

# The Golden Thread



Imagine a golden thread that leads back to the source of existence, to the consciousness that impels every aspect of the physical, mental and spiritual worlds in which we live. A thread which weaves through every aspect of life and which, if grasped, can carry us back to that source while helping us to make sense of the journey along the way.

Enjoy a weekend in the Summer in good company, when we will follow the thread in a variety of ways with the guidance of session leaders who have experience and a love of their chosen subject. The weekend will comprise three workshops each day, with a plenary session at the beginning and end of the event. Choose up to 6 workshops from a total offering of 24.

On Saturday evening we will enjoy a series of three 'mini' lectures entitled 'Proportion, Aesthetics and Beauty in Watch, Clock and Sundial Design'. The lecture was first delivered to the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers in October by Lady Joanna White, John Martineau and Lee-Yuen Rapati - all eminent in the fields of art, design and horology.

**January 9-10, 8.00am-4.00pm + Saturday evening presentation**

Online via Zoom. Meeting addresses will be supplied after registration.

Register now at: [practicalphilosophyvic.org.au/events/the-golden-thread](https://practicalphilosophyvic.org.au/events/the-golden-thread)

**Registrations close on Saturday 2nd January**

\$60 Flat Fee. This entitles entry to a selection of up to six workshops, two plenary meetings and the guest presentation on Saturday evening.

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# The Golden Thread

9th & 10th January, 2021

## OPENING PLENARY SESSION

Saturday 8.00am-8.25am

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### SESSION 1

Saturday 8.30am-10.00am

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#### 1A: The Ancient Wisdom of the Western Tradition

**Mrs Helen Nichol**

We are familiar with the teaching of unity in Advaita. Discover where the same unity reveals itself in the West and which our sages call the 'Golden Chain'. It is found in Homer, developed in Plato, mirrored in the Hebrew Magi, and continued through Plotinus, Dionysius, Ficino and many more. We will look at three for starters. This is our lineage. Do we know it? If not, why would it survive?

#### 1B: Exploring the Sacred in Art and Architecture

**Mr Garry Martin**

A contemplative workshop involving the observation from stillness of certain created works of art and architecture. In that stillness, the order, harmony and beauty of the Sacred may be revealed. Certain works, consciously created, emulate the Divine order of the creation and lead us back to the source of All. We shall explore together works from the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Islamic traditions in a journey to discover for ourselves the Unity that underlies the All.

#### 1C: Gayatri Mantra

**Mr Robert Udovicich**

The Hymn to the Sun - or Gayatri Mantra - is the oldest and most auspicious of mantras from the eastern tradition and one which has also profoundly influenced the West. When sounded sincerely, it erases the ordinary negative tendencies of the mind and awakens the vital energies which lead to liberation, health and happiness. An introduction to the history, science and health benefits of the mantra; including group sounding for a practical exploration of its effects on body, mind and emotions.

#### 1D: It is as it is

**Dr Neil McNab**

Inner non-resistance to what is leads to a life of Harmony, Simplicity, Love and Peace. This practical interactive session will allow you to experience inner non-resistance.

## SESSION 2

Saturday 10.30am-12.00 noon

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#### 2A: Accessing the Power of Silence, A Journey to the Heart

**Ms Mary Kennedy**

In a world of ever-competing, cacophonous volume, both external and internal, it seems as though we are afraid of silence, that we would do just about anything rather than sit in that quiet inner space. Yet if the number of books and courses written about it are anything to go on, we are drawn to and inherently feel the need for silence. What then is the value of silence, and how may we find access to it?

#### 2B: The Golden Thread Joining Patanjali and Marcus Aurelius

**Mrs Philippa Street**

Patanjali and Marcus Aurelius are connected by the Golden Thread of Virtue. An exploration into how the philosophies of these great men are connected and are practically useful to us in daily life.

