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Christ in the Heart

We have by no means yet exhausted the wonderful wealth of association which surrounds the idea of Christmas. We must not forget another and the most important aspect of the Coming of Christ — the coming within the heart of each individual, the development of the Christ-principle within us. To that principle we often give the name of *Buddhi*, which we translate as intuition. Yet indeed it means much more than intuition; it means the wisdom that knows, not by process of reasoning but by utter certainty. Its development must come to every man. That Christ-principle is in every one of us; it can be awakened — it is being awakened among us even now, and as it unfolds we realize the true brotherhood of man, because we understand the Fatherhood of God. And the knowledge of that is the supreme bliss. What can we do to bring it nearer to us?

C. W. Leadbeater

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 study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.*
- ☯ *To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being.*



BOOKSHOP AND LIBRARY

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	6 – 7:15 pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	Closed
Friday	1 – 4 pm
Saturday	10 am – 1 pm
Sunday & P/H	Closed



“The Theosophical Society in Perth”

Our Websites:

tsperth.com or
perth.theosophicalsociety.org.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.

Submissions

The closing date for all items for inclusion in the next edition of the Theosophical Link is:

1st January, 2024.



FIND OUR WEBSITE

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.

Mission Statement

To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual Self-transformation, and the Unity of all Life.

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.

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.

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You MUST include your name and the payment purpose with each transaction, so that we can identify it and process accordingly.

President's Report

Before I became president, I was heavily involved in the revitalisation of our exceptional Mt Helena Retreat Centre. I was fortunate to be supported by thirteen dedicated sub-committee members. During that period, our hard-working team put a great effort into tidying and making the place beautiful, comfortable and rentable. We subsequently have bookings not only from our TS members but also from outside organisations who hold a similar spiritual awareness and have the reverence for the environment that we do. We were lucky enough to find a new tenant in Haris House. We now have two country girls renting our two houses. They are very aware of their bush surroundings and have a love and reverence for the flora and fauna that is so very much appreciated.

Subsequently, nominating for president had never crossed my mind. When John Davey informed us that he was nominating for treasurer, I was uncertain where my place lay. However, when John asked me to consider the position of president, I did not pay too much attention to it but as the AGM drew closer, I thought, why not?

We are very fortunate to have a mix of current and former Executive Committee members who hold between them many years of expertise and experience. We also welcome one new member. This committee consists of:

President: Jean-Robert Hote

Vice-president: Adrian de Graaf

Secretary: Mary Hote

Treasurer: John Davey

Publicity officer: Hana O'Rourke

Additional Committee Members:

Li Farghaly

Kerry Holly

Shirley Martin

Rick Whittleston

I will take the opportunity to mention our **Branch Convention Business Meeting** which is usually held towards the end of November. When we know the date, we will make sure to let you know. It is only a ten-minute meeting before the Tuesday evening talk but it is important for members (only) to attend so the quorum of twenty is met.

As most of you know, we hold a **Christmas Party on Tuesday 12 December** which is the last day the Branch will be open. This evening is usually well attended and a fun night is the best way to round off the year. The refurbishment will start immediately after that. The plan is to reopen on the first Tuesday of February providing there are no delays in renovation. We will keep the members informed of any changes.

We wish you all a happy and safe festive season and I look forward to a positive and fruitful 2024 for all our members.



Jean-Robert Hote

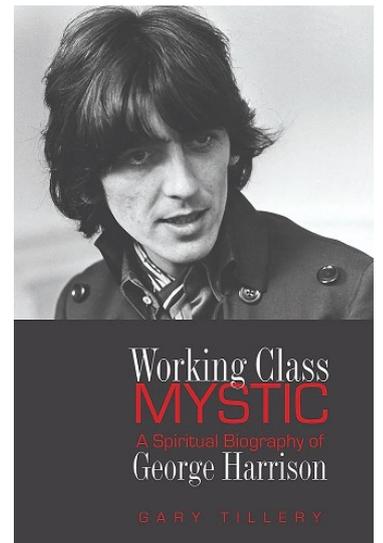
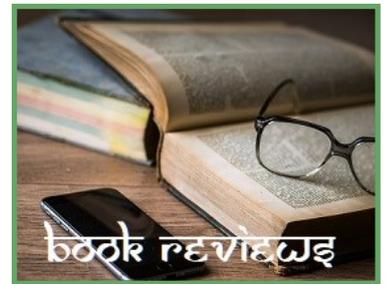
Working Class Mystic: A Spiritual Biography of George Harrison, by Gary Tillery

John Lennon called himself a working class hero. George Harrison was a working class mystic. Born in Liverpool as the son of a bus conductor and a shop assistant, for the first six years of his life he lived in a house with no indoor bathroom. This book gives an honest, in-depth view of Harrison's personal journey — from his blue-collar childhood to his role as a world-famous spiritual icon.

Author Gary Tillery's approach is warmly human and free of the fawning but insolent tone of most rock biographers. He frankly discusses the role drugs played in leading Harrison to mystical insight but emphasizes that he soon renounced psychedelics as a means to the spiritual path. It was with conscious commitment that Harrison journeyed to India, studied sitar with Ravi Shankar, practiced yoga, learned meditation from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and became a devotee of Hinduism.

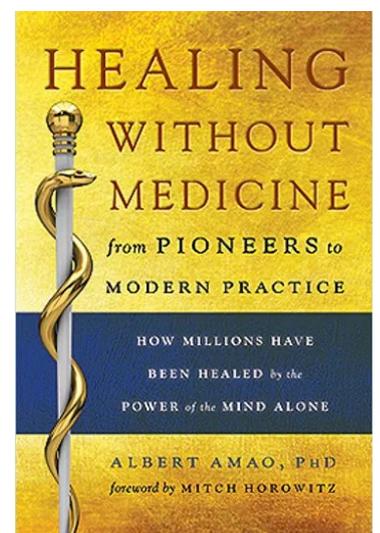
George worked hard to subdue his own ego and to understand the truth beyond appearances. He preferred to keep a low profile, but his empathy for suffering people led him to spearhead the first charitable rock-and-roll super event. And despite his wealth and fame, he was always delighted to slip on overalls and perform manual labour on his grounds. At ease with holy men discussing the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, he was ever the bloke from Liverpool whose father drove a bus, whose brothers were tradesmen, and who had worked himself as an apprentice electrician until the day destiny called.

