

# The Theosophical Link



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Contact	2
President's Report	3
News from the Library	4
Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey by Cynthia Overweg	5
Activities & Events	10
Report from the Mt.Helena Working Group	12
Sharing Divine Truths Program	13
Introduction to Theosophy Course Program	14
Mahatmas vs Ascended Masters by Pablo Sender	15
What is memory according to Theosophical Teachings - HPB	20
Program of lectures	23



## Joy Mills (October 9, 1920 - December 29, 2015)

This issue of The Theosophical Link is dedicated to the memory of **Joy Mills**, who passed to the light on Tuesday, December 29, 2015 at 10:35 AM, in her 96th year.

A much loved member and inspirational teacher  
of the Ancient Wisdom

She passed as she wished, in her bed at home in Krotona,  
Ojai, California.



## The Three Objects of the Theosophical Society

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.

**Bookshop and Library****Monday**

Closed

**Tuesday**

1 pm to 7:25 pm

**Wednesday – Friday**

12 pm to 4:30 pm

**Saturday**

10 am to 2 pm

**Sunday & Public****Holidays**

Closed

## Freedom of Thought – Official statement

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its Three Objects is the sole condition of membership.

No teacher, no writer, from H.P. Blavatsky downwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to be attached to any school of thought which they may choose, but have no right to force that choice on any other.

Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held or because of membership in any school of thought to which they may belong. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

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

**Visit us on the web**
[www.tsperth.com.au](http://www.tsperth.com.au)
**Find us on Facebook**

Search for  
"The Theosophical  
Society in Perth"

**Email**
[tsperth@iinet.net.au](mailto:tsperth@iinet.net.au)

### Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Theosophical Society unless specifically marked as official.

### Open policy

The Minutes of all Executive Committee (EC) meetings are always available to members on request at the office. Rule Books are also available at the office for members.

### Submissions

The closing date for all items for inclusion in the next edition of the Theosophical Link is: **1st April 2016.**

Email your submissions to [tsperth@iinet.net.au](mailto:tsperth@iinet.net.au), or leave your typed articles in the Editor's drawer in the office. **Emailed submissions preferred.**

## Contact information

**The Theosophical Society, Perth**

21 Glendower Street  
PERTH WA 6000

Phone: (08) 9328 8104

Fax: (08) 9328 8104

Email: [tsperth@iinet.net.au](mailto:tsperth@iinet.net.au)Web: [www.tsperth.com.au](http://www.tsperth.com.au)**Mount Helena Retreat Centre**

1540 Bunning Road  
MOUNT HELENA WA 6082

## Privacy policy

The Perth Branch of the Theosophical Society respects the privacy of its members. Accordingly, no photos, videos or audio recordings are to be recorded in hard copy or on the internet at any Branch event without the prior permission of each easily identifiable person.

## President's Report

This has been another hectic year for the Perth Branch. We have had visits by an International speaker, Vic Hao Chin, as well as our National President, Linda Oliveira and Education Coordinator, Pedro Oliveira. And right now (January 2016) we have the Convention on here in Perth with our International President, Tim Boyd, as the key note speaker.

Perth members have had numerous opportunities to experience quality presentations in the last 12 months. But alas we have to come back to earth eventually. This year there will be no Easter event. We have relied almost exclusively on National Lecturers to fill our Easter program in recent years. As generous as Section have been, we cannot expect to have national lecturers provided every year. However, this allows our hard working TS and the TOS committee members to enjoy Easter with family and friends for the first time in many years.

Recently I was involved in a discussion about life, death and euthanasia. When is the right time to leave the body, and who should make the decision if our mental faculties begin to desert us? Everyone had an opinion. It somehow reminded me of the words from Eckhart Tolle in his book, ***The power of Now***, where he states, "On the level of form, there is birth and death, creation and destruction. This is reflected everywhere: in the life cycle of a star or a planet, the physical body, a tree, political systems, and in the gain and loss in the life of an individual."

"There are cycles of success when things come to you and cycles of failure, when things wither. You have to let them go in order to make room for the new things to arise, for transformation to happen. It is not true that the up cycle is good and the down cycle is bad, except in the mind's judgement"

Important as the subject of death is, let's spend more time going with the flow and make room for new things to arise in 2016.

Regards,

Harry Bayens



"Burn worldly love, rub the ashes and make ink of it,  
make the heart the pen,  
the intellect the writer,  
write that which has no end or limit."  
— Guru Nanak, Sri Guru Granth Sahib



## News from the Library

As reported in the previous Link newsletter the burning of the Geoffrey Hodson CD's for incorporation into our library stock has commenced and is well advanced along this front.

The next phase, after completion of this task, will be to print all of the titles and some planned artwork onto the printable CD's we are using and then have them entered onto the library database.

A big thank you must go to Hans Smit for his technical expertise in setting up all of the necessary equipment and programs needed to complete this part of the project.

Recently we had a member of the public looking to acquire some photos of the old lodge building that was in Museum St. Perth near where the cultural centre is now located.

Having had some difficulty in trying to locate this information from what limited archival material we have on this subject but eventually we were able to find a photo or two but it got me to thinking that some of our members may have some sort of records, photos or other information about the old lodge site.

If anyone has any photos of the building inside or out or other material about the old lodge would you be willing to let us borrow it so that we could make copies of anything you might have before returning it to you? Please contact the branch if you can help add any material to our collection about this aspect of the branch history.

We are in need of another library volunteer to work every Friday from 12pm to 4:30 pm to work with another volunteer we already have. Training is provided and ongoing support is available as well as reimbursement of any travel costs incurred. This is a great opportunity to meet other members and the public and to engage in discussions with them that you might not have the chance to in other settings. There is also plenty of time to catch up on any reading you might want to do with plenty of material to choose from. If you could help us fill this vacant spot please contact the branch.

Skip Pry  
Librarian

"At the very heart and center of existence, pervading the whole manifestation of the divine Idea, there exists one predominant Law. This Law – insofar as it may be comprehended by humanity – decrees that the tendency to preserve harmonious equilibrium, shall always be stronger than the tendencies toward discordance."

Geoffrey Hodson



## Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey

by Cynthia Overweg

Printed in the Spring 2012 issue of Quest magazine.

Citation: Overweg, Cynthia. "Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey" Quest 100. 2 (Spring 2012): pg. 50-55

As she traveled through the foothills of northern India, the breathtaking beauty of the western Himalayas was a sight to behold. The mountains were magically iridescent in the midday sun, and she could hardly contain her excitement. The year was 1972, and Joy Mills was on her way to Dharamsala to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence-in-exile. It was a great honor for the Theosophical Society, and she could scarcely believe her good fortune.

The rendezvous was the result of Joy's idea to publish the Dalai Lama's book *Opening of the Wisdom-Eye*, which up to that point had appeared only in south Asia. Traveling with her on this memorable journey was her good friend and colleague, Helen Zahara, who was senior editor of Quest Books. "We were able to get the rights to publish the Dalai Lama's book, and since we already had a trip planned to Adyar, Helen and I wondered if we could meet with his Holiness," Joy recalls. They made arrangements through the Office of Tibet in New York, flew into Delhi, took the train north, and then hired a taxi to take them to Dharamsala.

When they arrived at the Dalai Lama's home, they barely had a moment to gather their thoughts when his Holiness greeted them with what Joy describes as "that wonderful smile." She recalls that Helen made the statement that H.P. Blavatsky had introduced the inner side of Buddhism to the Western world. "What did she write?" asked the Dalai Lama.

"*The Voice of the Silence*," Helen answered. Directing his next question to Joy, he asked, "What is the essence of *The Voice of the Silence*?" At first, Joy couldn't think. She wondered how she could express the book in a brief way. "Well," she said finally, "it discusses the Paramitas," the six "perfections" of Mahayana Buddhism. The Dalai Lama seemed genuinely excited. "Ah, then it is accurate. It is true." Joy was thrilled to be able to introduce the Dalai Lama to HPB's great little book, and the meeting is one of her most cherished memories.

