shape actions and reactions and ideologies (2010:21) irrespective of their validity or even probity.

In an exhaustive review, Hayes traces the evolution of attitudes towards the veil including its familiar use in Christian iconography and representations of the Virgin Mary and female saints, to the nursing veil and the ubiquitous bridal veil. These are all familiar and unthreatening representations which convey implied values of purity, modesty, devotion and sacrifice. Even the veiling of women in the East starts off as part of the general mystique of the exotic 'other' as propounded by Edward Said in his discussion of Orientalism as a fabrication of the West. The veiling of women in the East and West triggers opposite reactions thanks to the affirmation of memplexes. As Hayes observes: 'What started as a western voyeuristic gaze became enmeshed in a hegemonic colonial narrative supported by missionary and feminist sub-texts' (2010:130). With hindsight we can also

add *political* and *military* subtexts as after 9/11 and the Bali bombings of October 2002, attitudes towards Middle Eastern and Arab cultures became radically polarised. The fear of the other became identified with the war against terrorism. Not surprisingly, wearing the hijab became increasingly contentious in France, Turkey and Australia where instances of abuse were directed at veiled women as the visible representations of the threatening other. The familiar thus morphed into the feared and Islamophobia became a subtext in mainstream Australian culture.



In the final section of this paper I should like to present a case study in which both the flag and hijab memes converged in one major event, notably the Cronulla Riots of 11 December 2005. Cronulla is a working class beach suburb of southern Sydney and ironically forms part of the Kurnell Peninsula where Captain James Cook first made landfall in Australia in 1770, setting in train the dispossession of the First Australians. Barely five months after the July 2005 bombings in London, the Cronulla riots were fanned by alleged sneering and lewd commentary directed at Australian women on the beach by ‘men of

Middle Eastern appearance’. There was also some altercation between ‘foreigners’ and two volunteer lifesavers. A concerted drive through mobile and text messages called for a showdown at Cronulla Beach on 11 December ‘against the Lebs and Wogs’ in defence of ‘our beach’ and ‘our women’. In the ensuing melee constrained by forewarned police and military personnel, some five thousand Anglo-Australians converged on Cronulla Beach and engaged with a minority of ‘other’ Australians. Interestingly, many of the rioters came draped in the Australian flag as a symbol of their patriotism, or with the flag painted on their torso or faces signifying their perceived right to protect their space from invading ‘outsiders’ and as a boundary marker between inclusion and exclusion (Hayes 2010:227). Ironically, it was on this very peninsula that James Cook let loose the first shower of bullets against Aborigines who were brandishing spears in protection of their beach on the 28th of April, 1770.

The Cronulla Riots were followed by intense conciliatory negotiations and concerted efforts to defuse the ignorance and stereotyping that had prompted the riots in the first place. Discourse focussed on integration and the promotion of Australian values, notably equality between men and women. An interesting initiative occurred in March 2006 on Harmony Day when a group of Melbourne Muslim women wore Australian flags made up into hijabs. Here the flag became synonymous with the very garment that had acted as a meme and triggered so many knee-jerk and emotional reactions. The flag hijabs challenged the memetic affiliation between the flag, patriotism and whiteness, and affirmed the rights of Muslim women as Australian citizens. At the same time there was a concerted effort to be inclusive, as demonstrated in the ‘Our sisters, our daughters’ roadside signage. In due course, the Cronulla Riots subsided into memory as more pressing interests took over, notably in relation to the canonisation of Australia’s first home-grown saint: the very much veiled Mary McKillop.

In conclusion, memes and memeplexes do impact on our lives, accentuated by modern

technologies which convey text and images at the press of a button. It is important therefore to be mindful of loaded terminologies in advertisements and images, and be wary of mindlessly imitating them. Instead we should engage ever mindfully with the print and visual media and replicate only that which meets our insightful evaluation. It is important to understand, listen and thoughtfully engage with memes and slogans, rather than categorically challenge their authenticity. Only thus will we engage with the trends and signposts that inform modern life. In the final resort, though, where we may falter as to the real value or meaning of a meme, as Theosophists we can always fall back on the guiding principle implicit in our First Object.

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Born in Brussels, Olga Gostin completed her first degree in South Africa, majoring in Social Anthropology. After completing her PhD in Australia, Olga joined Australia's founding programme for Aboriginal tertiary students at the University of South Australia, where she is currently adjunct senior lecturer. Olga has been a member of the Theosophical Society for over four decades. Olga gave this talk at a meeting of the TS Science Group in Auckland, in October 2012, and at the 2012 Australian TS Convention.



It is important to understand, listen and thoughtfully engage with memes and slogans, rather than categorically challenge their authenticity. Only thus will we engage with the trends and signposts that inform modern life. In the final resort, though, where we may falter as to the real value or meaning of a meme, as Theosophists we can always fall back on the guiding principle implicit in our First Object.

Johannes Kepler: Man of Two Worlds

Brian Harding

1. Introduction

Social Psychologists have often pointed out that the overall evolution of humanity is reflected in the evolution of each individual person and vice versa. Theosophists may recall, for example, Ken Wilber, whose early work on the individual was recorded in *The Atman Project* (1985) and on humanity as a whole in *Up From Eden* (1986). Of relevance here is the fact that Wilber sees the Renaissance (1500-1600) as the transition from what he terms the 'middle egoic' period to the 'higher egoic' period, naming Johannes Kepler, along with Galileo and Newton, as the fathers of the new era (Wilber, 1986, p.181). As a rough comparison, Theosophists may think in terms of a transition from the lower mental to the higher mental, occurring on the societal scale, rather than in the individual.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand what this transition means is by reference to the work of the great French psychologist, Jean Piaget (Gruber, H. and Voneche, J. eds, 1977). The transition that occurred in the Renaissance is essentially from a stage in which the mind reflects simply *upon objects*, or *on what is*, to a higher stage in which the mind reflects upon *propositions* about objects, or *relationships* between them.

And this is precisely what we see Johannes Kepler doing. He takes the 'objects' – the vast amount of data collected by Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe, the 'what is' – and develops concepts from them and hence discovers



relationships, namely, his Laws of Planetary Motion. So it is appropriate to recognise Johannes Kepler and the man he assisted in Prague, Tycho Brahe, as transitional figures in what was called 'natural philosophy'.

