

THE THEOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY
IN CANBERRA

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

What makes life possible on earth and other things

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The Theosophical Society in Canberra is not responsible for any statement in this newsletter. Views expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Society or the Editor.

The activity and creativity of the human brain is astonishing and is expressed in many fields of human endeavour. One of its main activities is through its curiosity about the origin of life on our planet. We have the Bible with stories going back 5000 years, and stories from Asia from much earlier times and the indigenous peoples of Australia tell of a cosmology which satisfies their curiosity. More recent explanations of our existence are expressed in Muslim literature; in the writings of the Mormons by Mr Joseph Smith in the USA; in *The Secret Doctrine* of HP Blavatsky and in *The Urantia Book* which was first published in 1955.

An article in *Scientific American*¹ explains how it became possible for life to survive on land. The solar wind, radiating from the sun, is deadly to life and cosmic rays from the stars also have an effect on genetic mutations in living organisms and are especially dangerous for life on land. Then one billion years ago in the earth's core a solid inner core began to form, surrounded by a liquid layer. This liquid core moves regularly (convection) and produces a strong geomagnetic field round the earth. This field shields the earth's surface from the dangers of the solar wind and cosmic rays and may have enabled life to move on to land. When the conditions of the lower mantle were created in a laboratory, some minerals were discovered which enhanced the protective geomagnetic field. This is another explanation of our origins and what made life possible on land.

Another idea surfacing recently is the idea that Neanderthals who lived during the ice ages for 200,000 years and were extinguished by modern man, actually intermarried with them and their genes can still be found among living humans of today.

It is important to investigate 'certainties' propounded by previous generations and in the light what is now known, to reject, accept or modify them.

Welcome to the 2010 winter issue of the Canberra theosophical newsletter!

Peter Fokker, President

Reference ¹*Scientific American*: 'The Earth's Missing Ingredient' by Kei Hirose—
June 2010 pages 58-65

Notes for members and friends

IMPORTANT NEWS

OUR NEW VENUE—

SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB IN TURNER

2 AUGUST—

DARA TATRAY'S WORLD CONGRESS TALK

MICHAEL GOMES—

CANBERRA TS 4 OCTOBER (public holiday in ACT)

SPRINGBROOK CENTRE

6—11 OCTOBER 2010

As from July 2010 our Monday meetings will be held at:

**Senior Citizens Club, 10 Watson Street,
TURNER**

Until further notice, due to renovations at the Friends' Meeting House, our Monday evening meetings will be at the **Senior Citizens Club, 10 Watson Street, Turner.**

Canberra TS has been meeting at the "Friends' Place" for many years and it is with a certain sadness that we have to relocate. However, we can let this move, albeit temporary, be an exciting one. New premises can mean new ideas. Let's turn this into an invigorating experience.

Come along at 8.00pm, on the first Monday of each month unless otherwise stated (check the programme for details).

The Scientific Basis of Universal Brotherhood

On 2 August the National President of the TS in Australia, Dara Tatray, will present her World Congress talk to us in Canberra.

If we wish to cultivate harmony among the religious and spiritual traditions of the world, without which peace on earth is unlikely, it would be helpful if more of us understood that universal brotherhood is not just an ideal towards which we might strive: it is the truth about reality, at both a spiritual and physical level.

This talk presents a number of key findings in modern science to support the proposition that the ultimate essence of every part of nature is one undivided consciousness, present alike in all.

Michael Gomes is Director of the Emily Sellon Memorial Library in New York and has spent the past forty years in researching the modern Theosophical movement. His tour of the Australian Section in October will include Canberra.

He will visit and speak in Canberra on Monday 4 October on *The Esoteric World of Mme Blavatsky*. From 6 to 11 October he will hold a workshop/seminar at Springbrook on "The Secret of *The Secret Doctrine* and Tools of Occult Research". Cost — members \$200; non members \$250 plus \$10 registration for both categories.