Joy was fifty-two years old when she first met the Dalai Lama. She is now ninety-one. Nothing in her formative years could have predicted that one day she would arrive at the Dalai Lama's doorstep representing the Theosophical Society.

While her life is rich with accomplishments and service, there also has been hardship and neglect. The road that ultimately led her to Theosophy and to a profound respect for Buddhism, particularly the Dzogchen teaching of Tibetan Buddhism, began when she was a child.

When Joy was born in Lakewood, Ohio, in 1920, the world was still recovering from the devastation of World War I, and America was just beginning its rise as an economic and military powerhouse. American women had finally won the right to vote only two months before Joy's birth.

Joy's father was an engineer and her mother a schoolteacher. Her early life wasn't unusual until a family tragedy turned it upside down. When she was eight years old, Joy was confronted with a pivotal question: what happens after death? Her mother, Mary Conger, died of a massive heart attack at the age of forty-nine. Her father conveyed the sad news to Joy in one simple statement: "Mama has died." Very little was said between father and daughter on that shattering day in May 1929. As Joy knelt at her mother's bedside, it looked as though her mother was merely asleep, but there was a sad acceptance hanging in the air. "I leaned over to kiss her cheek and she was cold. It was my first impression of the temporary nature of physical life."

Her mother's death, Joy recalls, "triggered a need to better understand what it means to be human. I've learned that if you stay with that question long enough, a much deeper question emerges—it's at the root of our very existence: 'Who am I?'"

Not long after her mother's death, Joy got a taste of what that question points to. She was visiting the Ozark mountains in Missouri with her maternal aunt and uncle and three cousins. One day she hiked into the woods on her own, feeling a deep connection with nature and an exhilarating sense of freedom. "I had an experience in those woods that altered my perception of life," said Joy.

The Ozarks are known for their white oaks and dogwood trees, along with loblolly pines, which can reach over a hundred feet in height.

Joy had been walking for a while, absorbing the sights and sounds of the forest. Suddenly she found herself standing in front of a towering tree. "I became aware of the power and life in that tree. Then I became one with the tree. I could have slid right into it." In that instant, she knew that the life in the tree and the life within her were the same life. "At some level, it changed me. It's what HPB calls 'direct beholding,' an insight which often comes unbidden, when seeing happens at a deeper level."

In October 1929, five months after the death of Joy's mother, a catastrophic stock market crash hit Wall Street. It ushered in the Great Depression and a decade of economic turmoil affecting millions of families. Hard times gave rise to the most difficult turning point of Joy's youth. Her father lost his engineering job and spent most of his time looking for work. Overwhelmed by his circumstances and the demands of being a single parent, he sent her away to live with people she didn't know. "I was boarded out to a family who lived in another school district and saw my father only on weekends. Everything that was familiar was taken away, so I bottled up my feelings and lived in my books. It was my only refuge."

Two years later, when her father married a much younger woman, he tried reuniting with his daughter, but Joy's stepmother was verbally abusive and neglected her. "I wanted to tell my father, but I was afraid of what would happen, so I just took it." Her father soon realized the reunion he had imagined wasn't going to work out. "I overheard him tell my paternal aunt and uncle that he might put me in a convent," Joy recalls. "As an alternative, they offered to adopt me and I heard my father give his consent. I was being given away, and it really hurt."

Once she was legally adopted, Joy took the surname of her adoptive father and the child who had been baptized as Mary Joy Conger became Joy Mills.

At the age of twelve, her life began again with people who took much better care of her. "I had a lonely and dislocated childhood and never felt like I belonged. I'm not unique in that experience, of course. But I'm grateful that it pushed me inward and forced me to ask a lot of questions about life. It fed my desire to understand why there is so much suffering in the world."

By the time Joy was a teenager, she was reading Aristotle and Plato while others her age were at football games or at the local teen hangout. "I had a girlfriend at school who loved discussing philosophy. It filled a void." As she grew older, a question about the concept of freedom emerged. For her as a child, freedom meant being able to ride her bicycle in the open air with the sun shining on her face. Freedom also meant ridding herself of isolation and loneliness. "But I see the world differently now," she says. "The more we realize the Oneness of all things, the more we realize that freedom is a kind of illusion. The only real genuine freedom is to be free from the desires of a separated self. HPB refers to it as the 'obligatory pilgrimage of the soul.' This is our collective evolutionary journey."

When Joy graduated from high school in 1937, the country was still in the grips of the Depression and money was tight, but with the help of student loans she was able to go to Milwaukee State Teachers College in Wisconsin. In 1940, when she was a twenty-year-old student, she was introduced to Theosophy by a college friend and joined the Theosophical Society. "Theosophy made the world comprehensible to me. It fulfilled me in so many ways, and it opened a door to the unseen."

In June 1941, Joy was graduated with a degree in education and spent the summer working at national headquarters in Wheaton. She tried securing a teaching position for the fall, but nothing materialized. Sydney Cook, who was president of the American Section at the time, asked her what she wanted to do if a job didn't come through. She told him she wanted to go to graduate school.

"He was very kind and generous to me and said he would help." Cook paid half of her postgraduate tuition at the University of Chicago. The other half was paid by a university scholarship.

When the United States entered World War II in December 1941, some of the university's facilities were turned over to the military. To earn spending money, Joy found herself helping in the war effort. She would get up early in the morning and go into the dining hall, where about a thousand sailors needed to be fed breakfast. "I would sling hash all morning for the sailors stationed there," she says.

Joy earned her master's degree in English the following year, and Cook invited her to join the staff at Olcott. "He asked me to think it over first, but I didn't have to. I knew where I wanted to be." Her first job was to coordinate a correspondence course for new members. The following year, Cook asked her to do some lecture work. "He wanted to try me out, as it were." The plan was to send her to a number of cities in Michigan, where there were local branches of the Society. "But I had no suitable wardrobe and insufficient money, as staff salaries back then were minimal." So the Olcott staff went shopping in thrift stores on her behalf. "It was wonderful how they helped me. They found clothing which made me look presentable." For the first time in her life, Joy felt a sense of belonging. She was in an environment at Olcott that nourished body and soul. "I realized I aspired to something greater than myself. I had a mission, and these were my people, my friends. I was home."

As Joy studied *The Secret Doctrine* and other Theosophical literature, the principle of Oneness stood out—the Oneness she had experienced as a child in the Ozarks. "HPB always pointed to it. Everything is rooted in and is derived from a source that is One, not multiple. It's more than monistic, it's nondual." When she became more familiar with the contributions of the Society's founders, her admiration of Henry Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky grew.



"Olcott's work for the Buddhist cause is just incredible. He's responsible for the revival of Buddhism as a major cultural force in southeast Asia, and he did that while he was president of the Society. HPB is one of the most remarkable women who ever lived. She brought an ancient teaching to the West, and people from all over the world and in all walks of life have been drawn to it. She reminded us that compassion is 'the law of laws.'" During the war years, food, heating oil, and gasoline were rationed. The Olcott staff was given food coupons, and because Olcott is a vegetarian campus, they were allotted more cheese, butter, milk, and other items, since they didn't need the meat coupons. To conserve heating oil, the second-floor offices and the library were closed. "We drew closer to each other," Joy remembers. "We were like a family, and for me it was a tremendous feeling. It was the first stable family I'd had in my life."

At the end of the war, Jim Perkins was elected president of the American Section. Membership had declined sharply, and many members had been lost in the war. "Jim came up with a program known as *Spotlight* [SPOT—Speed Popularization of Theosophy] to reinvigorate the Society," says Joy. "We started in 1946 with six cities in a circuit, and I would give a series of classes for six weeks." It was a very successful program. Joy would rent a hall, usually in a hotel, and run newspaper ads to promote the classes. Over a three-year period, she helped to establish more than one hundred new lodges.