2. A Word about Brahe

Tycho Brahe was born at Knudstrup, now in Sweden, but then part of Denmark, on 14 December 1546 (much of the biographical data in this article is from Gribbin, 2002, with acknowledgement). He was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, into an aristocratic family. For many years, he had the favour of the King, Frederick II and thus he had sufficient funds to spend much of his time making observations of star and planetary positions. He is famous for the enormous amount of astronomical data he collected without the use of any telescope, using his naked eye and huge instruments (we're talking metres) such as the sextant with which he observed the supernova of 1572.

His observations of this, and later, in 1577, a comet, helped to demolish the medieval idea that the stars were eternally fixed in their places

on heavenly crystal spheres. He developed his own model of the Universe, a kind of halfway house between the models of Ptolemy and Copernicus. Tycho moved to Prague at the invitation of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II in 1599 where he was appointed Imperial Mathematician. He died two years later in 1601 and was succeeded by Johannes Kepler.

He had grave doubts about some of the Church's rituals, and although he believed firmly in the existence of God, he never found a formally established Church whose teachings and rituals made sense to him, and he persisted in worshipping in his own way.

The influence of classical scholars, such as Pythagoras, on his thinking came out in his book *Mysterium Cosmographicum*, published in 1596.

3. Johannes Kepler

From Weil der Stadt to Graz

Johannes Kepler was born on 27 December 1571 in Weil der Stadt near Stuttgart in Germany. He had none of the advantages of wealth and position that Tycho Brahe enjoyed. His father Heinrich was a wastrel and drunkard. Johannes had a disturbed and lonely childhood. The family situation was turbulent and he was moved from house to house and school to school. While staying with his grandfather, he caught smallpox, which left him with bad eyesight for the rest of his life. Hence he was never able to become an observational astronomer. However, his brain was unaffected and he did well at his studies.

Eventually he gained entry by examination to the University of Tübingen. Here, his course included mathematics, physics and astronomy, in all of which he excelled. His Professor of mathematics, Michael Maestlin, although dutifully teaching Ptolemy's astronomy to his

students as required by the Reformed Church, on the side introduced the young Kepler to the work of Copernicus.

Kepler's own attitude to religion is interesting – he would have made a good Theosophist, I think. To quote John Gribbin (2002, p.52),

He had grave doubts about some of the Church's rituals, and although he believed firmly in the existence of God, he never found a formally established Church whose teachings and rituals made sense to him, and he persisted in worshipping in his own way.

When he was twenty-two, a teaching opportunity arose at a seminary in Graz, then capital of the small state of Styria, where Kepler took up the position as Professor of Mathematics. But it wasn't easy for him. He was plagued with money problems and his being a Lutheran, at least in name, caused difficulties in the Holy Roman Empire at a time of ongoing religious strife.

He became popular in Graz and made some cash on the side by casting horoscopes for private individuals. In fact, throughout his life astrology was really his day job. However, he seems to have had little faith in it, as his private letters indicate, referring to his clients as 'fatheads' and describing astrology as 'silly and empty' (Gribbin, 2002, p.53). In spite of that, it's worth noting that Kepler had some success with his astrological predictions. He was commissioned to produce a calendar for 1595, predicting important events for the year ahead. These included rebellion by the peasants in Styria, Turkish incursions into Austria, and the cold winter.

The influence of classical scholars, such as Pythagoras, on his thinking came out in his book *Mysterium Cosmographicum*, published in 1596. Because he had defective eyesight, he could not indulge in detailed observation, as Tycho had done. And in Graz he had no access to Tycho's measurements. So he resorted to pure reason, as had the Greeks before him. It occurred to him that the number of planets (six were then known) might be related to the number of regular solid figures that can be constructed using Euclidean geometry.

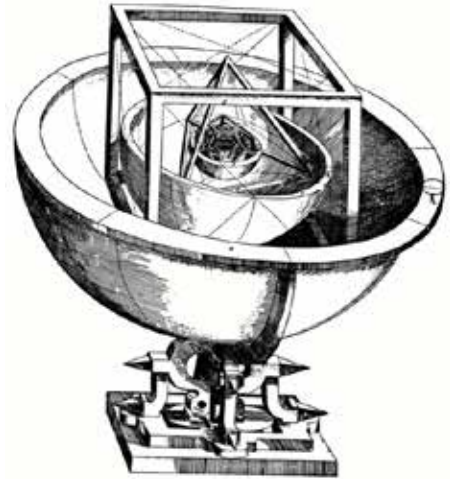
In brief, he nested these figures inside each other so that the corners of the inner figure just touched the surface of the surrounding sphere and in turn the sphere touched the inner sides of the next figure out in the nest. It's a bit hard to imagine, but he actually arrived at a spacing between the spheres that more or less corresponded to the orbits of the planets around the Sun. However, this model fell apart when Kepler himself later showed that the planetary orbits are in fact elliptical, not circular.

However, there was one important point raised in *Mysterium Cosmographicum*. Copernicus had found that the planets move more slowly the further they are from the Sun. Kepler suggested that they were kept moving in their orbits by a force which he called 'vigour' (Gribbin, 2002, p.56) reaching out from the Sun. He argued that this vigour would be less forceful further from the Sun and hence would push the planets more slowly. This was significant because it hinted that there was a physical reason for planetary motion. Kepler specifically said 'my aim ... is to show that the machine of the universe is not similar to a divine animated being but similar to a clock' (ibid., p.56). Thence, perhaps, arose the idea of a 'clockwork universe'.

From Graz to Prague

Kepler and his family had to be continually alert because of ongoing religious strife. Remember this was long before the unification of Germany, and each minor state was subject to the religious beliefs of the current ruler – change of ruler often meant change of religion. The religious climate in Graz led to Kepler leaving his job there in 1600.

The two men who between them laid the foundations of scientific astronomy, Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler, met at Benatky Castle thirty-five kilometres north-east of Prague on 4 February, 1600. As we have seen, Tycho arrived in Prague in 1599, the year before Kepler, and had been made Imperial Mathematician (in effect Court Astrologer) to Emperor Rudolf II. After an extended visit, Kepler returned to Graz and returned with his



Kepler's Platonic solid model of the Solar System from *Mysterium Cosmographicum*

family in October 1600. They settled into a house at no. 4 Karlova St, near the Charles Bridge.

