

The MULTITUDINOUS UNIVERSE

The Blavatsky Lecture at 100



BLAVATSKY LECTURE 2017
by Michael Gomes

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A Multitudinous Universe: The Blavatsky Lecture at 100

Michael Gomes

The Blavatsky Lecture is one of the most prestigious presentations in the Theosophical Society. Partly because of its longevity, continuity, subject matter, the eminence of its presenters, and the fact that for a hundred years these lectures have been available as separate publications, the Blavatsky Lecture has achieved a unique position among theosophical talks. It is the equivalent of the Academy Awards of Theosophy.

Although the first Blavatsky Lecture was delivered in 1918 at the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in England, its origin lay a year earlier. L. C. Soper documents in his 1956 *The Opening of the Doors of the Mind* (p. 5) that

"The Blavatsky Lectures were instituted by a resolution of the Executive Committee of The Theosophical Society in England in 1917, which directed that a 'Blavatsky Lecture on the analogy of the Hibbert and Gifford Lectures be...instituted which...shall take the form of a speech or paper based on some original research in connection with the writings of Mme. Blavatsky."

Products of the Nineteenth Century passion for learning, the annual Hibbert and Gifford Lectures, which helped create an interest in comparative religion, drew on some of the most noted scholars in the field of religion and resulted in wide audiences, for many of these lectures became popular books. William James' Gifford Lectures delivered in Edinburgh in 1901 were published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The scope of the Hibbert and Gifford Lectures is aptly summed up in the title of the recent Hibbert Lecture by Karen Armstrong "Spirituality and global citizenship."

In the Introduction to the first Blavatsky Lecture given in 1918, the idea was credited to D. N. Dunlop, a long-time student of H. P. Blavatsky's writings, who gave one in 1920 after which he departed from the Theosophical Society.



Daniel Dunlop

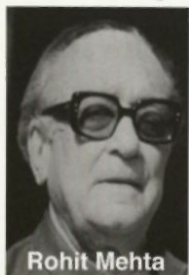
So, the model at its inception was a high one, it would be a means through which subjects of relevance to Theosophy would be expounded for the elucidation and uplift of the movement. It was meant to set a standard that could inspire others. And Theosophists set out to fulfill this directive with a dedication that would span a century and would draw on some of the best and brightest of Theosophy.

Reading through the Blavatsky Lectures that have appeared over the past hundred years, I have identified a number of thematic structures that allow classification into the following categories:

1. **Studies in Consciousness**
2. **Theosophical Living**
3. **Secret Doctrine Commentaries**
4. **Theosophical History**

1. STUDIES IN CONSCIOUSNESS

Many of the early talks dealt with interpreting Theosophy in light of the emerging field of Psychology. This subject held such a fascination for Theosophists that as recent as 1997 when Edi Bilimoria gave his Blavatsky Lecture, he felt it necessary to review contemporary scientific theories about the nature of human conscious.

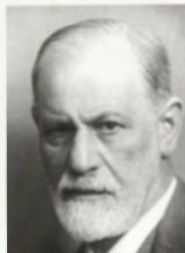


Rohit Mehta

Dudley Gower, in his 1957 *The Reign of the Spirit* (p. 25), supplies the following insightful quote from Rohit Mehta, "We are...entering a psychological phase in the understanding of Theosophy. In this age

a psychological approach and presentation of Theosophy have become imperative. Man's problems have become greatly intensified at the psychological level. He wants to know whether Theosophy can help him deal with these problems."

Theosophical contributions to the study of the mind presented in the Blavatsky Lectures were in a certain sense a response to the ideas of some of the leading psychoanalytical theorists at the time, such as Freud, who had posited that "The theory of repression is the pillar upon which the edifice of psychoanalysis rests." ("History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, New York: Modern Library, 1995, p. 907.) Theosophists tended to see the psychological process as part of a larger narrative: Life—Mind—Consciousness.



Sigmund Freud

Iwan A. Hawiczek, in *Mankind To-Day and To-morrow* (1937, p. 6), remarks that "Evolution in its human phase is fundamentally concerned with the development of self-consciousness in the phenomenal worlds, and in this work Mind is the essential constituent." For E. L. Gardner, in his 1918 *Matter is the Shadow of Spirit*, the Blavatsky Lecture that launched the series, "Mind is the gateway through which abstract ideas may emerge as concrete realities....Mind is where ideas are clothed, where they become actual: it is the welcome birthplace of the concrete" (p. 15.)