At age twenty-seven, Joy had already made a significant contribution to the Society's growth in the postwar years. She loved the work and loved Olcott, but felt it was time to earn a bit more money and start putting away some savings. In 1948, she accepted a teaching position in Seattle. "It was difficult leaving Olcott, but I wasn't leaving Theosophy; I was going into the profession I had trained for." She taught U.S. history at West Seattle High School. "I tried to make history come alive for my students. I wanted them to be critical thinkers and not buy into the media's way of presenting the world."

During this time Joy remained very active in the Society, becoming president of the Northwest Federation. Seven years later, Perkins needed an editor for *The American Theosophist* (predecessor to today's *Quest*), so at his invitation she returned to Olcott. "I fell in love with the beauty of the Northwest, but going back to Wheaton felt like the right thing to do." She took over the department of education at Olcott in 1955 and from that point forward dedicated her life exclusively to the Society.

In 1960, Henry Smith was elected president and asked Joy to run as vice-president. She agreed, but five years later he resigned, and Joy became acting president. In 1966, she was overwhelmingly elected president and served in that position until 1974. Her tenure as president of the American Section was one of the most productive in the Society's history. With the help of the Kern Foundation, Joy launched *Quest Books*, a seminal achievement for the Society. As *Quest* grew, she led a fundraising effort for the construction of a publications building to house its expansion. The building now bears her name.

Joy served as president during a time of great unrest, when the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement provoked violent clashes on the streets of American cities and awakened millions of people to a need for social justice and equality. "I wrote some rather strong editorials suggesting that we have a responsibility to speak up—to take a stand for brotherhood. It was controversial at the time because while some members agreed with brotherhood in theory, in practice they accepted segregation."

At one point Joy was criticized for joining a local chapter of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). "While we can't involve the Society in politics," she points out, "we can speak up individually on matters of conscience, and that's what I did. The founders stood for human dignity and equality, and Annie Besant was a great champion of that. Brotherhood has been an object of the Society from its beginning, and it states very clearly that



all peoples are brothers, or it means nothing at all." The word "brotherhood" stirs controversy for some members because it can be interpreted to exclude women and girls. "We know it refers to everyone, but I wish we could have a gender-free language," says Joy. "We live in a world with a dim awareness of how language labels people or leaves them out entirely. In some ways, we need a new language which overcomes that—and language does evolve."

Near the end of her third term as president of the American Section, the Society's beloved international president, N. Sri Ram, passed away. When John Coats was elected to take up Sri Ram's position, he nominated Joy to become international vice-president. She left Wheaton in 1974 and went to live in Adyar, serving in that post for six years. "When I was on the plane going to Adyar from Chicago, I had that old feeling of being without a home again. But I love India, and the adjustment to living there came easily." While she was in Adyar, she met the Dalai Lama for a second time when His Holiness was the featured speaker at the Society's international conference in 1975. "John and I had the privilege of having tea with His Holiness," she recalls.

In 1980, Joy was invited by Anne Green, then resident head of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy, to become director of the Krotona School. "That really appealed to me because it meant getting back into what I love most—education and teaching." Joy reinvigorated educational programs at Krotona, establishing a legacy of excellence. Twelve years later, in 1992, the search committee of the Australian Section asked her to run for president of that Section. Joy was ready for another challenge and was elected by a wide margin.

She returned to Krotona in 1996, where she now lives, to take up residence as teacher, lecturer, and author. Over the past seventy-two years, Joy has traveled to sixty countries, teaching through seminars and lecture tours



and nourishing countless Theosophical students. She is a role model to many others who seek her counsel and advice. She has authored several outstanding books, including the recently published *Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom: A Commentary on the Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*. Her other books include *The One True Adventure: Theosophy and the Quest for Meaning*; *One Hundred Years of Theosophy*; and *Entering on the Sacred Way*.

Joy never married, although sixty years ago she considered the possibility. "He was a good man, a Theosophist, but I needed my freedom. The work was all-absorbing to me, and I would have been a terrible housewife."

As she glances through her living room window at her favorite oak tree, Joy is reminded of the experience she had many years earlier in the woods of the Ozarks. "You can look at a tree and see firewood, or you can see a living presence with a purpose and intelligence of its own."

Joy then returns to the theme of Oneness and the evolutionary journey to a better understanding of what it means to be human. "The mind likes to separate 'me' from 'other.' We need to be aware of that because it brings us back to the fundamental question: 'Who am I?' And that question evolves as you evolve. As HPB said in so many different ways, once we have felt compassion for another living being, we have begun to awaken to the purpose and meaning of existence. That is the essence of Theosophy."

**Cynthia Overweg** is a journalist, playwright, and documentary filmmaker. She has written for the *Ventura County Star* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Her plays have been produced in Los Angeles, New York, and Pennsylvania, including an award-winning play based on the life of H.P. Blavatsky. She was a war correspondent and photographer during the Balkan War, traveling with Save the Children and United Nations relief organizations to produce a documentary film on the effects of war on children. Her other documentaries include *The Great Bronze Age of China*, which aired on PBS.

	Activities & Events	Date and Time
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hatha Yoga Classes</b></p> <p>Classes in Hatha Yoga for 2016</p> <p>The classes in Hatha Yoga for the Not so Young and the Not so Flexible will continue on Friday mornings 10 - 12 in the TS hall.</p> <p>The classes consist of warmups, lengthening movements relating to simple and more complex asanas, allowing those with various levels of skills to do what is possible for them. Also included are breathing techniques, a concentration and finally a relaxation often with a visualization. The class lasts about 1 1/2 hours, with a short practice in meditation for those who wish to participate.</p> <p>You will need flexible clothing, a yoga mat and a cover for relaxation in the cooler weather.</p> <p>There is no cost for the class, but feel free to make a donation for the cleaning and air conditioning.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fridays 10-11.30am Meditation until 12pm</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEET-UP; PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY DISCUSSION GROUP.</b></p> <p><b>Theosophical Society Hall; Saturday; 2 pm till 3.30 pm.</b> In this presentation and discussion group we take an investigative approach, where all personal contributions are most welcome. At any meeting you will be surprised with the variety and diversity of opinions, personal experiences and proposals, creating much food for thought and a higher consciousness.</p> <p>Our <b>February Meet-Up</b> for 2016 will be on the nature and origin of thought! Are thoughts living forms in themselves? Occult science speaks of "thought-form elementals" and suggests we do well to be more conscious of the kind of thoughts we send out into the world. Can we receive thoughts from others via telepathy? Indeed, can thoughts be sent to us by spirit beings, whether from spiritual guides or less helpful entities? How much does a personal will power come into this? If you are intrigued by these questions you are welcome to come along and share your "thoughts" on this topic! We would love to hear from you!</p> <p>Our <b>March Meet-Up</b> will be on past lives. Talk about intrigue! How do you know who you are? How much is truly relevant in your life now, and why is that so? Could this relevance be based on a mysterious past life, where you put in some of the ground work? Have you established a dislike, through a past experience, or have you determined a certain attitude? How much do you live the past now? Personal questions, sure, but it establishes a reality!</p> <p>Our <b>April Meet-Up</b> will be on ; "The Out of Body Experience." An out of body experience or OBE can be defined as an "experience" during which the person feels that their mind or consciousness is located outside of the physical body. An OBE can occur during a physical, emotional or mental crisis, during sleep, or as an active or passive physical state. We will discuss the when, why and how.</p> <p><b>Meet-Ups are open to TS Members and the Public.</b> Remember that a deeper truth and higher consciousness can only be established through an active participation.</p> <p><u><b>Meet-Up for 2016;</b></u>  <b>Sat. 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2016; The Nature and Origin of Thoughts.</b>  <b>Sat. 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016; Past Lives.</b>  <b>Sat. 30 April 2016; The Out of Body Experience.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Next Meeting; 27<sup>th</sup> Feb..at 2pm Theosophical Meeting Hall.</p> <p><b>Meet-Ups are open to TS Members and the Public.</b> Remember that a deeper truth and higher consciousness can only be established through an active participation.</p>



## The Theosophical Order of Service



# Thank you!

for the  
Backpacks  
from



### RUAH Homeless Drop-in Centre

The RUAH Christmas Party was held on 18 December and the TOS / TS Backpacks were handed out to the RUAH clients. On the morning of 19 December, Harry and I walked into Perth to do Christmas shopping. We walked over the railway concourse into Myer. Asleep, fully stretched out against the concourse wall was a homeless person. He was sound asleep and his pillow was the distinctive yellow and black TOS / TS Backpack. Even in his relaxed pose, he had one hand reached over his head and he was holding the backpack in a vice like grip. No one was going to take that backpack.