Eventually the Emperor was persuaded to appoint Kepler as Tycho's assistant. This began the most productive period of Kepler's life which saw the development of his famous Laws of Planetary Motion.

However, for the moment, the major project was the development of a new set of tables of planetary motion, to be called, in the Emperor's honour, the Rudolfine Tables. Tycho was reluctant to hand over his astronomical data to the still young Kepler, and doled it out in small bits, rather than giving him free access to it. But in 1601, Tycho was taken ill. Just before he died (24 October 1601), he bequeathed his life-long work, including his instruments and unpublished material to the astonished Kepler, and within weeks Kepler was offered Tycho's job as Imperial Mathematician.

But Kepler's astronomical work was hampered by a number of factors, not least being persistent lack of money. Also, there was interference from Tycho's heirs who were keen to see the Rudolfine Tables published and were concerned that Kepler would use Tycho's data to support Copernican ideas against the Earth-centred universe of the Roman Church.

And, as Imperial Mathematician, his job was to advise Rudolf as to what the stars had to say about war with the Turks, bad harvests, the religious troubles, and so on. Further, his astronomical calculations involved pages and pages of arithmetic to determine planetary orbits – he had no computer to help him in those days!

It was in his capacity as Imperial Mathematician that Kepler observed what we now know was a supernova. In 1604, this 'new star' appeared in the evening sky.

He worked first on the problem of the orbit of Mars and found he had to move further and further away from the classical idea of perfectly circular orbits. In 1602, he came up with what is now known as his Second Law, the mathematics of which suggested the orbit had to be elliptical. (The Law is usually given as 'the radius vector drawn from the Sun to a planet sweeps out equal areas in equal time intervals'. This explains why planets move faster, the closer to the Sun they are.) Still he was only able to get to his astronomical work occasionally and it took until 1605 before he arrived at his First Law, namely a proven general statement that 'all planets move in elliptical orbits with the Sun at one of the foci'.

With these two Laws, Kepler had done away with the need for classical Ptolemaic 'epicycles' and even his own idea of nested solids. A full discussion of these new ideas didn't appear in print until 1609 in *Astronomia Nova*. Even then, his ideas were accepted only slowly and the full import of his Laws wasn't widely recognised until Sir Isaac Newton came along with his Law of Gravity in 1686.

It was in his capacity as Imperial Mathematician that Kepler observed what we now know was a supernova. In 1604, this 'new star' appeared in the evening sky. Astrologers saw great portents in this phenomenon and Kepler, as part of his imperial duties, began its systematic observation. He noted its fading luminosity,

speculated on its origin and noted the lack of parallax suggesting it was no planet or comet but was much further away in the sphere of fixed stars. As with Tycho's observation of the supernova of 1572, this work again undermined the medieval (Aristotelian) notion of the immutability of the heavens. He published his findings in 1606 in *De Stella nova in pede Serpentarii*. A remnant of this supernova can still be seen today.

During his time in Prague, in addition to his astronomical work, Kepler did much pioneering work in the field of optics. This is less well known than his astronomy but is of great importance in the development of modern science. During 1603, Kepler focussed on optical theory. In 1604, he published his findings in *Astronomiae Pars Optica*. In this, he described the inverse square law governing light intensity, how light is reflected from mirrors, the importance of parallax, and apparent size of celestial bodies. He analysed the way the human eye works by focussing light onto the retina and used his understanding to explain why some (like himself) had bad eyesight. He discovered also the principle of the pinhole camera and how it created images without the use of a lens. *Astronomiae Pars Optica* is regarded as the foundation of modern optics.

In 1610, Galileo Galilei started work in Italy with his new telescope. He had corresponded with Kepler for some years and this started Kepler on his own investigations of telescopic optics using a borrowed telescope. His work was published in *Dioptrice* in 1611 (from which we get 'dioptré', the measure of the strength of a lens). In it, he describes how double concave and double convex lenses worked and produced a design for an improved telescope, now known as the astronomical or Keplerian telescope, which produced higher magnification than Galileo's.

But then Kepler went through a bad period in his personal life. He lost three children to smallpox and his wife died of typhus in 1611. The following year, the Emperor Rudolf died. His successor, Matthias, confirmed Kepler as

Imperial Mathematician and also allowed him to take a post in Linz, where he remarried. But religious difficulties followed him there. In 1615, his mother was accused of witchcraft. Kepler was involved in lengthy petitions on her behalf, but she was held in prison until October 1621. Six months after her release, she died.

One of Kepler's last great works was entitled *Harmonices Mundi*. It is here that what is known as Kepler's Third Law appears ('The square of the orbital period of any planet is proportional to the cube of the semi-major axis of the elliptical orbit'). The book was published in 1619. His other great work, *Epitome of Copernican Astronomy*, appeared in three volumes in 1618, 1619 and 1620. In it, Kepler made a clear and convincing case for the Sun-centred universe of Copernicus. This more readable book brought Kepler's ideas to a wider audience. One more loose end – the Rudolfine tables were published finally in 1627 and they remained the standard planetary tables for generations.

Continued religious difficulties meant that the Kepler family had to keep moving and it was on one of his travels that Kepler was taken ill at Regensburg with a fever. He died on 15 November 1630, just short of his fifty-ninth birthday. While in his lifetime Kepler

was better known as an astrologer, his work on astronomy can be found in every physics textbook today. He was truly a man of two worlds.

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An outing during the 2014 School of Theosophy. left to right: Janet Harding, Dianne Manning, Tony Buzek, Ed Abdill, Pedro Oliveira, Jane Wilson and George Wester



School of Theosophy - a class in session

Reincarnation – The Lost Pillar of Cristianity

David Allan

I was fortunate to spend some time in Vienna. During my stay I found myself gazing at length on one of the most disturbing pictures I have ever seen. It was a large painting, originally in a church, of *The Last Judgement* by the 16th century Flemish painter Hieronymous Bosch; a triptych, with a large panel in the middle and a smaller wing on each side. It was the pride of the small gallery owning it and one of the most visited paintings in the city.