LIBRARY NEWS - JUNE 2010
THE OBJECTIVE OF THE LIBRARY IS TO SUPPORT THEOSOPHICAL STUDIES

- The Perennial Philosophy past and present** Study course
 A comprehensive introduction for individual study and group work
 compiled by Dr Dara Tatray. TAT.1.L
- The Secret Doctrine** by H.P. Blavatsky Abridged and annotated by Michael Gomes
 Madame Blavatsky's masterpiece of occult philosophy is now scaled down to its
 essentials, providing the most readable, accessible experience ever of modern
 history's seminal work of esoterica. GOM 2
- The seventy-fifth anniversary book of the Theosophical Society**
 A short history of the Society's growth from 1926-1950 by Josephine Ransom. RAN 3
- Occultism, semi-occultism and pseudo-occultism** by Annie Besant
 A clear exposition is given here of the nature of occultism by one who
 was herself a distinguished occultist. BES 139
- My father's guru: A journey through spirituality and disillusion**
 by Jeffry Moussaieff Masson
 Told with a mixture of humour and compassion. Throughout this confessional
 book a grown man tells of an unusual, even weird childhood and the blind
 submission that consumes his family's life. MASS 1
- The story of Atlantis:** a geographical, historical, and ethnological sketch
 by W. Scott-Elliott with a preface by A.P. Sinnett. SCOT 1
- Occult cosmogony: A modern commentary to the Stanzas of Dzyan**
 Part Five - Evolution of Consciousness – by K. Chodkiewicz. CHO 1
- Thoughts for aspirants. First series – Compiled from the notes
 and writings of N. Sri Ram.** RAM.S 7
 N. Sri Ram, fifth President of the Theosophical Society was described by a distinguished
 colleague as 'the wisest among us all in the balanced judgement which he gives in all
 matters' and also as 'Having very lofty philosophical understanding. He sees many sides
 of a problem.' This little book which has been an inspiration to thousands of readers
 over the years bears witness to the truth of this statement.
- The ancient wisdom: An outline of Theosophical teachings** by Annie Besant BES 138
 This book is intended to place in the hands of the general reader an epitome of
 Theosophical Teachings, sufficiently plain to serve the elementary student, and
 sufficiently full to lay a sound foundation for further knowledge.



Bulletin board

Canyonleigh Centre will be the host venue for a weekend of learning, friendship and enquiry. Sessions on *Light on the Path* will be led mainly by Dara Tatray and Edi Bilimoria.

**Friday 5 to Sunday 7 November 2010—\$85 plus \$10 registration
 (includes three nights' accommodation and all meals Saturday and Sunday)**

Dianne Kynaston—The Great White Sisterhood—1 March 2010

In her talk on The Great White Sisterhood, Dianne reminded us of the evolution of consciousness and how most of us are at the stage of focussing on the “I Am” stage in their lifetime, but as we move forward and become aware of unity, we become more alert to the rights of others, including those of animals. There have been great souls, philosophers and scientists, who have helped in the evolution of humankind. A period of discipleship takes place as we move away from I Am on towards the spiritual path, when our soul starts guiding us. This is a difficult step - it is not glamorous and our capacity to let go is weak. The women who are the subject of the talk have done that.

Dianne’s starting point for the journey was K Paul Johnson’s book *Initiates of the Theosophical Masters*, and in particular the last chapter on The Great White Sisterhood, which lists some remarkable women who had links to The Theosophical Society.

Lady Hester Stanhope (? – 1839) was the niece of William Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister of Great Britain. Her position as hostess of his social life secured her a government pension for life, which would be significant in allowing her to lead the independent life of travel she would later choose. After the death of her aristocratic soldier fiancé Lady Hester lived as a recluse in Wales before travelling to the Middle East with a maid and doctor, Charles Meryon. It is from Meryon’s diary that we know of her journeys. En route to Alexandria, the party encountered a storm which sank their ship. Forced to swim ashore, they landed in Rhodes with no possessions; with no change of clothing, Lady Hester was given a choice of Turkish men’s clothes or women’s attire. She chose the men’s clothes and dressed that way for the rest of her life. In Cairo she was met by the ruler and, being accepted as visiting royalty, was able to go on to Damascus, being the first European woman to visit this great city situated on the trade route. She was crowned with flowers in Palmyra, accepted as a great personage, she studied astrology and occult sciences and did not align herself to any of the religions around her.