I nearly wept. We got it right! This backpack was a much appreciated and needed gift.

During the return journey, we saw two more backpacks being carried. This means 100 people had a better Christmas this year because of your generosity.

Thank you again.

Rhonda Phillips

Chairperson Perth TOS Branch

We work well as "Team TOS/TS"



**What A Great Year it's  
been and what a great  
way to wrap it up:**



### What's Coming Up:

**TOS Presentation – TS Convention**  
**'The Power of Service – Insights**  
**from the Ancient Wisdom'**  
at University Hall  
2pm Sunday 17th Jan



**World Peace / Taizé Meditation**  
– first Friday of the month  
6 pm at the Liberal Catholic Church  
– Cnr Brewer & Lacey Sts Perth.  
**TOS Healing Meditation Circles – third**  
Sunday 2pm.  
TS – 21 Glendower St Perth

**Happy New Year**  
from  
**Perth TOS**  
**Committee**



### TOS motto:

**A union of those who love  
in the service of all that suffer**



## Report from the Mt Helena Working Group

As we start the new year Mt Helena is looking good but with the burning off of excessive accumulated fuel load undergrowth and the lopping of potentially troublesome branches it is looking a trifle "worked over"! We need a busy Busy Bee to tidy up! We will be unable to burn off any of the stuff until the fire bans lift at the end of the summer season.

Both Patterson House and Harris House are tenanted and financially the property is more viable than it has been for a long time.

There has been a lot of essential work done throughout the year and it is hard to know where to start with thanking all volunteers for their amazing efforts -

Harry Bayens has been tireless with his support both in an organizational and a physical sense! We all know he loves lighting fires but we will not take any more Mickey on that one!!

Franco Guazzelli and George Duffy did a magnificent job of replacing termite eaten timbers in Harris House and doing essential maintenance on lots of other things that needed to be done from locks to sewage pipes.

Dave Firby spent time doing Patterson House front timbers and readying the house for rent.

Rick Whittleston painted and revived the place as only an expert can.

THANKYOU to all as we save a lot of money doing essential repairs and maintenance in this way. Just to give you an idea of what sort of money we are talking about is a quote to clear the gutters and roofs on Blavatsky and Leadbeater buildings submitted by a 'local tradesman' for \$1000!! Our plan is to remove the gutters in the New Year so as to avoid this kind of outlay.

We have definitely accepted the fact that we are all too old to go climbing on roofs to clear gutters and there are always those OHS issues to consider when we talk "chainsaws"! Therefore, some essential work will have to be tackled by professionals and now that the property is 'financial' we will organize for this to be done where required.

There were successful retreats run throughout the year and the November "Influences from India" weekend saw 27 attendees on the Saturday and 18 on the Sunday. All the Retreats showed a profit and everybody is happy with in house catering as it gives us more flexibility when doing all the food ourselves.

The Friday Yoga lessons run by Gaelene Wester extended to two Yoga Days which were very well supported and we are planning a weekend Yoga Event for 2016 as many one day visitors want more!!

There will be a members only Free weekend and dates will be determined at a meeting early in the New Year.

If any TS member or interested party has any great ideas for themes for Retreats please let us know or better still become involved in the Mt Helena Working Committee.

We want to see Mt Helena used by members more as it is such a wonderful resource for the Perth TS and members are welcome to spend time up there at any time and if you want to enquire about this please contact Shelley Orchard on 93813414 or 0437154559.

We are looking forward to sharing more happy and relaxing times up in our tree filled little piece of Heaven in 2016.

Shelley Orchard



# THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY RETREAT CENTRE

## *Sharing Divine Truths*

*Facilitated by Roberta Steedman*

**Fortnightly Workshops - Sunday at 3:00 pm (Excluding Easter)**

**With a beautiful High Tea feeding the body and soul**

**All Welcome - No Charge**

- 14 FEBRUARY:** **"Messages from Water"**  
This DVD is about Dr Masaru Emoto and his research with water crystals and how consciousness affects the water.
- 28 FEBRUARY:** **"How to Love Yourself and Release Pain" (Power Point Presentation)**  
Discover how to release the pain so you can fulfil your life's purpose which is to honour and value yourself in every moment.
- 13 MARCH:** **"The Twelve Divine Rays of God" (Power Point Presentation)**  
Learning About the 12 rays is truly a journey into the light. Each ray will help you to safely navigate the many changes in our outer and inner worlds.
- 3 APRIL:** **"The Angels" (Power Point Presentation)**  
Discover the hierarchy of angels and what are their gifts and talents. With this knowledge we can then call upon their assistance to aid us in times of need.
- 17 APRIL:** **"The Ascended Masters" (Power Point Presentation)**  
We will discuss the lives and times of a few of the most prominent and well known ascended masters and introduce you to a few new ones such as the ascended master for Western Australia.
- 1 MAY:** **"Sound Healing" (Power Point Presentation)**  
Understanding how vibration can affect us in both positive and negative ways. How we can use this to heal the body and enhance our daily lives.

***Venue: Theosophical Retreat Centre, 1540 Bunning Road, Mount Helena***

*The opinions expressed in the lectures are those of the speakers and not necessarily those of  
The Theosophical Society in Perth.*

***Phone: Roberta Steedman 0408 179 581 or TS Perth 9328 8104***

***Web: [tsperth.com.au](http://tsperth.com.au)***





## **INTRODUCTION TO THEOSOPHY COURSE**

### **BASICS OF THE ANCIENT WISDOM PHILOSOPHY**

Members and non-members are invited to participate in this seven week powerpoint introductory course on some of the fundamental ideas which are considered to be the “foundation stones” upon which the “Ancient Wisdom Tradition” is built.

There will be a DVD shown each week in the second half of the session to help illustrate the ideas presented in the first part of the session.

This course will begin Sat. Feb. 6th from 10.00am to 12:30pm. The course is open to all and is free of charge. Participants may attend any or all sessions on offer and may join in the course at any time which will cover the following basic ideas of the occult wisdom tradition and philosophy:

Week 1 FEB. 6 - THE DIFFERENT STATES OF MATTER

Week 2 FEB. 13 – REINCARNATION

Week 3 FEB. 20 - KARMA OR JUSTICE

Week 4 FEB. 27 - LIFE AFTER DEATH

Week 5 MAR. 5 - PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND CYCLES

Week 6 MAR. 12 - THE SPIRITUAL PATH AND THE OCCULT HIERARCHY

Week 7 MAR. 19 - ONE LIFE IN ALL THINGS

For further information please contact:  
The Theosophical Society in Perth  
21 Glendower St.  
Perth 6000 ph. 9328 8104  
or the facilitator Skip Pry on ph. 9228 8753.

## Mahatmas versus Ascended Masters

Originally printed in the Summer 2011 issue of Quest magazine.

by Pablo D. Sender



H. P. Blavatsky was the first person to introduce the concept of the Mahatmas (also called adepts or Masters) to the West. At first she talked about them privately, but after a few years two of these adepts, known by the pseudonyms of Koot Hoomi (K. H.) and Morya (M.), agreed to maintain a correspondence with a couple of British Theosophists—A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume. This communication took place from 1880 to 1885, and during those years the knowledge about the Mahatmas became more and more public. The original letters are currently kept in the British Library in London as a valuable historical item, and have been published under the title of *The Mahatma Letters*. This book remains an unparalleled first-hand source of information about the Mahatmas and their teachings.

