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Preparing for Death and After
St. Paul: a Dialogue
Harvard Conference: Theosophy and the Study of Religion

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

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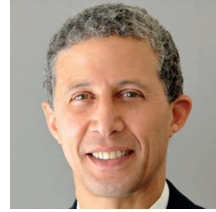
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Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society

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

From the International President

Tim Boyd



The ‘Word’ and the Spiritual Path

Speech is an imitation or reflection of a divine power that is within *all* of us. It is highly regarded in the Scriptures of the world. In the Bible the first words of the Gospel of John state that ‘In the beginning was the Word’— speech not as we understand it, but perhaps in the sense of the sound that awakens all things into being.

When John speaks about the coming of the Great Teacher, the appearance of an Avatar, the language that is used is: ‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ A clear understanding of the power of the Word, rightly understood, is something that runs throughout the Scriptures of the world.

In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P. Blavatsky (HPB) says many things about sound and speech. One thing in particular is:

To pronounce a word is to evoke a thought, and make it present: the magnetic potency of human speech is the commencement of every manifestation in the Occult World.

She writes about the capacity of speech to magnetise, to attract to itself. This

relates not solely to conscious occult practices, but to the normal speech and conversation that we engage in from moment to moment.

We mostly use speech without the addition of wisdom. So what this says is that to speak a word is to evoke a thought and to make it present. Every word we say, whether casual or profound, brings a thought into our presence and that of others.

In our normal conversation we do not apply this level of thought. We are just talking, and for us it is not something so deep or involved. The fact of the matter is that our speech is *always* something that deep. To utter a name is to define a being and place it under the influence of divine forces – or of those forces more suitable to thoughtless speech and a mind that is not refined.

So there is a great responsibility involved in how we use language. It becomes an active blessing in the world around us, or it becomes a curse. Although we may not think of ourselves as people who would do

harm to others, because of the casual nature of our thought and speech about others, we certainly do such things unconsciously.

To some people, it seems a fitting excuse to say: ‘I just wasn’t aware!’ For those who have committed themselves to a path of ever-deepening awareness, that is not acceptable. Even if we go into a court of law, they will tell us that ignorance of the law is no excuse. This is especially true with universal laws and the karmic consequences that ensue.

A great First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, went on to become a great humanitarian. She once made a comment about speech: ‘Small minds talk about peo-

ple; average minds talk about events; great minds talk about ideas.’ This is not from the perspective of someone who was specifically engaged in a spiritual path, because probably we can say that *greater* minds talk about the Divine, God, or Reality, and the greatest minds remain silent. But *all* of us find ourselves inhabiting different areas of this spectrum of speech at different times.

The idea is to try to refine this, and this is what we are constantly engaged in.

Extract from the International President’s pages in the June 2019 issue of *The Theosophist*.

To view more issues online, go to: <https://www.ts-adyar.org/book-store>

Under all speech that is good for anything lies a silence that is better. Silence is deep as Eternity; speech is shallow as Time.

Thomas Carlyle



Photo by Faye Cornish on Unsplash

From the National President

Linda Oliveira



Greetings from the National Headquarters.

For those who love the practical applications of Theosophy, this issue begins on a pragmatic note with some observations and salutary reminders, from our International President, about the importance of speech.

An interesting article about death follows which blends theory and practicality – it is a subject not so comfortable for some, yet indisputably relevant to us all. As with all journeys, this particular one will be easier if there is some preparation beforehand.

Also featured is a dialogue about St. Paul, who was described by HPB as an Initiate; a slightly unusual conversation about an individual who is not so often explored in the TS.

Another item of note is a report about a recent conference at Harvard University on ‘Theosophy and the Study of Religion’. Co-sponsored by the TS in America, an advertisement for the conference was framed in these terms:

Since its emergence in the late nineteenth century, the movement commonly known as ‘Theosophy’ has wielded enormous influence across diverse fields. This conference will examine Theosophy’s complicated relationship with the study of religion, from the late nineteenth century to today.

This continues some recent academic conferences focussing on Theosophy, which is gaining a renewed recognition in some quarters – and justly so.

Not only has Theosophy gained currency in the academic world today; more significantly it has inspired numerous lives, helping provide depth and meaning to existence in what seems, at times, to be a chaotic world. I would be most interested to hear also from members about how Theosophical teachings have impacted their life. Many have found the discovery of Theosophy, and a journey into its depths, to be truly inspirational and transformative.

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

Preparing for Death and After

Nelda Samarel



Photo: Bruno Theodorou on Unsplash

An ancient Mesopotamian tale, retold by W. Somerset Maugham, tells of a merchant in old Baghdad who sent his servant to the market to buy provisions. In a little while the servant returned, white and trembling, and said:

Master, just now when I was in the marketplace I looked across the square and saw Death staring at me. Please lend me your horse so I may ride away to Samarra, where Death will not find me.

The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant rode away as fast as the horse could gallop. Then the merchant went to the market and saw Death standing in the crowd. The merchant went over to Death and said, ‘Why did you frighten my servant when you saw him this morning?’

Death replied,

I am sorry and did not mean to frighten him I was merely surprised to see him here in Baghdad, for I have an appointment with him tonight in Samarra.

It is said that the only certain things are death and taxes; some seem to avoid taxes, but no one avoids death. Yet we know little about this inevitable transition and less about how to prepare for it. We pretend that it doesn’t exist. We have inherited a terrible attitude toward death; it is black, solemn. We fear death because of the myths and misconceptions about the after-death states.

Myth: Death is the end; nothing in us survives.

Fact: There is no death in the sense of ceasing to be, only transition or change in the focus of consciousness.

Myth: Death is a plunge into the unknown.

Fact: We can know what lies ahead.

Myth: Sinners go to hell forever.

Fact: It doesn’t make sense for those who have done one wrong or made one mistake to suffer for eternity.

These misunderstandings keep us from thinking about death. But we need to think about it and come to understand it *at this moment* so that we may adequately prepare for it.

Preparing for Death

The one aim of those who practise philosophy in the proper manner is to practise for dying and for death.

Plato, *Phaedo*

If we are planning a trip to an unknown place, how would we go about it? Would we fly somewhere, get off the plane, and think, ‘Where should I go? Where should I sleep?’ Would we wander around and wonder what the place is like? Or would we prepare for our trip?

If we assume that death is not the end of consciousness, but simply a change in the focus of consciousness, then planning for it is no different from planning any other trip. Being prepared, we will arrive on the other side with the courage, confidence, and ability to keep us from experiencing bewilderment, fear, and helplessness in a strange new place. Not only will this preparation result in a more pleasant after-death experience, but it will allow us to be a centre of peace, extending assistance to others who may not be as well prepared, and will also speed our own onward progress.

In order to prepare for the after-death states, we first need to explore what is meant by the afterlife.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Death is not a negation of life, or the opposite of life; it is the opposite of birth, but, like birth, it is a part of life. There is a continuum from birth to death, and that continuum endures after death. Quantum theory supports the idea that matter never ‘dies’, but continues in another form. What is that form?

