



# Contact

The members' newsletter of the Brisbane Theosophical Society

**2011 Issue 3 September- December**



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# **Brisbane Theosophical Society**

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**BOOKSHOP & LIBRARY:** (Closed on Public Holidays)  
Monday to Thursday 10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Friday ..... 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm & 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm

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

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

## **PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS**

Greetings fellow Theosophists,

Over the last few months your committee members and volunteers have been putting time and energy into the work of the Society and Besant House. Our enclosed back garden is now looking inviting, and the library, with clearer signage and a little rearrangement, looks more appealing. We are having curtains installed in the upstairs libraries (Reference and Members) to better protect our old and to us, valuable collection from deteriorating. We are also having a 'postcard' produced to advertise the library and bookshop in the hope of attracting more library members by distributing these throughout the community, so that people may come to know of our existence and hopefully we can then allow more people to consider the great ideas which Theosophy presents. There are always the ongoing issues of maintenance of our Heritage listed building, the cleaning up of the grounds due to those choosing to 'sleep rough', and maintaining our operations technologically in this modern world.

In this coming January, the National Convention is again scheduled to be in Brisbane after the last minute cancellation this past January because of the floods. The registration details will be in the September Issue of "Theosophy in Australia" which members all receive. Please take note of the 'cut off' date, and be sure to register in good time.

It is that time of year again, when our T.S. annual fees are due. Please note that anyone whose fees have not been received by 30/11/11 will have their membership lapsed, and will have to rejoin. Please be punctual with your payment and save office staff that extra work in chasing you up.

### **Theocentricity not egocentricity**

Sometimes when we are interacting with others, we need to be prepared to 'let go' of what we want no matter how much we may believe that our own ideas are right. They are after all only ideas, and we may find that in the 'letting go', that energy we have bound up by 'holding on', can be transformed and contribute towards a moving forward, a growth in consciousness. Energy cannot disappear, it must be transformed into other forms. Strive always to be centred

in wisdom – Theocentricity, rather than egocentricity. In that way we may truly be that nucleus of the Brotherhood of Humanity which we are all called upon to be.

Fraternal regards,  
*Phillipa Rooke*

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## 2011 Brisbane Lodge Committee

*President:* Phillipa Rooke  
*Vice-presidents:* Noel Bertelle, Denis Armstrong  
*Treasurer:* Patricia Ossenburg  
*Secretary:* Angela Read  
*Members:* Phoebe Williams, Marion Smith, Aldo Donadel, Robyn Rizzo.

### Sub-Committees

**Finance:** Patricia, Phillipa, Noel, Angela  
**Program:** Noel, Phoebe, Phillipa  
**Library:** Phillipa, Patricia, Robyn, Aldo  
**Besant Bookshop:** Phoebe, Patricia, Noel  
**Property/Equipment/Besant House:** Dennis, Marion, Phoebe  
**Publicity:** Noel, Phoebe, Phillipa  
**Futures Committee:** Noel, Marion, Aldo  
**'Contact' editor:** Geoffrey Harrod

**Cover picture -**  
*Die Frauernkirche*  
in Dresden, Germany.  
Totally rebuilt since the bombing of Feb 1945, as it was before.  
Statue of Martin Luther recovered from the rubble.  
*Photo: G Harrod, 2010*

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**Membership fees  
are due before  
30 NOVEMBER.  
Avoid being lapsed!**

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## WHAT DO WE DO?

*Noel Bertelle*

**At the April 2011 School of Theosophy held at Springbrook students were asked to prepare a short talk based on material discussed during the morning sessions. From those sessions the words that cemented themselves in my mind after we had much talk and discussion, were in the form of a question; 'what do we (*the Theosophical Society*) do?'**

The question must have disturbed my comfort blanket because it made me feel just a bit uneasy, nevertheless I realised it was a legitimate query which needed to be answered. As I then thought about the question I became grateful it had been raised because I realised that it might have a similar effect on others in the Society and consequently force us all to take stock by examining the purpose of and the very reason for the Society's existence. After all it is not as if the TS is actively engaged in so-called practical and visible humanitarian activities designed to ease the pain and physical suffering of the multitudes (or even small groups), and we are not seen to support actively, or passively for that matter, popular and vital political and social issues, so it does appear to be quite a reasonable question, doesn't it?

So instead of facing it with a blank mind or reacting with some defensive nonsense, it behoves each one of us to think it through and come up with a believable answer; I mean by that an answer that will satisfy not just ourselves but the questioner. In order to do that the information must come from within, from the very fullness in our hearts, before any reply we conceive of will have real meaning, or if I may suggest, have any real use towards explaining the purpose of

the Society to those who ask out of genuine interest. And our answer will have greater meaning if we express it from the solid foundation of being a living witness towards its Objects.

