

# The Theosophical Link

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DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR.

"**Damodar** was the only true, devoted friend I had in all India, the only one who having the Masters' and my secret, knew the whole truth and therefore knew that whatever people thought being blinded by appearance I had never deceived anyone. . . . Damodar was ready from his last birth to enter the highest PATH and suspected it. He had long been waiting for the expected permission to go to Tibet before the expiration of the 7 years; . . ."

H.P. Blavatsky



## The Three Objects of the Theosophical Society:

- To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
- To encourage the comparative study of religion, philosophy and science.
- To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in humanity

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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.

### 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 July. 2018.**

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.**

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## 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

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the Link for 2018. The year is well underway and the programming committee have already given us some very interesting and thought provoking talks to kick start the season.

At Easter, National Lecturer Simon O'Rourke presented talks over the weekend as well as on the Tuesday and Wednesday.

In April we have International Lecturer Michael Gomes from the USA coming and will be giving a Seminar and a talk at the Branch.

In June, National Lecturer Dianne Kynaston will be here to present a one day event at Mt Helena and a talk at the Branch.

As you can see there has been and will be a smorgasbord of speakers to nourish the mind.

A rules subcommittee has been formed and with the assistance of an external consultant is in the process of updating the Branch Rules to comply with legislation. A Code of Conduct is also in the process of being drawn up for the Branch.

The first Mt Helena event for the year will be in May and promises to be an interesting and enjoyable two days.

We are still waiting for someone to step into the breach and takeover from the existing editor of the Link, Perry Coles who has kindly offered to temporarily stay on until someone else steps in.

Franco

*"The universe is not for man alone, but is a theatre of evolution for all living beings. Live and let live is its guiding principle. 'Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah' - Non-injury is the highest religion." -*

Virchand Gandhi

## Contemplation

by Damodar K. Mavalankar

A GENERAL misunderstanding of this term seems to prevail. The popular idea appears to be to confine oneself for half an hour—or at the utmost two hours—in a private room, and passively gaze at one's nose, a spot on the wall, or, perhaps, a crystal. This is supposed to be the true form of contemplation enjoined by *Raj Yoga*. It fails to realize that true occultism requires "physical, mental, moral and spiritual" development to run on parallel lines. Were the narrow conception extended to all these lines, the necessity for the present article would not have been so urgently felt. This paper is specially meant for the benefit of those who seem to have failed to grasp the real meaning of Dhyān, and by their erroneous practices to have brought, and to be bringing, pain and misery upon themselves. A few instances may be mentioned here with advantage, as a warning to our too zealous students.

At Bareilly the writer met a certain Theosophist from Farrukhabad, who narrated his experiences and shed bitter tears of repentance for his past follies—as he termed them. It would appear from his account that the gentleman, having read *Bhagavat-Gita* about fifteen or twenty years ago and not comprehending the esoteric meaning of the contemplation therein enjoined, undertook nevertheless the practice and carried it on for several years. At first he experienced a sense of pleasure, but simultaneously he found he was gradually losing self-control; until after a few years he discovered, to his great bewilderment and sorrow, that he was no longer his own master. He felt his heart actually growing heavy, as though a load had been placed on it. He had no control over his sensations; in fact the communication between the brain and the heart had become as though interrupted. As matters grew worse, in disgust he discontinued his "contemplation." This happened as long as seven years ago; and, although since then he has not felt worse, yet he could never regain his original normal and healthy state of mind and body.

NOTE—This article by Damodar, published in the *Theosophist* drew correspondence and two further replies by him.—Eds.

Another case came under the writer's observation at Jubbulpore. The gentleman concerned, after reading Patanjali and such other works, began to sit for "contemplation." After a short time he commenced seeing abnormal sights and hearing musical bells, but neither over these phenomena nor over his own sensations could he exercise any control. He could not produce these results at will, nor could he stop them when they were occurring. Numerous such examples may be multiplied. While penning these lines, the writer has on his table two letters upon this subject, one from Moradabad and the other from Trichinopoly. In short, all this mischief is due to a misunderstanding of the significance of contemplation as enjoined upon students by all the schools of Occult Philosophy. With a view to afford a glimpse of the Reality through the dense veil that enshrouds the mysteries of this Science of Sciences, an article, the "Elixir of Life," was written. Unfortunately, in too many instances, the seed seems to have fallen upon barren ground. Some of its readers only catch hold of the following clause in the said paper:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation, must be practised and encouraged.

But, alas! their preconceptions have prevented them from comprehending what is meant by meditation. They forget that it "is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to 'go out towards the infinite,' which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration"—as the next sentence shows. A good deal of light will be thrown upon this subject if the reader were to turn to the preceding portion of the same paper, and peruse attentively the following paragraphs on page 141 of the *Theosophist* for March, 1883

(Vol. III, No. 6) :[1]

[1] From "The 'Elixir of Life'," reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy*.—Eds.