Many traditions have theories and beliefs about the after-death states that may assist one in accepting death. There is a great deal in the Theosophical literature about this subject. The view presented here is based on a synthesis of H.P. Blavatsky’s writings, the Mahatma Letters from the Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi, and the writings of second-generation Theosophists Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater. Some of the second-generation writing appears to contradict points in the initial writings of Blavatsky and the Masters, but we must keep in mind that the second-generation writing was presented thirty years later and had the benefit of decades of further clairvoyant research on the subject. Much of Besant’s and Leadbeater’s thought was corroborated by the later Theo-

sophical clairvoyants Geoffrey Hodson and Dora Kunz.

Before considering what happens after we die, it is essential to be familiar with the septenary human constitution.

The Septenary Human Constitution

*Man, know thyself; then thou shalt
know the Universe and God.*

– Pythagoras

Humans have a sevenfold constitution, ranging from the physical, the densest form with the slowest rate of vibration, to the Universal, the most subtle, with the highest rate of vibration. (See diagram 1, p.80.) These principles are not stacked on top of one another, but are interrelated, occupying the same space in differing degrees of density of matter and rapidity of vibration.

The lowest four principles (physical, vital, etheric, and the desire nature) are known as the *lower quaternary*, the impermanent or mortal part of our nature. The lower quaternary is that part of us that is unique to this life. The higher three principles (mind, spiritual consciousness, and the Universal), known as the *upper triad*, are the immortal, eternal part of our nature. The upper triad is the permanent individuality, or the part of us that reincarnates and knows the underlying unity of all existence. It is often referred to as the inner Self.



Sean Sinclair on Unsplash

We may think of ourselves, then, as immortal beings (mind, spiritual consciousness, and the Universal) who use the mortal personality and body (physical, vital, etheric, and the desire nature) for one lifetime.

Mind, having lower and higher aspects, may be seen as the swing principle: if mind gravitates toward the next *lower* principle, the desire nature, life is focussed on the material or earthly plane; if mind gravitates toward the next *higher* principle, spiritual consciousness, life is more focused on the spiritual.

Preparation Note

How do we want to focus our life, toward the material or the spiritual? We make this decision every day, every moment, using the mind, but it is reinforced by the desire nature, where the personal will resides. Use the personal will, moment after moment, to help prepare for the after-life but, equally importantly, to determine the quality of this life.

Diagram 1. The Seven Human Principles

1 Universal

One Self, One Reality, eternal, boundless; the most subtle level, with the highest rate of vibration. All principles are aspects of the Universal. One cannot know the Universal except through its reflection in the spiritual consciousness.

2 Spiritual consciousness

In close union with mind; associated with wisdom, discrimination, intuition, or spiritual insight.

3 Mind

Associated with words, ideas. One principle, separating functionally at birth into two: Higher mind: linked with conception; beyond reason; turned inward, interwoven with the higher principle, spiritual consciousness; knows and is therefore beyond reason. Lower mind: linked with perception and reason; turned outward to objects of sense; interwoven with fourth principle, the desire body; functionally disintegrates between incarnations.

If mind gravitates more toward the desire body, it is focused on the material, earthly plane; if it gravitates more toward spiritual consciousness, it is focused on higher or spiritual planes.

4 Desire body (astral body)

Emotional consciousness, the craving principle within us; desire not only for base physical or emotional gratification, but also for more refined gratifications; seat of the personal will. After death, it remains, along with the higher principles for a time, depending on intensity of the feelings, emotions, and cravings: the greater the intensity of feelings, the longer the desire body remains. Eventually it fades away, but its influences remain with the three higher principles.

5 Etheric double

Pattern body; precedes physical nature and is the model or mould around which physical develops. At the death of the physical, it survives for a brief time near the corpse, or until cremation.

6 Vital energy

Vital spark, the animating principle. Death of the physical body occurs when the vital energy is withdrawn.

7 Physical

Physical nature, physical consciousness; the densest level, with the lowest rate of vibration; the vehicle of other principles during life.

The Laws of Periodicity and Continuity

Understanding the laws of periodicity and continuity will help us conceptualise the after-death states. H.P. Blavatsky writes in *The Secret Doctrine*:

The Law of Periodicity asserts that, throughout the universe there are periods of activity followed by periods of rest; for every period of activity there is a corresponding period of rest, followed by another period of activity and then rest. Alternations such as day and night, sleeping and waking, and ebb and flow are facts so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe.

According to the law of continuity, existence is continuous, consciousness endures, and physical death is not the end of consciousness. There is an alternation between activity, representing physical manifestation, and periods of rest, the absence of physical manifestation.

What Happens When We Die?

Death may be understood as a withdrawal of the higher principles from the physical body. In reality, this withdrawal takes place gradually and goes unnoticed until it becomes pronounced. For example, as signs of aging begin, the physical body slows,

there is less vigour, and the vital organs don't function perfectly. Old age, then, is not the cause of death; rather it is the playing out of cycles; it is also the need for withdrawal and rest and for assimilation of life on earth.

Death of the physical and of the vital energy occur almost at the same time. For a short time, the etheric double remains near the corpse, then follows the physical and vital energy in dissipating. With physical, vital, and etheric death, one avenue of expression, one instrument of the personality, the physical, is lost. After death, we are not away somewhere else, but are right here, at a different rate of vibration, which is not perceptible to most.

Most people are unconscious at the moment of death and remain in this sleeping state for some duration after making their transition, awaking in the next state of consciousness, *kamaloka*.

Kamaloka

Kamaloka is a Sanskrit term translated as 'place or location of desires'. Again, this is not a different place, but a different state of consciousness. Mme. Blavatsky writes:

We accept consciousness after death, and say the real consciousness and the real freedom ... begins only after physical death. ... [The ego] is then no longer impeded by gross matter ... it is free, it can perceive everything. ... Can you see

what is behind that door unless you are a clairvoyant? There (after death), is no impediment of matter and the soul sees everything.

In *kamaloka*, one is subject to very strong cravings, such as for eating, drinking, and sleeping, and to emotions, such as anger, hate, and love. Because these may be appeased only by the physical body, and there is no physical body in *kamaloka*, there is no way to appease these desires, resulting in unpleasant experiences of unfulfilled longing. The greater the intensity of emotions and cravings, the longer they remain. Experience in *kamaloka*, then, is directly related, in both length and quality, to the intensity of our emotions on earth.

Preparation Note

Can we appease all our desires while in our physical form, living on earth? If we are tired and desire sleep, are there times when we're unable to do so? When we're late and in a rush, are we ever unavoidably delayed by traffic? When we wish for more money, do we always have it? And, if we do have more, are we content or do we desire still more? The idea, then, as we are told in Light on the Path, is 'kill out desire'. After death, as on earth, we live in a world of our own making. Begin preparing for the after-death states by making our world, our reality

better. Begin by reducing desires, negative thinking patterns, and selfishness.

When we are asleep, only our physical body is on the bed. We experience consciousness in the desire body, or astral body, during this time. Our experiences through our dreams may thus indicate what our life will be like in *kamaloka*.

Preparation Note

It is not so much the content of our dreams as the emotions they evoke that is of greatest importance. Negative emotions in the dream state may indicate a need to change aspects of our waking state to one that is more balanced, wholesome, and peaceful. Be aware of dreams and use them to make positive changes in life.