In 1930, fifty years after this correspondence began, Guy Ballard, a former student of Theosophy, was allegedly contacted during a hike on California's Mount Shasta by a mysterious nonphysical character. This figure identified himself as one of the Theosophical Mahatmas, the eighteenth-century occultist known as the Comte de St. Germain. He charged Ballard with the task of transmitting the lessons of "the Great Law of Life," giving rise to what became called "the I AM movement."

Ballard and his wife Edna soon gained a wide following with their version of St. Germain's teachings, creating the Saint Germain Foundation in 1932. The I AM movement reached its heyday in the late 1930s; Guy Ballard's death in 1939, combined with subsequent legal challenges, including a suit launched by the federal government alleging postal fraud, caused it to diminish. The organization continues to exist today, but keeps a low profile (Hanegraaff, 2:587).

The Ascended Master movement reached another stage in 1958, when Mark Prophet, a former student of the Saint Germain Foundation, claimed he was commissioned by "the Ascended Master El Morya" to transmit the teachings of the Great White Brotherhood through an organization called the Summit Lighthouse. Upon Mark Prophet's death in 1973, leadership of the organization was taken over by his wife, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, who changed its name to the Church Universal and Triumphant. In 1999, Prophet retired from her activities with the church; she died in 2009 (Hanegraaff, 2:1093–96).

Today, largely as a result of the I AM movement and the Prophets' activities, the idea of the Ascended Masters is prevalent in the New Age. Since the Ballards and the Prophets used the names and portraits of the Theosophical Mahatmas for their Ascended Masters, many people assume that they are the same. However, as we are going to see in this article, they differ in some very important respects.

### Ascended or Living?

The Ascended Masters, as their name suggests, are supposed to be Masters who have experienced the miracle of ascension, as it is said Jesus did. The original teaching, channeled by Guy Ballard, was that a new Ascended Master would not die but would take the body up with him. This teaching of ascension is in direct opposition to the Theosophical teachings. Mahatma K. H. refers to the idea disparagingly in one of his letters to Sinnett: "There was but one hysterical woman alleged to have been present at the pretended ascension, and . . . the phenomenon has never been corroborated by repetition" (Barker and Chin, 5). HPB also rejects ascension as a fact, calling it "an allegory as old as the world" (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* 8:389; see also 4:359–60).

After Ballard (who was supposed to have reached the stage of ascension) died of cardiac arterial sclerosis but did not take his body with him, his wife, Edna, said that one could actually ascend after the body died. Thus the idea of ascension changed during the years, and today Ascended Masters are regarded as disembodied spirits, having transcended their physical bodies. This, again, is contrary to the Theosophical teaching about the Mahatmas. In the early days of the TS, before people in the West knew anything about the Masters, Henry Steel Olcott began to receive letters from some of them. In one early letter, the Master Serapis wrote: "The time is come to let thee know who I am. I am not a disembodied spirit, brother. I am a living man" (Jinarajadasa [2002], 2:23).



That they are living men was verified by HPB, who lived with some of them near Tibet for several years while undergoing her occult training. Later Olcott and several other Theosophists also met some Mahatmas in their physical bodies at different times and in different parts of the world.

The fact that the Mahatmas retain their bodies is of great importance. They are enlightened yogis, similar in certain respects to those traditionally known in the East. But there is a difference. An enlightened one, after having realized Truth, has gained the right to merge with the All in a state of absolute bliss (called *moksha* or *nirvana*). This prevents him from being in touch with humanity, since he has to abandon the lower vehicles of consciousness.

By contrast, the Theosophical Masters, out of compassion, decide to give up entering into *nirvana* so that they remain able to help us in our struggle to realize Truth:

The Master must be in a human body, must be incarnate. Many who reach this level no longer take up the burden of the flesh, but using only "the spiritual body" pass out of touch with this earth, and inhabit only loftier realms of existence. (Besant, 49)

The Mahatmas are in this respect what the Mahayana Buddhists call *bodhisattvas*.

They choose to retain the body, not because of any fault in their development but as an act of self-sacrifice.

Possessing a physical body subjects the adepts to certain unavoidable limitations. As Blavatsky said, they "are living men, born as we are born, and doomed to die like every mortal" (Blavatsky [1987], 288). Being perfect yogis, they have learned how to take care of their bodies so that they can live much longer than ordinary human beings; nevertheless, the bodies must eventually die.

*The Mahatma Letters* have several statements about the limitations intrinsic in leading a physical existence. For example, Mahatma K. H. wrote: "I was physically very tired by a ride of 48 hours consecutively" (Barker and Chin, 398). He also stated that he is limited to his physical senses and the functions of his brain "when I sit at my meals, or when I am dressing, reading or otherwise occupied" (Barker and Chin, 257).

But the physical body is where the Masters' evolutionary development is the least apparent. It is said that if we see an adept on the physical plane, we may not even recognize him as anything more than a good and wise man. Yet on the inner planes, his nature is far beyond that of those who are still caught in the illusion. In their letters, the Mahatmas differentiate between the "inner man" (the spiritual Self of the adept which is relatively omniscient and beyond limitations) and "the outer man," which is a very limited expression of the spiritual Self working through the psychophysical personality. This is why K. H. wrote: "We are not infallible, all-foreseeing 'Mahatmas' at every hour of the day" (Barker and Chin, 450). As he explained: "An adept—the highest as the lowest—is one only during the exercise of his occult powers" (Barker and Chin, 257).

These adepts, then, are not like the Ascended Masters of the New Age, who are said to become godlike, all-powerful beings beyond the laws of nature. In their teachings, the Mahatmas even denied that such beings exist. K. H. wrote: "If we had the powers of the imaginary Personal God, and the universal and immutable laws were but toys to play with, then indeed might we have created conditions that would have turned this earth into an Arcadia for lofty souls" (Barker and Chin, 474). In their letters, the Mahatmas constantly talk about the "immutable laws" of the universe, and say that they can help humanity only within the limits of these laws. They cannot produce a New Age magically; whether we like it or not, this is our job.

Proponents of the Ascended Masters sometimes attempt to account for these discrepancies by claiming that when the TS was founded most of the Theosophical Mahatmas were still "unascended Masters." This leaves room to detach the Ascended Masters from the limitations that all the Mahatmas, "the highest as the lowest," are said to have. But according to the Theosophical teachings, the higher the adept, the less we are likely to hear from him:

The more spiritual the Adept becomes, the less can he meddle with mundane, gross affairs and the more he has to confine himself to a spiritual work. . . . The very high Adepts, therefore, do help humanity, but only spiritually: they are constitutionally incapable of meddling with worldly affairs. (Blavatsky, Collected Writings, 6:247)

Another feature of the Ascended Masters teachings is that they are mainly concerned with the “form aspect” of the Masters (their appearance, names, character, etc.). The Theosophical view, when properly understood, is very different. Blavatsky wrote, “The real mahatma is then not his physical body but that higher Manas [the spiritual Mind] which is inseparably linked to the Atma [the real Self] and its vehicle [the spiritual Soul].” And she adds that whoever wants to “see” a Mahatma has to elevate his perception to the spiritual planes, because “higher things can be perceived only by a sense pertaining to those higher things.” The spiritual planes, where forms and separation vanish and unity prevails, are far higher than the psychic planes, which are the ones contacted by natural seers. Those who can reach the high state of consciousness that transcends all sense of separateness “will see the mahatma wherever he may be, for, being merged into the sixth and the seventh principles, which are ubiquitous and omnipresent, the mahatmas may be said to be everywhere” (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 6:239). The real Mahatma is thus seen mainly as a spiritual state of consciousness, and the forms assumed by his personal aspect are just shadows. To be sure, we can find descriptions of the form aspect of the Mahatmas in the Theosophical literature, not because this aspect is important in itself, but because it provides something for our limited minds to grasp and comprehend. But this personal aspect is meant to be transcended, and whoever is content with it is stuck in the world of illusion.