And more and more as members of the Society we should prepare ourselves to expect many and varied questions about the reason for its existence, because it is abundantly clear that conditions in the world are deteriorating at an astonishing rate and need to be corrected for the safety of us all. And it is also clear that all members of the Theosophical Society must be prepared to help with the deteriorating situation. As our Society is not visibly acting to assist with material remedies to assist in such rectification, it would be wise for all members to keep that vital (and possibly bothersome) question 'what do we do', to the top-of-mind and be well prepared to come up with a satisfactory answer if or when challenged. And as we think through our reply we should be prepared to satisfy not just the enquirer but our entire membership (including those contemplating membership) as there may be many who have come to the conclusion that the TS is too idealistic and not taking a realistic and active role to ease at least some of the problems of the world, and so be inclined to depart to seek their answers elsewhere. It is therefore quite obvious how very important it is we make the effort to think through the matter adequately in order to truly understand what it is that we do in order to enthusiastically and positively communicate to all enquirers the purpose of the Theosophical Society.

Happily the early leaders of the Society have some ready answers available to us which will be of great assistance as we ponder. H. P. Blavatsky who gave the Society 'its original spiritual impetus' <sup>1</sup>. stated that ...'its primary purpose was to bring about a change in consciousness to "leaven the minds of the times". (Yet) ...such a change in consciousness must come about in every individual before any contribution can be made to the world around us'. <sup>2</sup>.

Further to that she states in *The Key to Theosophy* that ...'Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth. (And that) the Theosophical Society was formed to assist in showing...that such a thing as Theosophy exists and to help people ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities'. <sup>3</sup>.

Sri Ram, a former International President, said...'we are not aiming at sundry, superficial reforms but in bringing about a radical revolution in the hearts and minds of people, so that out of that revolution all sorts of beautiful possibilities may be realised'.<sup>4</sup>. 'Therefore, Theosophy my friends ...is not so much concerned with specific categories of activity as it is with that inner transformation which brings to birth in each of us our own design for creative living and acting'.<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally it has been said that ...'the chief business of the theosophist is to help establish in the world a new conception of life – a conception based on the recognition of the deep and fundamental unity of existence. Brotherhood must become a living experience for every individual.' <sup>6</sup>.

**So, what is it we do?** Well we as members of the Theosophical Society... 'have a special responsibility but before it can be fulfilled, brotherhood or the concept of unity, must exist in the minds of all members and be enacted in their lives through their activities to alleviate the suffering of the world. We must each decide for ourselves...the best way we can do that'. <sup>7</sup>.

In conclusion I would like to suggest a simple and straight- forward reply when asked what it is we do in the TS:

***We help establish in the world a new conception of life... based on the recognition of the deep and fundamental unity of existence. And we live the experience through our actions by doing our best to 'walk the talk'.***

1-7. Cited in 'Letters to New Members' #13, 1998.

# THE 3 A's OF JAINISM – AHIMSA, ANEKANTA & APARIGRAHA and how they can help the West.

From a talk given by Phillipa Rooke.

When we look at the world today, we see violence, greed, and an increasing fundamentalism occurring, disturbingly extreme fluctuations in the global climate, and whole species being either destroyed or in grave danger of being wiped out.

It's pretty tragic really that all the woes of the world have been caused by only one species of the many which inhabit the earth – and that species is mankind. Or perhaps to be more specific, so-called 'western' man, although the rapidly 'developing' east is now learning fast from the west and is steadily adding to the general degradation. So the overall picture is pretty bleak when we can see that we are inexorably driving our own eventual destruction unless and until we as a species can wake up, can change our collective mind, can transform attitudes of greed and selfishness and narrow mindedness, to an attitude of compassion, of caring for the greater good of mankind.

This responsibility for transformation I would suggest is the responsibility of each of us individuals, for what does that collective humanity consist of primarily but us as individuals. The fact of the interdependency and interrelatedness of the whole of life on this planet which has been borne out by many scientific studies, should be sufficient for us to understand our responsibility and accept the challenge of transformation, even if, as yet, we are unable to truly 'see' it directly for ourselves. The "One Fundamental Law" of the modern theosophical system as stated by HPB in "The Secret Doctrine" states clearly and unequivocally the fact of the ultimate unity of all manifestation. It is as follows:-

## The One Fundamental Law

"The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature – from star to mineral atom, from the highest Dhyān Chohan to the smallest infusorium, in the fullest acceptance of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual or physical worlds – this unity is the one fundamental law in Occult Science"

- "from star to mineral atom" – so the entire physical aspects of the universe
- "from the highest Dhyān Chohan to the smallest infusorium" – the whole range of evolving beings from beginnings of life through to the divine intelligences charged with the supervision of the Cosmos
- "fullest acceptance" "spiritual, intellectual or physical" - this unity is the foundation of all and every aspect of manifestation

That is a truly mind-blowing statement! What incredibly deep and wide ranging implications there are in that short statement.

In the light of that "One Fundamental Law" if we do not take on board that idea of 'radical unity' and transformation does not occur, then that which we call Theosophy is dead. Theosophy has to be about TRANSFORMATION if it is to continue to exist, if it is to flourish, and if we are to justify at all our purporting to be Theosophists.