In *kamaloka*, we have dropped our physical body and live in our desire body, or astral body. This body begins to disintegrate immediately after death. It struggles to preserve itself by rearranging its astral matter into concentric circles, with the coarsest material outermost, like a protective shell, creating a greater resistance to disintegration. This is a natural tendency, like the physical body's attempts to preserve itself when endangered. This coarsest astral matter represents the basest of our desires while living in the physical. Since like attracts like, the astral

body attracts coarse material from its surroundings. The individual is surrounded by base thought-forms, such as jealousy, vengeance, or greed, creating an unpleasant experience.

Preparation Note

After death it is helpful to resist the rearrangement of the astral matter and maintaining the desire body as it was in physical life. This requires resisting any fear that may be present after death, preventing the rearrangement of matter and resulting in a more pleasant and shorter life in kamaloka. This may be accomplished only through the personal will, which must be developed during physical life. Develop the personal will now through regular meditative practice. I will meditate.

Eventually the outermost matter disintegrates. When the passion has for the most part played out, the remainder of the astral body disintegrates, and our time in *kamaloka* is done. The duration in *kamaloka* is directly related to the amount of passion remaining when we die.

Preparation Note

The idea is to purge ourselves of all earthly desires during life and to direct our energies toward unselfish spiritual aspiration.

As every life differs, no two after-death experiences are identical. There always are variations. *Kamaloka*, then,

is different for every person. Intensely spiritual people may pass through it quickly and regain consciousness in *devachan*, the next after-death state.

After Kamaloka

When the astral body has disintegrated or dissolved, along with the lower mind, the higher three principles (Universal, spiritual consciousness, and higher mind), move on. Before the desire body and lower mind completely fade away, however, their remnants – thoughts, desires, and emotions – are saved to become the elements forming the personality of the next physical incarnation. So right now we are actually forming the attributes of our next incarnation.

Preparation Note

Give consideration to every thought, desire, and emotion as those will determine our personality in the next incarnation.

Following is a period of gestation, an intermediate period of preparation for entry into the next state.

Devachan

After *kamaloka*, the three higher principles enter the state of *devachan* (meaning ‘place of the gods’ or ‘place of happiness’). Like *kamaloka*, *devachan* is not a place, but a state of consciousness. Going from one state

to another only signifies a change in the focus of consciousness from one principle to another. For example, while our consciousness is focused in the physical body, only the physical world is perceived and we live in that world; when our consciousness is focused in the astral or desire body, only that world is perceived.

Nothing of a gross nature like selfishness, greed, or sorrow can manifest in *devachan* because the material of the desire body is too coarse for *devachan's* rarified atmosphere. Therefore the experience in *devachan* is one of supreme bliss. Unselfish aspiration is the dominant characteristic determining our experience of *devachan*. This aspiration may be in the form of unselfish pursuit of spiritual knowledge, high philosophic or scientific thought, literary or artistic ability exercised for unselfish purposes, or service for the sake of service. The keynote, then, is unselfishness, or altruism.

Whether or not one has achieved one's ideals during earth life, whatever one has longed for will blossom into fulfillment in the after-death states, and into the next incarnation. *Kamaloka* is the experience of unfulfilled lower passions and desires, while *devachan* provides for the fulfillment of spiritual yearnings during earth life. In the after-death period, nothing comes from

outside ourselves, and we are limited only by our lofty aspirations while in physical incarnation.

Devachan is not a reward of earth life, but a result. That which a man longs for, he becomes. 'For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he' (Proverbs 23:7).

Preparation Note

The quality of our consciousness in physical life determines our after-death condition; our lives today are preparing us for our after-death states. To experience a better devachan, one must live a life of higher, spiritual aspiration. The cultivation of full consciousness and unselfish devotion during physical life not only benefits us and others now, but will produce results in the afterlife. As our consciousness grows, along with our altruistic motivation and service, we develop a greater power for good, which in turn results in more beneficial outcomes in both the physical world and in the after-death states.

Because only truth, beauty, and goodness may enter the *devachanic* state of consciousness, all coarse emotions and thoughts created by the personality while in physical incarnation are left behind, like checked baggage to be collected when one's stay in *devachan* concludes. At that point, leaving *devachan*, we pick up our checked bag-

gage, which becomes the blueprint for the personality of our next incarnation. Unlike the baggage we check with airlines, this baggage is never lost!

The spiritual experiences, the memory of all the good and noble from our previous incarnation, become immortal, surviving to our next incarnation. Past lives, then, never are wiped out, but blended into the life to be. We are a blending of all our past lives.

After Devachan

After *devachan* is another period of gestation, followed by rebirth (see diagram 2, p.86).

The mechanism of birth is the opposite of the mechanism of death. With birth we assume bodies, like robes, one by one; in death we cast off the robes. The *Bhagavad Gita* says, ‘As a man, casting off worn-out garments, taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn out bodies, entereth into others that are new.’ Annie Besant writes in *Death and After*:

We are far more complex beings than we appear to physical sight. To one who knows this, death is an episode, not a tragedy. It is liberation from the physical body and not an annihilation of consciousness. For our consciousness is not in our physical body, though for a time it may be focussed through it. Unchanged by death, the powers of our consciousness may be greater and the extent of our vision and perception somewhat

larger because of our freedom from the physical limitation, but we are the same people after death as before, mentally, morally, and spiritually.

Dora Kunz taught that, in the last moments before physical death and immediately afterwards, the greatest gift we may bestow on ourselves is being at peace. Being at peace immediately prior to and during our transition has a profound effect on the afterlife and future incarnations.

Preparation Note

Because we cannot be what is foreign to us, especially during such a momentous time as this final transition, we must make peace a part of who we are at every moment. This means that we must begin our practice now, at this moment. Because we don't know when our time will come, it is never too early to begin. Now is the time to meditate, as that is the only way to make peace a part of the fabric of our being.

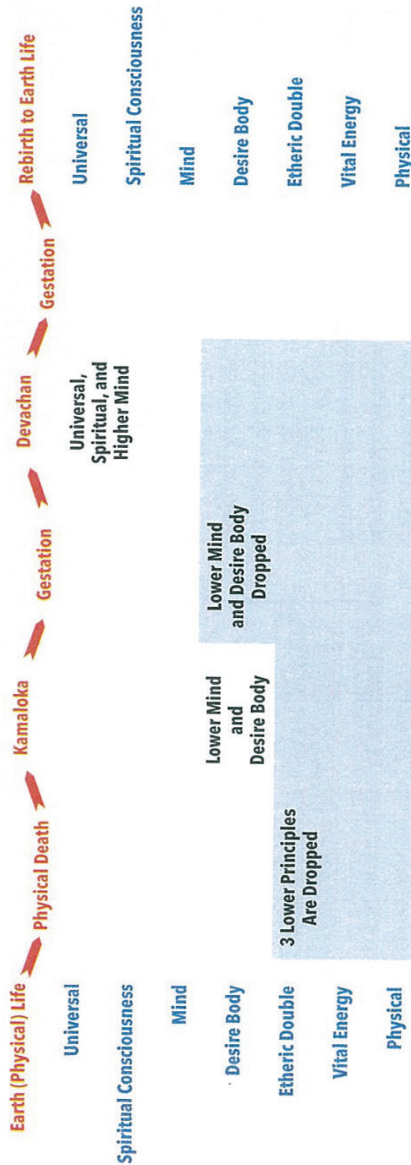
How we live our lives determines our after-death states and our future lives. Through living a life of equanimity (nonattachment), peace, self-acceptance, self-knowledge, generosity (service for the good of all), morality, and patience, our lives today, in the afterlife, and in future incarnations will be of the highest order.