Tillery's engaging narrative depicts Harrison as a sincere seeker who acted out of genuine care for humanity and used his celebrity to be of service in the world. Fans of all generations will treasure this book for the inspiring portrayal it gives of their beloved "quiet" Beatle.



Healing without Medicine: From Pioneers to Modern Practice, by Albert Amao, Ph.D.

As a man thinketh, so is he — thus is the biblical King Solomon often quoted by proponents of New Thought, one of the most influential native religious movements in America. Albert Amao provides an engaging and serious history of this and related movements from the eighteenth century to the present. His discussion ranges from Phineas P. Quimby, the father of New Thought, and Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, to Myrtle Fillmore, cofounder of Unity Church of Christianity, William James, the father of American psychology, and leaders in the emerging field of Energy Psychology. Amao's aim is to provide a rational explanation of the power of thought to heal the mind and body. All methods of mind/spiritual healing are self-healing, he says; we all have an inner capacity to heal ourselves. He examines cases of contemporary New Thought leaders who self-healed from "incurable" diseases free of medicine, and he describes the mechanism that triggered their healing. Their experiences have benefited millions of followers worldwide. The beauty of New Thought, says Amao, is that it empowers us to become conscious co-creators of our well-being and achieve success in other areas of life beyond recovering our health.



THE TRUTH THROUGH THEOSOPHY

BY ANNIE BESANT

FROM *THE THEOSOPHIST*, JULY 1937. PART 2. (CONTINUED)

III. PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS

CONSCIOUSNESS

Philosophically, Theosophy is idealistic; consciousness is primary, the one indubitable fact, which can neither be strengthened nor weakened by argument. "I am" is the testimony of consciousness to itself, and nought can disprove its witness, since every disproof, every argument, must be addressed to that same consciousness, and imply its existence. To the All-Self, matter is but the limitations imposed by Himself on His thoughts; to us, evolving in a universe which is the manifestation of our Logos, matter is His thought, limitations imposed on us by His thought and activity—limitations which we cannot transcend until we can realize ourselves in Him.

Human thought, though feeble and undeveloped, is of the same nature as divine thought, and increases its power over matter with its increasing growth; thought is the one creative and moulding power, and, as evolving man realizes this, and so clarifies his lower nature that this aspect of the self can work through it, he becomes the master of that lower nature and of his surroundings, the creator and controller of his destiny. By thought, mastering the science of physical nature, he bends it to his will and utilizes it; by thought, mastering the science of the emotions, he builds virtues and destroys vices;



by thought, mastering the science of mind, he subdues his turbulent energies into orderly obedience; by thought, directing will and controlling activity, he brings all things, within and without, into subjection to the self, "the inner ruler, immortal." Only by such fit rule and due subjection can man attain perfect health of body, emotions, and mind, and reach the highest good. Hence many of the practical Theosophical teachings deal with this power and control of thought.

CONTINUITY

The eternity of spirit—more loosely spoken of as the immortality of the soul—is an integral part of Theosophical philosophy. It is an inevitable deduction from the identity of nature of the human and the universal Self; "unborn, undying, perpetual", it is eternal as God Himself. The continuity of consciousness is equally inevitable, since the self is conscious and continuous, and in the self must consequently abide all its experiences, of which a successive survey is memory. The extent to which these memories are carried on by the material sheaths, or bodies, of the self—i.e., the survival of the individual and the person—will be better considered under the constitution of man.



REINCARNATION

The method of the unfolding of this continuous and conscious self in the human kingdom is by reincarnation. Reincarnation is, in fact, the only doctrine of immortality that philosophy can look at, as Hume said. (*)

Note: (*) David Hume, "Of the Immortality of the Soul", *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, ed. by T. H. Green and T. H. Grote (London 1875-1878), iv. 404.

It means that the self, having unfolded to the human stage, appropriates matter from the three worlds (see below) and builds it into bodies, suitable for life in those worlds, beginning in the stage of barbarism, as a savage of a low type. During earth-life he gathers experiences, pleasant and painful; after death he meets the results of these experiences—the lower in the intermediate world, where he

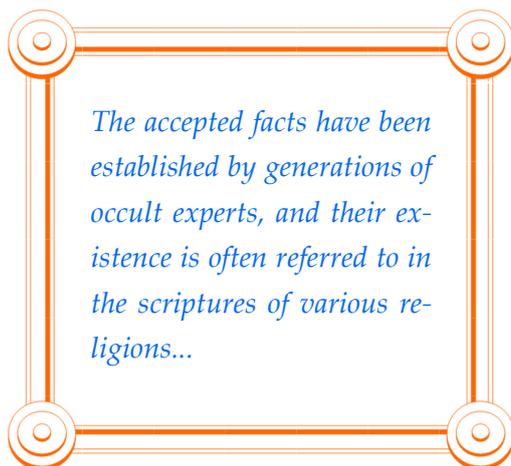
suffers in the appropriate body of matter belonging to that world, and converts all these experiences into mental and moral capacities. When all are thus converted, he returns to earth-life, bringing with him these capacities wrought out of experiences, into new bodies built to express and utilize them. In these he goes through a similar cycle, gathering, suffering, transmuting, and so on and on; each birth brings the fruitage of the preceding lives to start the new pilgrimage, and this is the inborn character and temperament, mental, moral, physical. Step by step he climbs the ladder, working under inflexible and inviolable laws, until he reaches the stature of the perfect man; he passes through all the classes of the school of life until he has mastered all that this world has to teach, and is *asekha* — he who has no more to learn. He is then a man, beyond birth and death, "fitted for immortality", ready for work in the larger life.