By the term 'transformation' I am referring to a change in our "state of being", in our consciousness, in our essence, which in turn affects the way we act in our daily life. Now when

we talk about that state of being which has to be transformed, we are not referring to our health or the condition of the physical body, we are essentially talking about the condition/attitude of the mind. It is this condition of the mind which determines how we act in the world. That state can vary from say, an emotionally reactive dissatisfaction, to a calm purposeful joy. I would say that the difference between these two states lies in whether or not the “life” is “examined”. I think that this ‘life examined’ has to be the journey of preparation for transformation: it is the work which must be done to create the conditions which must prevail before transformation of any kind can occur. We could perhaps say that it is the journey, in Theosophical parlance, from being under the influence of the so-called “lower self” – that aspect of mind and emotions governed by attachments, by desire, by the strongly separative egoistic passions in man – to the “higher self” – the aspect of our being which is influenced by universality of thought, a devotion to the good of all, free from attachments, and ultimately on to a total lack of self and immersion in the ‘divine’. I use the word ‘divine’ in ignorance of its truth, for I think that we cannot conceive of that ‘divine’ in our present state, we can only travel the pathless land in pursuit of that which we cannot conceive, looking to where the fingers are pointing, and not getting distracted by the fingers themselves.

I would like to present to you three such ‘fingers’, three ideas from the Jain religion. They are Aparigraha, which translates as non-possessiveness, Anekanta, meaning non-onesidedness or non-absolutism, and Ahimsa which can mean non-violence or non-injury. But first about Jainism...

## Jainism

I was surprised in the lead up to this talk, to realise that a lot of people had not heard of Jainism or else knew very little of it, so to begin with I shall speak a little of Jainism itself.

(From “Introduction to Jainism” by Rudi Jansma and Sneh Rani Jain)

The origins of Jainism are lost in antiquity. Some believe Jainism to pre-date Hinduism. The word “jain” is derived from the term ‘jina’ which means ‘conqueror’. In the case of Jainism, the word ‘conqueror’ is seen in the inner sense as being the conqueror of oneself – that change in ones state of being to complete selflessness.

“Again and again humanity has been taught by the Jinās – those who have conquered their passions and illusions and have acquired perfect knowledge and insight, and are no longer bound through karma to the cycle of existence. Some of them, who have built up the right karmas, again preached the dharma, the spiritual doctrine, code of conduct and cosmic law. They were moved by compassion for suffering humankind with the purpose of saving as many living beings from the mire of suffering as possible –or to put it more correctly: to teach them how to liberate themselves. Because each individual must accomplish that for himself. There is no god or saviour who can do it for us; we can only do it through our own effort. Beings have the inherent power to liberate themselves, however big the karmic obstacles may be, ..... These extraordinary teachers, who show much similarity with the Buddhas of Buddhism, are called Tirthamkaras (from tirtha = passageway; sacred place(at the edge of a water + Kri = to do) in Jainism.”

Jainism honours, but does not worship as gods, a total of 24 Tirthamkaras who have guided jains from the first Tirthamkara, Rishabha, who is said to have lived more than 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> million years ago, to the last, the 24th Tirthamkara, Mahavira, said to have been born on 30/3/599BC. Mahavira was a senior contemporary of Buddha.

In 1975, the 2,500th anniversary of Mahavira’s enlightenment, the Jains adopted a symbol, The Pratika which we will have a look at as it gives a good overview of Jain beliefs.

## The Image of the Pratika

Starting from the bottom, the words translate to “All Life is Interdependent” – It underlies every aspect of Jain thought as the ‘One Fundamental Law’ does in Theosophical thought.

The hand is the expression of the Ideal of Peace

In the palm of the hand is the word “Ahimsa” – non-injury

Above it is the svastika – the symbol of life/vitality/energy

Then there are three dots representing the Triratna (three jewels) of Right Faith/Attitude, Right Knowledge and Right Action/Conduct.

The crescent marks out the place of enlightened souls

The final dot at the top signifies the liberated jiva, the unit of pure consciousness that has thrown off the bonds of karma.

Now we will look at the 3 ideas with quotes which express different aspects of each idea.



## Aparigraha

Non-possession; absence of fondness for possessions but I think that it is essentially about attachment to things, ideas, and ultimately to our sense of separateness.

“Jainism does not subscribe to forced poverty but suggests that wants should be minimised voluntarily and there should be no grabbing at any level. Many economic systems today are based only on promoting wants rather than curbing them. This is having disastrous results. One of them is that we are exhausting the non-replenishable resources of this world; another is that material goods and money are becoming the measures of man. Internationally, this spirit is leading to regional and world conflicts. Here again, the start would have to be made from the individual and his mind would have to be changed.” (from “Ahimsa: The Science of Peace”)

This rather describes our system of consumerism

“Parigraha means fondness for possessions that turns into deep desire, which in turn leads to unlimited acquisition and hoarding. Fondness for things and covetousness have a tendency to grow continuously. As they are mutually complementary, they grow very fast. Fondness enhances covetousness and covetousness enhances fondness.”