So, then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined—literally, not metaphorically—to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil, or body, and hatch out of it, clothed in our next. This "next" is not a spiritual, but only a more ethereal form. Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the

outward shell to die off through a certain process . . . we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual, visible, material body—man, so called, though, in fact, but his outer shell—to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we change skin as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact. . . . Hence, if a man partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin,—so our astral, vital body . . . may be made to harden its particles to the atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old particles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them. . . . We can say no more.

A correct comprehension of the above scientific process will give a clue to the esoteric meaning of meditation or contemplation. Science teaches us that man changes his physical body continually, and this change is so gradual that it is almost imperceptible. Why then should the case be otherwise with the inner man? The latter too is constantly developing and changing atoms at every moment. And the attraction of these new sets of atoms depends upon the Law of Affinity—the desires of the man drawing to their bodily tenement only such particles as are en rapport with them or rather giving them their own tendency and coloring.

For Science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding itself outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The inner men, however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, not hypothetical particles, and are still subject to the law that an “action” has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser “shell” they are in contact with and concealed within. (“The Elixir of Life.”)

What is it the aspirant of *Yog Vidya* strives after if not to gain *Mukti* by transferring himself gradually from the grosser to the next more ethereal body, until all the veils of Maya being successively removed his Atma becomes one with Paramatma? Does he suppose that this grand result can be achieved by a two or four hours’ contemplation? For the remaining twenty or twenty-two hours that the devotee does not shut himself up in his room for meditation—is the process of the emission of atoms and their replacement by others stopped? If not, then how does he mean to attract all this time,—only those suited to his end? From the above remarks it is evident that just as the physical body requires incessant attention to prevent the entrance of a disease, so also the inner man requires an unremitting watch, so that no conscious or unconscious thought may attract atoms unsuited to its progress. This is the real meaning of contemplation. The prime factor in the guidance of the thought is WILL..

Without that, all else is useless. And, to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but *a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment’s remission.*

The student would do well to take note of the italicized clause in the above quotation. He should also have it indelibly impressed upon his mind that

It is no use to fast *as long as one requires food.* . . . To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, any one who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes—at once rushes in for contemplation and dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown. Wallowing in the mire of exotericism, he knows not what it is to live in the world and yet be not of the world; in other words

to guard self against self is an incomprehensible axiom for nearly every profane. The Hindu ought at least to realize it by remembering the life of Janaka, who, although a reigning monarch, was yet styled *Rajarshi* and is said to have attained *Nirvana*. Hearing of his widespread fame, a few sectarian bigots went to his Court to test his *Yoga*-power. As soon as they entered the courtroom, the king having read their thought—a power which every chela attains at a certain stage—gave secret instructions to his officials to have a particular street in the city lined on both sides by dancing girls who were ordered to sing the most voluptuous songs. He then had some gharas (pots) filled with water up to the brim so that the least shake would be likely to spill their contents. The wisecracks, each with a full *ghara* (pot) on his head, were ordered to pass along the street, surrounded by soldiers with drawn swords to be used against them if even so much as a drop of water were allowed to run over.

The poor fellows having returned to the palace after successfully passing the test, were asked by the King-Adept what they had met with in the street they were made to go through. With great indignation they replied that the threat of being cut to pieces had so much worked upon their minds that they thought of nothing but the water on their heads, and the intensity of their attention did not permit them to take cognizance of what was going on around them. Then Janaka told them that on the same principle they could easily understand that, although being outwardly engaged in managing the affairs of his state, he could at the same time be an Occultist. He, too, while *in* the world, was not *of* the world. In other words, his inward aspirations had been leading him on continually to the goal in which his whole inner self was concentrated.

*Raj Yoga* encourages no sham, requires no physical postures. It has to deal with the inner man whose sphere lies in the world of thought. To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration recognized by Esoteric Philosophy which deals with the inner world of *noumena*, not the outer shell of *phenomena*.

The first requisite for it is thorough purity of heart. Well might the student of Occultism say, with Zoroaster, that purity of thought, purity of word, and purity of deed, — these are the essentials of one who would rise above the ordinary level and join the “gods.” A cultivation of the feeling of unselfish philanthropy is the path which has to be traversed for that purpose. For it is that alone which will lead to Universal Love, the realization of which constitutes the progress towards deliverance from the chains forged by Maya around the Ego. No student will attain this at once, but as our VENERATED MAHATMA says in the *Occult World*:

The greater the progress towards deliverance, the less this will be the case, until, to crown all, human and purely individual personal feelings, blood-ties and friendship, patriotism and race predilection, will all give way to become blended into one universal feeling, the only true and holy, the only unselfish and eternal one, Love, an Immense Love for Humanity as a whole.

In short, the individual is blended with the ALL.

Of course, contemplation, as usually understood, is not without its minor advantages. It develops one set of physical faculties as gymnastics does the muscles. For the purposes of physical mesmerism, it is good enough; but it can in no way help the development of the psychological faculties, as the thoughtful reader will perceive. At the same time, even for ordinary purposes, the practice can never be too well guarded. If, as some suppose, they have to be entirely passive and lose themselves in the object before them, they should remember that by thus encouraging passivity, they, in fact, allow the development of mediumistic faculties in themselves. As was repeatedly stated—the Adept and the Medium are the two Poles; while the former is intensely active and thus able to control the elemental forces, the latter is intensely passive, and thus incurs the risk of falling a prey to the caprice and malice of mischievous embryos of human beings, and—the Elementaries.