IV. SCIENTIFIC TEACHINGS

OCCULT SCIENCE

Theosophy differs from modern science in the fact that it includes under “science” investigations into superphysical worlds. Its methods are the same: investigation by observation of objective phenomena, reasoning on observation, framing of hypotheses, discovery of invariable sequences (i.e., of natural laws) repeated experiments to verify deductions, and formulation of results. It uses the senses for observation, but the senses intensified—super-senses, in fact—responding to vibrations of matter finer than that which affects the physical senses.

As with modern science, so with Theosophical — “occult science”, it is usually called — there is a body of accepted facts, laid down by recognized experts and largely reverified by later experiments, and a fringe of modern discoveries, constantly added to, revised, and modified. The accepted facts have been established by generations of occult experts, and their existence is often referred to in the scriptures of various religions; the more accessible of these are being constantly reverified by occult students today, but the larger cosmological facts are beyond our reach. Any discoveries made by students are subject to revision and modification, as observations are repeated and the instruments of observation are improved.



THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

The broad outline of this comes from the seers of the past, and is largely confirmed in the scriptures. It appears reasonable to us, and is congruous with the observations which we are able to make. The laws of analogy and recapitulation confirm it, for we see its outlines repeated in miniature within our own range of observation, and we see sequenc-

es rapidly repeated in miniature which the seers have described as occurring in a universe—as the aeonian evolution of the kingdoms of nature is mimicked in the growth of the embryo in the womb. A universe consists of seven kinds of matter, or planes, of which the densest is called physical or solid; the next finer, astral, or watery; the next, mental or fiery; the next, spiritual or airy; the next, superspiritual or ethereal; and the two finest, divine. What are called solar systems are all on the physical plane of the universe, and a solar system repeats within itself the seven kinds or states of matter, these subdivisions of the vast cosmic plane forming its planes, or worlds.

Within a solar system these subdivisions can be mostly studied by less developed seers, and we are in a field of research open to the occult student of our own day. We find in relation to our own earth: “physical matter”, all formed by aggregations of similar physical atoms, similar except that some are positive, some negative; these aggregations are grouped into solids, liquids, gases, and three kinds of ethers; “astral matter”, formed by aggregations of astral atoms, differing from physical atoms in shape, and grouped into states corresponding to the physical; “mental matter”, formed by aggregations of mental atoms, again distinguishable by their form, and again grouped as before; the “spiritual” and “superspiritual worlds” are formed on the same plan, each having its own type of atom and its own corresponding states of aggregation. Of the “divine worlds” we cannot directly speak.

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

This is analogous to that of the solar system, and hence the possibility of knowledge concerning it. As said, he is a fragment of the Universal Self,

and he is clothed in the matter of his system. In the divine world dwells his true self, the monad, and his consciousness appropriates matter from each of the five worlds below in order that he may know and conquer them; as the continuing "I", he uses matter from the superspiritual, spiritual, and the finer regions of the mental world; this is the "spiritual body" of which St. Paul speaks; it grows and evolves through the whole cycle of reincarnation, and beyond, but is not changed or lost in birth or death; probably St. Paul refers to this when he speaks of our "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens", which he says "we have". It is this spirit in the spiritual body which is the reincarnating Ego, or individual, though the term is often used to indicate only the consciousness working in the finer mental matter, in what is termed "the causal body", a subdivision of the spiritual taken separately. When the reincarnating Ego takes a new birth, he appropriates some of the coarser matter of the mental world for his "mental body", some of the matter of the astral world for his "astral body", some of the matter of the physical world for his "physical body"; his consciousness, in thinking, uses mental matter; in desiring or sensating, uses astral matter; in acting in the physical world, uses physical matter; these are "the three worlds" in which his evolution goes on, and in which he is affected by birth and death, and is a personality, or person, i.e., the individual, as limited in expression by grosser matter; the mental body is closely related to the brain, though not dependent on it, save for activity in the physical world; the astral body is mainly correlated with the cerebro-spinal and sympathetic ganglia and nerves, and the glands; the three bodies interpenetrate each other, mutually acting and reacting throughout waking life.

In sleep consciousness withdraws from the physical body, clothed still in its astral and mental garments, living then in the astral world, and sometimes, on its return, impressing on the physical brain some of its experiences in vivid and coherent "dreams"; it keeps in magnetic touch with its physical body. In death this magnetic touch is broken off, and the consciousness dwells for a while in the as-

tral world, called often "the intermediate world", in relation to those who have passed away from earth. After a while the astral body dies, and the man passes in the mental body into the mental world, or heaven, where he abides for a period extending to many centuries, the length depending chiefly on the richness of his intellectual, emotional, and artistic past life on earth.

When he has assimilated all the experiences of this nature accumulated on earth, the mental body disintegrates, the consciousness withdraws to the spiritual body with all it has gathered to enrich the Ego. Then the Ego builds a set of new bodies for a new pilgrimage in the three worlds, and returns to them by birth. Thus the evolution of man is carried on in three worlds, brooded over by the spirit — himself — the spirit garnering the results and unfolding thereby; he is an inhabitant of the three during waking life; of two during sleep and for a period after death; of one during his heavenly life.

The lowest, the physical body, is at present the most perfectly organized, and therefore the most capable of receiving impressions from without and transmitting them to the consciousness. The astral body is rapidly becoming organized, and its proper senses are developing, so that it is receiving and transmitting many impressions from the astral world, though generally with a lack of sharpness and accuracy; these include the phenomena of second-sight, premonitions, warnings, visions, perception of phantasms of the living and the dead, etc. — the phenomena to which modern psychology is paying so much attention. An increasing number of people are "sensitive", or "psychic", and are using the supersenses, i.e., the senses of the astral body, more or less consciously. The mental body is becoming well organized in educated people, but more in relation to its organ, the brain, than as an independent vehicle of consciousness, active in its own world. Consciousness, in the mental body, is in-turned rather than outward-turned.

