

Foreword

The *Wednesday* magazine is pleased to announce to its readers the fruit of its second year of publication. With this volume, the magazine gets to its fifth book and volume six will be shortly sent to the printers. I am pleased to say that the magazine seems to go from strength to strength, not only in content but in terms of human value and inspiration. The magazine started as an outlet for the intellectual output of the group of friends who meet every Wednesday for a discussion. Philosophy gets special attention at every meeting, but the meetings also include the wider interests of its members. Humanities, literature, poetry and art all find their space in the debate and on the pages of the magazine. The wider aim is to create an atmosphere of friendship between like-minded people through the group and the magazine. I am pleased to say that we have achieved much of this so far. I am grateful to our members, our contributors and our readers.

From the start, I was inspired by the title of the magazine of S.T. Coleridge, *The Friend*, and I think it is a great title for an intellectual magazine. Friendship was of course of immense interest for philosophy in its early days. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle contemplated it and wrote a good deal about it. One could also enlist the idea of recognition and the value of rationality in friendship. The mystics take the idea higher by talking about becoming a friend of God. Ibrahim (Abraham) is also called al-Khalil, which means that he is an intimate friend of God.

It is at the higher level of finding like-minded people who can share ideas that friendship is important. Such an idea was developed further in Islamic history by the first secret society of Neo-Platonist intellectuals called *The Brotherhood of Purity*. Sufi circles also developed their own societies, known in Turkey as the Akhi (Brother). Sufi societies had their own places for worship and for seeking friendship and solidarity. Umberto Eco in his novel *Foucault's Pendulum* traces the history of the influence of these societies on the early societies in Europe.

It is my duty now to thank all the friends who made *The Wednesday* a success, my editorial board, contributors, our designer and readers, as well as the few generous individuals who, from time to time, donate to the project to keep it going. I dedicate this volume to them all.

The Editor