“How to go about practicing non-possession.... Understand the evil attached to covetousness and the tendency to hoard. At the social level the hoarding tendency gives rise to disparity and therefore triggers violence. At a personal level, it generates stress leading to a variety of ailments. At the environmental level, it depletes the available natural resources inviting disaster. Opening our eyes to these evils, we should practice limiting our needs and assess the results. “

In Jainism, there are more stringent codes of conduct for the monks and nuns than lay persons. In fact Jainism divides for example aparigraha, into several different layers, to which Jains can gradually aspire. It will encourage the lay person to set specific intentional limits on possessions and not exceed those limits. It will also further encourage the person to lower these limits by a certain amount each year. The final goal would be to renounce all property in excess to his legitimate needs. The final statement of the Jain monk, who in the Digambara tradition has renounced all (even clothing) except a small broom and a water bowl, is renunciation of his attachment to the body, by fasting to death at the end of his life.

I think that going through a process of conscious renunciation of possessions we really have to think about it all. We would have to consider carefully what our needs are, and have the opportunity to observe where our attachments lie, and thence be able to recognise and face those attachments including those to ideas or beliefs.

The next great idea from the Jains is that of Anekanta.

## **Anekanta**

Which translates as non-onesidedness, non-absolutism, renunciation of dogma. It is the wholistic principle of Jainism. The term 'anekanta' consists of two words 'aneka' (more than one) and 'anta'(qualities, attributes or ends).

"Anekanta has one rule: co-existence of opposites. Not only is existence in pairs, they have to be opposing pairs. In the entire world of nature, in the entire universe of existence, opposing pairs exist. If there is wisdom there is ignorance. If there is happiness then there is sadness. If there is death, there is life. Our life is based on opposing pairs. If the opposition between pairs was to disappear, so would life."

"If our view is anekantic and we look at opposing views from varying angles, then we can find the solution. But conflict becomes inevitable if we do not look at truth from a truthful perspective, and at reality from a realistic perspective or the two opposing truths from two different perspectives."

"The basis of anekanta itself was formed by the observation that the nature of matter itself is such that opposing forces reside within it.

"We base all our understanding of truth purely on the basis of the expressed, manifested world. Anekanta cautions against this. Do not give in to the arrogance of seeking complete truth on the basis of the manifested alone.

"Anekanta signifies the interdependence of substance and modes. Reality is made up of both substance and mode. Modes and qualities reside in substance and we recognise the substance because of its qualities and modes. the eternal and the non-eternal, which cannot be separated from one another. "

"Anekanta is not an effort toward compromise, or concept based on indecisiveness. It is acceptance of the truth from a viewpoint different from our own. If knowledge is multifaceted, it is also dynamic. There was a time when it was believed, on the basis of available proofs, that light travels in a straight line. As more knowledge was acquired, it was proved that light travels in waves. Going still further, it was found that it travels in impulses of particles. None of these statements can be termed as false; each is true from one particular viewpoint and up to a certain level of knowledge. Accepting all the three, once the level of knowledge is attained, can certainly not be termed as compromise of indecisiveness."

"Anekanta keeps one's mind open to various possibilities and curiosity alive to reach new dimensions of knowledge. Once a truth is accepted as one-faceted, the chances of exploring its other variants are reduced, and the knowledge remains incomplete." (Ahimsa The Science of Peace)

"Epistemological respect for the views of others" does not mean conceding that all arguments and all views are equal. It means that logic and evidence determine which views are true in what respect and to what extent. It does not mean that Jain thinkers who were committed to the truth of the Jain view could not, as scholars, be committed to explaining and defending their view by means of argument. In fact, it allows Jain thinkers to maintain the correctness of their own view, to recognise the inferiority of other views, and to criticise both their own views and

other views in terms of their weaknesses, but to do so respectfully, recognising their partial correctness, combining tolerance with a certainty and commitment to their own views.”

Now comes the third, and arguably the greatest of the ideas presented by Jainism, that of Ahimsa.

## Ahimsa

Ahimsa translates as Non-violence, non-injury, abstinence from acts that inflict harm on other creatures or the environment

There is a preoccupation with ahimsa within Jainism, for no other religious tradition has carried it to the extreme of the Jaines. For them it is not simply the first among virtues but the virtue. In most other religious traditions violence usually is associated with causing harm to other living beings. In Jainism, however, himsa refers primarily to injuring oneself – to behavior which inhibits the soul's ability to attain Moksa (liberation)

Under Jainism, violence or injury to any living beings is considered violence to self and is a major impediment to one's liberation.