The occultist, having by the practice of special methods — meditation, concentration, etc. — artificially forced the evolution of the astral and mental

bodies beyond the normal, is, as regards these, many centuries ahead of his time; he uses the supersenses for life in the astral and mental worlds in his waking consciousness, and thus carries on his investigations in them as the physical scientist does in the physical world. The dying of the three bodies, and the building of new ones for each successive life-period, is the cause of the loss of memory of past lives; that memory is in the reincarnating Ego, and is shared by the consciousness when animating the lower bodies only if, in those bodies, the man has realized himself as one with the higher.

THE LAW OF ACTION AND REACTION

This is universal, and exists in the worlds of emotion, thought, and spirit as much as in the physical world. Hence a man can build his character as scientifically as he can build up his body, and disregard of the mental and moral laws is as destructive of mental and moral health as disregard of physical laws is destructive of physical health. The study and utilizing of the laws, summed up as karma, forms an important part of Theosophical work.

EVOLUTION

The monad gradually unfolds his powers by coming into touch with matter and appropriating portions of it; he thus passes through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, until in a highly developed animal the intelligence reaches the human stage; thenceforward reincarnation under karma is his means of unfolding. Humanity, on our globe, takes on a fresh type — more delicately organized as to the nervous system — that of a root-race, when a considerable number of reincarnating Egos are ready to develop a higher quality of consciousness. The third, or Lemurian race, was the first to assume the really human type in the middle period of its evolution — the previous types being embryonic; the surviving remnants of the Lemurian are the negroes and the many negroid peoples scattered over the world. The fourth, or Atlantean, race with its seven subraces — of which the Toltec, Akkadian, Turanian, and Mongolian peoples are

typical — is still the most numerous. The fifth, or Aryan, race has already five subraces — the Aryans of India, the Mediterranean Aryans (Arabs, the later higher class Egyptians, etc.), the Iranians, Celts, and Teutons — and has yet to develop two more. These varying types afford to the reincarnating Egos the necessary varieties for their evolution, each Ego taking birth in the races and sub-races as often as is necessary for the unfolding of the qualities characteristic of each.

HUMAN PERFECTION

By repeated reincarnations under inviolable law, each man reaping exactly as he has sown, man reaches his temporary goal — human perfection. At the present stage of evolution it is possible for him to reach this goal in advance of the evolutionary term, which will last yet for many millions of years. By strenuous exertions and noble and unselfish living, he may attract the attention of the spiritual Guardians of mankind, who will teach him how to quicken his evolution, so that he may enter on “the Path of Holiness”, pass through its five initiations — or stages of widening consciousness — and become a “Master”, the last of the five initiations opening the gateway of superhuman evolution. He may then pass into other worlds, or enter the ranks of the Guardians of this world as he wills. From the hierarchy of these Guardians have come the Founders of world-religions, the lesser prophets and teachers being their disciples.



V. THE ETHICS OF THEOSOPHY

These are not definitely formulated into any code, but consist of the highest and purest teachings of the world's noblest saints, prophets, and founders of religions. All that is sweetest and most lofty in the world's Bibles, all that is most inspiring and ennobling in the writings of its philosophers and moralists, forms the ethics of Theosophy. As man lives by the highest ethic he can grasp, he becomes capable of appreciating ethic yet sublimer; the Theosophist

strives to live by the spirit of Christ rather than by any legal code, and, cultivating love, he hopes to be enlightened by the Lords of Love. Broadly speaking, that which works with the Divine Will in evolution is right; that which works against it is wrong; and the best examples of that will are found in such divine men as the Buddha and the Christ. These the Theosophist looks up to as examples, and strives to reproduce their likeness in himself. ॐ

TREE OF LIFE, BAHRAIN

by Andy Khong

Bahrain is a small island country in Western Asia situated on the Persian Gulf connected to Saudi Arabia via a causeway. The Tree of Life (known locally as Shara-jat al-Hayat) is an iconic landmark in Bahrain, a symbol of life and endurance, representing the resilience and strength of the Bahraini people.

The Tree of Life in Bahrain about 10 meters (33 feet) high, is a solitary *Prosopis Cineraria* tree (species of flowering tree from the legume pea), that has managed to survive in the middle of a desert for over 400 years, and its remarkable ability to survive in such an arid environment has made it a symbol of resilience and natural beauty; and has become synonymous with the country's heritage and cultural identity. Despite being situated in the middle of the desert, with no visible source of water, the tree continues to thrive and is considered a mystery.

There are several factors that have contributed to the survival of the Tree of Life in Bahrain. First, the tree has deep roots that allow it to access water from underground sources, even during periods of drought. In addition, the tree has adapted to the harsh desert climate by developing a thick trunk and small, waxy leaves that help it to conserve water.

Another factor that has helped the Tree of Life to survive is the cultural significance it holds for the people of Bahrain. The tree is considered a natural wonder and a symbol of the country's heritage, and efforts have been made to protect it from development and other threats.



Map of Bahrain



The Tree of Life (known locally as Sharajat al-Hayat), lush green miracle in the desert without the gift of rain or water supply.

Overall, the survival of the Tree of Life in Bahrain is a testament to the resilience of nature, and the importance of preserving the natural world. It is a reminder that even in the most challenging environments, life can find a way to thrive and adapt. Standing under this majestic tree will envelope you with energy, and fill you with tranquility.

It is a popular tourist destination about 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Bahrain's capital, Manama, and is considered one of the must-visit attractions in Bahrain. If you are ever in Bahrain, go and look at this tree which baffles and inspires humanity.

BABYLON

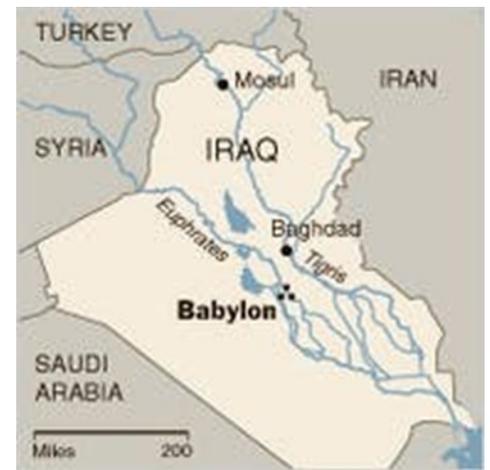
by Andy Khong

The remains of Babylon is in present day city of Hillah, about 85 km (53 miles) south of Baghdad, Iraq. It was the capital city of the Babylonian Empire built around the banks of the Euphrates River. It is well known for the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon is attributed to Nebuchadnezzar II who built it around 600 BCE for his wife Amytis, who missed the greenery of her homeland.

