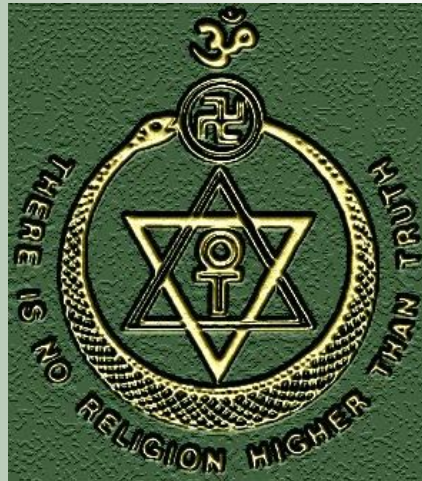


THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Founded in 1875

PRETORIA LODGE



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SUNDAY NIGHT LECTURES AT 19:00

Please note: The opinions expressed by the speakers are their own, as the Theosophical Society has no dogmas.



DATE	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
<u>APRIL 2009</u>		
05 April	Vagaries of the Mind	Ravi Govender (<i>Sai Baba Group</i>)
12 April	EASTER RECESS – NO MEETING	
19 April	Use Your Power to have a Better Life	John Broome
26 April	Face Profiling – How to recognise your true self	Martie Mare
<u>MAY 2009</u>		
03 May	Stress Management Meditation	Sanjay (<i>Sahaja Yoga Group</i>)
10 May	The Other Side if the Iceberg	Tom Davis
17 May	The Power of Gratitude	Roz Griffin
24 May	Insight and Meditation	Brama Kumaris
31 May	Philosophy of the Young Rite and Esoteric Christianity	Rev. Dr. Franz Devantier
<u>JUNE 2009</u>		
07 June	Making Your Life Meaningful	Lionel Berman
14 June	Kabbalah and Self Creation	Jacob Swart
21 June	Spiritual Hypnotherapy	Jan Grobler
28 June	Communication	Jeremy Haskin

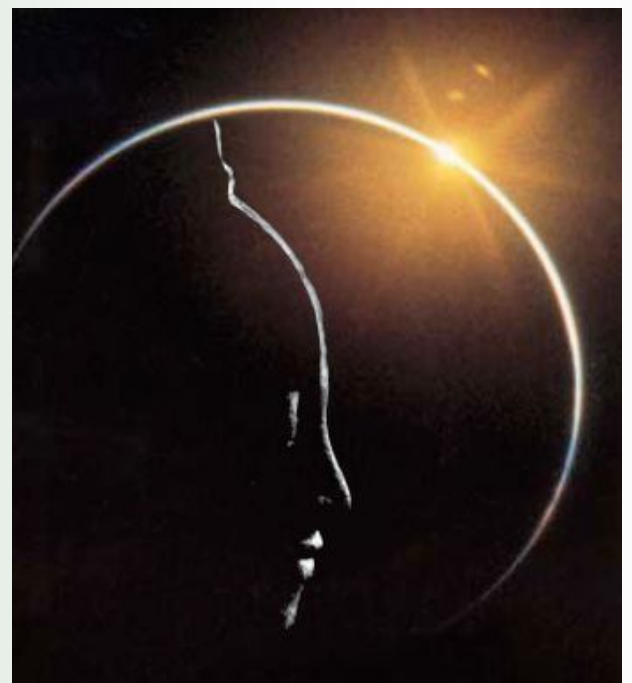
- Members and visitors are invited to attend these lectures. Use the Meintjies Street entrance to the car park in the new Department of Trade and Industry building next door to the Theosophical Society. Once inside, head for the pedestrian exit in the western wall of the car park, next to the Theosophical Society notice board. Exit through the door at that point. Walk up the ramp to the hall.
- No charge is made for attendance but a collection is taken after each Sunday evening talk.
- Tea is available after the talk – donations will be gratefully accepted.

ACTIVITIES

- **AT THE FEET OF THE MASTERS**
Workshop run by Jaap Bishoff. 1st Thursday of the month at 6.30pm.
For more information contact 078 319 0905.
- **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
Held on the **SECOND SUNDAY** of the month.
- **NUMEROLOGY / TAROT CLASSES**
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Enquiries: **Louise Wade** at 012 325-6853 (work) or Cell: 082 510 4466
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- **FREEMASONRY**
Are you interested in Freemasonry? If you would like to know more about the teachings, contact **Louise Wade** (phone 082 510 4466, or 012 325-6853 at work)
- **SHRI SATHYA BABA DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS**
Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Pretoria East, invites you to attend their Group Devotional Meetings, every Thursday evening.
Venue: Theosophical Society, Sunnyside. **Time:** 19h00-20h00
Contact persons: Greta 072-621-0808 / Ravi 082-551-5342
- **ANKH**
Amen-Ra Institute Fridays 7pm & Sunday 9am.
Contact person: Peter 082-882-3126



ENQUIRIES FOR ALL ACTIVITIES

Louise Wade at 012 325-6853 (work) or Cell: 082 510 4466.