Compassion and reverence for life are the sheet-anchor of the Jain quest for peace, harmony, and rectitude, based on spiritual and physical symbiosis and a sense of responsibility and restraint. Ahimsa is rooted in a host of positive aims and actions which have great relevance to contemporary environmental concerns. It is a principle of compassion and responsibility. Compassion and non-violence are the basis of the ancient Jain scriptural aphorism Paraspapagraho jivanam – all life is bound together by the mutual support of interdependence.

The concept of Ahimsa as developed by Jainism has many significant features. These are

- (i) Ahimsa is not to be practiced at the physical level only but at a mental one as well. It is stated that there should be no Himsa (violence, Injury) by mind, speech or action. Even hurting feelings in Himsa
- (ii) The concept of Ahimsa means that one would not Kill, get killing done, or approve any killing.
- (iii) Himsa or violence a parigraha or possession are intimately connected. In fact the biggest cause of Himsa is possession. Thus to achieve Ahimsa, Physical possession and the spirit of possession would have to be restricted.

“..whereas science has only recently stumbled upon the concept that all living things are related and that they trace their descent back to the same origin, Mahavir, who devoted himself to deep study of origin and spread of violence, conceived the idea of equality of all life forms more than two thousand five hundred years ago. *He conveyed that all beings are fond of life, like pleasure, hate pain, shun destruction and desire to live. Even an iota of attitude opposed to this is detrimental to the progress of soul and may be termed as violence.*”

Mahavir explained, “You will have to understand and adjudge himsa in its proper perspective. The fact that nature is infested with living organisms does not mean that violence is inevitable. It is not correct to assume that a person commits violence merely by becoming instrumental in destruction of another being. Even this is false, that a person is non-violent because he has not caused destruction of another being.....in fact, in its absolute definition, violence is the presence of evil thoughts, feelings or attitude.

## Conclusion

I hope that these three great ideas of Jainism may be of some use in your travels. But always underpinning our experiments, there is this great idea of the oneness of all life, that radical unity of the 'One Fundamental Law'; 'from highest Dhyān Chohan to the smallest infusorium' and in any other pair of opposites that you care to look at deeply. The ideas of science can help us come to a better understanding of that unity, that interdependence of all life as posited by the Jains. We only have to look at the work being done in the field of ecology to understand how vital (in both senses of the word) is the interdependence of life. For unless we can carry the truth of that ideal of unity/interdependence/ complete interrelatedness of all life in our hearts, we cannot truly practice ahimsa because up until we can know that ideal, we tend to act only for ourselves and not for the greater good of all. It is not a feeling – it is a knowledge. We know it by the facts of the matter. But NO BLAME no blame no blame – we are what we are, and what we are is at any moment where our travels in that pathless land must start from, again, and again, and again. We must simply try.

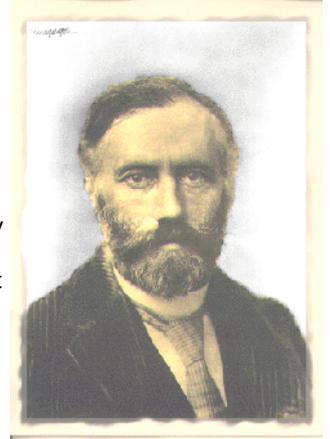
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## Kama Loka

By William Quan Judge

*From "The Ocean of Theosophy"*

Let us now consider the states of man after the death of the body and before birth, having looked over the whole field of the evolution of things and beings in a general way. This brings up at once the questions: Is there any heaven or hell, and what are they? Are they states or places? Is there a spot in space where they may be found and to which we go or from where we come? We must also go back to the subject of the fourth principle of the constitution of man, that called Kama in Sanskrit and desire or passion in English. Bearing in mind what was said about that principle, and also the teaching in respect to the astral body and the Astral Light, it will be easier to understand what is taught about the two states ante and post mortem. In chronological order we go into kama loka -- or the plane of desire -- first on the demise of the body, and then the higher principles, the real man, fall into the state of Devachan.



After dealing with kama loka it will be more easy to study the question of Devachan. The breath leaves the body and we say the man is dead, but that is only the beginning of death; it proceeds on other planes. When the frame is cold and eyes closed, all the forces of the body and mind rush through the brain, and by a series of pictures the whole life just ended is imprinted indelibly on the inner man not only in a general outline but down to the smallest detail of even the most minute and fleeting impression. At this moment, though every indication leads the physician to pronounce for death and though to all intents and purposes the person is dead to this life, the real man is busy in the brain, and not until his work there is ended is the person gone. When this solemn work is over the astral body detaches itself from the physical, and, life energy having departed, the remaining five principles are in the plane of kama loka.

The natural separation of the principles brought about by death divides the total man into three parts:

First, the visible body with all its elements left to further disintegration on the earth plane, where all that it is composed of is in time resolved into the different physical departments of nature.