The Tower of Babel was heart of the vibrant Babylon metropolis. According to Book of Genesis (Bible), the Babylonians under the leadership of Nimrod (Noah's Great Grandson) decided to build a ziggurat* tower to reach up to the heavens. Upon seeing this, God confuses the language (creates multiple languages) of the workers so they couldn't understand each other; hence the Tower was never completed, and people scattered to different lands.

According to archaeologists and historians, people who lived in Babylon practiced polytheism – the worship of more than one God, and each city in ancient Mesopotamia (present day Iraq) had a patron God. Marduk was the patron God of Babylon (being Lord of the Gods of Heaven and Earth), and it was Nebuchadnezzar II who commissioned the completion of the ziggurat* Tower of Babel which was almost 100m (328 feet) tall; however, there are no remains of the tower today.

[*A ziggurat is a massive structure in the form of a pyramidal tower with a rectangular base, built in successive stages with a number of stories or terraces (usually 2 to 7), outside staircases, and a temple/shrine at the top. The legendary Tower of Babel mentioned in Book of Genesis is built as a ziggurat. Sloping sides and terraces of ziggurats were usually landscaped with trees, plants, and shrubs e.g. the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. During the ancient times, people believed that Gods lived in the sky and the top of the ziggurat is where Priests could commune with a patron deity on behalf of the people by holding religious ceremonies. Each ancient city would have a different patron deity e.g. Nanna, the Moon God was patron of Ur city].



Map showing location of Babylon.



Hanging Gardens of Babylon.



Mušhuššu-Dragon at Ishtar Gate in Babylon.

Although no one lives there today, you could visit Babylon and see treasures such as Ishtar Gate, and the Lion of Babylon. Dating back to 1600 BCE, the Ishtar Gate is one of the 8 main gates that provided entry to the city of Babylon. Figures of bulls (symbols of Adad, God of Weather), mušhuššu-dragons* (mythological symbols of Marduk, God of Creation, Water, Agriculture, Justice, Medicine, and Magic), and lions (symbols of Ishtar, Goddess of Fertility, Love, War, & Sex) are adorned on Ishtar Gate facing visitors to protect the city from evil influences, and give blessings of good luck

[*ghastly looking hybrid dragons with a scaly body, long neck and tail, lion arms, eagle legs, curly horns, and a snake-like tongue]. The Lion of Babylon is a 2600 year old basalt statue of a lion trampling a man, a symbol of power in overcoming misfortune, and enemies.



Tower of Babel.



Ishtar Gate



Lion of Babylon

According to Babylonian records, Alexander the Great died in the south Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II sometime in June 323 BCE in Babylon. The ruins of this large and ornately decorated palace is located south of Ishtar Gate and has been reconstructed today. Some archaeologists believe that a maze of foundations next to the reconstructed Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II may be the site of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

When Saddam Hussein was in power, he built more than 100 opulent palaces and villas. During the 1980s, Saddam Hussein decided to envision himself as Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II (who ruled from 605 to 563 BCE), and spent millions reconstructing Babylon. A new Palace was needed by Saddam Hussein to overlook Babylon, and Qawarish village stood in the perfect location. In 1986, Saddam's workers bulldozed the village which was made up of 120 houses to build the location of his Palace. Today the Palace is in a state of neglect having been looted, gutted, and full of graffiti.



View of Babylon from Saddam Hussein's Palace (formerly Qawarish village).



Exterior view of Saddam Hussein's Palace in Babylon.

King Nebuchadnezzar II first seized the Kingdom of Judah and captured Jerusalem in 597 BCE, deporting King Jehoiachin to Babylon along with 10,000 prominent citizens, 7,000 craftsmen, and 1,000 blacksmiths (according to the *Book of Kings*). Zedekiah (Jehoiachin's Uncle) was then installed as puppet-king of Judah but when he rebelled against Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar brutally crushed it in 587 BCE in the second siege of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, which culminated in the destruction of King Solomon's Temple (First Temple). It is believed that after this seizure, 20,000 people, about 25% of the population were deported to Babylon; with a further deportation in 582 BCE. Because Nebuchadnezzar II had orchestrated the "*Babylonian Captivity*", Hebrew authors had no love for him nor Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar II and Babylon receive poor treatment in the Bible — being described as a tyrant, and a city of sin and evil. Although depicted negatively by Hebrew scribe, this does not mean those narratives are historically accurate. Nebuchadnezzar II is depicted from other sources in the ancient world as a great king who restored Babylon and transformed it into a city of glory and light, and a centre for the arts and intellectual pursuits.



Interior of Saddam Hussein's Palace in Babylon.



View of Euphrates River from Saddam Hussein's Palace in Babylon.

The following is part of the lyrics of the song, "**By the Rivers of Babylon**", from the 1978 album *Nightflight to Venus*, by artist band Boney M:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down
Yeah, we wept, when we remembered Zion
By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down
Yeah, we wept, when we remembered Zion

There the wicked
Carried us away in captivity
Required from us a song

Now how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?



View of a ceiling in Saddam Hussein's Palace.

The song is based on lamentations of the Jewish people from Kingdom of Judah subjected to *Babylonian Captivity* by Nebuchadnezzar II; living in a society (Babylon) that restricts people's freedom and controls them by using force, and the longing for freedom to return to Zion [Zion = Jerusalem and the land of Israel].