## CORRESPONDENCE ON “CONTEMPLATION”

by Damodar K. Mavalankar

### I

I regret the whole article is totally misunderstood. All I meant to say was that temporary estrangement, from family or friends, does not constitute an essential qualification for advancement in occultism. This ought to be plain to one who weighs carefully my illustration of Janaka. Although *in* the world, to be not *of* it. Failing to realize the meaning of this important teaching, many people rush in from a sentimental disgust of worldliness, arising probably out of some worldly disappointment—and begin practising what they consider to be a true form of *contemplation*. The very fact that the *motive* which leads them to go in for this practice, is as described . . . this fact is a sufficient indication that the candidate does not know the “contemplation” of a *Raja Yogi*. It is thus impossible in the nature of things that he can follow the right method; and the physical practice, which he necessarily undertakes, leads him to the disastrous results adverted to in the article.

Any reader, who has intuition enough to be a practical student of occultism, will at once see that to work up to perfection is the highest ideal that a man can have before him. That is not the work of a day nor of a few years. “The Adept *becomes*; he is NOT MADE”—is a teaching which the student must first realize. The aspirant works up to his goal through a series of lives. Col. Olcott says in his *Buddhist Catechism*:—“. . . Countless generations are required to develop man into a Buddha, and the iron will to become one *runs throughout all the successive births*.”

That “*iron will*” to become perfect must be *incessantly* operating, without a single moment’s relaxation, as will be apparent to one who reads *carefully the article as a whole*. When it is distinctly said that during the time that this contemplation is not practiced, i.e., the iron will is not exerting, the process of the emission and attraction of atoms is not stopped, and that the desires, instinctive or otherwise, must be so regulated as to attract only such atoms as may be

sued to his progress—I cannot understand my correspondent when he asks me what he should do at a particular hour in the morning. He should cultivate only such thoughts as would not be incompatible with the highest ideal he has to work up to.

By perfection, which should be his highest ideal, (I must add) I mean that *divine* manhood which the Occult Philosophy contemplates the seventh race of the seventh Round will attain to. This, as every tyro knows, depends largely upon a cultivation of the feeling of Universal Love, and hence an earnest desire to do some practical philanthropic work is the first requisite. Even this state, I admit, is not *absolute perfection*: but that maximum limit of ultimate Spiritual perfection is beyond our comprehension at present. That condition can only be intellectually realized as a practical ideal by those *divine men*—Dhyanchohans. To be identified with THE ALL, we must live in and feel through it. How can this be done without the realization of the feeling of Universal Love? Of course Adeptship is not within the easy reach of all. On the other hand, occultism does not fix any unpleasant place or locality for those who do not accept its dogmas. It only recognizes higher and higher evolution according to the chain of causation working under the impulse of Nature’s immutable law. The article on “Occult Study” in the last number [2] gives the necessary explanation on this point.

[2] *The Theosophist*, March, 1884, pp. 131-3.—Eds.

It is painful for me to find that the very thing I attempted to point out in that article to be mischievous in its results, is again put forward as a desirable attribute or adjunct of true *contemplation*. I would ask my correspondent to read again the same article, with these additional remarks, before thinking of the necessity of any peculiar or particular posture for the purpose of contemplation. I, at any rate, am unable to prescribe any specific posture for the kind of *incessant contemplation* that I recommend.

## II

Notwithstanding the article on the above subject in the February *Theosophist*, many of its readers still seem to imagine that “contemplation” is a particular form of gazing or staring at something, which process, when undergone a set number of hours every day, will give psychological powers. This misunderstanding is apparently due to the fact that the main point discussed has been lost sight of. Instead of realizing that there is but one chief idea meant to be conveyed by that article by arguing it through many of its phases, it seems to be imagined that almost every sentence expresses quite a distinct idea. It may not therefore be uninteresting or unprofitable to revert to the subject and put forward the same idea from another stand-point and, if possible, in a clearer light. It must first be borne in mind that the writer of the article did not at all mean to imply the act of gazing by the word “contemplation.” The former word would have been made use of, were that the idea. *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language* (1883)—defines the word contemplation thus:—

- (1) The act of the mind in considering with attention; meditation; study; continued attention of the mind to a particular subject. Specifically—
- (2) Holy meditation; attention to sacred things.

Webster’s dictionary thoroughly revised—also gives the same meaning.

Thus we find that contemplation is the “continued attention of the mind to a particular subject,” and, religiously, it is the “attention to sacred things.” It is therefore difficult to imagine how the idea of gazing or staring came to be associated with the word contemplation, unless it be due to the fact that generally it so happens that when any one is deeply absorbed in thought, he apparently seems to be gazing or staring at something in blank space. But this gazing is the effect of the act of contemplation. And, as usually happens, here too the effect seems to be confounded with the cause. Because the gazing attitude follows the act of contemplation, it is at once assumed the gazing is the cause which produces contemplation! Bearing this well in mind, let us now see what kind of contemplation (or meditation) the *Elixir of*

*Life* recommends for the aspirants after occult knowledge. It says:

“Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation must be practised and encouraged.”