The left panel showed the expulsion from the Garden of Eden and an impure life. The top of the centre panel showed the joys of heaven with the saved worshipping God and his angels. However, the painter had devoted most of his skill and energy to the bottom of this panel and to the right wing, with the dammed falling into hell, and frightening depictions of their tortures and torments. I felt a wave of depression and sympathy for the people of medieval Europe, compelled by the church of the time to accept such options for the afterlife.

Fast forward to Western countries today and the only depiction of heaven or hell seems to be a cartoon conversation with St Peter at the pearly gates in the clouds when some luminary dies. Should any church install a reproduction of Bosch's *Last Judgement* at its altar, it would probably be subjected to a class action for scaring children at sermons.

One unfortunate effect of this devaluation of authoritative religion has been a deficit of higher beliefs in a significant proportion of the population. Many now believe this is the only life and nothing exists after death or don't know and therefore skirt the issue. Of course there is still the core of traditional Christian believers, but also growing numbers of people attracted to Eastern religious beliefs incorporating rebirth or reincarnation.

Yet all this need not have happened. Had it not been for the sixth century intervention of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, then the most powerful person in the Western world, reincarnation may well have been a major pillar of Christianity. Most of the early Christian Fathers believed in and taught the pre-existence of the soul, particularly Origen, who lived from CE 185 to 254. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* stated that Origen was the most prominent of the early Church Fathers with the possible exception of Augustine. St Jerome considered him the greatest teacher of the church after the Apostles.

Yet his name is largely forgotten now, because his views on reincarnation and the spirit world were anathematised (i.e. cursed) by a stacked fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in CE553. These anathemas, of which there are twenty-four under the name of the Emperor Justinian, make astonishing reading and are in the Appendix of an anthology on Reincarnation compiled for a *Quest Book* by Joseph Head and Sylvia Cranston. The first anathema sets the scene: 'If anyone assert the fabulous pre-existence of souls and shall assert the monstrous restoration which follows from it; let him be anathema.' Others refer to teachings that Christ had a normal birth and a pre-existing soul. Some anathematised teachings are reminiscent of concepts from the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The final anathema provides a link with the Bosch painting with which I introduced this talk:

If anyone says or thinks that the punishment of demons and of impious men is only temporary and will one day have an end and that a restoration will take place of demons and of impious men, let him be anathema.

A concluding statement anathematises Origen and an associate personally for setting forth these opinions.

Astonishing, is it not, what we think we know but are totally ignorant of?

Talk given at the 2013 School of Theosophy, Springbrook. David Allan is a Brisbane member. He has a PhD in Engineering.

Q and A: Theosophical Teaching, Death, the TS and the TOS

Following are some responses from the Q and A panel during the January 2014 Convention

What is the most important Theosophical teaching for today?

David Allan, Brisbane:

From my point of view, the most important teaching is simply that there is an ageless wisdom, the Perennial Philosophy. This is basic but so important.

Brian Parry, Melbourne

The most important theosophical teaching in my view is HPB's immortal comment that we need to be aware that we are ceaselessly self-deceived. Think what that would do to all argument on any subject you could think of. I detest the thought, but know that I am self-deceived most of the time.

Stephen McDonald, Sydney:

In *The Voice of the Silence*, HPB mentioned: 'The Mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the disciple slay the slayer.' This reinforces what Brian was saying.

Phillipa Rooke, Brisbane:

I began by thinking 'Brotherhood' and ended up with 'Unity', that amazing one fundamental Law in occult science. If we all had a bit of a handle on that, what a different world it would be.

How can Theosophy throw light on death and dying?

Stephen McDonald:

This is a very interesting question because most of us, whether we admit it or not, probably have some fear about death. The Perennial Philosophy discusses death in terms of cycles, physical death being part of the process of life and renewal. Some view it in terms of reincarnation; in reality, none of us really knows, unless there has been such an experience from which we have returned. Some people have had Near-Death-Experiences but solid evidence about what happens after physical death is rather slim. Madame Blavatsky

pointed out in *The Secret Doctrine* that there is no dead matter in the universe. This is supported by modern science which affirms that matter and energy are interchangeable. Interestingly, the difference between something physically dead and physically living is still not really known in the realm of science today. In that sense, life is still a mystery in the scientific sense. The only ideas we have about this mystery probably come from the Perennial Philosophy.

Then there is psychological death – inner death, which can actually occur from moment to moment. This is the sort of death which J. Krishnamurti ('K') spoke of, the death of the self. That means, dying to all that is old in our psyche, in our consciousness. The question of what happens after physical death becomes fairly irrelevant if we know what it is to die psychologically to our past anyway. K used to say, 'Die right now.' This means to die to all that is past, to our conditioning. Then we will truly know what it is to live. For life is more important than death. Renewal or regeneration probably only comes about through self-awareness.

Why don't more TS members join the TOS? Surely the TOS is putting TS principles into action?

Phillipa Rooke:

I am a very strong supporter of the work the TOS does. It is valuable and has to be encouraged. TOS work is about service and living to benefit humanity. There are different avenues of service. Personally, I see my service as serving on the committee of the Lodge and enabling the Lodge to remain as a focal point of Theosophy. That takes quite a bit of time and I do not have time to participate in TOS activities. I know many people, contemporaries, who are doing service for grandchildren which can be time-consuming.

Indian thought includes the different tendencies in people, reflected in the different yogas. There is Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of devotion and prayer. Anyone who sincerely prays with intent is adding to the service of humanity at a non-physical level. There is Karma Yoga, the yoga of action, the level upon which the TOS very ably works. There is also Jñāna Yoga, the yoga of Knowledge. Meditation is also a service to humanity.

*Images - 2014 Annual
Convention, Sydney*



Group photo outside the Women's College, University of Sydney



Three of our National Lecturers, left to right: Simon O'Rourke, Brian Harding and Barry Bowden



Left to right:
Vicki Jerome (New Zealand),
Dianne Manning (Brisbane),
Ilze Gorell (Sydney)
Viv Ward (Perth)
Shirley Martin (Perth),
Pamela Peterson (Sydney)

During the reception:
Vicki Jerome (New Zealand)
with
Gerard Brennan (Sydney)



Gil and Carolyn Murdoch



Isolde Sueltemeyer

*The Theosophical Society in Australia
Minutes of the
2014 Annual Convention
Business Meeting*



The Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia commenced at 9.16am on Wednesday 22 January 2014 at The Women's College, 15 Carillon Ave, Newtown. Notification had been provided in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia.