Tom/Ann Davis at 012 329 3082

Jean Lee at 012 343 0542

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PRETORIA LODGE:

1. Implies interest in the Three Objects of the Theosophical Society but does not impose any beliefs;
2. Gives you free use of the library and the National Library for research purposes and is available every Saturday morning;
3. Gives you free copies of the [SA Theosophist](#); and
4. Allows attendance of members' meetings and, after two years' membership, voting powers and eligibility for election to the Lodge Committee.

Being a member helps support our Lodge. Members are vital to the continuing existence of the Lodge.

FEES:

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Exceptions:

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The **THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY** has no dogmas. It is composed of students whose bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and by service to humanity. Perfect freedom and tolerance are extended to all.

Theosophy is the light that shines through the many-coloured lamps of religion. It is the thread of truth in scriptures, creeds, symbols, myths and rituals.

The Divine Wisdom is one, the path towards it are many.

THE 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 the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in Man.

THE THREE TRUTHS

1. "The soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit."
2. "The Principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent: is not heard or seen or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception."
3. "Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment."

These truths, which are as great as life itself, are as simple as the mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IS A DOORWAY TO THEOSOPHY:

It does not say, "Here are the teachings for your acceptance and which will make you happy and wise."

It says, "Here is a way which leads to the understanding of the oldest and most profound teachings concerning man, his nature, origin and destiny, his powers, possibilities and responsibilities.

My door is open to every man; whether you stay or depart; whether you honour the teachings and pass them on in your turn; or whether you misunderstand or pollute them, is up to you entirely."

No promises are given except the old tradition: "If you live the life you will know the truth."

The theosophical tradition affirms that man, by exploring the depths of his own nature, can come to the experience of TRUTH, the knowledge of ultimate reality.

Theosophy is a word of Greek origin meaning "Divine Wisdom" (Theos = God; Sophia = Wisdom). The word *THEOSOPHY* has been in use for many centuries. The *DIVINE WISDOM* has existed from the beginning of time.

DO YOU EVER WONDER...?

Who you are?

Why you are here?

Where you are going?

THEOSOPHY, the Wisdom of the Ages, says:

You are part of the One Existence which men call God.

Your body – is mortal

Your spirit, which is your true self – is immortal

You are here in order to discover who you really are, and to bring into activity all the powers that lie sleeping within you. Your goal is infinite love, infinite wisdom. Humanity is still very young and most of us have hardly begun this immense task of self-discovery.

You are going in the direction you have chosen: Either drifting through life, at the mercy of events and your own passing whims and moods, or accepting your destiny and moving consciously towards the goal of self-realization.

Quotable Quotes

Evolution and Illusion

Q. But who is it that creates each time the Universe?

A. No one creates it. Science would call the process evolution; the pre-Christian philosophers and the Orientalists called it emanation: we, Occultists and Theosophists, see in it the only universal and eternal *reality* casting a periodical reflection of *itself* on the infinite Spatial depths. This reflection, which you regard as the objective *material* universe, we consider as a temporary *illusion* and nothing else. That alone which is eternal is *real*.

Q. At that rate, you and I are also illusions.

A. As flitting personalities, today one person, tomorrow another-we are. Would you call the sudden flashes of the *aurora borealis*, the Northern lights, a "reality," though it is as real as can be while you look at it? Certainly not; it is the cause that produces it, if permanent and eternal, which is the only reality, while the other is but a passing illusion.

Q. All this does not explain to me how this illusion called the universe originates; how the conscious *to be*, proceeds to manifest itself from the unconsciousness that *is*.

A. It is *unconsciousness* only to our finite consciousness. Verily may we paraphrase St. John and say: ... *and (Absolute) light (which is darkness) shineth in darkness (which is illusionary material light); and the darkness comprehendeth it not.* This absolute light is also absolute and immutable law. Whether by radiation or emanation-we need not quarrel over terms-the universe passes out of its homogeneous subjectivity onto the first plane of manifestation, of which planes there are seven, we are taught. With each plane it becomes more dense and material until it reaches this, our plane, on which the only world approximately known and understood in its physical composition by Science, is the planetary or Solar system-one *sui generis*, we are told.