Whether or not one has realised one's ideals during physical life, whatever

one has longed for will blossom into fulfilment in the after-death states, and in the next incarnation. The best

preparation for death, then, is a well-lived life. Gain skill in living in order to master the art of dying.

Diagram 2



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Nelda Samarel, Ed.D., longtime student of the Ageless Wisdom, has been director of the Krotona School of Theosophy and a director of the Theosophical Society in America. She has also served on the executive board of the Inter-American Theosophical Federation. A retired professor of nursing, Dr. Samarel has numerous publications and presents internationally. Her article ‘Meeting the Needs of the Dying’ appeared in *Quest*, Fall, 2016.

The 14th Triennial Conference of the Indo-Pacific Federation, Manila **Theme: ‘Let Your Light Shine’**



Special Guests:

International President **Tim Boyd**
and **Lily Boyd**

International Secretary
Marja Artamaa

Dates: 9-12 November 2019

Arrivals 8 Nov - Departures 13 Nov
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US\$400 double occupancy (2 per room)

The above costs include: daily breakfast, morning and evening snacks, lunch, dinner, convention kit, city tour, visit to the Golden Link School and access to all conference activities.

Airport Transfers: by individual request for a minimum fee.

Payment: Payment should be remitted on or before 15 September 2019.

For further information, including registration form and payment, go to: <http://ipf-ts.org/>

Contact: Mr Roselmo Z. Doval Santos
Email: roseldovalsantos@gmail.com

St. Paul: a Dialogue

Ravi Ravindra and Pedro Oliveira



Photo: St. Paul's Cathedral, London
Paolo Antonini on Unsplash.

The following dialogue took place at the Springbrook Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre in in April 2005.

Pedro Oliveira: Both of us have a heartfelt feeling for the teachings of St Paul and we propose to go into aspects of his teachings in a serious manner.

Ravi Ravindra: This is a conversation between a priest of Christ and a heathen, who is actually a lover of Christ. And one of his earliest interpreters is St Paul, the first Christian theologian. Nearly a third of the New Testament really comprises letters of St Paul and according to most scholars who study the New Testament his letters are the oldest Christian manuscripts that we have.

Paul was a Roman, a soldier who tyrannised the early Christians. Then, once on his travels towards Damascus he had a completely extraordinary experience, in which, as the description

is given, he was blinded by a dazzling light. Now exactly how long this experience lasted is difficult to determine because he himself was unable to say very much about it. However, the fact of the matter is that this experience marked him as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He was the only Apostle, out of the total of twelve, who did not meet Christ in flesh and blood. So there is something already a little exceptional about him and this particular vision – which has to be considered a spiritual vision, not in flesh and blood, in the ordinary sense of perception – so deeply marked him that he felt that Christ himself had now given him a new name. This is quite a common practice both in the Old Testament and the New Testament; whenever there is a radical transformation of being, a new

name is given. We have examples of this – Abram becomes Abraham, Jacob becomes Israel and Simon is called Peter; Saul is now called Paul.

One of his remarks which I often return to is: ‘A necessity is laid upon my soul. Woe is unto me if I do not preach the Gospel’ (1 Corinthians, 9:16). Now, what is this necessity that was laid upon his soul? It seems to me it is because of something that deeply touched him and thoroughly transformed him. Therefore, because he saw and understood something extraordinary, he was responsible.

One often finds in St Paul two completely different sides struggling with each other, the great struggle between the spirit and the flesh. And he says: ‘I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me’ (Galatians, 2:20). This was one side of St Paul; when he was in that mode of consciousness he spoke almost nothing that is short of an angelic level, particularly obvious in his first letter to the Corinthians which speaks about love (1 Corinthians, 13). It is a paean to love, which is absolutely unsurpassed in any other body of literature in the world that I am aware of.

On the other side, it is obvious that he had a great struggle with himself, as he said that there is the law which resides in his members, which does not want to obey the Law of God or

the Law of Spirit. He understood many things in his mind, but his flesh was unwilling and in that there was a great conflict (Romans, 7:22-24).

I should emphasise simply that he had a very fiery character. Whenever wholly taken over by the spirit of Christ, he remarked: ‘There is neither Jew, nor Greek, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised, neither male nor female, they are one in Christ’ (Colossians, 3:10-11). When he was in his other mood, then he was a disciplinarian, laying down what is the right thing to do, whether women should wear hats, or whether they should not wear hats. Then he had a very traditional understanding of all this and a very traditional way of emphasising that it was Eve who transgressed, not Adam, and therefore women should not be given the high place.

Let women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church, says St Paul (1 Corinthians, 14:34-35).

If they had followed this in the Theosophical Society, we would have no HPB, no Annie Besant, and none of the many remarkable women! But we are speaking about two St Pauls, or two levels in him, one of which is almost

wholly taken over by Christ. There are extraordinarily striking examples of this in his letters to the Corinthians and to the Galatians. However, when he was in the other mode, then he was very traditionalist, asserting where the place of men is, and where the place of women is, coming across as almost a complete misogynist in those remarks.

A very puritanical attitude came across in him. St Paul was the first major person in the Judeo-Christian tradition to make a very sharp distinction between *eros* and *agape*. Even among the early Church fathers this distinction was not so radically made, partly because the word *eros* included all levels of love. For example, Socrates spoke about *eros* as well as one of the very great Church fathers, who unfortunately later on was declared a heretic – Origen. Paul even invoked Jesus Christ by referring to him as ‘Oh Eros’. As a reminder, *eros* is the fundamental *fohat* in the Theosophical literature. But St Paul made a very radical division within the whole realm of *eros*, between the lower levels of that, its erotic aspects, calling it only *eros*, while the more spiritual love he would call *agape*. I think this radical distinction arose out of his puritanical feelings about this whole matter.

PO: You have mentioned his experience on the road to Damascus, and I just want to read from the Acts of the



Apostles (26:13), which contain his own description of it. He was talking to King Agrippa, who was somehow interviewing him, because they wanted to know who he was as some people thought that he was up to mischief, and so on. This was his description: ‘At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journey with me’. It was obviously not a physical phenomenon. ‘A light which was above the brightness of the sun.’ The text of the scriptures says that others saw this light but they did not participate in this experience for out of that light a voice spoke to him and said: ‘Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ Now he was a professional hunter of Christians, and suddenly he met with this experience. When he enquired about the identity of that voice he was told it was Jesus. This is important because genuine Gnostic gospels affirm that Jesus was instructing his disciples up to eleven years after his physical death.

Why does an experience completely transform one person? Why do we, and

many people in the world, go through many experiences, yet are not transformed? In the case of the Buddha, it only took the sight of a beggar on the roadside, a mendicant, somebody in appalling poverty, a destitute. That experience was enough for him to find determination in himself to seek the cause of suffering. Krishnamurti once said: ‘Why do people think that only A, B, C, or D can be gurus? Why can life itself not be the guru?’ Life means every relationship, every contact, not only human contact, but every contact. If the consciousness is receptive, perhaps the experience ceases to be just ordinary experience and becomes something which is transforming.