#### 2C: Making Resolutions that Stick

**Mr Sam Grace**

Resolutions can be very slippery - especially ones that are made at the commencement of the New Year. Yet it feels like the natural time to make such commitments. Despite our best intentions, when we do not meet our own expectations it can be a deflating experience. What can the wisdom traditions teach us about resolution? This workshop offers a forum for you to share your experience, or to simply soak up the information and quietly reflect on how it might apply to your life.

#### 2D: The Sower went forth to sow

**Mr John Jepsen**

Throughout the millenia, the great teachers of humankind have gone forth to sow the seeds of truth embedded in the great teachings into the 'soil' of the human heart. Some bear fruit; some do not. It has been ever so. Let us follow the thread of some of these mighty sowers from beyond ancient memory up to the present day.

## SESSION 3

Saturday 1.30pm–3.00pm

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### 3A: The Body Speaks

**Mrs Bouthaina Mayall**

Using an ancient Upanishadic text, the Chandogya Upanishad, we shall explore how the body itself reveals universal truths and leads to Self knowledge. This is a workshop for those who would like to explore authentic movement, that is to trust the body to speak through its own movement. We shall also learn the traditional hand mudras which are used to illustrate the story in the text as our starting point.

### 3B: The Greatest Ignorance

**Mrs Jane Praeger**

Plato's Laws can teach us what is required to create a perfect city and what will bring it down and destroy it. What in ourselves brings a state of wisdom and what are the clouds that bend our will and create torment?

### 3C: Taming your Amygdala

**Mr Robert Udovicich**

Fearlessness - the first of the divine qualities in the Bhagavad Gita. According to Plato fear and anger are tyrannical obstacles to a full and reasonable life. Learn to tame your dragon - or the dragon of someone close to you. Practical philosophical approaches to reduce anxiety, panic attacks and other manifestations of fear.

### 3D: The Wisdom of Jesus - a golden thread leading to Self Realisation?

**Mrs Marita Brewster**

The Christian mystics understood that in transcending the material world it is possible to find unity with the divine. We will examine some key statements spoken by Jesus that point to that divinity within our own souls. We will also look to the mystics to discover what they practised to help access the wisdom of Jesus. Could this be the time to return to the purity of the conscious words spoken by Jesus himself - spoken directly to the minds and hearts of all people in the centuries to follow?

## SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Saturday 7.30pm–9.00pm

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### Proportion, Aesthetics and Beauty in Watch, Clock and Sundial Design

**Joanna Migdal (Lady White),  
John Martineau and Lee-Yuen Rapati**

A series of three 'mini' lectures delivered over one hour with time for questions. The lecture was first delivered to the Worshipful Company of

Clockmakers in October by Lady White who is the current Master of the Company, John Martineau - the acclaimed geometer and editor of Quadrivium and Trivium and publisher of Wooden Books, and Lee-Yuen Rapati - the much-applauded watch designer. This quote from Orlando Gibbons (British composer 1583-1625) sums up the essence of the lecture: "It is proportion that beautifies everything, the whole universe consists of it, and music is measured by it."

## SESSION 4

Sunday 8.30am–10.00am

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### 4A: A Golden Environment

**Mr Warwick Brewster**

What attributes in the environments in which we live, work and play are helpful in providing the sattva needed to lead us to a peaceful and blissful life? What steps can be taken to create a living environment where the being can come to rest? We will introduce some practical experiments in this workshop to help explore these most important questions.

### 4B: Isa Upanishad

**Mrs Jane Praeger**

Come back to where it all began. 4,000 years before Plato these ancient Vedic texts, having been chanted for millennia, were written down to ensure they would be available to all and never forgotten. Join us as we invite the text to help bring an understanding and purpose to the meaning of life.

### 4C: Let no man enter who is ignorant of geometry

**Mr Reginald Johnston**

Have you ever looked up at the sky at night, and wondered? Or looked at Mother Nature, and been amazed by Her symmetry? Sacred Geometry is at the heart of this universal array and indeed, of every aspect of the creation. We will examine the significance and beauty of Sacred Geometry and how it can be used for artistic expression. Suggested materials: a compass, pencil, ruler and paper. All instructions will be given. Or just come and listen. No prior knowledge or artistic skill required.