Q. What do you mean by *sui generis*?

A. I mean that, though the fundamental law and the universal working of laws of Nature are uniform, still our Solar system (like every other such system in the millions of others in Cosmos) and even our Earth, has its own program of manifestations differing from the respective programs of all others. We speak of the inhabitants of other planets and imagine that if they are *men*, *i.e.*, thinking entities, they must be as we are. The fancy of poets and painters and sculptors never fails to represent even the angels as a beautiful copy of man-*plus* wings. We say that all this is an error and a delusion; because, if on this little earth alone one finds such a diversity in its flora, fauna, and mankind-from the seaweed to the cedar of Lebanon, from the jellyfish to the elephant, from the Bushman and negro to the Apollo Belvedere-alter the conditions cosmic and planetary, and there must be as a result quite a different flora, fauna, and mankind. The same laws will fashion quite a different set of things and beings even on this our plane, including in it all our planets. How much more different then must be *external* nature in other Solar systems, and how foolish is it to judge of other *stars* and worlds and human beings by our own, as physical science does!

Q. And therefore you have implicit faith in them?

A. Faith is a word not to be found in theosophical dictionaries: we say *knowledge based, on observation and experience.* There is this difference, however, that while the observation and experience of physical science lead the Scientists to about as many "working" hypotheses as there are minds to evolve them, our *knowledge* consents to add to its lore only those facts which have become undeniable, and which are fully and absolutely demonstrated. We have no two beliefs or hypotheses on the same subject.

Q. Is it on such data that you came to accept the strange theories we find in *Esoteric Buddhism*?

A. Just so. These theories may be slightly incorrect in their minor details, and even faulty in their exposition by lay students; they are *facts* in nature, nevertheless, and come nearer the truth than any scientific hypothesis.



LIFE AFTER DEATH

John Algeo

LIFE AFTER DEATH LIFE AND DEATH SEEM to us to be opposites, but the word “death” is ambiguous. We ordinarily use the same word for the transition at the end of life and the condition following that transition: namely death. That double use is unfortunate because it confuses a process with a state, thus leading us to think of the two as the same. It implies that once we have died, that’s all there is. By contrast, we have two quite different words for the complementary process (birth) and state (life), suggesting that the process of birth leads to the new state of life. To clarify the distinction and avoid the implication, here the term dying will be used for the process and life after death or after-death life for the resulting state.

Theosophy explains the process of dying and entering into life after death, thereby lessening the mystery and moderating the fear of both the process and the state. Instead of something to be dreaded or not thought about, both process and state appear as inevitable adventures for which we can prepare as intelligently as we would for a journey to another country, informing ourselves of conditions and taking the steps that are needed to meet new experiences. Is it really possible to learn what happens after physical dying—or even whether we continue to exist at all? Shakespeare’s Hamlet referred to “that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns,” but in fact we have many reports about what happens after dying. These reports are from near-death experiences, the observations of clairvoyants, and the traditions of the great religions. Survival of consciousness after dying is also a logical conclusion from a view of the world as a rational and orderly place. It would be wasteful to destroy the experiences of a lifetime.

As Manly Hall expressed it: “If, as the theologian insists, there is a divine spark in every human creature, then this spark is itself timeless and indestructible and there is no reason to assume that God in Nature lives forever but God in man is forever dying.” The human individual is an immortal pilgrim with a future inconceivably longer than the life of our present personality. To be sure, because each individual is unique and no two lives are exactly alike, it is logical to assume that life after death is also unique for each person, although its general pattern would be similar for

all, as is that of earthly life. Life after death is a subjective state said to be largely determined by the individual’s attitudes, thoughts, and actions—that is, by the level of consciousness attained during the life just completed. Theosophy holds that our real self is no more dead after we leave our physical body than we were before; rather, after a time, we are more active than ever because we have lost our identification with and dependence on dense physical matter.

After dying, we have merely ceased to use our vehicle of expression on the physical plane. It is as though the wires of communication had been cut, leaving the “receiving instrument” dead, although the being who had formerly been speaking through that instrument is as active as ever. According to the Theosophical tradition and the descriptions of clairvoyant observers, there are two patterns for the after-death state. Some students believe that only one of the two is normal, but all we can say with confidence is that two patterns have been described. Perhaps, just as there are different patterns of living, there are different patterns of the after-death state. The two patterns agree in certain respects but differ in others.