In his letter to the Ephesians (3:8, 9), he refers to his responsibility to preach the gospel as a ‘mandate from the spirit’. It is not necessarily a moral responsibility, but it was perhaps part of his connectedness with God. He wrote:

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

A spiritual search is a necessity of the soul. However, there will always be in it a transcendent element which the mind can never fathom for Spirit is in-

exhaustible. In the words of Meister Eckhart, ‘the soul has within it an abyss, an uncreated dimension’, which is the ground in which this transformative experience – the birth of Christ – takes place. It is a new consciousness, meaningfully described by St Paul as ‘the fellowship of the mystery’ (Ephesians, 3:9).

RR: Maybe you would want to add a quote from St Paul himself, that ‘we become members of one another’ (Ephesians, 4:25).

PO: Yes, he said in his letters to the Romans (12:4, 5):

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

We are related to each other, including those whom we will never meet. This is a very radical teaching. In the same letter he says: ‘None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.’ The mystery of life is relationship.

RR: For St Paul the whole experience of Christ was spiritual. In none of his letters does he show the least bit of interest in any historical, physical or material details about Jesus Christ. This is the earliest testimony of Christ that we have, within thirty-five to forty years after his death, and there is absolutely no interest shown by St Paul in any of

the historical or physical or material details. I find this completely puzzling. How do you find it?

PO: If you read the letters, he hardly mentioned the name 'Jesus' at all; he mostly referred to Christ. Some scholars have said that it was Paul's travels that really laid the foundation for the continued existence of the Church. In some letters it is mentioned that he broke the bread and blessed the wine with the community. But it is a fact that he did not demonstrate much historical interest. Was it because, for him, Christ was not a historical figure but a daily reality? In his letter to the Romans (6:3,4), he said:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

I would like to mention my favourite passage in St Paul's letters. It is perhaps one of the most honest, inspiring and beautiful portrayals of the human condition that one can ever come across. It is from Corinthians (13:12): 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'

What we think is clear vision in our ordinary consciousness is like the vision

through a dark glass, because self-centred activity does not allow us to see clearly. For St Paul, true seeing is face to face; it is a meeting. Or as Martin Buber wrote: 'In the beginning there is relation.' And then Paul said, 'now I know in part'. If only we had the courage to realise that all our knowledge – whatever it is – is fragmentary. 'But then I shall know even as also I am known', which implies completeness.

RR: That is an indication of the reason for our friendship because that is exactly the part that I had singled out as my favourite. However, I had a verse before that and a verse after that also, so I would read the whole passage:

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1Cor.,13 :11-13)

I should point out an important aspect in this remark: it is less important that I, as I am, know; rather, what is more important is that I be known by a subtler level within me.

Why was he chosen? We have a sense that if somebody repents for his bad deeds, then he will be forgiven. In fact, often in the ordinary Christian in-

terpretation, even of the Bible, this is the point that gets emphasised. So, if only you repent, then God will forgive you. But I have become convinced that there is actually something a little different going on in the Gospels. You see several stories, including that of a woman caught in adultery and of another woman who is being tried, et cetera. Christ first forgives, then the sinner repents and lives a different life. St Paul, as you have said, was very intense in his persecution of the Christians. But it is my impression that Christ forgave him, which is the reason why St Paul thoroughly repented. The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia* which literally means ‘to make a hundred and eighty degree turn’, which is exactly what he did. Forgiveness is transformative for the evil-doer.

PO: Perhaps there is an answer to your question in the Acts of the Apostles (9:15). When he had this profound experience he was taken to the house of Ananias who knew his reputation of being a persecutor of Christians and who said to the Lord, ‘much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem’. And this was the answer received by Ananias from the Lord: ‘Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.’ So Christ chose Paul.

RR: To reaffirm what you just read, all the disciples or apostles of Christ were Jews and there was a very strong movement among those disciples, more particularly from James, who is regarded by scholars as the older brother of Christ, to keep this teaching that Christ came only for the Jews. But it was St Paul and before long, Peter, who suggested that this teaching is not confined only to the Jews, that it is for all, as all are one in the Spirit – as if the choosing spirit, Christ, wished this message to be more universally known or transmitted. Then you see that St Paul would be the right choice for this, because none of the other disciples seem so keen on spreading the teaching.

PO: There is perhaps another element at play here when it is said that there is a great saint behind a great sinner. The lives of both St Augustine and St Francis of Assisi come to mind in this regard. Is it because a sinner has a lot of energy to invest? You mentioned the word ‘intensity’. This is what St Paul says in his letter to the Romans:

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38,39)

RR: We can put down passion if we just think of it in terms of deleterious passions that diminish us. On the other hand, passion is simply an intensity of the heart. Unless that exists, it is very difficult to imagine that one can come to anything.

PO: They call it in Sanskrit *atma-shakti* or soul energy. According to Annie Besant, Giordano Bruno also had this intensity of soul.

PO: Many feminists consider St Paul responsible for the subsequent condition of women throughout Europe and in the world. He called himself the ‘master builder’ who is someone who directs the building of a structure, in his case the building of budding Christian communities. Besides the early structure of bishops, priests and deacons, there were also deaconesses, two of whom worked closely with him. My own understanding of this is that he upheld the existing social order of his day, while for us today, living in the twenty-first century, to tell a woman that she should obey her husband and stay in her house is quite unacceptable. The tragedy is that the condition of women has not essentially changed much, not only in that part of the world, but even in Asia. I have read that certain Catholic female scholars were also more or less sympathetic to St Paul’s limitations in this matter.

RR: In the case of Christ, it is really obvious that there were women disciples travelling with him, being taught by him. As you move from the Old Testament to the New Testament, it would be more appropriate to say that one moves from God the Father to God the Mother. There is that full shift of feeling, but in spite of all this Christ still keeps referring to God as Father because of the whole traditional usage of it. Even great revolutionaries are more or less bound, partly because they are, after all, speaking to ordinary people who also have to listen to them.

I feel that Paul had in him at least two levels: one was a social reformer, but even within that he was very much occupied with the proper mode of dress, the place of women, or lack of it, or how the church should be built or not built, all that. But to me that is a secondary part of his teaching. We would not even bother with St Paul if that was all that he did. The reason why we actually read him – not only we, but why his letters are included in the New Testament – is that when he spoke from this other level, he clearly transcended any of the ordinary human limitations.

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Ravi Ravindra is Professor Emeritus at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada where he served for many years as a Professor in the departments of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Physics. His interests include a deep immersion in the mystical teachings of the Indian and Christian classical traditions. He is the author of several books on religion, science, mysticism and spirituality.



Pedro Oliveira is the Education Coordinator of the Australian Section and holds a degree in Philosophy. He has previously held the offices of International Secretary of The Theosophical Society and President of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the Theosophical Society. A former Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, he has a strong interest in Mysticism.

Harvard Conference: Theosophy and the Study of Religion

Michael Gomes



Left: Charles Stang, Director of the Centre for the Study of Religions, Harvard University.

Right: Michael Gomes, TS in America

In May 2019 the Centre for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University held a four day conference on Theosophy and the Study of Religion. Eighteen presenters, drawn mainly

from academics who taught at various universities, and some graduate students, were invited to speak. Panels were held in the mornings and afternoons, comprised usually of three,

sometimes two speakers. Presenters were given thirty minutes for their paper and another thirty minutes for questions and answers.