That is to say, a *chela’s* meditation should constitute the “reasoning from the known to the unknown.” The “known” is the phenomenal world, cognizable by our five senses. And all that we see in this manifested world are the effects, the causes of which are to be sought after in the noumenal, the unmanifested, the “unknown world:” this is to be accomplished by meditation, i.e., continued attention to the subject. Occultism does not depend upon one method, but employs both the deductive and inductive. The student must first learn the general axioms. For the time being, he will of course have to take them as assumptions, if he prefers to call them so. Or as the *Elixir of Life* puts it:—

“All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the *Elixir of Life* and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the matter, at present, and proceed on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way; while modern, or the so-called exact science laughs at it.”

These axioms have sufficiently been laid out in the articles on the *Elixir of Life* and various others treating on occultism, in the different numbers of the *Theosophist*. What the student has first to do is to *comprehend* these axioms and, by employing the deductive method, to proceed from universals to particulars. He has then to reason from the “known to the unknown,” and see if the inductive method of proceeding from particulars to universals supports those axioms. This process forms the primary stage of true contemplation. The student must first grasp the subject intellectually before he can hope to realize his aspirations. When this is accomplished, then comes the next stage of meditation which is “the inexpressible yearning of the inner man to ‘go out towards the infinite’.” Before any such yearning can be properly directed, the goal, to which it is to be its aim to run, must be determined by the preliminary stages. The higher stage, in fact, consists in realizing practically what the first steps



have placed within one's comprehension. In short, contemplation, in its true sense, is to recognize the truth of Eliphaz Levi's saying:—"To believe without knowing is weakness; to believe because one knows, is power."

Or, in other words, to see that "KNOWLEDGE IS POWER." The *Elixir of Life* not only gives the preliminary steps in the ladder of *contemplation* but also tells the reader how to *realize* the higher conceptions. It traces, by the process of contemplation as it were, the relation of man, "the known," the manifested, the phenomenon, to "the unknown," the unmanifested, the noumenon. It shows to the student what ideal he should contemplate and how to rise up to it. It places before him the nature of the inner capacities of man and how to develop them. To a superficial reader, this may, perhaps, appear as the acme of selfishness. Reflection or contemplation will, however, show the contrary to be the case. For it teaches the student that to comprehend the noumenal, he must identify

himself with Nature. Instead of looking upon himself as an isolated being, he must learn to look upon himself as a part of the INTEGRAL WHOLE. For, in the unmanifested world, it can be clearly perceived that all is controlled by the "Law of Affinity," the attraction of one to the other. There, all is Infinite Love, understood in its true sense.

It may now be not out of place to recapitulate what has already been said. The first thing to be done is to study the axioms of Occultism and work upon them by the deductive and the inductive methods, which is real contemplation. To turn this to a useful purpose, what is theoretically comprehended must be practically realized. It is to be hoped that this explanation may make the meaning of the former article on this subject clearer.

—D.K.M.

*Theosophist*, February, April, and August, 1884

"One of the first proofs of self-mastery is when one shows that he can be kind and forbearing and genial with companions of the most dissimilar characters and temperaments. One of the strongest signs of retrogression when one shows that he expects others to like what he likes and act as he acts."

Mahatma M in a letter to Franz Hartmann

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**Dates:** Every Wednesday  
**Time:** 6:30 - 7:30 PM  
**Cost:** No Charge - All Welcome

**Presenters:** Marta Kablar &  
 Ophelia Poczwa  
**Venue:** Main Meeting Hall  
 21 Glendower Street, Perth



On the family trip to nirvana



Open Heart Meditation is a remarkably simple, yet effective, heart-based practice that is centered on “feeling” rather than on brain-oriented visualizations or breathing techniques, making this practice purely experiential. Open Heart Meditation is different to most meditation techniques because it is about working with the spiritual heart (center of feelings) to connect with the True Source of Love and Light so we are able to let go of any kind of negative emotions which have caused us problems with our spiritual heart. It has helped many people reduce their stress level and heal on a deep internal level and allowing the natural healing process to happen much faster. In addition, this practice is universal and non-denominational and it encourages respect for all religious beliefs. This is not a serious practice that involves hard work, creative visualizations or any sort of effort whatsoever. If it is being done properly it should feel light, gentle, peaceful, effortless...and fun!