DYING AND THE ETHERIC DOUBLE

The two views agree that, as a person approaches the point of dying, the etheric double, which transmits vitality to the dense physical body, withdraws, carrying with it the life force and the higher bodies. The slender magnetic thread—the “silver cord”—is finally all that holds it to the dying body. Then, in the last moments of consciousness, the events of the ending incarnation pass swiftly in review—a fact well attested by persons who have been near dying but brought back to life. Finally, at the moment of dying, the cord of etheric matter is broken, and the person, wrapped in the violet-gray etheric double, appears to float for a time above the dense physical body in a state of peaceful unconsciousness.

So viewed, the process of dying is not much different from that of going to sleep, except that in sleep the etheric double remains attached to the dense physical body, supplying it with vitality, whereas at the time of dying the double is withdrawn and the connection broken. Those present at the moment of withdrawal can be of great help to the one making the transition by remaining quiet and calm and without emotional resistance to what is taking place. After some time, varying somewhat but usually lasting for a number

of hours, the inner person or soul disengages itself from the etheric double and thus releases itself entirely from the physical world. The double then “dies” also and gradually disintegrates, while the person’s consciousness remains in the emotional body. This is another way of saying that the emotions outlive the physical body.

THE EMOTIONAL BODY IN LIFE AFTER DEATH

As noted in an earlier chapter, the emotions exist in a world more tenuous than any state of ordinarily visible matter—a field of existence with its own kinds of vibrations, from the very fine to the very coarse. After dying, the person is attracted to that level most characteristic of the habitual emotions during life. The emotional body has a kind of vague elemental consciousness of its own that feels the change when the separation from the etheric double takes place, and in order to protect itself and resist disintegration as long as possible, it begins immediately to rearrange its tenuous matter so that the denser, coarser vibrations form the outermost shell. Only such influences as can penetrate this surface layer will reach the consciousness within. Most newly dead persons therefore lapse into an unconscious sleep. A person who has lived a life governed by strong, coarse desires is, however, awake to the vibrations of that type in a sort of purgatory. There is no physical pain, of course, but that person must contend with desires that cannot be fulfilled because the physical vehicle needed to satisfy them no longer exists. This condition is not a punishment; it is merely the inevitable result of natural law, the working out of causes set in motion in the physical world.

Individuals of less coarse tastes and more controlled appetites will experience no such intense emotional stress because even the densest and coarsest portions of their emotional bodies contain no matter that vibrates at those frequencies. They dwell in a protected sleep while the content of the emotional body is sorted out into that which is to be discarded like a worn-out shell and that which can be absorbed into the permanent reincarnating individuality’s causal body. It is at this point that the two views diverge. One view sees the individual as sleeping through the entire postmortem experience in the emotional world and awakening only on the mental plane called Devachan, a kind of purely subjective heaven. This view was disseminated by early Theosophical teachers to counter the idea of

Spiritualists that mediums could be in contact with the souls of dead persons, who were thought to be living consciously and objectively after dying and to be able to communicate freely with the living and even to manifest physically in a séance. It is Theosophical tradition that the living cannot normally communicate with the dead through mediums, but only subjectively by rising in thought to their level.

The other view sees individuals as sleeping only through the coarser levels to which they do not resonate and then, when that part of the emotional body has been cast off and the higher levels of the emotional world are reached, as awakening to find life very similar to that which they left. The higher subplanes of the emotional world in this view are said to be very much like the pleasanter aspects of earth life, although less material. By the time the soul reaches those levels, the emotions have been refined and the thought forms are therefore unattached to passion; indeed, at this level, there is no matter that can respond to dense physical desires and thoughts. There is an important difference from physical life, however.

Thoughts are now visible, so deception is impossible; communication is at a level practically impossible for those in a physical body to comprehend. The worlds of emotion and thought have been called the “unobstructed universe,” where matter is so responsive that to think of a thing is immediately to construct it, although it may dissolve the moment the thought is gone. The dead are said to communicate readily with the living while the latter are asleep, but during waking hours they cannot usually get through to those whose consciousness is still centered in the physical world. Loving thoughts from living friends and prayers for the dead, if not accompanied by feelings of depression, are often a source of help and pleasure to those who have recently passed onto the emotional plane. Excessive grief on the part of those left behind, however, subjects the deceased to discomfort and may even hinder their progress for a time.