Second, the kama rupa made up of the astral body and the passions and desires, which also begins at once to go to pieces on the astral plane;

Third, the real man, the upper triad of Atma-Buddhi-Manas, deathless but now out of earth conditions, devoid of body, begins in devachan to function solely as mind clothed in a very ethereal vesture which it will shake off when the time comes for it to return to earth.

Kama loka -- or the place of desire -- is the astral region penetrating and surrounding the earth. As a place it is on and in and about the earth. Its extent is to a measurable distance from the earth, but the ordinary laws obtaining here do not obtain there, and entities therein are not under the same conditions as to space and time as we are. As a state it is metaphysical, though that metaphysic relates to the astral plane. It is called the plane of desire because it relates to the fourth principle, and in it the ruling force is desire devoid of and divorced from intelligence. It is an astral sphere intermediate between earthly and heavenly life. Beyond any doubt it is the origin of the Christian theory of purgatory, where the soul undergoes penance for evil done and from which it can be released by prayer and other ceremonies or offerings.

The fact underlying this superstition is that the soul may be detained in kama loka by the enormous force of some unsatisfied desire, and cannot get rid of the astral and kamic clothing until that desire is satisfied by some one on earth or by the soul itself. But if the person was pure minded and of high aspirations, the separation of the principles on that plane is soon completed, permitting the higher triad to go into Devachan. Being the purely astral sphere, it partakes of the nature of the astral matter which is essentially earthly and devilish, and in it all the forces work undirected by soul or conscience. It is the slag-pit, as it were, of the great furnace of life, where nature provides for the sloughing off of elements which have no place in Devachan, and for that reason it must have many degrees, every one of which was noted by the ancients.

These degrees are known in Sanskrit as lokas or places in a metaphysical sense. Human life is very varied as to character and other potentialities, and for each of these the appropriate place after death is provided, thus making kama loka an infinitely varied sphere. In life some of the differences among men are modified and some inhibited by a similarity of body and heredity, but in kama loka all the hidden desires and passions are let loose in consequence of the absence of body, and for that reason the state is vastly more diversified than the life plane. Not only is it necessary to provide for the natural varieties and differences, but also for those caused by the manner of death, about which something shall be said. And all these various divisions are but the natural result of the life thoughts and last thoughts of the persons who die on earth. It is beyond the scope of this work to go into a description of all these degrees, inasmuch as volumes would be needed to describe them, and then but few would understand.

To deal with kama loka compels us to deal also with the fourth principle in the classification of man's constitution, and arouses a conflict with modern ideas and education on the subject of the desires and passions. It is generally supposed that the desires and passions are inherent tendencies in the individual, and they have an altogether unreal and misty appearance for the ordinary student. But in this system of philosophy they are not merely inherent in the individual nor are they due to the body per se. While the man is living in the world the desires and passions -- the principle kama -- have no separate life apart from the astral and inner man, being, so to say, diffused throughout his being. But as they coalesce with the astral body after death and thus form an entity with its own term of life, though without soul, very important questions arise.

During mortal life the desires and passions are guided by the mind and soul; after death they work without guidance from the former master; while we live we are responsible for them and

their effects, and when we have left this life we are still responsible, although they go on working and making effects on others while they last as the sort of entity I have described, and without our direct guidance. In this is seen the continuance of responsibility.

They are a portion of the *skandhas* -- well known in eastern philosophy -- which are the aggregates that make up the man. The body includes one set of the skandhas, the astral man another, the kama principle is another set, and still others pertain to other parts. In kama are the really active and important ones which control rebirths and lead to all the varieties of life and circumstance upon each rebirth.

They are being made from day to day under the law that every thought combines instantly with one of the elemental forces of nature, becoming to that extent an entity which will endure in accordance with the strength of the thought as it leaves the brain, and all of these are inseparably connected with the being who evolved them. There is no way of escaping; all we can do is to have thoughts of good quality, for the highest of the Masters themselves are not exempt from this law, but they "people their current in space" with entities powerful for good alone.

Now in kama loka this mass of desire and thought exists very definitely until the conclusion of its disintegration, and then the remainder consists of the essence of these skandhas, connected, of course, with the being that evolved and had them. They can no more be done away with than we can blot out the universe.

Hence they are said to remain until the being comes out of devachan, and then at once by the law of attraction they are drawn to the being, who from them as germ or basis builds up a new set of skandhas for the new life. Kama loka therefore is distinguished from the earth plane by reason of the existence therein, uncontrolled and unguided, of the mass of passions and desires; but at the same time earth-life is also a kama loka, since it is largely governed by the principle kama, and will be so until at a far distant time in the course of evolution the races of men shall have developed the fifth and sixth principle, thus throwing kama into its own sphere and freeing earth-life from its influence.