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# BUSY BEE



Mount Helena

5 & 6 May 18

0830 - 1630

Volunteers needed for  
Karma Yoga in Action



Contact: **Franco Guazzelli**

TS President

**Mt HELENA BUSHTUCKER  
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## EVOLUTION AND THE SECRET DOCTRINE

**Dr. Doss McDavid**

(Originally published in *Theosophical Research Journal*, Vol. 1: Number 3, September 1984)

In recent years with the advent of the so-called “scientific creationism”, the old debate over Darwin’s theory of evolution has begun once more. The “scientific creationists” attempt to prove, on empirical grounds, that the Biblical description of creation given in Genesis is a viable alternative to the theory of evolution.<sup>1</sup> This idea, naturally enough, is repudiated by the advocates of evolution who regard such a challenge as little short of blasphemy.<sup>2</sup> Other, more moderate viewpoints have also been put forth which, while accepting the general idea of evolution, seek to interpret and explain it in a variety of novel ways.<sup>3,4,5</sup> Theosophical teachings on the subject occupy a sort of no man’s land apart from either the orthodox scientific or the fundamentalist Biblical points of view. Since many Theosophists seem to be unclear as to exactly what *The Secret Doctrine* says about biological evolution, it seems worthwhile to review these ideas in the light of contemporary ideas on the subject.

Contemporary science has identified the possession of a genetic program as the primary characteristic which distinguishes “living” organisms from the rest of the world. This genetic code is carried by the unique molecule known as deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). DNA carries the instructions for both its own self-replication and for the synthesis of protein within the cell. Since many of them act as enzymes or organic catalysts, the proteins synthesized under the direction of DNA are responsible for the control of the biochemical machinery of the organism. Every organism has a unique set of genetic instructions which is shared by every one of its constituent cells. Organisms can be classified on the basis of their genetic content. Those organisms whose genetic material is sufficiently similar for breeding to occur are classified within the same species. Species in turn are closely or distantly related to one another on the basis of the similarity of their genetic patterns. The way in which the amazing variety of species has come into being is the primary concern of evolutionary science. Charles Darwin, in his *Origin of Species*<sup>6</sup> proposed a solution to this mystery which is still the explanation accepted, in substance, by the vast majority of scientists today. While modern scientists have added to and updated Darwin’s theory in the light of increased knowledge, such as the Mendelian theory of genetics, and while there is still considerable debate over details, the basic idea that evolution has occurred and that the mechanism proposed by Darwin has played an important role in that process remains without serious challenge.

The “synthetic” theory of evolution, which combines Darwin’s ideas with those of modern genetics<sup>7</sup>, is based upon two fundamental processes: variation and natural selection. Through genetic variation, which is believed to occur spontaneously and randomly, organisms arise with characteristics different from their parents. This variation does not in and of itself result in evolution. Rather, it provides the raw material required for the operation of the second process, natural selection. Natural selection may be defined as the “differential reproductive success of favoured variants”<sup>8</sup>. It is the process which sorts out those organisms whose characteristics are favourable for their survival within the prevalent environment. The “selected” organisms leave more offspring and therefore the genes for their particular traits increase in frequency within the species. New species arise when a small population branches off from its parent stock and diverges genetically to the point that it is incapable of breeding with its parent population. This usually occurs when a population becomes geographically or otherwise isolated from its parent population.

Evolution therefore occurs at three levels. This has been summarized in the following way: genes mutate, individuals are selected, and species evolve. Genetic variation provides the raw material for evolution. Natural selection allows favoured individuals to survive and reproduce, altering the genetic

pool of future generations. Individuals collectively form species which give rise to new species when enough genetic variation has occurred within an isolated population. In addition to the Darwinian mechanism of natural selection, it is now realized that there are other factors which are at least in part, responsible for evolution.<sup>9</sup> Basically these involve what has been called “random change”, a term which refers to a shift in gene frequency occurring as a statistical effect apart from natural selection.

The picture of evolution outlined in H.P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* does not deny any of the principles which have been described above but it does deny that these principles are sufficient in themselves to account for the panorama of life which we behold around us. They are, it teaches, secondary effects which come into play once life has entered the region of physical causation.

According to *The Secret Doctrine* the process of evolution begins in regions which are inaccessible to physical science as it now exists. These uncharted regions, which H.P.B. calls the “astral”, are worlds of superphysical reality which are said to interpenetrate and inform our material world. No proof is given for this assumption and therefore the scientist can hardly be blamed for maintaining an attitude of scepticism. Nevertheless, *The Secret Doctrine* maintains that the astral world is no less real than the world of the five senses and that it in fact underlies that world. Evolution began in this astral world which contained at the beginning of the present “Round” or cycle of evolution, the ancestral “prototypes” or “patterns” left over from the previous Round. In the course of time, these “prototypes” materialized into physical expression. As materialization occurred, the astral forms became the invisible moulds around which physical organisms were organized from the surrounding elements, like iron filings arranging themselves in a magnetic field. Man's body, according to this teaching, originated as an astral pattern, as did the organisms of the first animals, plants and micro-organisms. The “lower” life-forms materialized first, followed by the rest in ascending order. As life entered the arena of material causation, the biochemical processes with which we are familiar today were called into action and with them, the possibility for genetic variation and natural selection along Darwinian lines. From this point, life diverged in many directions from the handful of original “types” to the million or so species found in the world today. H.P.B. describes this in the following way:

The truth is that the differentiating “causes known to modern science only come into operation after the physicalization of the primeval animal root-types out of the astral. Darwinism only meets Evolution at its midway point – that is to say when astral evolution has given place to the play of the ordinary physical forces with which our present senses acquaint us.<sup>10</sup>