Hester Stanhope

HPB wrote of her: *Lady Hester Stanhope, whose name was for many years a power among the Masonic fraternities of the East, is said to have witnessed, personally, several of these Yezidean ceremonies. We were told by an Ockhal, of the sect of Druses, that after having been present at one of the Yezidis' "Devil's masses," as they are called, this extraordinary lady, so noted for personal courage and daring bravery, fainted, and notwithstanding her usual Emir's male attire, was recalled to life and health with the greatest difficulty. Personally, we regret to say, all our efforts to witness one of these performances failed. (Isis Unveiled, volume 2, p 572)*

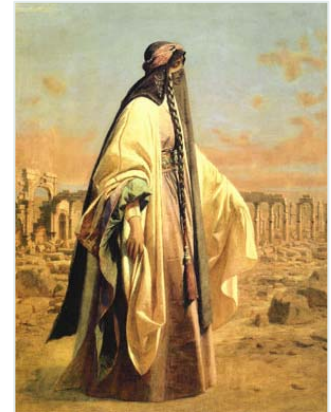
Even Blavatsky failed to witness the ceremonies. Lady Hester was accepted and had access to occult teachings and, importantly, she laid a foundation for the rest who follow.

Helena P Blavatsky (1831 – 1891 née von Hahn) was a most extraordinary woman. Born in Ukraine, with a father in the army who was stationed in various parts of the Russian empire, she displayed psychic abilities as a child. In 1849 she married Nikifor Blavatsky, many years her senior and left him not long after the marriage, then set off on a grand journey round the world, in man’s clothes. In London she met her teacher who had appeared previously to her in a dream. She travelled to Lebanon and Syria and deep into Asia including Tibet, in disguise, and fought with Garibaldi at the battle of Mentana, apparently bearing wounds from the combat. In USA, she

attended séances at the Eddy Farmhouse when Col Olcott was visiting there as a journalist – a significant meeting which would result in them setting up the Theosophical Society in New York. Originally most of the members had Masonic affiliations but within a short time, the group became so popular it was decided to open it up for it to become a world wide movement. HPB and Olcott sailed to India, with funds to buy the Adyar estate – the headquarters of the TS. During this period the Mahatma Letters started arriving, being received by Sinnett and Hume. HPB then left India and went on to Paris and London where her Inner Group included the poet Yeates, CW Leadbeater and Annie Besant. She worked on the magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*.

Jane Elizabeth Digby (See *A Scandalous Life* by Mary S Lovall)

Born in Dorset (1807 – 1881) the daughter of an admiral, she had four husbands, including a Syrian Bedouin, Sheikh Medjuel el Mezrab, the true love of her life. They met when she was in her 40s, and he in his 20s and were married in Arabic Law. Her husband was in charge of Palmyra. Was he the head of the Illuminati in the East? Was he an adept? As an accomplished horsewoman she was accepted by the Bedouin. In Syria she was a friend of HPB and lived next door to explorer Richard Burton who was also British Consul. He, too, was a friend of HPB and a member of the TS. There was a group of people in Syria at this time, who were strongly interconnecting.



Portrait of Jane Digby by Carl Haag, in the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait

Isabelle Eberhardt (Switzerland 1877 – Algeria 1904) came from the same family (Hahn) as did HPB and spent most of her life in North Africa. Her writings were published in France but she wrote in the guise of an Arab. She recorded the following in Sardinia in 1900 en route to Algeria:



People who interest me are those who are subject to that lofty, fertile form of suffering known as dissatisfaction with oneself – the thirst for an Ideal, something mystical, and eminently desirable that fires their souls. Self-satisfaction, because of some accomplishment will never be for me, and, as I see, it, truly superior people are those preoccupied with the quest for better selves. (Initiates of the Theosophical Masters: K. Paul Johnson)

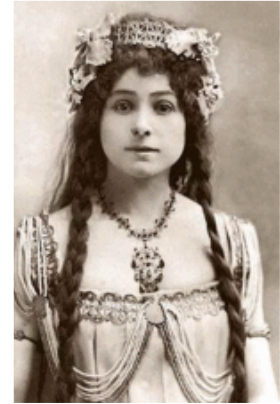
She did in fact travel to Algeria, and was introduced to Sufism, being an initiate of a lodge (at Khouan). She was devoted to the Islamic world and was given access to Sufi sites. At 27 she died in a flash flood in the desert.

Mirra Alfassa (1878 – 1973) born in Paris, she had mystical experiences as a child. At 12 she practised occultism and was travelling astrally. At 13 she described a vision of herself in a golden robe, which stretched over the city. When, in her vision, people came to beg for help the robe spread over them and they were healed.