### The Masters’ Work for Humanity

Today thousands of people claim they are channeling the Ascended Masters. It is clear that these Ascended Masters have their attention focused on this physical plane, doing little more than communicating with us through channels. This is, again, another basic difference with the Theosophical teachings. In Theosophy, as well as in most serious spiritual traditions, this physical plane is seen as an illusion. The Maha Chohan, one of the highest adepts, said: “Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and an illusion” (Jinarajadasa [1988], 1:6-7). This concept echoes the teachings of Plato, who said this world is just the shadow of Reality. It is also related to the first Noble Truth the Buddha taught after his enlightenment: “All is *dukkha* (suffering) in this world.”

Consequently, as Annie Besant said of the Masters, “the least part of their work is done here,” in connection with the physical plane (quoted in Codd [1988], 45). This is one reason why they live in seclusion—most of their activity takes place on the higher planes. This, in fact, is based on a profound knowledge of the structure of the cosmos: It will be easily seen by any one who examines the nature of occult dynamics, that a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence. (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 5:338-39)

So what is the Masters’ work on these higher planes? This complex subject is beyond the scope of this article. When asked about this, Blavatsky answered: “You would hardly understand, unless you were an Adept. But they keep alive the spiritual life of mankind” (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 8:401).

By contrast, channeled communications from the Ascended Masters display a great concern with the physical lives and desires of their followers. The Ascended Master literature is filled with promises of magical miracles of health, limitless wealth, and perfect happiness, and “decrees” are given to enable people to “manifest” these things in their lives. This attitude is the exact opposite of the Theosophical one.

Theosophy says that the psychological ego is false, that the idea that we are this body, emotions, and mind is a mistake of perception and the source of sorrow. It says that real happiness comes only as an unsought by-product of reducing rather than increasing our attachment and identification with the personal. This is why Blavatsky wrote that “Occultism is not . . . the pursuit of happiness as man understands the word; for the first step is sacrifice, the second renunciation” (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, 8:14). K. H. agreed with this when he wrote: “We—the criticized and misunderstood Brothers—we seek to bring men to sacrifice their personality—a passing flash—for the welfare of the whole humanity” (Barker and Chin, 222).

The Theosophical Mahatmas would never pay attention to personal desires. During the early times of the Theosophical Society, some members, completely misunderstanding the nature of the Mahatmas, would bring HPB some personal requests to ask of them.

In a letter Blavatsky explained:

The Masters would not stoop for one moment to give a thought to individual, private matters relating but to one or even ten persons, their welfare, woes and blisses in this world of Maya [illusion], to nothing except questions of really universal importance. It is all you Theosophists who have dragged down in your minds the ideals of our Masters; you who have unconsciously and with the best of intentions and full sincerity of good purpose, desecrated Them, by thinking for one moment, and believing that They would trouble Themselves with your business matters, sons to be born, daughters to be married, houses to be built, etc. etc. (Jinarajadasa [1923], iv; emphasis here and in other quotations is from the original)

And yet this is exactly the kind of thing the Ascended Masters seem to be concerned with. They even teach alleged ways to dissolve unpleasant karma, a conception that the Theosophical Mahatmas emphatically opposed. K. H. wrote:

*Bear in mind that the slightest cause produced, however unconsciously, and with whatever motive, cannot be unmade, or its effects crossed in their progress—by millions of gods, demons, and men combined. (Barker and Chin, 77-78)*

The Ascended Masters are portrayed as cosmic fathers who will take care of their followers' problems. In contrast, Mahatma M. said: "We are leaders but not child-nurses" (Eek, 605). The adepts are impersonal, universal forces, and respond only to those who are developing in that direction:

*Although the whole of humanity is within the mental vision of the mahatmas, they cannot be expected to take special note of every human being, unless that being by his special acts draws their particular attention to himself. The highest interest of humanity, as a whole, is their special concern, for they have identified themselves with that Universal Soul which runs through Humanity, and he, who would draw their attention, must do so through that Soul which pervades everywhere. (Blavatsky, Collected Writings, 6:240)*

The Mahatmas do not communicate indiscriminately with people who fail to realize the illusion of the personal self, or who are driven by desires, fears, and ambitions:

*They work on this plane through two kinds of agents: direct and indirect. Any person sincere and unselfish working in the line of the Masters' work may receive their inspiration even if they do not know it. Their direct agents are their accepted disciples, who work consciously with the Masters. (Codd, [2000], 9)*

Their influence is always available for those of us acting with selflessness and compassion, even though we may be completely unaware of this. As K. H. wrote to Annie Besant: "At favorable times we let loose elevating influences which strike various persons in various ways" (Jinarajadasa [1988], 1:123-24). Thus any philanthropic act we perform may be part of the Mahatmas' work. However, only accepted disciples have a conscious and personal relationship with them. The moral and spiritual qualifications needed to be an accepted disciple are very deep and demanding, and very few in humanity are at the level of spiritual maturity to achieve this. (For a description of these qualifications see *At the Feet of the Master* and *Light on the Path*.)

The teachings of the Mahatmas are calculated to help people rise above the personal ego and realize the spiritual Self. Approaches like those we see in the New Age have been characterized by the Tibetan lama Chögyam Trungpa as "spiritual materialism." While not denying the reality of the spiritual, these individuals attempt to put it at the service of the personal and material. This approach is appealing for many who are not ready to try to transcend the personal ego, and has turned the New Age into an important business.

### **Who Are the Ascended Masters?**

Who, then, are these Ascended Masters that are communicating with thousands of channels around the world? We cannot be sure. But to appreciate this question it is necessary to realize that the inner planes are inhabited by all kinds of entities (elementals, thought-forms, deceased people, living people whose bodies are sleeping, etc.). Many of these entities enjoy impersonating Masters, saints, and other important historical figures. (For more on this subject see *The Astral Plane* and the pamphlet *Difficulties in Clairvoyance*, both by Charles W. Leadbeater.)

Even in the early days of the TS, mediums and sensitives began to channel messages from fake Mahatmas. For example, after a sensitive by the name of Oxley declared that K. H. had “thrice visited him ‘by the astral form’ and . . . that he had a conversation with Mr. Oxley,” the Mahatma had to ask his disciple, Djual Kool, to write to Mr. Sinnett saying: “Whomsoever Mr. Oxley may have seen and conversed with at the time described, it was not with Koot Hoomi” (Barker and Chin, 253).

In another instance, there was a medium who claimed to be in touch with characters such as Jesus, John the Baptist, Hermes, and Elijah. In a letter to Mr. Sinnett referring to this kind of psychic communication, K. H. wrote: “Mystery, mystery will you exclaim. ignorance we answer; the creation of that we believe in and *want* to see” (Barker and Chin, 109).

We have to keep in mind that “the Psychic World of super-sensuous perceptions and of deceptive sights—the world of Mediums . . . is the world of the *Great Illusion*” (Blavatsky, [1992], 75-76). In that realm different entities can assume any form according to what they find in the seer’s mind. Deep powers of clairvoyance, long training, and a strong spiritual maturity, are needed not to be fooled by these entities, because

*The slightest wish-fulfillment there [on the psychic plane] takes shape and form. Such a thought-form can be ensouled by a Nature-spirit . . . and thus appear as an angel of light, telling us just what we want to hear. CWL [i.e., Leadbeater] always warned us to be wary of any vision or voice which flattered us. (Codd, [1988], 66)*

In support of this, Blavatsky offers a suggestive historical fact. Writing in 1889, she observes:

*Fourteen years ago, before the Theosophical Society was founded, all the talk [by mediums] was of “Spirits” . . . and no one by any chance even dreamt of talking about living “Adepts,” “Mahatmas,” or “Masters.” . . . Now all that is changed. We Theosophists were, unfortunately, the first to talk of these things . . . and now the name has become common property. . . . There is hardly a medium who has not claimed to have seen them. Every bogus swindling Society, for commercial purposes, now claims to be guided and directed by “Masters,” often supposed to be far higher than ours! (Blavatsky [1987], 301-302)*

The idea of the Ascended Masters is hard to believe for many spiritually minded people, who see in them nothing more than a reemergence of the tribal gods of old. Let us hope this article serves to remove some misconceptions.