In the past, it was difficult to visit Iraq and cumbersome to obtain a tourist visa. Most tourists in previous years visited Kurdistan (northern Iraq), an autonomous region that allowed most nationalities in without the need to obtain a tourist visa before arrival. Around March 2021, Iraq introduced Visa on Arrival (VOA) for most nationalities including Australians. The VOA is an easy process at Baghdad Airport – fill in a form, pay the visa fee, and your tourist visa will be ready in a few minutes. When you visit Iraq, you will receive unprecedented doses of hospitality and generosity from the Iraqi people!

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

by P. E. Green

November 1985



St. Augustine once said that “the very thing that we call the Christian religion was not wanting among the ancients from the beginning of the human race”.

Manly P. Hall reminds us that Christianity has taken unto itself many of the philosophies and concepts of the ancient and medieval pagan worlds. For example:

“The Christian cross comes from Egypt and India; the triple mitre from the faith of the Mithraics; the shepherd’s crook from the Hermetic Mysteries and Greece; the immaculate conception from India; the transfiguration from Persia; and the trinity from the Brahmans. The Virgin Mary, as the Mother of Christ, is found in a dozen different faiths. The church steeple is an adaptation of Egyptian obelisks and pyramids.”

... concluding that a truly sincere study of the Christian faith proves that it is the evolutionary outgrowth of ancient doctrines, for “there is an evolu-

tion in religion as well as in physical form. In the 4th Century when Pope Julius I decided to establish 25th December as the feast of the birth of Christ, he was really adopting two important pagan festivals, the Roman feast of Saturnalia and the Norse feast of Yule. The spirit of Christmas descends to us largely through a group of symbols long associated with the festivities of the season. These symbols may be termed archetypal, for they reveal the gradual growth of fundamental ideas subjected to new interpretations”.

In *Symbolism, The Universal Language*, J.C. Cooper tells us that “the origin of festivals such as Christmas lay in the need for man making himself practically and ritually one with the times, seasons and rhythms of nature, especially where the climate varied from one extreme to the other between the seasons. Various gods were associated with the sun and vegetation, and it was obvious that their power died towards the end of the year, but regained life and vigour as the new year came and the days lengthened once more. The Winter Solstice was the dividing point between this death and rebirth, and 25th December was the date most universally chosen for the Dying God’s rebirth festival. He represented the ever-dying, ever renewing cycle of nature”.

(Manly P. Hall): “All things grow from their proper seeds and unfold the life within them, nourished and sustained by universal laws. Of all wonderful things, the most immanent was the miracle of generation. The seed which seemed lifeless and very small was planted in the earth. The sun shone and the rains came, and from the dark womb of the soil, life was released. The miracle of the germinating seed was accepted as a spiritual symbol of life, death and resurrection.”

The mystery of the seasons was closely associated with the revolution of the sun. In pagan times, the Romans marked 25th December on the old calendar with the words “*Natalis Solis Invicti*”, the “Birthday of the Invincible Sun”.

The Persians worshipped the same god as Mithra, the Solar Lord, whom they caused to be born in a grotto, just as he is represented being born in a stable in the Christian faith. The Virgin Mother giving birth to the Sun God, which Christianity has so faithfully preserved, is a reminder of the inscription concerning her Egyptian prototype, Isis, which appeared on the Temple of Sais — “the fruit which I have brought forth is the Sun”.

Among certain of the Arabian and Persian Astronomers, the three stars forming the sword belt of Orion were called the Magi, who came to pay homage to the young Sun God. In *Mankind, Their Origin and Destiny*, we read “In Cancer, which had risen to the meridian at midnight, is the Constellation of the Stable and the Ass. The ancients called it Praesepe Jovis. In the north, the stars of the Bear are seen, called by the Arabians Martha and Mary, and also the coffin of Lazarus”. Thus the esotericism of pagandom was embodied in Christianity, although its keys are lost. The ancient priests of Persia, whom we call the Magi, living in the valley of the Euphrates, studied the stars and the motions of the heavens from their tall towers in the desert. They measured the seasons and discovered the three long dark nights which accompanied the Winter Solstice, after which it was noted that the days began to lengthen. So they lit their sacred fires and did honour to the reborn God of Light. In Greece there were processions of rejoicing. There were midwinter rituals at Delphi, celebrating the rebirth of the deity Dionysus, who was represented as a “cradled infant born from the sea”. In the great sanctuary of the State Mysteries of Eleusis, the holy birth was re-enacted in the quiet hour of midnight”.

Corinne Heline, in *Colour and Music*, says: “aptly, the Winter Solstice has been referred to us as an observance looking towards the coming of the Great Light. As far back as is known, this season has been celebrated by a ritual called the Vigil Of The Light. The first observances were in caves or mounds; later, these gave way to temples, but there were always lights and a midnight vigil of adoration. With the advent of Christ, the observance became the Christ-mass”.



(Cooper): Other strong influences came from the Gallic, Teutonic, Scandinavian and Celtic traditions of Yuletide. “Yule” is said by some to be derived from the Gallic “gule”, a wheel, probably representing the wheel of the turning sun and the revolution from the old to the new. Yule also symbolised the return of chaos and primeval darkness necessary before the new year can be born, a darkness and formlessness also symbolic of life in the womb before birth. It is the Regressus Ad Uterus of myth and initiation rites. The yule log was ritually burned at the end of the old year to signify the death of winter and the rising heat and power of the sun. The log was of oak, the Cosmic Tree of the Druids.

The pine, the fir, the evergreen have long been associated with the idea of immortality because they remain green during the long winter period. Sprigs of acacia, cypress, cedar or fir were used to decorate the ancient altars.

The pine of Attis and the fir of Woden have continued to live as the Christmas Tree. With the tree, Christianity also took over the lights and luminous balls that represent the sun, the moon and the stars in the branches of the Cosmic Tree forming the canopy of the universe, but in addition, they signified Christ as the Light of the World. The Christmas Tree, so common among us, was equally common in Pagan Rome and Egypt. In Egypt, the palm tree denoted the Pagan Messiah as Baal-Tamar, in Rome, the fir tree symbolically represented him as Baal-Bereth. The mother of Adonis, the Sun God, was mystically said to have been changed into a tree, and when in that state, to have brought forth her divine son (A. Hislop, *The Two Babylons*).