I used to see myself clad in a magnificent golden robe...and as I rose higher, the robe would stretch...to form a kind of immense roof over the city. Then I would see men, women, children...coming out from every side; they would gather under the outspread robe, begging for help, telling their miseries... In reply, the robe... would extend towards each one of them individually, and as soon as they had touched it they were comforted or healed, and went back to their bodies happier and stronger... Nothing seemed more beautiful to me.... and all the activities of the day seemed dull and colourless... beside this activity of the night. (Wikipedia)

She studied art in Paris and met the occultist Max Théon who had known HPB in Egypt and who explained her psychic experiences to her. She was also a friend of Alexandra Néel. She met Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry and recognised as having met him in a dream. He recognised her as an avatar.

Alexandra David-Néel was Belgian-French, born in Paris. When the family relocated to Brussels she discovered the Theosophical Society. In 1891 she travelled to India where she studied yoga. In Tunis she met and married Philippe Néel but parted in 1911. In India she met Sri Aurobindo, whom she recognised as a great sage, and the 13th Dalai Lama who encouraged her to study the Tibetan language. *My Journey to Lhasa* was written in 1923 when at the age of 55 she dressed as a pilgrim and entered the forbidden city – the first woman to do so. She wrote books about her journeys; she went, she saw she recorded. She opened doorways which we previously did not know.



Alice Cleather was given the task of recording the inner group teachings of HPB. Alice went along with Judge when there was the split and eventually left the organisation as she said it had then strayed from its origins. She travelled to Beijing and Tibet. She published two pamphlets in Chinese on why she believed in Buddhism and was responsible for a reprint of *The Voice of the Silence* which was endorsed by the Tashi (Panchem) Lhama as being the heart of **Mahayana** tradition. She had a vision of what Blavatsky had said.

As Members of his Order, part of the work we undertook at his request for Buddhism was the reprint as the only true exposition in English of the Heart doctrine of the Mahayana and its noble idea of self sacrifice for humanity. [From a foreword by Cleather to The Voice of the Silence - from Initiates of the Theosophical Masters.]

Annie Besant (1847 – 1933 born Annie Woods) studied science but was not allowed to take a degree. She married Frank Besant, an Anglican priest, and became aware of the poverty in East London. An important point in her social work was meeting Charles Bradlaugh. One of the major projects they worked on was family planning. Their published leaflet on this topic was considered to be pornographic but the court case was thrown out on due to Annie's oratorical skills. She frequented the Fabian Society, met GB Shaw and took up the cause of the Matchstick Girls who worked with poisonous phosphorous [see article on page 11]. She was asked to review *The Secret Doctrine*, and as she read, she remembered "...and the whole philosophy fell into order before me. Although to this brain and in this body it came before me for the first time." (Annie Besant by Geoffrey West)

She was invited to join the TS by HPB who died two years later. Annie Besant then became head of the Esoteric School. Besant became a Co-Mason and in her wake, Masonic Lodges sprang up. Inspired by Annie Besant were women like Edith Cowan and Bessie Rischbieth. In 1893 Besant toured India and Ceylon to enthusiastic audiences. She became President of the TS on the death of HS Olcott, and among her other achievements, she set up the Organisation of the Star of the East and fought for Home Rule for India.

In summary. All of these quite remarkable women were from comfortable home environments, they left Europe and their lifestyles to seek knowledge and wisdom. They became benefactors of society and entered the world reserved for the initiated few.

PARLIAMENT
OF THE
WORLD'S RELIGIONS



In December 2009, Grahame Crookham attended the Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne. On 12 April 2010 he took us through that week with the aid of a spectacular Power-Point/Video documentary. This is his story of his week at the Parliament.

The Parliament of the World's Religions is the world's largest and most inclusive regular inter-religious gathering of engaged religious leaders and adherents, and makes visible the maturing of the global inter-religious movement.

The Council for the Parliament has worked to foster a more peaceful, just and sustainable world and has taken aim at the root causes of conflict: poverty, lack of vital resources, inequality, absence of freedom and misunderstanding. These are worldwide, deeply-rooted problems. The religious and spiritual communities, with their strong emphasis on human dignity, have much to contribute in addressing these worldwide challenges. In addition, the values and ethical imperatives of the world's great traditions have much to add to our sense of renewal and hope, and the inter-religious movement plays a key role in fostering this progress.

What was once the province of scholars and academic inquiry has evolved into tangible activities worldwide, emanating from local communities of faith and spirit onto the global stage. It is the "small people" working at the local level who make up most of the interreligious movement. The exciting result is community building, increased social cohesion and a greater, and necessary, appreciation of difference.