**Pablo D. Sender** has given Theosophical lectures, seminars, and classes in India, Spain, the U.S., and several countries in Latin America. He has published articles in Spanish and English in several Theosophical journals. They can also be found on his Web site, [www.pablosender.com](http://www.pablosender.com). His article “The Theosophical Path of Meditation” appeared in *Quest*, Winter 2011.

## References

- Barker, A. T., and Vicente Hao Chin Jr., eds. *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. and K. H. in Chronological Sequence*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1998.
- Besant, Annie. *The Masters*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1985.
- Blavatsky, H. P. *Collected Writings*. 15 vols. Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1977-91.
- . *The Key to Theosophy*. London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1987.
- . *The Voice of the Silence*. Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1992.
- Codd, Clara. *The Way of the Disciple*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1988.
- . *Theosophy as the Masters See It*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 2000.
- Eek, Sven, ed. *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965.
- Hanegraaff, Wouter J., et al. *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*. Two volumes. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Jinarajadasa, C. *Early Teachings of the Masters*. Chicago: Theosophical Press, 1923.
- . *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*. Two volumes. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1988, 2002.

(An excerpt from The Key to Theosophy by H.P Blavatsky )

## ON RE-INCARNATION OR RE-BIRTH

### WHAT IS MEMORY ACCORDING TO THEOSOPHICAL TEACHING?

ENQUIRER. The most difficult thing for you to do, will be to explain and give reasonable grounds for such a belief. No Theosophist has ever yet succeeded in bringing forward a single valid proof to shake my scepticism. First of all, you have against this theory of re-incarnation, the fact that no single man has yet been found to remember that he has lived, least of all who he was, during his previous life.

THEOSOPHIST. Your argument, I see, tends to the same old objection; the loss of memory in each of us of our previous incarnation. You think it invalidates our doctrine? My answer is that it does not, and that at any rate such an objection cannot be final.

ENQUIRER. I would like to hear your arguments.

THEOSOPHIST. They are short and few. Yet when you take into consideration (a) the utter inability of the best modern psychologists to explain to the world the nature of *mind*; and (b) their complete ignorance of its potentialities, and higher states, you have to admit that this objection is based on an *a priori* conclusion drawn from *prima facie* and circumstantial evidence more than anything else. Now what is "memory" in your conception, pray?

ENQUIRER. That which is generally accepted: the faculty in our mind of remembering and of retaining the knowledge of previous thoughts, deeds and events.

THEOSOPHIST. Please add to it that there is a great difference between the three accepted forms of memory. Besides memory in general you have *Remembrance*, *Recollection* and *Reminiscence*, have you not? Have you ever thought over the difference? Memory, remember, is a generic name.

ENQUIRER. Yet, all these are only synonyms.

THEOSOPHIST. Indeed, they are not — not in philosophy, at all events. Memory is simply an innate power in thinking beings, and even in animals, of reproducing past impressions by an association of ideas principally suggested by objective things or by some action on our external sensory organs. Memory is a faculty depending entirely on the more or less healthy and normal functioning of our *physical* brain; and *remembrance* and *recollection* are the attributes and handmaidens of that memory. But *reminiscence* is an entirely different thing. "Reminiscence" is defined by the modern psychologist as something intermediate between *remembrance* and *recollection*, or "a conscious process of recalling past occurrences, but *without that full and varied reference* to particular things which characterises *recollection*." Locke, speaking of recollection and remembrance, says: "When an *idea again* recurs without the operation of the like object on the external sensory, it is *remembrance*; if it be sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavour found and brought again into view, it is *recollection*." But even Locke leaves *reminiscence* without any clear definition, because it is no faculty or attribute of our *physical* memory, but an intuitional perception apart from and outside our physical brain; a perception which, covering as it does (being called into action by the ever-present knowledge of our spiritual Ego) all those visions in man which are regarded as *abnormal* — from the pictures suggested by genius to the *ravings* of fever and even madness — are classed by science as having no *existence* outside of our fancy. Occultism and Theosophy, however, regard *reminiscence* in an entirely different light. For us, while *memory* is physical and evanescent and depends on the physiological conditions of the brain — a fundamental proposition with all teachers of mnemonics, who have the researches of modern scientific psychologists to back them — we call *reminiscence* the *memory of the soul*. And it is *this* memory which gives the assurance to almost every human being, whether he understands it or not, of his having lived before and having to live again.

Indeed, as Wordsworth has it:  
"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath elsewhere had its setting,  
And cometh from afar."

ENQUIRER. If it is on this kind of memory — poetry and abnormal fancies, on your own confession — that you base your doctrine, then you will convince very few, I am afraid.

THEOSOPHIST. I did not "confess" it was a fancy. I simply said that physiologists and scientists in general regard such reminiscences as hallucinations and fancy, to which *learned* conclusion they are welcome.

We do not deny that such visions of the past and glimpses far back into the corridors of time, are not abnormal, as contrasted with our normal daily life experience and physical memory. But we do maintain with Professor W. Knight, that "the absence of memory of any action done in a previous state cannot be a conclusive argument against our having lived through it." And every fair-minded opponent must agree with what is said in Butler's *Lectures on Platonic Philosophy* — "that the feeling of extravagance with which it (pre-existence) affects us has its secret source in materialistic or semi-materialistic prejudices." Besides which we maintain that memory, as Olympiodorus called it, is simply *phantasy*, and the most unreliable thing in us. Ammonius Saccas asserted that the only faculty in man directly opposed to prognostication, or looking into futurity, is *memory*. Furthermore, remember that memory is one thing and mind or *thought* is another; one is a recording machine, a register which very easily gets out of order; the other (thoughts) are eternal and imperishable. Would you refuse to believe in the existence of certain things or men only because your physical eyes have not seen them? Would not the collective testimony of past generations who have seen him be a sufficient guarantee that Julius Caesar once lived? Why should not the same testimony of the psychic senses of the masses be taken into consideration?

ENQUIRER. But don't you think that these are too fine distinctions to be accepted by the majority of mortals?

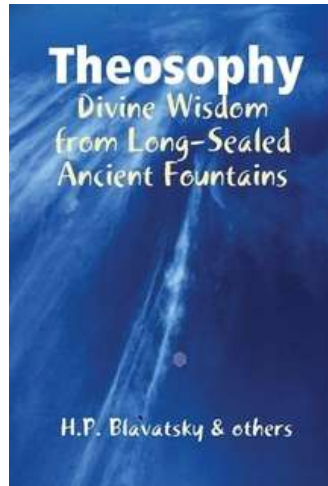
THEOSOPHIST. Say rather by the majority of materialists. And to them we say, behold: even in the short span of ordinary existence, memory is too weak to register all the events of a lifetime. How frequently do even most important events lie dormant in our memory until awakened by some association of ideas, or aroused to function and activity by some other link. This is especially the case with people of advanced age, who are always found suffering from feebleness of recollection. When, therefore, we remember that which we know about the physical and the spiritual principles in man, it is not the fact that our memory has failed to record our precedent life and lives that ought to surprise us, but the contrary, were it to happen.

#### WHY DO WE NOT REMEMBER OUR PAST LIVES?

ENQUIRER. You have given me a bird's eye view of the seven principles; now how do they account for our complete loss of any recollection of having lived before?