CONVENTION CHAIR

The Meeting was chaired by the National President, Linda Oliveira.

OBSERVERS

A motion that Vicky Jerome from New Zealand be admitted as an observer was carried (moved Marlene Bell; seconded Max Brandenberger).

ROLL-CALL OF VOTING DELEGATES AND PROXIES

In accordance with Rule 15(2) of the National Rules, the names of the voting delegates and proxies must have reached the National Secretary on Form 4 by 7 January at the latest. Only those delegates so named by the due date were eligible to vote at the present meeting. They were noted as follows:

- Marlene Bell or failing her Francisca Tyssen for Adelaide Lodge
- Max Brandenberger or failing him Bev Parker for Atherton Lodge
- Pamela Peterson or failing her Peter Brereton for Blavatsky Lodge
- Brian Harding or failing him Phillipa Rooke for Brisbane Lodge (Brian was absent so Phillipa assumed the role of voting delegate)

- Peter Fokker or failing him Tony Fearnside for Canberra Branch
- Denise Frost for Hobart Branch
- Ruth Holt or failing her Denise Frost for Launceston Lodge.
- Kari Torgersen or failing her Rodney Dawson for Melbourne Lodge (Kari was unable to attend; Rodney Dawson thus assumed the role of voting delegate)
- Tony Buzek or failing him Dianne Kynaston for Newcastle Lodge
- Jean Dawson or failing her Anne Bower for Perth Branch (Jean Dawson arrived a little late but was present for purposes of voting)
- Carmen French or failing her Jean Carroll for Sunshine Coast Lodge

The National Secretary reminded the delegates present that the Australian Convention Business Meeting (ACBM) is the governing body of The Theosophical Society in Australia. The members of the ACBM, that is, the Lodges/Branches in the Section, already voted through their Lodge/Branch Convention meetings. She added that no new *significant* motions can be moved at the present meeting. However, minor modifications of motions that were carried at Lodge/Branch Convention Meetings may be voted upon by the voting delegates present at the ACBM.

Each Lodge/Branch has 1 vote irrespective of the number of members it has. In addition, each Lodge/Branch is entitled to 1 vote for every 50 members in Good Standing for two years as at 31 August 2013. The vote allocation for 2014 was therefore noted as follows:

LODGE	MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING	VOTES
Adelaide	62	2
Atherton	17	1
Blavatsky	178	4
Brisbane	61	2
Canberra	15	1
Hobart	18	1
Launceston	22	1
Melbourne	133	3
Newcastle	15	1
Perth	103	3
Sunshine Coast	62	2
National	105	3
TOTAL VOTERS	791	24

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 2013 CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING

The Minutes of the 2013 Convention Business Meeting held at St. Mary's College, University of Melbourne, 871 Swanston St, Parkville, Victoria on 20 January 2013 were published in the June 2013 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted **for** the Minutes of the 2013 Convention Business Meeting. There was no discussion on those Minutes.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2013

It was noted that the National President's Annual Report for the Year ended 31 August 2013 had been published in the November 2013 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted **for** the Annual Report at their Convention Meeting. The National President called for comment, and then highlighted several points in her report: the mentoring programme offered by the Acting Education Coordinator to new members who would like guidance in their studies and enquiries; the prize that had been offered to the University of Queensland, which has a large department of studies in religion; the redesign of the Section's website; and the first editions of

the e-Bulletin. There was no discussion on the President's Report.

NATIONAL TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2013

It was noted that the National Treasurer's Report for the Year ended 31 August 2013 had been published as a supplement to the November 2013 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted **for** the National Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 August 2013. Beatrice Malka, the Assistant Treasurer, drew attention to the surplus noted in the report, and pointed out that the larger proportion of that was profit from the sale of a property which was accounted for in the Balance Sheet under Kent Street Property, land and building at cost (now 50% of said property).

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2013, AND AUDITOR'S REPORT THEREON

The Financial Statements, Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 August 2013 and the Auditor's Report thereon had been published as a supplement to the November 2013 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. The National Secretary

reported that all Lodges/Branches had voted for the Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31 August 2013, and the Auditor's Report. The National Secretary drew attention to the apparent increase in wages and salaries paid by the Section, an increase due to accounting for all wages and salaries in two lines of the financial statements. A comment was made by Brian Parry in support of the depth of reporting available to members in the Australian Section, which, he said, stands in contrast to the experience of members in some other Sections of the Society. He commended the transparency and comprehensiveness of the Section's reporting in general, including that of the National President. Lynette Muller seconded that comment. Peter Brereton objected to the change in accounting procedure, from accounting for the Section's investments at cost to accounting at market. The Assistant Treasurer responded by offering to speak with him about this subject later. The National Secretary responded by pointing out that both are acceptable methods of reporting, but, as mentioned last year, as the Section had always reported to its investment partners (Brisbane Lodge, Adelaide Lodge, Melbourne Lodge and Perth Branch) at market value, it was not feasible to report to the TS alone at cost. It would have to be one way or the other. David Allan asked whether consideration could be given to increasing the cost of hire to non-TS groups hiring the Springbrook Centre. The National Secretary remarked that there had been a small increase twelve months or so ago, and that many of the hirers are small groups who would not be able to pay a great deal more. The matter however would be considered.

BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2014

It was noted that the National Council previously approved the Budget at its meeting in July 2013, and had authorised the Executive Committee to approve any subsequent minor amendments after the completion of the annual accounts. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches had voted for the Budget. The Assistant Treasurer pointed out that the amount budgeted for income from investments was conservative and is likely to be higher.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

The Chair reported that Storey Blackwood was reappointed as Auditor for 2014 by the National Council at its meeting on 20 January.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICERS

The Chair reported that the following appointments had been made by the National Council at its meeting on 19-20 January 2014, and by the national Executive at its meeting on 10 December 2013:

National Vice-President - Denise Frost (National Council appointment)

National Treasurer - position remains vacant

Assistant Treasurer - Beatrice Malka (national Executive Committee appointment)

Editor of *Theosophy in Australia* - Linda Oliveira (national Executive Committee appointment)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT RESULTS

State Representatives for NSW/ACT, Victoria and Western Australia:

The National Secretary reported that in accordance with Rules 17(1)(c) and 19, the terms of office of the State Representatives for Tasmania (Denise Frost), South Australia/NT (Travis James) and Queensland (Geoff Harrod) expired at the appointment of the new State Representatives towards the end of 2013. They were all eligible for re-election. The election was duly called on 10 June 2013, with nominations to reach the National Secretary no later than close of business 19 September 2013. There being only one nomination from Tasmania, Denise Frost was appointed for a second term. There being only one nomination from South Australia, Travis James was appointed for a second term. As there was only one nomination from Queensland, Phillipa Rooke was appointed. Congratulations and thanks to them all.

VOTE ON NOTICES OF MOTION

The National Secretary reported that each of the eleven Lodges/Branches in the Section held a Convention Meeting at which the Notices of Motion were put to a vote, and each of those Lodges/Branches returned the results of voting on Form 4 by the due date. All Lodges/

Branches voted for all of the nineteen Notices of Motion, with the exception of Perth Branch which voted against Motion 4, concerning the slight increase to the dues. Therefore, the nineteen Notices of Motion were all carried. As the National Secretary mentioned previously, no new significant motions can be moved at a Convention Business Meeting (Rule 13(4)) However, a Notice of Motion on any matter may be amended to a minor extent provided that it is submitted in writing to the National Secretary no less than three days before the Convention Business Meeting. The National Secretary then stated that on 16 December she received by email a request from the National President to propose minor amendments to Motion 13 and Motion 17. The reason for the proposed amendments was that on 10 December the national Executive decided to appoint an Electronic Media Committee for 2014 instead of a Website Committee. In Motions 13 and 17 the word 'Website Committee' should therefore be changed to Electronic Media Committee, as follows:

Motion 13 includes the duties of the National President. In the suggested amendments to Rule 21(3)(h) the words to be deleted are struck out and words to be added are underlined:

(3) (h) To Chair the ~~Website Committee~~ Electronic Media Committee which shall hold overall responsibility for the national website and the use of other electronic media subject to the direction of the National Council.

A motion to approve the above minor amendment was carried (moved Marlene Bell; seconded Denise Frost).

Motion 17 includes the duties of the Education Coordinator. In the suggested amendments to Rule 22A(2) the words to be deleted are struck out and words to be added are underlined:

(2)The Education Coordinator shall be a member of the Education and Training Committee and the ~~Website~~ Electronic Media Committee, as well as any other Working Committees the Executive Committee deems appropriate.

A motion to approve the above minor amendment was carried (moved Denise Frost; seconded Pamela Peterson).

PLACE AND TIME OF NEXT CONVENTION

The Chair announced that the 2015 Convention will be held at St Mark's College, Adelaide, from Saturday 24 January to Friday 30 January. The next Convention Business Meeting will be held during that Convention.

RESOLUTIONS OF GOODWILL

The Chair stated that postcards addressed to absent friends and well-wishers had been prepared ready for Convention delegates to sign during the week. Delegates were given the opportunity to suggest other possible recipients.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. From the floor, Pamela Peterson asked whether it could be a condition of the university prize that the prize winners give a talk at the local Lodge. In response to this question, Lynette Muller stated that in Brisbane this is quite likely to happen. Lynne Hume, from the University of Queensland, has given several talks at Brisbane Lodge. Erica Patient expressed the view that while this was a good idea, it should be made as a suggestion rather than a condition. The National President said that she would look into the matter.

b. From the floor, Peter Brereton asked whether consideration could be given to extending Conventions to allow for an optional additional event such as a Theosophy-Science Group event, or something similar, to give time to focus more intensively on subjects in which members are interested.

c. The National President announced the names of the members of the National Executive Committee for 2014, as appointed by the National Council at its January 2014 meeting: The National President and National Secretary (ex officio), the Assistant Treasurer Beatrice Malka, Dianne Kynaston, Ken Edwards, Marlene Bell and Dai Trandang.

There being no other business the Chair closed the Meeting at 10.20am.

Call for Nominations - State Representatives



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF STATE REPRESENTATIVES FOR EACH OF THE ELECTORAL STATES OF NEW SOUTH WALES/ACT, VICTORIA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In accordance with Rules 17(1)(c) and 19, the current terms of office of the State Representatives for New South Wales/ACT (Dianne Kynaston), Victoria (Kari Torgersen) and Western Australia (Franco Guazzelli) will expire at the appointment of new State Representatives towards the end of 2014. They are all eligible for re-election.

Nominations are invited for the election of one State Representative for each of New South Wales/ACT, Victoria and Western Australia. Nominations may be made by a Lodge (Branch) in the relevant Electoral State, or by any two Members resident in the relevant Electoral State who have been Members in Good Standing for the last two years prior to the nomination.

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

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

A photograph of the candidate, curriculum vitae, relevant biographical data, and a personal statement by the candidate, which may be edited as necessary for distribution in consultation with the candidate, must accompany all nominations. All nominations should be on Form 8, endorsed with the consent of the Nominee, and reach the National Secretary no later than close of business 12 September 2014.

Copies of Form 8 can be obtained from the National Secretary, The Theosophical Society in Australia, 4th Floor, 484 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000, or from your Lodge/Branch President or Secretary.



National Calendar of Events...



Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook QLD
Thurs 23 Oct (arrivals) - Sun 26 Oct (departures)
FOR MEMBERS ONLY

Theme: *Vivekachudāmani* of Sri Shankaracharya:
A Theosophical Enquiry into Vedanta

Presenters: Acting Education Coordinator Pedro Oliveira, National Lecturer Barry Bowden and National Lecturer Simon O'Rourke

Overview: Termed 'The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom', the *Vivekachudāmani*, a classic work in the Vedanta tradition, is an enquiry into the nature of bondage to the world of illusion and the path which leads to Liberation and Self-Realisation. This event will consist of a study of the main teachings of the book followed by meditative dialogues.