The 2009 Parliament of Religions was an amazing convergence of people from widely diverse backgrounds and deeply held religious and spiritual convictions, who came together to 'Make a World of Difference'. This theme "***Make a World of Difference: Hearing each Other, Healing the Earth***" reflects the urgent need for religious and spiritual communities and all people of goodwill to act on their concerns for the environment, peace and for overcoming poverty

Every generation is called upon to answer the great challenges of its time. In this spirit, the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions provided an extraordinary opportunity to do so. By acknowledging and celebrating difference, this unique gathering offered an engaging forum to deepen spirituality, to experience personal transformation and to explore the variety of ways that people may recover a sense of soul; a feeling for divinity.

Over the six days, the Parliament gathered together over 6,500 people from 80 countries and represented the world's diverse religious and spiritual traditions. Participants chose from over 550 programs, including daily morning religious observances and meditations, intra- and inter-religious programs, workshops, panel discussions, debates, symposia, lectures, roundtable dialogue, models of engagement, sacred and cultural performances, "Open Space" gathering, art exhibits, films and plenaries. The Parliament also featured a captivating variety of artistic performances: music, dance, poetry, drama etc by representatives of many religions and faith traditions from across the globe.

Spirit of the Parliament

Grahame read an extract from The Urantia Book, entitled “**The Discourse on True Religion**” which ended with the following:

When you once begin to find God in your soul, presently you will begin to discover him in other men’s souls and eventually in all the creatures and creations of a mighty universe.

This is the spirit in which the Parliament of World Religions was conducted, with over 6,000 people coming together to explore their common ideals, and the following themes:

What unites us?	What do we have in common?
What can we learn about each other?	It’s not enough to know; you also have to tell
To maintain the use of WE, not THEY.	To be a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects

The first session each day was reserved for observances and the contemplative dimension of traditions. At that early morning hour, rooms were filled with groups deep in meditation, in dialogue on spirituality, singing or conducting solemn ritual. Service, advocacy and activism cannot be sustained without some way of renewing our strength, and for most people who belong to a religious tradition, inner contemplation and also beauty, ceremony and song are indispensable sources of inspiration and empowerment.

Opening of the Parliament

Prof. Joy Wandin Murphy: a Wurrunjeri Senior Elder of the Kulin Nations and Chairperson of the Australian Indigenous Consultative Assembly, presented the “Welcome to Country”, as is her right in the traditional role as senior woman of the Wurundjeri People.

Rabbi David Saperstein: was designated in Newsweek’s 2009 list as the most influential rabbi in the USA, and was described as among the country’s most influential shapers of religious issues in national elections.

Dr Sakena Yacoobi: Given the ordeal of the Afghan people, beginning with the Soviet invasion, she asked herself the question, “What can I do to help?” In 1995 she founded the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) and began providing teacher training to Afghan women, education for boys and girls, and health education to women and children. After the Taliban closed girls’ schools in the 1990s, the organization supported 80 underground home schools for three thousand girls in Afghanistan. Throughout that country she continues to work to empower girls, women and the disenfranchised.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: is a renowned spiritual leader and founder of the Art of Living Foundation, now active in more than 140 countries. His Prison Programs have helped transform the lives of an estimated 150,000 inmates around the world.

Venerable Dharma Master Hsin Tao: Born in Burma, at the age of nine he was forced to become a child soldier in the Burmese guerilla movement. At the age of twenty-five, he became a Buddhist monk and spent the next two years fasting and meditating in a mountain cave in northern Taiwan. He later established the Wu Sheng Buddhist Monastery at the site of his meditation. As a monk, he has combined his religious practices with political and social activism.

Youth

The Youth Program was designed and organised by young people for young people and featured Hugh Evans, **Young Australian of the Year in 2004**, also founder and director of the Oaktree Foundation and the Global Poverty Project.

Ecology

Religion and Ecology

Our planet is on the brink of an ecological crisis, for which the participation of all people of goodwill is necessary if our efforts to save our planet are to be successful. It is the biggest uniting issue for mankind. The natural world is more than home and shelter; it is the heart and essence of sacred spirituality. Caring for the environment is an essential expression of religious conviction.

Creating a sustainable, healthy world was a major focus of the Parliament. Key religious leaders addressed the climate issue in a major panel and every religious tradition offered in-depth sessions on its approach to the environment. The symposium focused on both practical action and spiritual motivation to mobilize and sustain environmental efforts. Topics included: protecting, sustaining and repairing the earth, local farming, reducing energy consumption, mitigating climate change, and the growth of green architecture.