*The Secret Doctrine* agrees with accepted ideas of evolution with respect to the evolutionary history of certain classes of organisms and disagrees with them with respect to others. Thus H.P.B. had no quarrel with the evolution of certain species of fish into amphibians and of certain species of reptiles into birds. In the words of the Stanzas of Dzyan “They that creep on the ground got wings. They of the long necks in the water became the progenitors of the fowls of the air”.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, when it comes to the evolution of the mammals, *The Secret Doctrine* rejects their evolution from reptiles and traces them back to an altogether different “astral pattern” – to the human pattern in fact. Man, it is taught, began as a gigantic astral phantom which over millions of years, gradually materialized to become the organism we recognize as man today. The early human races reproduced by “division”, almost as the microscopic amoeba does today. Later, they exuded “buds” from themselves which developed into new human organisms. Just as occasional “monsters” are produced in childbirth even today, some of the “buds” developed not into human beings but into other kinds of creatures which then, reproducing, gave rise to whole new species on their own pathways of evolution. This was the origin of all the various mammalian species according to *The Secret Doctrine*. While modern science shows man descending from an animal ancestry, the theory set forth in *The Secret Doctrine* traces all the mammalian species back to forms shed by man himself. Sexual reproduction was, according to this theory, inaugurated only upon the full materialization of the astral types. The

apes, it is said, arose from the breeding of some of the early men with some of the early mammals which were as yet, close enough to the original population to permit such interbreeding.

Technically, there were two episodes of such interbreeding, and the present apes arose from the second admixture in which men breed with the descendents of the first.

Whatever we may make of these ideas, they are certainly at variance with the accepted notions of modern science just as they were at variance with the science of H.P.B.'s time. That H.P.B. was painfully aware of this discrepancy is indicated by her frequent apology for the strangeness of the ideas presented. "To speak of a race nine yatis high, or 27 feet" she wrote, "in a work claiming a more scientific character than 'Jack the Giant-Killer' is a somewhat unusual proceeding".<sup>12</sup> And so it is. If, as many critics have suggested, H.P.B. invented the whole system of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis contained in *The Secret Doctrine*, it is difficult to understand why she did not dream up something simpler and something which would have been more acceptable in the intellectual climate of her day. Indeed, it may be argued that the very preposterousness (the word is H.P.B.'s<sup>13</sup>) of some of the ideas presented is one of the best arguments for their authenticity.

There is, in addition to the discrepancies already discussed, an even more fundamental difference in *The Secret Doctrine* approach to evolution and that which is postulated by the majority of modern biologists. This is the idea of the evolution of consciousness which, H.B.P. taught, is the underlying drive behind the external evolution of astral and physical forms. According to *The Secret Doctrine* there is a universal consciousness or intelligence which is the ensouling power behind the unfolding panorama of life. This "Monadic Essence" moves circuitously yet progressively through the kingdoms of nature – from the elemental forces, through the minerals, plants and animals till finally it reaches the human stage where it awakens as a self-conscious, individual "soul". Genetic variation arises not through chance but by the inner directive of the Monadic Essence seeking to express itself through more suitable forms. This is an idea which seems more akin to Lamarck's belief (now widely repudiated) that life-forms make creative and heritable responses to perceived needs than to the Darwinian idea of variation and natural selection. At any rate, H.P.B. summarizes the esoteric teaching as follows:

Whence came the "useful variations" which develop the eye? Only from "blind forces.....without aim, without design?" The argument is puerile. The true solution of the mystery is to be found in the impersonal Divine Wisdom, in its IDEATION – reflected through matter.<sup>14</sup>

The story of evolution, as it is understood from the orthodox scientific point of view, does not include the element of teleology. It is all based on chance and fortuitous circumstances. There is no such thing as a "great chain of being" in which progressive evolution develops more and more complex forms in an effort to attain some goal. The teachings enunciated in *The Secret Doctrine* on the other hand, maintain that evolution *is* progressive and that it is directed by Cosmic Mind. H.B.P. writes:

The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march toward a higher life. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces. The whole process of evolution with its endless adaptations is proof of this. The immutable laws that weed out the weak and feeble species, to make room for the strong, and which insure the "survival of the fittest", though so cruel in their immediate action – all are working toward the grand end. The very fact that adaptations *do* occur, that the fittest *do* survive in the struggle for existence, shows that what is called

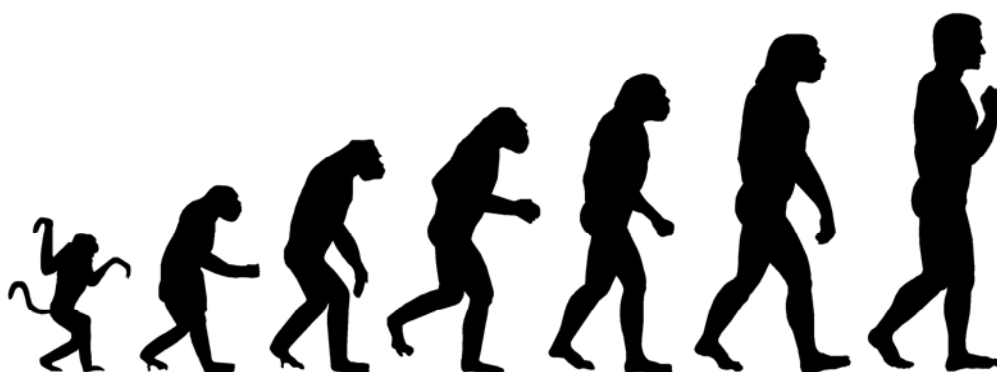
“unconscious Nature” is in reality an aggregate of forces manipulated by semi-intelligent beings (Elementals) guided by High Planetary Spirits (Dhyan Chohans) whose collective aggregate forms the manifested verbum of the unmanifested LOGOS, and constitutes at one and the same time the MIND of the Universe and its immutable LAW.