Holly was sacred to Saturn and was one of the evergreens used to deck his temples at the Saturnalia. It was also an attribute of the sun gods and signifies joy, goodwill, health and happiness. Christianity took it over as a symbol of the crucifixion. Its wood is sometimes taken as the tree of the cross, as are also the oak wood and the aspen, and its spikes are the crown of thorns and the passion, with the berries as the blood of Christ”.

The priests of ancient Britain were called the Druids, or **Men Of The Oak Tree**. At the winter solstice “these great bearded patriarchs, clad in flowing white robes, entered their sacred groves to cut the mistletoe, carrying knives of beaten gold. The oak and the mistletoe were sacred to the Druids as the masculine and feminine powers in nature. Growing out of the oak, mistletoe was taken as representing the life force or essence of the oak tree and was therefore a divine substance. It was believed that it grew as a result of the branch being struck by lightning. This gave it a special spiritual quality, as anything or anyone struck by lightning was said to be favoured by the gods! Perhaps we can tie this in with the old saying “those whom the gods love, die young.”

The white berries and bright green leaves were used to make wreaths around the crude monolithic atones of their altars. Stonehenge, on Salisbury Plain, in England, still stands as an ancient ring of huge stones as a reminder of this ancient faith. It was in places like this that the early Britons gathered to venerate the return of the sun. The early worshippers regarded the cycle of the sun god as direct evidence of divine providence.”

The old Roman feast of Saturnalia, the Feast of Saturn, was a long, lusty festival which terminated on Christmas Eve. It marked the death of the old year and the birth of the new, the passage from chaos to cosmos. Transvestism was a feature of the time of chaos in Saturnalia, orgies, carnivals, etc., signifying a return to Chaos. Babylon held twelve days of duel between Chaos and Cosmos; in Christianity, these are the Twelve Days of Christmas. I wonder if we can trace in the disorder, chaos and disharmony of this present day, the old cyclic pattern of the Saturnalia, putting our trust in the promised return from Chaos to Cosmos in the new Aquarian Age about to dawn. How wise of our own International Order of Co-Freemasonry to take as its motto the old adage — **Order Out Of Chaos**.

Manly P. Hall says: “Whatever the motive may have been, it was not actually the legislation of men or priests and bishops that established Christmas. It was an intuitional recognition of the appropriateness of the great sun symbolism. There were a number of philosopher-mystics among the early Christians, and they gradually identified Christ with the sun. They saw in Him the Light of the World. If Christ was the Light of the World, was He not the true sun hero, the Light Bearer?” It is always important to see beyond the symbol, and not mistake it

for reality. The first Christians found it expedient to hold their celebrations when the Romans were fully engaged in their own Saturnalian revelries, when they were much too occupied with their own affairs to be likely to molest the Christians. Later, official permission was given to meet on certain days, and gradually it became an accepted tradition.

To my mind, we should be grateful to have inherited these pagan and mediaeval customs which have enriched our own Christian festivities with symbolism and pageantry. The old has been gracefully and colourfully absorbed into the new. On the fast approaching Christmas Day of 25th December, when we repeat the words “Christ our Lord is born this day”, we perpetuate the devotion and veneration of the ancient Egyptians who paid homage to the divine mother Isis and her new born son, Horus, and Holy Night in Ancient Greece when “to the accompaniment of a flute, and when the cock crowed, neophytes descended with lighted torches to an underground chapel and paid reverence to the image of a Babe who bore on brow, hands, knees and feet a shining cross of gold. Seven times the Babe was carried in a processional around the Inner Temple then back to the underground sanctuary, while the chorus chanted “at this hour today Kore (the Virgin) bore Aeon (the New Age or Year). Truly may it be said that “Save by the Old Road none attain the new, and from the Ancient Hills alone we catch the view”. (Patmore).

Let me end with these words of Edward Irving: “We ought not to wonder, therefore, that the Holy Spirit continually uses the emblems or symbols derived from vegetable and human life — the sowing of the seed and the harvest, the birth of the child and the full grown man, to set forth spiritual things withal... However much our men of taste and sentiment do laugh at the spiritualisings of our fathers, I dare to believe and to say, that to spiritualise nature is rightly to interpret nature, and that the greater part of our Lord’s discourses are nothing but divine exercises of this kind, and so of His parables also.”

Rightly does Gaskell describe a Sacred Festival such as Christmas as “a symbolic performance to celebrate an auspicious occasion in the life and progress of the soul”, following the age-old alchemical formula of the “cyclic order of nature; of the formation, development and eventual dissolution of the ALL, followed by its inevitable Re-Formation or resurrection” — **Order Out Of Chaos** indeed.





TOS News



The Theosophical Order of Service was formed to give members of the TS a platform in which to do service to humanity, as the three ideals of Theosophy are Study, Meditation and Service.

We are a very small dedicated group and would welcome anyone who feels they would like to do some service for humanity with love.

Love and Blessings to all,

Gailene Wester

TOS Chairperson — gailenefran@gmail.com — 0488 019 349

Taize World Peace music meditation:

Held on first Fridays of each month @ 6:00 pm

Cnr. Brewer and Lacey Sts., Perth



The Theosophical Order of Service

'A union of all who love in the service of all that suffers'

Founded in February 1908



Our Library



Please note the borrowing conditions that apply for TS Members:

1. Members are entitled to borrow a total of 3 books and/or DVDs/CDs at a time for a period of 3 weeks.
2. Borrowed items are not transferable to other members and must not be lent to another person.
3. Renewal of borrowed items may be done by telephone the first time, but items must be returned to the Library before a second renewal can be given. No further renewals can then be given.

PLEASE NOTE



The **Christmas Party** will be the last event this year held on Tuesday Night — 12/12/2023.

The **Library** will be closed from the 16/12/2023 until 17/1/2024.

Our regular **Tuesday Night Talks** will start again on Tuesday 6/2/2024.