Cost: \$150 (includes accommodation, sessions, meals and \$10 non-refundable registration fee)

Further Enquiries: contact Pedro Oliveira, edcoord@austheos.org.au, tel. 02 92647056



Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh, NSW
Fri 26 Sep (arrivals) – Sun 28 Sep (departures)

Theme: 'One Life, One Law, One Element' **FOR MEMBERS ONLY**
 – letters from Adepts, a journey into *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*

Presenter: Beverley Champion, former National President of the TS in Australia

Cost: \$120 (includes accommodation, all sessions, meals and \$10 non-refundable registration fee)

Further information: see national website



2015 Annual Convention

Sat 24 Jan (arrivals) – Sat 31 Jan (departures)

Theme: 'Science, Society and Soul Wisdom'

Key Speakers: Associate Professor Victor Gostin, earth scientist, and Dr Olga Gostin, anthropologist. Both are long-time TS members.

Full programme: will appear in the November 2014 issue of this magazine.

Earlybird Registration Fee (non-refundable): \$20 per person for day and live-in registrants if received no later than 31 August by the Convention Secretary.

Regular Registration Fee (non-refundable): \$40 per person for day and live-in registrants if received after 31 August by the Convention Secretary.

Registration Forms: www.austheos.org.au/what's on or from Lodges/Branches.

Cost: \$95 per night including all meals, as well as morning and afternoon teas

Edna Jenks Scholarships: Letters are being sent to the relevant Lodges/Branches.

Further Enquiries: Jennifer Hissey, Convention Secretary, TS National Headquarters, tel: 02 9264 7056, (Mon, Wed and Fri 9.00am – 3.30pm) jennifer@austheos.org.au



Registration forms for Springbrook and Canyonleigh Events:

from the National Headquarters (02 9264 7056) and at www.austheos.org.au/what's on

TOS



TOS Perth members at their Easter Fundraiser supporting Ed and Mary Abdill's visit to Perth. Left to right: Anne Bower, Gailene Wester, Renee Jonas, Viv Ward, Shirley Martin, George Wester

It is a pleasure to share what is going on in our national TOS world. Our nine autonomous groups are busy with fund-raising projects. At a local level the Brisbane TOS recently organised the Annual Working Bee at our Springbrook Education and Retreat Centre, in readiness for the annual TS School with Ed and Mary Abdill. Over the Easter holidays the Perth group managed a successful catering fundraiser by assisting the TS in their workshop with Ed and Mary Abdill (see above photo). These are examples of how, even though small in numbers, our quiet and persistent workers are able to contribute to the common good.

Vic Hao Chin, Jr., from the TOS in the Philippines, has sent a message of thanks to TOS Australia for our generous donation of A\$1,676 in supporting last year's typhoon appeal. The Philippines TOS has tried its best to organise direct donations and distribution of materials to those who were affected by the typhoon. This has included surveying damaged houses, packing, documentation, shipping and trucking, arranging travelling to the small towns and villages, organising volunteers to load and unload goods, and managing the actual distribution of the goods and cash to the families affected.

Delegates at last year's TOS International conference held in Wheaton, USA, produced a draft Plan of Action for the next five years. This plan was then presented to our national group coordinators who, after consulting with their members, streamlined this to suit our Australian TOS groups. These Commitments to Action were then presented at our recent AGM. The overall consensus was a desire to build stronger ties with the Theosophical Society nationally, by stressing the importance of altruism and the three pillars of the Theosophical Society – study, meditation and service. Ideas currently under consideration are for the TOS to be included in local lodge/branch programming and to include TOS news in local TS newsletters, creating a sense of unity. All proposals will be reviewed by our TOS National Council towards the latter part of the year and presented at the next TOS AGM to develop a national policy to assist our groups.

A message of congratulations was sent to our new International President Mr Tim Boyd and his wife, Lily, following the recent Presidential election. The TS internationally has always supported the TOS, the tradition being for the TS International President to be the President of the TOS also. Tim has been very active in the TOS in the USA. Our best wishes go with him in his new role. Despite ill health our webmaster Geoffrey Harrod from Brisbane has recently updated our website and TOS brochure. We wish Geoff a speedy recovery to good health.

If you are interested in peace, justice, the environment, healing, the welfare of people and animals, then please contact Jean Carroll at tos.australia@gmail.com or see our website at: www.australia.theoservice.org

News & Notes

School of the Wisdom, Adyar



Information is now available about the late 2014/early 2015 sessions of the School of the Wisdom, to be held at our International Headquarters in India. They are:

3-14 November 2014:

Theme - *The Voice of the Silence*

The course will attempt to bring home some of the mystical meanings and experiences conveyed by this mystical treatise in poetic prose with its profound appeal to the heart and intuition.

Director - Prof. R.C. Tampi, retired professor of English and TS member since 1959. He has conducted a number of courses on various theosophical subjects.

17-28 November 2014:

Theme – ‘The Psychology of Yoga’

Topics for study will include Consciousness, the Mind, Matter, the relationship of Life and Consciousness, and Samadhi. Background reading: two books by Dr I.K. Taimni.

Director: Mr P.K. Jayaswal, former General Secretary of the Indian Section and current National Lecturer who is deeply interested in Theosophy and J. Krishnamurti's teaching.

1-12 December 2014:

Theme: ‘Self-Transformation and the Spiritual Life’

This course covers an approach to self-transformation that serves as a foundation for an integrated and effective life as well as an essential preparation for living the spiritual life.

Director: Mr Vicente Hao Chin Jr., former President of the TS in the Philippines and former President of the Indo-Pacific Federation who has authored and edited a number of published works.

5-16 January 2015:

Theme: ‘The Science of Theosophy: Foundation and Practice’

These sessions will prove that Theosophy is a science based on a foundation and proven by experimentation. Exercises in self-awareness and a detailed study of meditation will be included.

Director: Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Điêu, Chairperson of the European Federation, General Secretary of the TS in France and postgraduate in pharmaceutical technology.

Members who wish to apply to attend the School of the Wisdom are required to fill out an application form for the School which can be downloaded from the international website. Queries can be directed to the National President, who will need to sign the form and also forward a letter of recommendation to the International Headquarters.