Once again it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to *prove* these assertions by means acceptable to the physical scientist. Such nevertheless, is the teaching of the Esoteric Philosophy.

The difference between the theory of evolution proposed in *The Secret Doctrine* and that proposed by modern biology is fundamental. Both theories take it for granted that evolution – in one form or the other – has occurred. Both theories take it for granted that evolution is for the most part, a gradual process which has taken place over millions of years, although the time scales differ considerably in some respects. The fundamental discrepancy is much more fundamental and has to do with the completely different worldviews of the modern scientist and the esotericist. The former seeks to explain the entire world in terms of the three or four fundamental forces which are known and understood, to some degree at least, at the present time. These include the electromagnetic force, the weak nuclear force (these two are now believed to be aspects of a single force or interaction), the strong nuclear force, and the force of gravity. Aside from these forces, modern science recognizes no others as, so far, there has not been a convincing demonstration, under laboratory conditions, that any other forces exist. Occult science, on the other hand, postulates a variety of forces unknown to modern science and a variety of states of “matter” beyond the reach of physical instrumentation. Such forces can be understood, demonstrated, and utilized no less than the forces known to physical science, but only by those willing to undergo the necessary training to acquire such mastery. As this is possible only by initiation into the Arcane Fraternities possessing such knowledge, this rules out the majority of scientists. Moreover, occultism maintains that the universe is the embodiment of life and consciousness, an idea which has been expressed by a minority of rather unorthodox physicists but which has as yet made very little impact upon biologists.

Whether the esoteric teachings on evolution will receive support from scientific evidence is an open question. That H.P.B. believed that such support was forthcoming is evident from her writings although at least one of her prophecies has seemingly failed to materialize;<sup>16</sup>

If the skeletons of man should, at any time, be discovered in the Eocene strata, but no fossil ape, thereby proving the existence of man prior to the anthropoid – then Darwinians will have to exercise their ingenuity in another direction. And it is said in well-informed quarters that the XXth century will be yet in its earliest teens, when such undeniable proof of Man’s priority will be forthcoming.





Unfortunately it has not done so. At any rate, the rather impressive confirmation of many of the ideas put forth in *The Secret Doctrine* with respect to other scientific questions<sup>17</sup> leaves open the possibility of such developments. Concerning this possibility, H.P.B. left us with the following light- hearted remark:

It is just as possible that future should have in store for us the discovery of the giant skeleton of an Atlantean, 30 ft. high, as the fossil of a pithecoïd "missing link": only the former is more probable.<sup>18</sup>

*Dr. McDavid was a professor of biophysics at the University of Texas, San Antonio and a member of The Theosophical Research Journal editorial board. This article is based on a talk given at Olcott in 1984.*

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**Program of Lectures**

**Definition of meeting types and relevant guidelines**

- **Public Meetings** – All members and the public are welcome to attend.
- **General Meetings** – For Perth members, with interested members 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 and visiting TS 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 Meetings** – Are strictly for current Perth and visiting TS members only. Non-members will not be admitted to the meeting.

**All sessions normally 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.

MAY	
<p>Tues 1 May General Meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Deity, Cosmos and Man: An Outline of Esoteric Science (Part 7)</b> - Perry Coles <b>Globes, Rounds and Races</b></p> <p>The subject of this PowerPoint presentation illustrates the Great Hermetic Axiom, expressed by Mme Blavatsky in these words: “As is the Inner, so is the Outer; as is the Great so is the Small; as it is above, so it is below: there is but ONE LIFE AND LAW; and he that worketh it is ONE.” For example, Occult Science shows that universal law, which links every effect to an antecedent cause, must apply to the earth itself just as it applies to every being on it. If every life-form had its causative antecedents, so also must the planet have had its preceding cause in another mode of existence. The recognition that this must be so extends our view of the history of life on earth into a past of scarcely imaginable duration, into world systems that existed before ours - and similarly forwards into a future with no conceivable limit.</p>
<p>Tues 8 May General Meeting</p>	<p><b>White Lotus Day</b> - Commemoration of H. P. Blavatsky’s passing on May 8, 1891 with a short reading from the Bhagavad-Gita and The Light of Asia as requested by H.P. Blavatsky to mark the occasion. Followed by:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Spiritual Vision of William Blake</b> - Becky Newell</p> <p>“If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.” So wrote William Blake (1757-1827), London artist, poet, revolutionary, and visionary. His vast creative output included illustrations of the Book of Job and the poetic Songs of Innocence and Experience. Tonight’s PowerPoint presentation will explore some of his spiritual perceptions from these works.</p>
<p>Tues 15 May <b>Members Only Meeting</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Regents of the Seven Spheres (Part 2)</b> - Bill Wood</p> <p>This book, of the same name by H. K. Challoner, contains much wisdom of an unusual kind. You will probably agree that the contents justify the author overruling his early misgivings and finally deciding to write and publish. This talk will be in the form of various selected readings because interpretations, paraphrases and alterations would detract from the quality of the text.</p>