Edward Gardner

In Theosophical terminology, "buddhi is realization of life, while manas is realization of things, and atma is realization of self," as Ernest Wood suggested in his 1924 *Personal Psychology and the Sub-Conscious Mind* (p. 15). "The higher self grows from within through the exercise of its powers in the personality...The lower self is only the higher self making a mistake" (p. 19). Another approach in Theosophical terms can be found in Adam Warcup's 1981 *An Inquiry into the Nature of Mind*.

N. Sri Ram in *Consciousness: Its Nature and Action*, 1964, saw the working of the mind not as a series of mental processes but intrinsically as the nature of consciousness. "Life is nothing but consciousness completely conditioned by the organism it uses. In each organism it is a succession of states in which there is both experiencing and action, the capacity to experience and act being limited by the nature of the organism" (2002, p. 6). So, there can be sensitiveness of a more subtle or deeper nature. "Ordinarily we are aware only of a few things superficially, and let the others pass by" (p. 9). "Consciousness is sensitiveness itself" (p. 10). As Blavatsky had observed, there are enormous mysteries connected with the lower manas.



N Sri Ram

2. THEOSOPHICAL LIVING

Once the "self" had been identified, the "person" analyzed, the "I" objectified, it was only natural that the interaction and responsibilities of the individual with the world would be seen as an area of its development. For the Self is revealed in our relations with others. It should not be surprising that the first to pull all these strands together into what we might now call Theosophical Living was Ianthe Hoskins in her 1950 Blavatsky Lecture *The Science of Spirituality*.

Previous Blavatsky Lectures had dealt with a diverse amount of things, disparate subjects, the mechanics of Theosophy. For Ianthe, "The Science of Spirituality makes intelligible both the problems of human life and the attempts of individuals and of groups to find a satisfying solution. The Ancient Wisdom declares that Life is One, but man, in the valley of the shadow, sees only many-ness and goes from death to death. In separation and in pain he gathers the fruit of



Ianthe Hoskins

individuality; in renunciation and in love he may gather the Wisdom of the Self" (p. 30).

The beneficent experience of this Wisdom of the Self is central to the theme of later Blavatsky Lectures such as Joy Mills' 1978 ***The Human Journey - Quest for Self-Transformation***, Radha Burnier's 1979 ***Self-Knowledge in the Light of Theosophy*** and a number of others. The move from knowledge to wisdom is worth noting, and then to practice as can be seen in a trio of Lectures dealing with the importance of the subject: Muriel Daw's 1987 ***Paramitas of Perfection***, Betty Bland's 2006 ***The Virtuous Key***, and Bhupendra Vora's 2011 ***The Bodhisattva Path***. These presentations stressed the use of the paramitas of Buddhism as tools for spiritual development.



Joy Mills

Blavatsky had introduced seven paramitas ("perfections") in her manual *The Voice of the Silence*, a work which she says served as a guide for students in the school she belonged to. The practice of the paramitas features prominently in the Buddhist guides of Shantideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, described as "A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life," and the Tibetan teacher Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (Lam-rim Chen-mo)*, works not readily available in the West at the time of her writing.

As H. Tudor Edmunds noted in his 1967 ***A World in Revolution*** (p. 11), "The moment we start putting into practice the beneficent forces of wisdom, we get a response, however little, in every man's heart. For every individual has evolved from the great Universal Spirit, and when the spirit in one man sincerely calls to another in its separated loneliness, there is always a response."

3. SECRET DOCTRINE COMMENTARIES

Using *The Secret Doctrine* as a source text provides another subset of the Blavatsky Lectures.

In his 1918 Blavatsky Lecture (p. 5) E. L. Gardner conveyed the feelings of many readers of the book that the volumes composing that work “have appeared more formidable than enlightening,” and a number of talks set forth to mine this material to present it in a more relatable form.

Josephine Ransom’s 1933 *The Occult Teachings of the Christ* states that its information was drawn solely from *The Secret Doctrine*. Laurence J. Bendit’s 1948 *Adam, the Prodigal Son*, Harold Tarn’s 1999 *The Soul’s Imperative* and Edi D. Bilimoria’s 1997 *Mirages in Western Science Resolved by Occult Science* are examples that relied heavily on the framework of *The Secret Doctrine* to flesh out their themes.