What emerged from these days was a snapshot of the way Theosophy is viewed by the academic world, those who have the ability to transmit their opinions to students and through their writings and talks. It is said to be a gift to see ourselves as others see us. There seems to be a greater consensus that early Theosophy did achieve much in the way of impacting culture. Many speakers worked to show how this influenced the study of religion through a reinterpretation of the presumptions that defined the field, though sometimes it was not considered a positive thing.

However, Wouter Hanegraaff of the University of Amsterdam gave a considerate analysis of G.R.S. Mead's work on Hermetism and his translations, which Hanegraaff felt were among the best available. H.P. Blavatsky remains the favourite target, as the minutiae of her life seem to excite constant comment.

I took up a specific charge brought against her by F. Max Müller, the editor of the *Sacred Books of the East* series, that her idea of Esoteric Buddhism was 'Buddhism misunderstood, distorted, caricatured'. I wanted to examine the

evidence for his claim after what has become known about Buddhism over the past century. Spoiler: it hasn't held up well though Müller's verdict still gets quoted.

Overall there was great exchange among the group. Barbara Herbert, President of the Theosophical Society in America, spoke a few words at the closing and reminded those present that while the early period was fascinating, the TS has had another seventy-five years that also deserves recognition.

The Theosophy and the Study of Religion Conference was also an historic one, as it was the first such conference in America.

There was a Theosophy and the Arts Conference at Columbia University in 2015 but it was the second instalment of the Enchanted Modernites Conference held at the University of Amsterdam in 2013. The first academic event devoted solely to Theosophy was the Legacies of Theosophy Conference held at the University of Sydney in 2010 where I was a keynote speaker.



Minutes of the 2019 Annual Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia



Minutes of the Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia held on Sunday 20 January at Sancta Sophia College, 8 Missenden Rd, Camperdown. Notification had been provided in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia. The meeting was opened at 9.30 am.

CONVENTION CHAIR

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

The Chair requested a show of hands when anyone wished to speak, and pointed out that there would be time for questions and discussion at the close of the Meeting.

1. 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 5 January 2019 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:

- Pamela Peterson for Blavatsky Lodge
- Denise Frost for Launceston Lodge
- Marie McArdle for Canberra Branch
- Gaynor Fraser for Adelaide Lodge
- Edward Sinclair for Melbourne Lodge
- Jean Carroll for Sunshine Coast Lodge
- Phillipa Rooke for Brisbane Lodge

- Helen Steven for Hobart Branch
- Sue Lee for Perth Branch

No forms were returned by Atherton Lodge or Newcastle Lodge, which therefore had no voting delegates at the meeting.

It was noted that the Lodges/Branches in the Section had already voted through their Convention meetings and that no new significant motions could be moved at the present meeting. The National Secretary pointed out that the members are the governing body of The Theosophical Society in Australia, through the instrument of the Australian Convention Business Meeting. She added that she had one minor amendment to propose to Motion 17.

Vote Allocation 2019

Lodge	Members in Good Standing	Votes
Adelaide	60	2
Blavatsky	120	3
Brisbane	47	1
Canberra	17	1
Hobart	13	1
Launceston	15	1
Melbourne	85	2
Perth	127	3
Sunshine Coast	32	1
Sub-total	516	15
National	73	2
Total	589	17

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 2018 CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING

The Minutes of the Convention Business Meeting held on Sunday 21 January 2018 at St John's College, College Rd, St Lucia, Queensland were sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted for the Minutes of the 2018 Convention Business Meeting.

3. NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2018

It was noted that the National President's Annual Report for the Year ended 31 August 2018 had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all the Lodges/Branches voted for the Annual Report at their Convention Meeting. There was no discussion on the report.

4. NATIONAL TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2018

The National Treasurer's Report for the Year ended 31 August 2018 had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all the Lodges/Branches voted for the National Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 August 2018. The Chair called for comment on the Treasurer's Report. There was no comment.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2018 & AUDITOR'S REPORT THEREON

The Financial Statements and Balance

Sheet for the year ended 31 August 2018 along with the Auditor's Report thereon had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches had voted for the Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31 August 2018 and for the Auditor's Report thereon. The Chair asked if there were any questions on the financial statements. Peter Brereton pointed out that 'Section is spending all the yearly earnings to fund its activities'. The National Secretary replied that the Section was spending its earnings on activities that benefitted the members. She gave as examples the national convention which was run at a loss of some \$14,500 because not all costs were passed onto the registrants; the magazine *Theosophy in Australia*, which ran at a loss of some \$10,700; and various events that are run by the Section for members who do not even pay a cost recovery rate. So it is not quite right to say that the earnings are spent on the Section's activities: the activities and many other expenses are incurred on behalf of the members. Denise Frost thanked the National Society for its spending on behalf of the members. Peter Brereton then asked whether franking credit refunds were included in investment income; the answer to which was yes. Finally, Peter Brereton pointed out that the cash flow statement still referred to reimbursements from investment partners. The National Secretary agreed that a better form of wording would be 'transfer to investment partners'. She would endeavour to correct that in next year's financial statements. The Chair remarked

that the Section's finances are carefully monitored and cared for on behalf of the members.

6. BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2019

The budget had been sent to every member of the Section in November. A motion that the budget be received was carried (moved DF; seconded PR). It was noted that the National Council had approved the Budget at its meeting in June 2018. The National Treasurer remarked that a conservative approach is taken in relation to projected income. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches had voted for the Budget for the year ending 31 August 2019. The Chair asked for questions or comments. Marie McArdle asked whether there was a short and long term plan to make Springbrook and Canyonleigh more profitable: given that we can't reduce expenditure, would it be possible to increase income? She wondered what the future of those two centres might be. Any thought of generating more income from them? The National Secretary replied that the National Council had been considering that question but beyond increasing the hire charges somewhat had no other plans. Pamela Peterson remarked that Canyonleigh would be an ideal wedding venue but that the absence of alcohol at the venue would be a problem: allowing the consumption of alcohol would open up the use. The National Secretary replied that there were no plans to allow alcohol consumption on any Trust properties. Jenny Lee-Robins asked whether there was a budget for advertising or promotion outside of the website. The National Secretary replied that \$20,000 was in the budget

for that item. David Allan suggested upgrading Springbrook to make it more comfortable, especially in the winter.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

It was noted that the National Council had appointed Causbrook & Associates (with whom Storey Blackwood had merged) as Auditor for 2019, under Section Rule 23(4): 'The Convention shall appoint an Auditor or failing such an appointment it shall be made by the National Council which shall determine the remuneration.'

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICERS

The Chair reported that the following appointments had been made by the National Council at its meeting on 18 January 2019, and by the national Executive at its meeting on 11 December 2018:

National Vice-President (NC):

Helen Steven

National Treasurer (NC):

Beatrice Malka

Assistant Treasurer (EC):

Dara Tatray

Editor of *Theosophy in Australia* (EC):

Linda Oliveira

9. ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT RESULTS

State Representatives for Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia/NT.

The National Secretary reported that in accordance with Rules 17(1) (c) and 19, the terms of office of the State Representatives for NSW/ACT (Gloria Yiangou), Western Australia (Franco Guazzelli) and Victoria (Kari Torgersen) expired at the appointment of the new State Representatives towards the end of 2018. Apart from the State Representative for Western Aus-

tralia they were eligible for re-election. An election was duly called on 10 May 2018 with nominations to have reached the National Secretary no later than close of business Friday 10 August. There being only one nomination from Victoria, there was a YES/NO vote, as the result of which Edward Sinclair was elected. There being two nominations for the state of WA an election was called, as the result of which Susan Ingrid Lee was elected. There being no nomination for the state of NSW/ACT the national Executive unanimously resolved to appoint Gerard Brennan to fill the vacancy under National Rule (20)(3) (b). The Chair remarked on the importance of the role of State Representatives, who represent the members in their Electoral States.