To quote Thomas Berry: - *“The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human.”*

The Hindu ‘Declaration on Climate Change’

The first Convocation of Hindu Spiritual Leaders ever to be held at a Parliament focused largely on environmental ethics and culminated in the launch of the “Hindu Declaration on Climate Change”, drafted by a distinguished international committee.

The Declaration begins thus:

The Hindu tradition understands that man is not separate from nature, that we are linked by spiritual, psychological and physical bonds with the elements around us. Knowing that the Divine is present everywhere and in all things, Hindus strive to do no harm. We hold a deep reverence for life and an awareness that the great forces of nature – the earth, the water, the fire, the air and space – as well as all the various orders of life, including plants and trees, forests and animals, are bound to each other within life’s cosmic web.

Peace, Justice and Wisdom

Peace Building: - The sessions in this program demonstrated how religion and spirituality can and do serve as avenues for harmony. These unique sessions analysed conflict transformation, mediation and resolution, peace building and social development.

Building Peace in the Pursuit of Justice: -These sessions offered a wide array of diverse, expert perspectives on how people of all religious and spiritual traditions can move closer to realizing the vision of a just and peaceful world.

Overcoming Poverty in an Unequal World: - To some, poverty is a word while to others, it is a way of life. The 2009 Parliament explored how religious and spiritual communities throughout the world are implementing practical solutions to ensure that basic human rights to adequate food, clean water, housing, education and employment opportunities are available to everyone.

Indigenous People

This Parliament offered the opportunity to continue with the reconciliation process in a spirit of trust by providing a chance for Indigenous Peoples around the world to voice their concerns and aspirations, and share their wisdom and insights. The presence and witness of indigenous religious leaders from Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Island nations, North and South America, Africa, Asia and the Arctic, was one of the most distinctive dimensions of the Parliament. Among the participants were members of the Indigenous or “pre-Christian” religions of Europe.

The Golden Rule

Also known as the Ethic of Reciprocity, it is arguably the most consistent, prevalent and universal ethical principle in history. It is found worldwide throughout cultures, religions, secular philosophies and indigenous traditions. Many people regard it as the most concise and general principle of ethics. Our changing world invites us to broaden this rule to groups of people and society as a whole. The Golden Rule can be the ethical cornerstone as the human family works together to build a peaceful, just and sustainable global society. It has tremendous capacity for promoting social justice, the teaching of compassion and ethics, multicultural and multi-faith cooperation, unity, and more. The Golden Rule may be the best guide we have for bringing all the world’s people to live together in peace.

Grahame interspersed his account vividly with visual aids, meditation and readings, resulting in a memorable presentation.

PEACE, LOVE, CHARITY AND HARMONY

The frenetic and frantic 21st century, with our lives travelling along at a hectic pace, can be blamed for resultant feelings of anxiety and agitation. But is this so? These feelings have been with us for a long time.

This is what HPB says about the results of anxiety in *Spiritual Progress*: - “Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much, they are not content to leave well alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more; they exaggerate every action and so produce karma to be worked out in a future birth. One of the subtlest forms of this evil is the hope and desire of reward. Many there are who, albeit often unconsciously, are yet spoiling all their efforts by entertaining this idea of reward, and allowing it to become an active factor in their lives, and so leaving the door open to anxiety, doubt, fear, despondency — failure.”¹

Hugh Shearman gives us a tip on how to calm anxiety: “What the agitated mind must be told is, quite simply, ‘There is no past. There is no future’. It may well be convenient to combine this assertion with the slow rhythm of breathing; but it must be firm assertion and not just a repetition of words.”²

And Antonio Girardi, President of the TS in Italy suggests the alternatives in these few words: - “Our mind, when agitated, gets us nowhere. Peace is thus an essential element, and there is no peace without love, there is no peace without charity, there is no peace without harmony..”³

¹ H P Blavatsky - *Spiritual Progress* - <http://www.blavatsky.net/blavatsky/arts/SpiritualProgress.htm>

² Hugh Shearman - *The Theosophist* May 1979: *Time and the Troubled Mind*
<http://www.katinkahesselink.net/other/shearman17.html>

³ Antonio Girardi - *Rivista Italiana di Teosofia* - June 2010 – p 24.



The Theosophical Order of Service Representing theosophy in action on a daily basis.