Harold Tarn

The three Blavatsky Lectures of E. L. Gardner, in 1918, 1946, and 1959, can be regarded as the thoughtful working out of the author’s interaction with the book through the decades. As Gardner observed in 1918, “Major cycles, minor cycles, wheels within wheels, chains, rounds, globes, races! – many a brain has reeled at the onslaught. But if the student be resolute and prepared to adapt himself to the method demanded, a priceless course of study awaits him. H. P. B.’s way was not to present the finished canvas, so to speak, but to provide the artist with brush and palette, the craftsman with tools, that each might, with the vast assistance given, work out his own understanding.”

What emerges from the working out of these studies are patterns. That form defines the spirit (or consciousness) of a being and the reciprocity between inward and outward. That we have an

enormous history behind us of vast cycles and the awakening of human intelligence.

4. THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

The last category of material I would like to look at falls under the theme of Theosophical history, which is only fitting for with the centenary of the Blavatsky Lectures this subject becomes a matter of history.

The Blavatsky Lecture for 1961 was devoted to the history of the Theosophical Society, its past achievements, its growth and development in the twentieth century and the potential that lay before it. The presenter was Thomas Harewood Redfern, President of the Peace Lodge in Hyde, Cheshire, and editor of a theosophically oriented journal *Eirenicon*, and his subject was ***Getting Ready for 1975***, seen as a pivotal date for Theosophists, as it would not only mark the centenary of the Society but usher in a new period of growth for the movement. I had corresponded with T. H. Redfern at the end of the 1960s and he had sent me a copy of his Blavatsky Lecture.

In reviewing the challenges before the Theosophical Society, he believed that "Mme Blavatsky was vilified and our Movement still suffers from the mud that was thrown at her. Because she bears the stigma of charlatan in the public mind, we who belong to the Society formed around her work are dubbed gullible and deluded, and our work is under a cloud. It is time she and our Society came from under that cloud and into the sunshine. It is time Mme Blavatsky was vindicated, and we who are grateful are the ones who must do it. Work is being done by devoted men and women to this end. May it quickly come to fruition, and may every Lodge be ready to spring into action and make the greatest possible corrective impact on the public mind when the time comes!" (p. 20).

This was not the first time that Mme. Blavatsky's career was commented on in a Blavatsky Lecture. C. Jinarajadasa, who met her in London when he was fourteen, said in his 1930 *The Personality of H.P. Blavatsky* (p. 2), "I have been far more fascinated by H.P.B. herself than by her writings. Her writings may lead me to knowledge; but the more I know of her as a person, the more I am inspired to conduct. For she has a heroic quality which affects me profoundly. In our present day lives of stress and strain, where we have to pay quickly our debts in karma, I think to grow in heroism is more needed than to grow in knowledge."

Geoffrey A. Barborka's 1967 *H. P. Blavatsky: The Light Bringer* offered a number of processes to account for HPB's literary achievements. "We are not asked to accept on faith alone the message which H. P. Blavatsky brought to the western world. But we are requested to consider the fundamental propositions upon which her writings are based. Nevertheless, in due time we are expected to test the validity of each one of the doctrines which she presented" (p. 44).

John Algeo's 1996 *Blavatsky, Freemasonry and the Western Mystery Tradition* pointed out the shared similarities between Theosophy and Freemasonry and the contacts between some of its leading members, including Mme. Blavatsky's views on the subject. This lecture was unique in its own



John Algeo



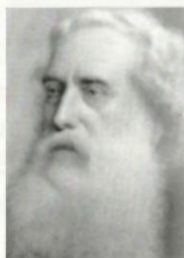
Geoffrey Farthing

way: it was the first to include a biographical sketch of the presenter, and was the first, and so far only Blavatsky Lecture, to elicit a response in the form of a study titled *The Right Angle: H. P. Blavatsky on Masonry in her Theosophical Writings* put together by Geoffrey Farthing and published in 2003.

When I was invited to present the Blavatsky Lecture for the year 2000, marking the 125th anniversary of the Theosophical Society

and the beginning of the new millennium, I saw that members in England had no easily accessible history on the origins of Theosophy there. Certainly this was an opportunity to do so. My title, ***Creating the New Age: Theosophy's Origins in the British Isles***, was meant as a tribute to the work of Leslie Price who had produced a short article in 1987, "Theosophy's Influence on the British Isles."