### 4D: Meditation, Mantra and returning to the Source

**Mr Michael Luscombe**

Meditation is described as a journey of an Individual into the Universal, into the Absolute. It is a journey of expansion from the limited to the unlimited. Mantra is the vehicle in this journey which refines and becomes subtler and slower as one is drawn on to the bare thread of meditation, the golden thread. All possessions

have to be discarded to complete this journey and even the mantra itself disappears to reveal Self as Universe. This workshop is for students who are practising the School's mantra meditation.

## SESSION 5

Sunday 10.30am–12.00 noon

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### 5A: Getting Over Preferences

**Mrs Philippa Street**

In the Bhagavad Gita we are blithely instructed to 'Look upon all with an equal eye'. How can we go beyond our normal inclination to prefer this or that person? Patanjali, in The Brahmavihari of sutra 1.33 gives us practical steps towards unity.

### 5B: Know Thyself

**Mrs Marita Brewster**

Know Thyself – these words were carved over the portal to the Temple at Delphi. The works of Plato are devoted to exploring this noble aspiration. We will examine what Plato called the 'Forms', the indestructible and eternal realities which transcend the material world perceived by the senses; and discover our relationship with them. Is to know the Forms a pathway to knowing ourselves?

### 5C: Mindfulness: more than stress management and efficiency?

**Dr Craig Hassed OAM**

Mindfulness is very popular these days and has a surprising amount of research behind it. Mostly, people see it as a technique in stress management or to help them to focus and be more efficient, but does it have greater potential than that? Can following the golden thread of mindfulness-based practices ultimately take us deeper into self-knowledge, wisdom and even liberation?

### 5D: Stay still in yourself and be what you are

**Mr Michael Smith**

In the midst of this everchanging, challenging world of ours – both in the large sense and, particularly in the individual sense – the experience of our true self can appear far away, not within view. Drawing upon the wisdom of Plato, Christian scripture and a range of spiritual guides and writers, let us see if we can learn to rise above what often appears to be all consuming, in order to connect with reality.

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## SESSION 6

Sunday 1.30pm–3.00pm

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### 6A: Democracy on Trial

**Dr Craig Hassed OAM**

These days most people in the western world revere democracy as the highest form of government but not everyone, notably Socrates, shares that opinion. Was Socrates right about democracy being the second lowest of the five forms of government, just one step from tyranny? On what basis would he make such an assertion? What is the governing principle in a democracy and is there something higher we should be governed by? Does modern neuroscience give us any clues as to whether or not Socrates was right? Can this inquiry provide a golden thread with the potential to lead us to wisdom, enlightenment and freedom?

### 6B: Experiencing awakened consciousness through the body

**Mrs Jane McNab**

'Awakened consciousness yearns for full embodiment.' In this session we will relax into beingness in the body. The more relaxed, the more we inhabit our bodies, the more presence we experience. That presence is subtle, scintillating aliveness and spaciousness in stillness and silence. We will feel every cell in our bodies as awake and listening, and in a state of alert potential. With experience, we will come to know ourselves as this embodied life force.

### 6C: The Fortunes of Dialectic

**Mr Raj Bhandari**

The Golden Thread of Reason is what leads us back to the Truth of who we are. Want to know more about your Self? Want to discover deep and meaningful insights into the nature of Reality? Whatever it is you wish to enquire about, Dialectic may help to develop your capacity to explore and discover. Guidelines will be offered as well as time to practise with fellow participants.

### 6D: Mandalas - the Art of Drawing Within

**Mrs Deirdre Hassed**

The drawing of a mandala can be seen as a golden thread leading to stillness. It starts from a point and manifests from there following a natural order of pattern and structure. Often symbolic in meaning, the act of drawing a mandala can be a meditative practice. Uncover your innate artistic potential.

## CLOSING PLENARY SESSION

Sunday 3.15pm–4.00pm

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