This will also be the date that the Branch and Office will re-open. However, due to the planned refurbishment, these dates may be reviewed. A due notice will be sent out accordingly.

Merry Christmas Everyone!



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

A reminder to all members who have over 1 year's membership that your annual membership dues are payable by no later than 30th November. Our Rules require that members who do not renew by this date will be lapsed from membership. Members of less than 1 year will be sent a separate reminder notice, when due, of the pro-rata amount payable.

Member	(M)	\$75
Pensioner/Student (full time only)/Unemployed	(P)	\$50

Note: The term pensioner includes unemployed and full time (only) student members. Seniors card holders and self-funded retirees do not qualify for the aged pensioner rate. Please advise if your category status has changed and needs to be updated or amended and that if you are claiming the discounted aged pensioner rate you actually qualify for this category.

An EFT payment can be made directly to our NAB account: BSB 086 488 — A/C 697487911. Please ensure you include your surname and what it is for e.g. [Smith J. - Dues](#) when entering the payment details.

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** – Are strictly for current Perth and visiting TS members only. Non-members will not be admitted to the meeting.

All sessions, unless otherwise stated, run from 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM

All of the contents and images presented, and opinions expressed in the lectures are fully the responsibility of the speaker, and not necessarily those of the Theosophical Society in Perth.

NOVEMBER

<p>Tue 7 November General Meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Buddhist Cosmology and its Relevance to the Meditator, by Sue Lee</p> <p>Sue Lee describes the Buddhist view of the various planes of existence that are manifest in the cosmos, the beings that inhabit them, and the light they can shed on the deep states of peace that is possible to reach in meditation.</p>
<p>Tue 14 November General Meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Seven Hermetic Principles, by Richard Glenk</p> <p>Richard will provide insights into the Seven Hermetic Principles with special reference to the fourth principle – the Principle of Polarity and how understanding of this ancient wisdom is so needed in modern times.</p>
<p>Tue 21 November General Meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Impact of Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach from Capri to Castlecrag, by Annette Condello</p> <p>German artist Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach (1851-1913) was a follower of theosophical principles. He produced works involving the modern landscape conservation of the Isle of Capri off the coast of Naples in Italy. Considering the relevance of Diefenbach's interactions with the Theosophical movement in Italy and Switzerland, this talk will trace the early modern development of landscape conservation in Capri and its impact on suburban Castlecrag in Australia.</p>
<p>Tue 28 November General Meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Convention Business Meeting – Members only (very short), followed by The importance of Practice on the Esoteric Path. Part 2, by James Kelly</p> <p>Is theoretical knowledge enough to liberate the human mind? Is intellectual understanding what the great teachers and sages of antiquity pronounced? When walking the esoteric path one notices a very clear distinction between intellectual study and practical work. Both have their place in the timeless systems of self-transformation, yet one is often overlooked in today's age of information.</p>

DECEMBER

**Tue 5 December
Public Meeting**

Theosophy Unlimited, by Tina Hentisz

Theosophical leaders from Blavatsky onwards, and especially Annie Besant, have stressed the need for ongoing research and review while keeping alive the noble ideals of the fundamental concepts. We explore and discuss the 10 ideas that support and substantiate the Divine Wisdom in a modern world through a pictorial wonderland.

**Tue 12 December
General Meeting**

Christmas Party

Christmas celebrations, conversations and music entertainment at the Perth Branch. Family and friends welcome. Consider bringing a small plate of food to share.



Next Meeting: Tuesday, 6th February 2024.

The Three Truths

There are three truths which are absolute and cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

- ☯ The Soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor has no limit.
- ☯ 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.
- ☯ 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 is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man.
Feed the hungry with them.**

(From *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, by Mabel Collins)



2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION PERTH

20 – 26 January 2024

★ **Members Only** ★

Featured Speaker: Tim Boyd – International President of the Theosophical Society

Venue: St Catherine's on Park, University of Western Australia, Perth

Theme: **The Wisdom Traditions, The Great Teachers, The One Life**

Earlybird Registration Fee is \$20 if received by 31/08/2023. All registrations received after this date \$40.

Registration Deadline for guaranteed accommodation, live-in registrants – **Friday 17 November 2023.**

Download the Registration Form at theosophicalsociety.org.au/events/2024-national-convention-perth

Enquiries: Convention Secretary – office@theosophicalsociety.org.au or on (02) 9264 6404.

Early registrations are encouraged. We look forward to meeting you in Perth.



It is when the heart is silent that the inspiration dawns and vision grows clear. In the silent watches of the night, in the stillness of the desert, on the lonely mountain top, in the hush of the forest, under the silvered canopy of stars, passions lose their power, illumination floods the mind, the heart is filled, and the spirit takes wings and soars to heaven.

A. E. Powell

Theosophical Art Retreat

Mt Helena



It's the season of Djilba: A time of transition away from winter and into spring. Our third Art Retreat Weekend at the Mt Helena Theosophical Retreat took place on the weekend of the 26th and 27th of August. It was incredibly wonderful relaxing with like-minded people. Reflective conversations about life, family and spirituality was a wonderful reprieve from the hectic urban life.

We all inspired each other to work individually as well as coming together to create a unique natural land artwork (figure 1) by tracing an image of 'self' and surrounding it with tree bark strips to signify the unseen energy rays that emit out from within. The magpies were fascinated throughout the process and no doubt, will play a part in the artwork's impermanence.

We also painted river stones sitting out in the sun and soaking up the beauty and the sounds of silence around us. We used some of them as Chakras within the ground sculpture.

The tranquility, beauty and specialness of Mt Helena never fail to relax and rejuvenate those lucky souls who share its magic.

Shelley Orchard and Antony Rieck

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 possible future inclusions in the Link. Email your submissions to info@tsperth.com.au — these will be gratefully accepted. The closing date for all items for inclusion in the next edition of the Theosophical Link is: **1st January, 2024**.

Your contributions and any feedback are truly appreciated. A big Thank-You to our regular contributors!