DEVACHAN AND THE MENTAL BODY

In either case—whether the dead sleep through the whole emotional postmortem experience or only the lower part of it—the emotional world is not eternal. Every person, whatever the quality of the person’s past life, is eventually cleansed of emotional desires. It has been estimated that between twenty and forty years of our time is the average length of the postmortem emotional experience. And then the individual awakes to

more favorable and pleasant surroundings. This awakening has been compared with the entrance into the heavenly life described in many religions. The special characteristic of the heaven world or Devachan, which exists from the four lower subplanes of the mental plane (which were mentioned in chapter 4 as the locus of the mental body) through the highest causal subplanes, is said to be an intensity of bliss. This is a world where evil and sorrow are impossible, for these have been worked out and left behind in the physical and emotional worlds. It is also a world in which the power to respond to aspirations is limited only by the individual's capacity to aspire. It is the land of one's heart's desire because in Devachan we create the world that best suits us. The experience of Devachan (a term that means "the land of the gods") is a consolation for every pain and disappointment of earthly life. Devachan is not a place but a state of consciousness in which energies have been stepped up to an immensely high level. The individual has the power to grasp every situation in its entirety. To think of a place is to be there; to think of beloved friends is to be with them. It is a world of indescribable happiness, realizing one's greatest aspirations.

THE CAUSAL BODY BETWEEN INCARNATIONS

Whatever the length of time spent in Devachan, it is appropriate to our personal needs. After those needs have been met on the lower four subplanes of the mental world, the individual awakens on the three higher subplanes, where all the immortal faculties gained during the past life have been incorporated into the causal body.

The immortal self, having made the round of an incarnation, has come home and dwells for a time on its own level. For the majority of individuals, this is only a short period in a rather dreamy state of consciousness, yet all realize the significance of the past life and store its residue of good for future use in the form of conscience and ideals. After a stay on the causal plane—shorter or longer as the case may be—the individual grows hungry for more experience. There comes a vision of the next incarnation, a glimpse of the road ahead. Then the individual is carried by the rhythmic life urge into

the process of accumulating a new set of bodies for the coming incarnation. The soul's own desire and need for more experience on lower planes brings it back again into the round of birth and death. This cycle is repeated again and again until the possibilities of learning and developing through this process are exhausted and the soul stands on the threshold of divinity.

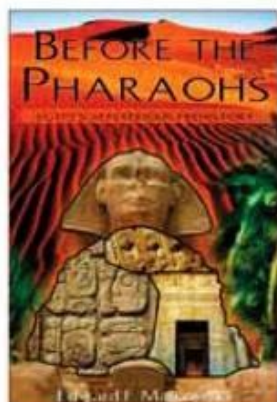
REFERENCES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY READING

- Algeo, *The Mirror of Life and Death*.
 Besant, *Death—And After*.
 Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, sections 7 "On the Various Post Mortem States" and 9 "On the Kama-Loka and Devachan."
 Layton, *Life, Your Great Adventure*, ch. 9 "Life after Death."
 Leadbeater, *The Life after Death*.
 Mehta, *The Journey with Death*. Perkins, *Through Death to Rebirth*.
 Smith, *Our Last Adventure*.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION—

1. Compare popular ideas about death with the Theosophical ideas given in this chapter.
2. List reasons and evidence for belief in life after death that appeal to you.
3. Describe the Theosophical understanding of the process of dying and the condition of the ordinary person immediately after death.
4. How does the emotional body rearrange itself in the after-death state?
5. How does Theosophy explain our responsibility for our own condition after dying?
6. How does Theosophy relate the level of our emotional life to our immediate experiences on the emotional plane with its various subplanes, in the after-death state?
7. What should be the attitude of mind and emotions on the part of the living toward the so-called dead?
8. How do the two Theosophical views of the after-death life differ from each other?
9. What determines the length of stay (a) in the emotional world, and (b) in the heaven world or Devachan?
10. What is the purpose of Devachan?
11. What follows Devachan?

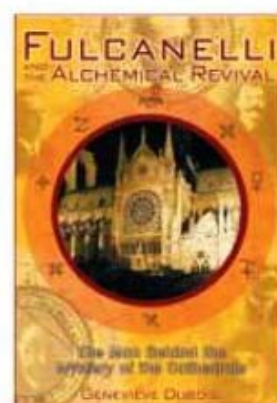
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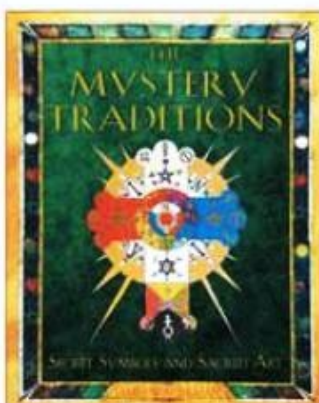


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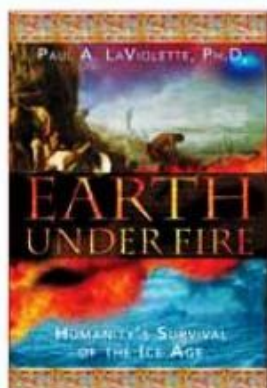


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