The astral man in kama loka is a mere shell devoid of soul and mind, without conscience and also unable to act unless vivified by forces outside of itself. It has that which seems like an animal or automatic consciousness due wholly to the very recent association with the human Ego. For under the principle laid down in another chapter, every atom going to make up the man has a memory of its own which is capable of lasting a length of time in proportion to the force given it. In the case of a very material and gross or selfish person the force lasts longer than in any other, and hence in that case the automatic consciousness will be more definite and bewildering to one who without knowledge dabbles with necromancy. Its purely astral portion contains and carries the record of all that ever passed before the person when living, for one of the qualities of the astral substance is to absorb all scenes and pictures and the impressions of all thoughts, to keep them, and to throw them forth by reflection when the conditions permit.

This astral shell, cast off by every man at death, would be a menace to all men were it not in every case, except one which shall be mentioned, devoid of all the higher principles which are the directors. But those guiding constituents being disjoined from the shell, it wavers and floats about from place to place without any will of its own, but governed wholly by attractions in the astral and magnetic fields.

It is possible for the real man -- called the spirit by some -- to communicate with us immediately after death for a few brief moments, but, those passed, the soul has no more to do with earth until reincarnated. What can and do influence the sensitive and the medium from out of this sphere are the shells I have described. Soulless and conscienceless, these in no sense are the spirits of our deceased ones. They are the clothing thrown off by the inner man, the brutal

earthly portion discarded in the flight to devachan, and so have always been considered by the ancients as devils -- our personal devils -- because essentially astral, earthly, and passional. It would be strange indeed if this shell, after being for so long the vehicle of the real man on earth, did not retain an automatic memory and consciousness. We see the decapitated body of the frog or the cock moving and acting for a time with a seeming intelligence, and why is it not possible for the finer and more subtle astral form to act and move with a far greater amount of seeming mental direction?

Existing in the sphere of kama loka, as, indeed, also in all parts of the globe and the solar system, are the elementals or nature forces. They are innumerable, and their divisions are almost infinite, as they are, in a sense, the nerves of nature. Each class has its own work just as has every natural element or thing.

As fire burns and as water runs down and not up under their general law, so the elementals act under law, but being higher in the scale than gross fire or water their action seems guided by mind. Some of them have a special relation to mental operations and to the action of the astral organs, whether these be joined to a body or not. When a medium forms the channel, and also from other natural co-ordination, these elementals make an artificial connection with the shell of a deceased person, aided by the nervous fluid of the medium and others near, and then the shell is galvanized into an artificial life. Through the medium connection is made with the physical and psychical forces of all present.

The old impressions on the astral body give up their images to the mind of the medium, the old passions are set on fire. Various messages and reports are then obtained from it, but not one of them is original, not one is from the spirit.

By their strangeness, and in consequence of the ignorance of those who dabble in it, this is mistaken for the work of spirit, but it is all from the living when it is not the mere picking out from the astral light of the images of what has been in the past. In certain cases to be noted there is an intelligence at work that is wholly and intensely bad, to which every medium is subject, and which will explain why so many of them have succumbed to evil, as they have confessed.

A rough classification of these shells that visit mediums would be as follows:

- (1) Those of the recently deceased whose place of burial is not far away. This class will be quite coherent in accordance with the life and thought of the former owner. An unmaterial, good, and spiritualized person leaves a shell that will soon disintegrate. A gross, mean, selfish, material person's shell will be heavy, consistent, and long lived: and so on with all varieties.
- (2) Those of persons who had died far away from the place where the medium is. Lapse of time permits such to escape from the vicinity of their old bodies, and at the same time brings on a greater degree of disintegration which corresponds on the astral plane to putrefaction on the physical. These are vague, shadowy, incoherent; respond but briefly to the psychic stimulus, and are whirled off by any magnetic current. They are galvanized for a moment by the astral currents of the medium and of those persons present who were related to the deceased.
- (3) Purely shadowy remains which can hardly be given a place. There is no English to describe them, though they are facts in this sphere. They might be said to be the mere mould or impress left in the astral substance by the once coherent shell long since disintegrated. They are therefore so near being fictitious as to almost deserve the designation. As such shadowy photographs they are enlarged, decorated, and given an imaginary life by the thoughts, desires, hopes, and imaginings of medium and sitters at the seance.
- (4) Definite, coherent entities, human souls bereft of the spiritual tie, now tending down to the worst state of all, avitchi, where annihilation of the personality is the end. They are known as black magicians. Having centered the consciousness in the principle of kama, preserved intellect, divorced themselves from spirit, they are the only damned beings we know. In life they

had human bodies and reached their awful state by persistent lives of evil for its own sake; some of such already doomed to become what I have described, are among us on earth today. These are not ordinary shells, for they have centered all their force in kama, thrown out every spark of good thought or aspiration, and have a complete mastery of the astral sphere. I put them in the classification of shells because they are such in the sense that they are doomed to disintegration consciously as the others are to the same end mechanically only.

They may and do last for many centuries, gratifying their lusts through any sensitive they can lay hold of where bad thought gives them an opening. They preside at nearly all seances, assuming high names and taking the direction so as to keep the control and continue the delusion of the medium, thus enabling themselves to have a convenient channel for their own evil purposes. Indeed, with the shells of suicides, of those poor wretches who die at the hand of the law, of drunkards and gluttons, these black magicians living in the astral world hold the field of physical mediumship and are liable to invade the sphere of any medium no matter how good.