10. VOTE ON NOTICES OF MOTION

There were a total of 17 Notices of Motion. As the voting had already taken place at the Lodge/Branch convention business meetings, and the results conveyed to the National Secretary on the requisite form, she did not read out the Notices of Motion, instead announcing the results as follows. All Lodges/Branches voted FOR motions 1 to 15 inclusive. All Lodges/Branches voted FOR motions 16 and 17, with the exception of Canberra Branch, which voted against motions 16 and 17 concerning the change to the dues and the adoption of the Code of Conduct which would form part of the rules of the TS in Australia, if accepted at the international headquarters. The National Secretary proposed a minor amendment to motion 17: that for the sake

of clarification, wherever the word President appears in the Code of Conduct it shall be replaced with National President, where that was the intention. It was unanimously resolved to accept that amendment (moved SL; seconded PP).

11. PLACE AND TIME OF NEXT CONVENTION

The Chair announced that the 2020 Convention would be held in Melbourne from Saturday 18 January to Saturday 25 January at St Mary's College, University of Melbourne and that the Convention Business Meeting would be held on Sunday 19 January 2020.

12. 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.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Marie McArdle asked whether Lodge/Branch presidents could receive electronic copies of reports earlier than the hard copies are mailed out. The Chair replied that electronic copies of reports could be provided as soon as they were finalised. The change to the financial year meant that the National President's annual report would be to end June each year, as would the financial reports. These could therefore be sent by email prior to the November magazine mail-out.

13.2 The Chair announced that the national Executive Committee for 2019 had been appointed by the National Council as follows: Dianne Kynaston (Newcas-

tle), Denise Frost (Devonport), Harry Bayens (Perth), Cassandra Au (Sydney) and Edward Sinclair (Melbourne). It was noted that the National President, National Treasurer and National Secretary are members of the Executive ex officio. The Chair offered a vote of thanks to the mem-

bers of the Executive and the Council for giving of their time to attend and prepare for meetings.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.24 am.

Education

Pedro Oliveira, Education Coordinator



The Purpose of Meditation

The purpose of meditation is the alteration of the polarity of the personal mind, so that it becomes no longer automatically responsive to the emotions and the senses, but rather turns naturally, for stimulus and direction, to the Divine Self, the Root of all.

* * *

The goal of meditation is not, however, merely personal self-development. One who pursues this path misses the real objective. The ultimate purpose is to prepare the personal nature so that it is able to reflect and express its relationship with the Universal Self. And once this inner relationship is established, the aspirant can become of real use in the divine plan, for he or she is then able to bring spiritual wisdom to bear upon daily life.

* * *

The practice of meditation, then, is an effort of the true individual to change the habitual, automatic reactions of the personal nature, so that this becomes tranquil and more open to the influence of the spirit. This is contrary to the interests of the personal bodies for these like the fuss and flurry of strong personal and emotional stimulus – but it is in the direct interest of spiritual awakening. If we cannot see the truth within ourselves, how shall we know the truth about the life around us?

From the book *Meditation – a Practical Study* by Adelaide Gardner.

A Study Course based on this book is available from the National Headquarters. Enquiries to the Education Coordinator, education@theosophicalsociety.org.au.

National Calendar of Events



2019 CANYONLEIGH CENTRE, NSW, for TS Members & Non-members

Date, one day event: Sunday 3 November 2019, 10.30am - 3.30pm

Theme: 'The Treasures of India'

Cost: \$10 registration, uncatered, please bring vegetarian food to share for lunch

Presentations: Please send requests to participate in the programme, with details, to the Coordinator, **Dianne Kynaston**

tel. 02 9969 1087 after 7.30pm Mon-Thurs or email: diannedeva@gmail.com

2020 NATIONAL CONVENTION, TS IN AUSTRALIA for TS members

Dates: Sat 18 – Sat 25 January 2020

Venue: St. Mary's College, University of Melbourne

Theme: 'A Dialogue with the Universe: Science,
Wisdom and Creativity'

Featured Speaker: Professor Emeritus Richard Silberstein



Accommodation, cost recovery rates: \$700 for 7 nights, single rooms, shared bathrooms. Instalments, contact Dara Tatray: natsec@theosophicalociety.org.au

Registration fee for both day and live-in registrants: \$40

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

Enquiries: Jennifer Hissey, Convention Secretary catalogue@theosophicalociety.org

2020 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY, Springbrook Centre, Qld

Dates: Fri 24 April - Thurs 30 April 2020 **For TS Members**

Theme: Key Concepts in *The Secret Doctrine*
and Their Relevance Today

International Guest Presenter: Elena Dovalsantos, Ph.D, USA

Cost: \$380 - includes accommodation, meals and tuition

Priority will be given to TS members who have not attended previous Schools.

Early expressions of interest to: pres@theosophicalociety.org.au

Registrations for the School will commence later in 2019.



More information & registration for national events: theosophicalociety.org.au

Review

Practical Spirituality, John Sell, Theosophical Publishing House, Auckland, New Zealand, 2019, HC, 495pp. Cost: NZ\$60+\$20 postage to Australia.

Orders:

<https://theosophy.nz/shop/practical-spirituality>



This book is a collection of talks, courses, seminars and workshops from the late John Sell, a member of the New Zealand Theosophical Society. The emphasis is on a practical approach to Theosophy, based on John's very extensive experience as taught in his workshops and seminars.

Though no longer with us, John Sell is still a highly regarded member of the Society in New Zealand. By training as a teacher and psychologist, he used those skills to great effect in his work for the Society. He was considered an inspiring teacher. Eventually a number of his courses were collated into a training manual for Theosophical teachers.

The new book, edited by his daughter-in-law Renee, is about our spiritual transformation into a more evolved



state by the use of various disciplines that are covered in this book, all of which are derived from practical experience based on presentations that John developed and led over the years.

The book can be more or less divided into sections, with the first three chapters covering practical group work and self-transformation, encouraging self-examination and self-discipline by the use of various types of meditation, invocations, and affirmations, as well as very practical advice on how to get the best results from group work.

Chapters 4 to 7 cover various stages of meditation, with advice on technique, posture and so on, as well as looking at some dangers with various forms of meditation. Each chapter has sections with questions and answers, again with practical advice.

Chapters 8 and 9 cover Discipleship and the Gayatri Mantra, again with exercises for students and advice on avoiding pitfalls.

Chapters 11 to 13 look at the Law of Karma, examining the philosophy behind Karma and how it works in our lives, including advice on understanding suffering and developing forgive-

ness for past wrongs. Again there are affirmations and meditational exercises for the student to practise.

Chapters 14 and 15 look at the seven levels of the soul and at death. The after-life and the implications of suicide are covered here. The final chapters of the book cover gurus, drug abuse, esoteric psychology and, finally, service.

As can be seen, the book has been designed with actual study and practice in mind. The chapters are easy to read and are divided into sub-headings, with information in point form or numbered for easier understanding. Most of the chapters have workshops and question and answer sections, all emphasising actual practice by the student.