The TOS was founded by Annie Besant in February 1908

TOS Australia's new website address is <http://australia.theoservice.org/>. From there, we can visit TOS groups around Australia as well as groups around the world. Webmaster Geoffrey Harrod has done a great job in re-inventing the site and making it more user-friendly, more colourful and more outreaching. Newsletters and brochures are at the 'Resources' tab and it is possible to buy a guided meditation CD from Brisbane Lodge for \$12. The proceeds from the sale of the CDs will go to the Pakistan literacy home-schools project. (See the Resources tab for information on how to order.) The areas of service of peace; social welfare; animal welfare; environment and healing all have their own page on the new website. Dip into the new website. You will be informed and surprised.

And.... TOS has an entry in Wikipedia.

A bit about AB....

In June 1888 Annie Besant was a member of the audience when a speech on Female Labour was given at a meeting of the Fabian Society. This was an introduction to the working conditions of women and girls working at the Bryant & May factory producing matches.

Mrs Besant then interviewed some of workers at the factory, being informed of their fourteen-hour long working days and wages which were under five shillings a week. Workers, however, did not always receive their full wages when management imposed fines for offences such as talking, dropping matches, or going to the toilet without permission. Late starters were fined a half-day's pay.



Annie Besant (third from right at rear row) supporting women workers of a match factory asking for fair wages

It was also discovered that the white phosphorous used in the production of the matches was seriously affecting the women's health. This could cause skin to turn yellow, and a loss of hair and even the condition of "phossy jaw", or phosphorus necrosis of the jaw.

On 23rd June 1888, [Annie Besant](#) wrote an article in her newspaper, *The Link*. The article, entitled *White Slavery in London*, complained about the way the women at Bryant & May were being treated. The company reacted by attempting to force their workers to sign a statement that they were happy with their working conditions. When a group of women refused to sign, the organisers of the group were sacked. The response was immediate; 1400 of the women at Bryant & May went on strike. The women at the company decided to form a Match-girls' Union and Besant agreed to become its leader. After three weeks the company announced that it was willing to re-employ the dismissed women and would also bring an end to the fines system. The women accepted the terms and returned in triumph. The Bryant & May dispute was the first strike by unorganized workers to gain national publicity.

Information from <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/TUmatchgirls.htm>

Thank you, everyone, from all in TOS.

Janice

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANBERRA
PROGRAMME

Day	Date	Talk	Speaker
Sat 2.00pm	19 June	Discussion group	Who am I – facilitated by Grahame Crookham <i>(the last meeting at the Friends' Meeting House)</i>
Mon 8.00pm	5 July	Urantia group	Continued - Urantia group <i>(the first meeting to be held in the Senior Citizens' Club, Turner)</i>
Sat 2.00pm	17 July	Discussion group	Venue – TBA
Mon 8.00pm	2 Aug	Dara Tatrav, National President of the TS in Australia	The Scientific Basis of Universal Brotherhood (Dara will present the talk she gave at the World Congress, Italy, in July 2010)
Sat 2.00pm	21 Aug	Discussion	Venue – TBA
Mon 8.00pm	6 Sep	Jim Nichterlein	TBC
Sat 2.00pm	18 Sep	Discussion group	Venue – TBA
Mon 8.00pm	4 Oct (public hol)	Michael Gomes	The Esoteric World of Mme Blavatsky (Venue for this talk to be confirmed) Michael is an International speaker and Director of the Emily Sellon Memorial Library, New York

Information on future talks will be in the next newsletter

Due to renovations taking place at the Friends Meeting House, from July 2010 until further notice, all Monday meetings will take place at 8.00pm at:

Senior Citizens Club
10 Watson Street
Turner ACT 2612

Venues for discussion groups for the rest of the year will be advised. The meetings on the first Mondays are open to the public; any who are interested in the subject are welcome at the discussion group meetings.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME, PLEASE BRING FRIENDS.

Gold coin donations are requested at our meetings

We rely on these donations to cover the cost of renting the room
for the evening and they are sincerely appreciated.

Annual fees for the Theosophical Society in Canberra:

Single: \$50, **Couple:** \$90, **student/pensioner*:** \$40

Joining fee: \$5, **Associate member:** \$10, **Friends donation:** (suggested) \$20

Library: no charge for members; \$10 for non members (reimbursed on return of book).

* Number of concession card required: as per National Executive Committee minutes of July 2004