The door once open, it is open to all. This class of shell has lost higher manas, but in the struggle not only after death but as well in life the lower portion of manas which should have been raised up to godlike excellence was torn away from its lord and now gives this entity intelligence which is devoid of spirit but power to suffer as it will when its final day shall come.

In the state of Kama Loka suicides and those who are suddenly shot out of life by accident or murder, legal or illegal, pass a term almost equal to the length life would have been but for the sudden termination. These are not really dead.

To bring on a normal death, a factor not recognized by medical science must be present. That is, the principles of the being as described in other chapters have their own term of cohesion, at the natural end of which they separate from each other under their own laws. This involves the great subject of the cohesive

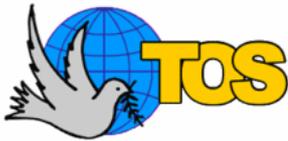
forces of the human subject, requiring a book in itself. I must be content therefore with the assertion that this law of cohesion obtains among the human principles. Before that natural end the principles are unable to separate.

Obviously the normal destruction of the cohesive force cannot be brought about by mechanical processes except in respect to the physical body. Hence a suicide, or person killed by accident or murdered by man or by order of human law, has not come to the natural termination of the cohesion among the other

constituents, and is hurled into the kama loka state only partly dead. There the remaining principles have to wait until the actual natural life term is reached, whether it be one month or sixty years.

But the degrees of kama loka provide for the many varieties of the last-mentioned shells. Some pass the period in great suffering, others in a dreamy sort of sleep, each according to the moral responsibility. But executed criminals are in general thrown out of life full of hate and revenge, smarting under a penalty they do not admit the justice of. They are ever rehearsing in kama loka their crime, their trial, their execution, and their revenge. And whenever they can gain touch with a sensitive living person, medium or not, they attempt to inject thoughts of murder and other crime into the brain of such unfortunate. And that they succeed in such attempts the deeper students of [Theosophy](#) full well know.

We have now approached devachan. After a certain time in kama loka the being falls into a state of unconsciousness which precedes the change into the next state. It is like the birth into life, precluded by a term of darkness and heavy sleep. It then wakes to the joys of devachan.



# T.O.S. news

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## ***You are invited to join us in putting Theosophy into practice***

### **Join our planning meetings**

Planning meetings are held quarterly from 10.00 to 11:30 am in the T.S. rooms. All interested people are invited to attend. The next meeting is on Saturday 10 September (**please note change of date**) and the AGM is on 3 December 2011.

### **Donations to service activities**

At the June planning meeting, members decided to distribute the funds raised during the year as follows:

\$1000 to the Assam TOS for their mobility aids program  
\$1000 to the Golden Link College organised by the Philippines TOS  
\$1000 to the Literacy home-schools organised by the Pakistan TOS  
\$500 to the Animal Clinic at Adyar  
Funds were also set aside for our homeless women project. The June sale table raised \$204 for the Hamlin Fistula Relief program in Ethiopia.

### **Activities coming up**

#### ***Cinema event***

Here's your opportunity to see the new production of *Jane Eyre*, chat with friends over afternoon tea and at the same time support two worthwhile projects: the literacy home-schools in Pakistan and the Hamlin Fistula Relief program.

**Date: Sunday 4 September** in the early afternoon. We will confirm the exact time when the cinema releases its schedule.

**Venue: Regal Cinema**, Honour Ave., Graceville. There is ample street parking and it is opposite the railway station.

**Cost: \$15** for the movie & afternoon tea

**Tickets** can be purchased from TOS members or phone Janet Harding on 3269 9469 by 28 August.

### ***Sale tables***

Bring your gold coins along to the TS meeting on **Friday 9 September** to spend on goodies such as jam, pickles, biscuits and fresh produce. Money raised from this sale table will be used for our homeless women project. You'll be able to buy Christmas goodies at the sale table on **Friday 2 December**.

### ***Healing from the Forest seminar***

You and your friends are invited to this seminar that the TOS is organising to recognise the UN Year of the Forest.

**Date:** Saturday 1 October – 9:00 to 3:30

**Venue:** Brisbane TS main meeting room

**Cost:** a gold coin or more, with proceeds going to the Pakistan literacy home-school

The program will include talks on *Using Essential Oils from the Forest*, *How Forests Help Heal Our Planet* and *The Spiritual Dimension of Forests* and conclude with a creative workshop, *Exploring Our Personal Responses to the Forest*, led by two artists. A registration form will be in the TS library from 29 August.



*A literacy home-school in the slums of Karachi, Pakistan provides free basic education.*



The Hamlin Fistula Relief program in Ethiopia promotes safe birthing practices and provides free surgery.

## The Theosophical Society

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

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

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

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