As a hard back with nearly 500 pages, the book is a little heavy. For easier use, perhaps future editions could be divided into three or so paperback volumes based around the various themes covered by the book.

Overall, this book is a fitting tribute to John Sell's life work in the TS. It certainly fulfils his objective in designing a practical way for students to practise Theosophical teachings in their lives, both for individuals and also for groups. It is a valuable addition to any Theosophical library, as a practical manual for our development as human beings and as students of Theosophy.

Richard Larkin

News and Notes

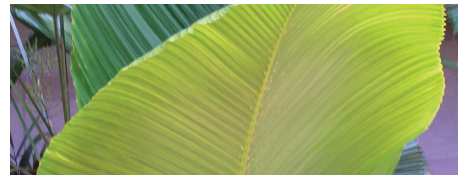
School of the Wisdom, Adyar

Information is now available regarding two School of the Wisdom sessions to be held at our International Headquarters in Adyar later this year and early next year. They are:

Self-Awareness and Awareness

Dr José Foglia MD, Uruguay
18-29 November 2019

Discovering Dialogue - in Freedom from the Known



Paul Smith, U.K.

2-13 December 2019

Deeper into Meditation

Ven. Olande Ananda

9-22 January 2020

Key Teachings in *The Secret Doctrine* and Their Relevance Today

Elena Dovalsantos, USA

27 January - 7 February 2020

These classes are specifically intended for members of the TS. More in-

formation is available at:

<http://www.ts-adyar.org/content/school-wisdom>

Click on the theme of each session to obtain more detailed information and a link to an application form. Please note that *application forms also need to be signed by the National President* before being submitted to the International Secretary's office.

2019 International Convention, Varanasi 31 Dec 2019 - 5 Jan 2020

Theme: 'Nurturing the Divine Seed'

This is a special opportunity to meet TS members from various countries in the holy city of Varanasi. Details about the next International Convention can be found at: <https://www.ts-adyar.org/>

What is happening around the Section?

Are you planning to travel interstate? The Section's website, with its shared platform, provides the latest information about what's on in TS centres around the country. Click on 'Other Branches' on the home page to find Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups. The website is a treasure trove of interesting information, with much to be discovered. Take some time to look around at:

theosophicalsociety.org.au

Much more information about the Section's many activities will appear the November magazine in the National President's Annual Report.

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.

The Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches

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

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

Section Directory

Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,

Surry Hills NSW 2010

Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404

Fax: 02 9264 5857

<https://theosophicalsociety.org.au>

Campbell Theosophical Research Library:

catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:

Postal Address: c/- P.O. Box 760, Rozelle NSW 2039

Meet: 3rd Saturday of month, 2.00-3.30pm

Emeritus Faculty, Australian National University

President: Marie McArdle

Secretary: Barbara Harrod

Tel: 0402 530 859

email: canberratheosophicalsociety@gmail.com

<https://canberra.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:

Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 1590

Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards

NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)

Telephone: 02 9267 6955 Fax: 02 9283 3772

Email: contact@tssydney.org.au

<https://sydney.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

Meet: 1.00pm Wednesdays

President: position vacant

Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:

Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,

Mayfield NSW 2304

7.30pm 2nd Friday each month

President: Tony Buzek

Secretary: Dianne Kynaston

Tel: 0452 633 132

Email: diannedeva@gmail.com

<https://newcastle.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

Blue Mountains Group, Certified 13/5/1997:

Meet: Members' Lounge, Blue Mountains

Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street (above Coles),

Katoomba NSW 2780

Meet: every Monday, 2.00 - 4.00pm

Coordinator: Jessica Gemmell

Tel: 02 4782 4269

email: Pattie.Thompson,p.thompson12@bigpond.com

Gosford Group, Certified 11/11/1997

Meet: The Narara Community Centre,

Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250

8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month

Coordinator: Marianne Fraser

Tel: 02 4339 7118, 0400 713 273

email: marifraser256@gmail.com

Secretary: Roni Ostergaard

Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group, Certified 2/4/1996:

Postal address and meeting address:

c/- 31 Riviera Street

Avalon NSW 2107

2.00 pm 3rd Saturday each month

Coordinator: Nila Chambers

email: nilachambers@bigpond.com

Queensland

Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,

Atherton QLD 4883

Meet: Meeting Room,

Community Services Tablelands,

rear of 38 Mabel Street, Atherton

2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.

President: Max Brandenberger

Secretary: Chris Pang Way

Tel: 07 4091 5156

<https://atherton.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000

Tel: 07 3839 1453

email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au

<https://brisbane.theosophicalsociety.org.au>

Meet: 7.30pm Wednesdays, library open 6.30-7.30pm

President: Phillipa Rooke

Secretary: Dianne Manning

Logan Group, Certified 9/4/2019:

Meet: Meeting Room 2, Logan Hyperdome Library,

Mandew Street, Loganholme, Qld.

1st Friday each month, 9.00am - midday

Coordinator: Christine Gwin

email: logantheosophy@gmail.com

Tel. 0418 755 496

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004:

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
Tel: 0417 873 481
7.00pm Thursdays
Email: theosophy.sunshinecoast@gmail.com
<https://sunshinecoast.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
President: Joyce Thompson
Secretary: Jean Carroll

Toowoomba Group, Certified 10/7/2007:

Meet: Hospice Board Room, 57b O'Quinn Street,
Toowoomba QLD 4350.
Meetings on a Thursday evening once a fortnight at
6.30pm.
Annual Springbrook retreat each Winter
Coordinator: Gayle Thomas
Secretary: Barry Bowden
Tel: 0438 331 885
email: gaylethomas8@gmail.com

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

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

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

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
<https://hobart.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
Meet: 7.30pm Mondays
President: Helen Steven
Secretary: Berry Dunston
Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:

Meet: Scouts Hall, 1 St. Georges Square, East
Launceston,
1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1.00pm
Postal address: 28 Teggs Road, Gravelly Beach, TAS
7276
email: launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com
<https://launceston.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

President/Secretary: Franka Hughes

Tel: 0418 346 526

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

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624
email: info@melbournetheosophy.org
<https://melbourne.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
Meet: usually 4th Saturday each month
President: Edward Sinclair
Secretary: Maria Jevic

Mornington Peninsula Group, Certified 8/2/2000:

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month
(12.00pm meditation - 12.30pm lunch + library -
1.30pm presenter + questions and comments)
Coordinator: Alice Opper
Tel: 0439 563 313

Wodonga-Albury Group, Certified 9/7/1996:

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: tsperth@iinet.net.au
<http://www.tsperth.com.au>
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
President: Franco Guazzelli
Secretary: position vacant

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:

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

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

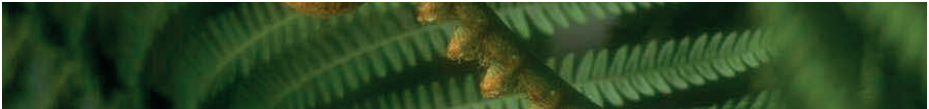
2184 Springbrook Road,
Springbrook QLD 4213
Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211
email: info@tsretreat.com.au
Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

Freedom of Thought

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

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

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



Freedom of the Society

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

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

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



The Three Objects of the Theosophical Society

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

~

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

~

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