Email: pres@austheos.org.au

tel. 02 9264 7056

Additional information about these courses is available at:

www.austheos.org.au/What's On and

<http://www.ts-adyar.org/Events>

2015 Convention

Our National Conventions are interesting and vibrant events, with various people from around the country attending enthusiastically every year. Members are encouraged to attend the National Convention to be held in Adelaide next January on the theme of ‘Science, Society and Soul Wisdom’ with guest presenters **Drs Victor**

and Olga Gostin. Consider spending quality time with old friends and making some new ones as well. More details appear on page 61.

Adelaide Lodge Retreat, August 2014



Photo courtesy Glenbarr

Adelaide Lodge has organised a retreat to be held at Glenbarr Camp and Conference Centre in Strathalbyn, forty-five minutes from Adelaide, from **29-31 August**.

Theme: ‘The Kabbalah – Tree of Life, an Experiential Journey of Discovery’

The retreat will include meditation, theory, discussion, processes, sharing and silence. **Members from interstate are also welcome to attend.**

Cost:

earlybird application and payment by 31 July: \$125 TS members / \$175 non-members.

application and payment between 1 and 19 August: \$150 TS members / \$200 non-members.

Enquiries to: Marlene, Francisca or Marion, tel. 08 8223 1129

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

Important Notice to all Members: Membership Dues and Magazine Changes, 2015

Members are reminded that as a result of the votes of Lodges/Branches at the Convention Business Meeting in January (see page 58) there will be a slight increase to the membership dues, for the first time in over a decade, and a new dues structure. In short, as from March 2015, the print edition of *Theosophy in Australia* will be slightly smaller — a handy A5 — and will be sent only to those members who opt to receive it in hard copy.

When annual dues become payable in 2014, all members will be provided with a choice between two types of dues payment:

1. Continue to receive four print copies of *Theosophy in Australia* each year, at an additional cost of \$20 per annum including postage
- OR
2. Opt not to receive print copies of the magazine, and pay the annual dues without the additional cost of \$20.

All reminders to pay the annual dues which are issued to Lodge/Branch and National Members will be accompanied by a similar explanatory notice.

Please note that the Section will supply Lodge/Branch libraries with a small number of print copies for reference, or for loan.

Section Directory

Australian Section National Headquarters

4th Floor, 484 Kent Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 0163 / 9264 6404
Fax: 02 9264 5857
www.austheos.org.au
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:
campbell@austheos.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:
Postal Address: c/- 27 Reveley Crescent,
Stirling ACT 2611
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent &
Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612
7.30pm 1st Monday of month
(Please confirm by email or telephone)
President: Peter Fokker
Tel: 02 6236 3170
Email: fokkerbakker@gmail.com
Secretary: Tony Feamside
Telephone: 02 6288 7656
Email: janton@netspeed.com.au

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:
2nd & 3rd Floors, 484 Kent Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: 02 9267 6955 Fax: 02 9283 3772
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
www.tssydney.org.au
Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays
President: Simon O'Rourke
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:
Meet: Charlestown Community Centre,
Charlestown Square, 81/30 Pearson Street,
Charlestown NSW 2290
8.00pm 2nd Friday each month
(excluding January)
Study group (members) confirm dates
with Lodge
http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/
President: Melanie Ball
Tel: 02 4948 1733 - please leave message

Blue Mountains Group:
Meet: 1st Floor, 122 Katoomba Street,
Katoomba NSW
2.00pm 1st Monday each month
Coordinator: Donald Fern
Tel: 02 4757 1910

Gosford Group:
Meet: The Neighbour Centre,
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser

Tel: (02) 4339 7118, 0400 713 273
E-mail: marifraser256@gmail.com
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group:
Postal address: c/- The Manor,
2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088
Meet: c/ 22 Laitoki Road
Terrey Hills
NSW 2084
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month
Coordinator: Dai Trandang
Tel: 0438 357 522

Queensland

Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:
Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,
Atherton QLD 4883
Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services
Tablelands, 38 Mabel St, Atherton
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.
President: Max Brandenberger
Secretary: Chris Pang Way
Tel: 07 4091 5156

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:
355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000
Tel: 07 3839 1453
Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au
www.theosophyqld.org.au
Meet: 7.30pm Fridays
President: Brian Harding
Secretary: Phoebe Williams

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004
Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
7.00pm Thursdays
President: Carmen French
Tel: 07 5495 6980
Email: carmen_french@yahoo.com.au
Secretary: Joyce Thompson

Toowoomba Group:
Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba
1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday at
2:30pm each month
(Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)
Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter
Coordinator: Barry Bowden
Tel: 0427 751 464

South Australia

Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:
310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: 08 8223 1129
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au
http://www.austheos.org.au/adelaide
Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday
of every month. Please contact Lodge for
additional meeting dates.
President: Marlene Bell
Secretary: Francisca Tyssen

Tasmania

Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:
13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000

www.theosophicaltas.websyte.com.au
Meet: 8.00pm Mondays
Acting President and Secretary: Helen Steven
Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:
54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston, TAS 7250
Postal address: 66 Flinders Street,
Beauty Point, TAS 7270
email: rmholt@gmail.com
www.austheos.org.au/launceston
Meetings: Wednesdays commencing
7.00 pm for meditation, followed
by meeting at 7.30 pm
President: James Deavin
Secretary: Ruth Holt
Tel: 0448 397 246

Victoria

Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:
126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624
email: meltheos@bigpond.net.au
Meet: 2nd, 3rd and 4th Tuesdays, 6.00pm
President: Kari Torgersen
Secretary: Rodney Dawson

Mornington Peninsula Group:
Meet: Mt. Eliza Neighbourhood Centre,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month 11am - 3.30pm
(meditation - lunch - Theosophy)
Coordinator: Daphne Standish
Tel: 03 9589 5439
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

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

Western Australia

Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:
21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104
Email: tsp Perth@iinet.net.au
http://tsp Perth.iinet.net.au
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
President: Tina Hentisz
Secretary: Deborah Weymouth

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:
1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082
Currently Closed
All enquiries to Perth Branch
Tel: 08 9328 8104

**Theosophical Education
and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Qld**
2184 Springbrook Road,
Springbrook QLD 4213
Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211
email: info@tsretreat.com.au
Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