THEOSOPHIST. Very easily. Since those "principles" which we call physical, and none of which is denied by science, though it calls them by other names, are disintegrated after death with their constituent elements, *memory* along with its brain, this vanished memory of a vanished personality, can neither remember nor record anything in the subsequent reincarnation of the EGO. Reincarnation means that this Ego will be furnished with a *new* body, a *new* brain, and a *new* memory. Therefore it would be as absurd to expect this *memory* to remember that which it has never recorded as it would be idle to examine under a microscope a shirt never worn by a murderer, and seek on it for the stains of blood which are to be found only on the clothes he wore. It is not the clean shirt that we have to question, but the clothes worn during the perpetration of the crime; and if these are burnt and destroyed, how can you get at them?.....

**Theosophy: Divine Wisdom from**  
**Long Sealed Ancient Fountains Reading Group**



**An introduction to Theosophy  
from the writings of H.P. Blavatsky and her Teachers.**

Commencing **10am Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February** 2016

& then every alternate Saturday for approx. 6 months

TS Reading Room  
21 Glendower Street Perth  
Register at Theosophical Society Perth ph.9328 8104

Contact Perry Coles- Mobile 0434 869 034 or email [plcoles@inet.net.au](mailto:plcoles@inet.net.au)

Numbers are limited so please register early

**For Members Only**



**The Elephants**  
**ADYAR**  
**RENOVATION**

“Coming to the Adyar estate, the headquarters of the Theosophical Society-Adyar, one senses a touch of paradise, but it is a paradise in decay.”

Go to “The Elephants Adyar Renovation” Website and see what plans lay ahead for the estate and how you can help.

<http://adyar-renovation.org>



## Program of Lectures

### Definition of meeting types and relevant guidelines

- **Public Meetings** – All members and public are welcome to attend.
- **General Meetings** – For Perth members, with interested persons of the public welcome to attend up to 4 meetings, with the objective to explore and confirm an interest in becoming a member of the TS. If after attending 4 meetings the person is not interested in becoming a member they are requested to restrict their visits to other options open to the public.
- **Members Only Meetings** – Generally for Perth members only. However, members attending may invite a guest to whom the presentation would be of interest and benefit, is known to have a basic understanding of theosophy, and is in harmony with the membership requirements and the general principles of the TS.
- **Strictly Members Only** – Are strictly for current Perth members only. Non-members will not be admitted to the meeting.

**All sessions, unless otherwise stated, run from 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm**

The opinions expressed in the lectures are those of the speakers and not necessarily those of The Theosophical Society in Perth.

FEB	
Tues 2 Feb General Meeting	<b>Krishnamurti: The Impossible Question</b> - Tina Hentisz Can we unravel the impossible question? Are we really free? We may be followers of a dictate or authority, or perhaps we are caught up in our own philosophy with set ideas? There may be a new assessment! Do come to this vital PowerPoint presentation and discussion!
Tues 9 Feb General Meeting	<b>How to Love Yourself and Release Pain</b> - Roberta Steedman In this PowerPoint presentation we will discover how all suffering, illness and unhappiness are cries from the soul asking you to fulfil your life's purpose which is to love, honour and value yourself.
Tues 16 Feb General Meeting	<b>The Business of Bringing Buddhism to the West</b> - Drew Bellamy The Honourable Secretary of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia How can lay Buddhists successfully apply Buddhist principals to the commercial realities of 21st Century life? This case study will explore some possible answers to this question.
Tues 23 Feb General Meeting	<b>The Mystery &amp; Enigma of Gottfried De Purucker - (A Two Act Play)</b> Skip Pry as G.D.P. "The Professor", Perry Coles as Dick Slusser "The Editor", John Davey as Iverson Harris "The Interviewer" and various TS members as "The Students". In Act 1 of this play we will uncover, during a real interview conducted with G.D.P., the riddle and explanation of how he came to possess the extraordinary metaphysical knowledge, revealed in his extensive writings. In Act 2 we will join G.D.P. and a class of theosophical students from his esoteric school as he answers a wide range of actual esoteric questions put to him by the students.
MAR	
Tues 1 Mar General Meeting	<b>Edgar Cayce: The Sleeping Prophet</b> - Suzanne Stout Cayce was considered to be America's greatest mystic. Let me take you on a journey from the beginning of this incredible man's life. You will hear how Cayce's gift as a medical intuitive unfolded and how it was used to heal thousands of people. We will discuss some of his interesting healing remedies and will also explore some of the spiritual aspects of his readings such as reincarnation and the accuracy of his predictions.
Tues 8 Mar General Meeting	<b>Mindfulness &amp; Practical Philosophy</b> - Clive Lamond from The School of Practical Philosophy If mindfulness is the solution, then mindlessness is the problem. This PowerPoint talk looks at practices taught for millennia to bring an aberrant mind under control. Just knowledge or information is not the solution as it is the wayward mind that is the problem, so we look at practices and techniques that deliver mindfulness.

Tues 15 Mar General Meeting	<b>The Healer Inside Us</b> - Andy Khong Can we incite a healing revolution? This PowerPoint talk we learn to heal ourselves by activating our own internal medicine to increase our productivity, vitality, and well-being - three of our richest assets for free. Simple exercises, self-massage, meditation, and methods to coordinate your breathing and conscious awareness can be used to increase and improve this potent inner resource. The most profound medicine, a real and powerful healing elixir is produced within ourselves.
Tues 22 Mar General Meeting	<b>Salvation Through Dhyana Yoga</b> - Dr. Munna Sharma Dhyana (meditation) yoga is one of four yoga's of Vedanta that lead to peace and tranquillity, and ultimately to human emancipation. Most religions recognise techniques which have been employed for training, controlling or guiding the human mind not only for improving the quality of day-to-day life but also for spiritual advancement. This PowerPoint presentation will analyse the essence of meditation practices that go beyond religious boundaries.
Tues 29 Mar General Meeting	<b>Manly P. Hall: The Murdered Mystic (DVD)</b> - Geraldine Belkin facilitated by Viv Ward This 42 min. theosophical DVD explores the little known and mysterious life of Manly P. Hall the twentieth century's most prolific writer on ancient philosophies and the shadowy and fairly unrecognized fact of his murder and the unusual circumstances surrounding his death.
<b>APR</b>	
Tues 5 Apr General Meeting	<b>Area 51 - Before and After</b> - John Davey The historical and contemporary evidence of all kinds connected with the UFO/ Extra-terrestrial phenomenon is substantial and continues to grow exponentially. Exo-politics has become a serious associated movement and we witness Governments, the Vatican and organisations such as SETI heavily invested in the area. The question remains, should Theosophy be taking notice of the scientific, political and philosophical implications that appear to be involved?
Tues 12 Apr General Meeting	<b>A Global Humanity (DVD)</b> - facilitated by Virginia Milner This 30 min. DVD explains Nichiren Japanese Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai International organisation which means "value creation". Virginia will then share her journey with S.G.I. Australia and the miracles that have happened on the way.
Tues 19 Apr General Meeting	<b>Paracelsus</b> - Jean Dawson Phillippus Aureolis Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim was called the "Prince of Physicians" and the "Luther of Medicine" 450 years ago. His medical teachings and practices outraged the establishment but they were the forerunners of medicine today. Paracelsus put his faith in "the healing forces of nature". Come along on this PowerPoint presentation journey of discovery into his life.
Tues 26 Apr General Meeting	<b>Stroke Awareness</b> – The speaker is a Trained Strokesafe Ambassador A TOS fund raising night - Please join the TOS for our delicious snacks and light supper for \$8 at 6:30 pm and to check out the raffle basket and other items for sale. Followed by: One in six people will have a stroke in their lifetime. In Australia, someone has a stroke every 10 minutes. This presentation will arm you with ways you can prevent stroke, and how to recognise the signs of a stroke.

### The Theosophical Link contributions

Members of TS Perth Branch are heartily invited to contribute articles, poems, book reviews and any news affiliated with the Branch to the Editor for future inclusions in the Link.

Typed submissions will be gratefully accepted.

Leave your articles etc. with the library or office staff, email them to [tsperth@iinet.net.au](mailto:tsperth@iinet.net.au) or place your material in the Editor's drawer by the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2016