<p>Tues 22 May General Meeting</p>	<p><b>The Artistic Masterpieces &amp; Story of the Life of the Lord Buddha</b> - Viv Ward In April and May every year many nations celebrate Buddha's birthday - it's a time to commemorate the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gautama who became the founder of Buddhism. In tonight's PowerPoint presentation I will be showing frescoes that were painted on the inside of a beautiful Indian temple's walls by a famous Japanese artist. The paintings depict scenes from the Buddha's life and I shall give descriptive accounts on each painting.</p>
<p>Wed 29 May General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Emotional Well-Being</b> - Margaret Parrott BMs (Bachelor of Metaphysical Sciences) How your emotional overtones help you attract what you experience. How to meet an emotion, allow our consciousness to give us the answers we seek, and exploring the emotion itself will all be explored in this PowerPoint presentation.</p>
<p><b>JUNE</b></p>	
<p>Tues 5 June General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Deity, Cosmos and Man: An Outline of Esoteric Science (Part 8) - Perry Coles Spiritualism and Psychism</b> Spiritualism, as commonly understood, is a view of life that recognizes the survival of a personal "soul" or "spirit" after the death of the body, and the ability of that surviving entity to communicate with the living through the intermediary of a sensitive or medium. Psychism is a general term that embraces a range of paranormal occurrences and faculties, such as materializations, poltergeists, mediumship, pre-cognition, out-of-the-body experiences, psychometry, clairvoyance, and clairaudience. In Occult Science the phenomena associated with both spiritualism and psychism are systematically studied and coherently explained. This PowerPoint presentation will explore and offer an introduction to these areas of study.</p>
<p>Tues 12 June <b>Members Only Meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Women of Spiritual Integrity</b> - Diane Kynaston - National Lecturer for the TS In this PowerPoint presentation we will look at a number of women from various cultures who have reached higher states of consciousness.</p>
<p>Tue 19 June General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Can Science Prove Spirituality?</b> - Tina Hentisz Can Science prove a belief system such as a belief in God, Ghosts, Spirits or fairies? Can Science prove that other dimensions or realities exist? Hard evidence is difficult to find, yet, there may be indications. We investigate the possibilities in this PowerPoint presentation.</p>
<p>Tues 26 June General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Discrimination on The Path</b> - Matthew Thompson A talk about some of the problems and obstacles faced by people treading the spiritual path.</p>
<p><b>JULY</b></p>	
<p>Tues 3 July General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Deity, Cosmos and Man: An Outline of Esoteric Science (Part 9) - Perry Coles Spiritual Development : A Theosophical Perspective</b> In this PowerPoint presentation an attempt is made to review the vast and marvellous process described in Esoteric Science. Process implies purpose, and it becomes evident that the purpose of the grand scheme is epitomized in the words of the title, Spiritual Development - the unfoldment of the potentialities of Spirit. Humanity is a critical stage in the process, for it is in the human kingdom that the process becomes self-conscious.</p>
<p>Tues 10 July General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Angels in Everyday Life</b> - John Davey Angels have long since been considered Divine messengers but are probably much more than that. With the assistance of writers such as John Price and Lorna Byrne, both of whom speak of regular direct contact, we explore what these beings may offer us.</p>

<p>Tues 17 July General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Ethics, Morality and Spirituality</b> - facilitated by Skip Pry Tonight's discussion group will explore the possible differences between ethics and morality, what part they might play and how they may impact and have an influence on attempting to lead a more spiritual life. Let's investigate. Bring your ideas and opinions to share with the group.</p>
<p>Tues 24 July General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Mt. Helena Retreat Centre</b> - Harry Bayens and Mt. Helena Working Group Mt. Helena Retreat Centre has been operating since the 1980's. We will take a look at how it evolved through a series of photographs in PowerPoint. Then we will discuss what is happening there today, and possibilities for the future. This will be your opportunity to express your thoughts regarding the centre and its future.</p>
<p>Tues 31 July General Meeting</p>	<p><b>Helping Minds - a TOS Presentation</b> - Debbie Childs CEO A TOS fund raising night. Please join the TOS for our delicious snacks and light supper for \$10 at 6:30 pm and to check out the raffle basket and other items for sale. Followed by: This organisation supports anyone that is experiencing mental health distress, providing emotional and practical supports that will help find the best solution for them. Their mission is to support individual and family recovery, making a positive difference in the community and mental health sector by delivering quality services, education and advocacy.</p>



**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 July 2018