In 2007 I was again asked to deliver the Blavatsky Lecture. As it was the centenary of the Founder-President H. S. Olcott, and as the theme of the School of that year was to be the Healings Arts, the subject matter suggested itself to me. Col. Olcott's ability as a therapeutic healer had received cursory comment but no detailed study of his work in this area existed. The research on this talk and the reviewing of attitudes of Theosophists to mental healing was an education and I hope that the result, ***Colonel Olcott and the Healing Arts***, fills a once obscure chapter in the history of Theosophy.



Col. Olcott

5. PERSONALITIES



Stephan Hoeller

Of course, the areas delineated here are only brief demarcations of the larger subject at hand. Not all talks fall into these categories. There are some that are so individualistic that they are a category of their own. Salomon Lancri's 1977 ***The Occultism of Ancient Egypt*** is a succinct introduction to the spirituality of ancient Egypt, while Ted Davy's 1983 ***The Descent into Hades*** offers a helpful analysis of the idea of the descent in various traditions. One can do no better than Stephan Hoeller's 2003 ***Joyful Gnosis*** for an enlightening overview of Gnosticism from the viewpoint of a living practitioner.

If I have omitted anyone, it is not through lack of interest or the worth of their contributions but due to constraints of time at hand. I can do no better to rectify this than to suggest you read them all. I have had the great pleasure of knowing most of the presenters of the Blavatsky Lectures since the late 1970s and a few from before that time. I can still remember Dr. Corona Trew (who gave the Blavatsky Lecture in 1943), telling me of her work as an usher at Annie Besant's 1925 Queen's Hall lectures. Ianthe Hoskins and Geoffrey Farthing, once met who could forget them? There are very few alive in the Theosophical world today who can say they knew Geoffrey A. Barborka, a great scholar whose many books have helped generations of students.



Corona Trew

But there are two who deserve special notice due to the fact that until now they are the only ones who have given the Blavatsky Lecture thrice: Radha Burnier and Edward L. Gardner.



Radha Burnier

Radha Burnier (née Sri Ram) is still familiar to many as she was only taken in 2013. She will be remembered, no doubt, as the longest serving president of the Theosophical Society, 33 years in office. She was elected the organization's seventh international president in 1980 and will be the only one known to most members. She was born at the Society's International Headquarters, Adyar, in 1923, her father being N. Sri Ram who became the Society's fifth international president.

Her life was interconnected with that of the Society. She studied classical Indian dance with her aunt Rukmini Devi Arundale (wife of the third international president and N. Sri Ram's sister). And except for a brief foray into film, starring in Jean Renoir's 1951 *The River*, she spent the rest of her life working for the Theosophical Society. She was director of the Adyar Library and Research Centre at the Society's headquarters and general secretary of the Indian

Section, in which position she attended the Society's Centennial World Congress in New York in 1975. She married the Swiss photographer Raymond Burnier while in Hollywood in 1951 for the opening of *The River*. Though they later separated she retained his name and Swiss nationality.

The great influences on her life were Annie Besant, the second president of the Society, who she remembered seeing at Adyar as a child, her father N. Sri Ram, and Jiddu Krishnamurti, who, after she became president, visited Adyar after an absence of 47 years.



Annie Besant

She was also Head of the Esoteric School of Theosophy, a position she held throughout her life. These influences must be taken into account when approaching what she has written, especially with her emphasis to know by personal experience, that wisdom is practical, and to observe what is happening within. As she stated in her first Blavatsky Lecture given in 1979, ***Self-Knowledge in the Light of Theosophy***, "Self-knowledge is thus denial as well as discovery, renunciation as well as realization. It is denial of attachment and illusion and the discovery of the true nature and powers of the life within."

I was in England for the Summer School of 1988, which also commemorated the centenary of the English Section. Radhaji gave the Blavatsky Lecture that year again. I had been with her in India and saw how much effort she put into it. Titled ***The Universal Yoga Tradition*** it may be regarded as her mature statement at the full command of her powers before a number of changes began to affect the Theosophical Society, resulting from the deaths of Krishnamurti and Indira Gandhi. She gave her third Blavatsky Lecture in 2005 on ***Living Truth: The Future of the Theosophical Society***.

Edward L. Gardner also delivered the Blavatsky Lecture three times. He was a leading figure in the Theosophical Society in England. He joined in 1907 at the age of 38 and died in 1969 at the age of 100, during which time he was General Secretary of the Section and wrote numerous books and articles, especially on the intricacies of *The Secret Doctrine*. In a recent article in the journal of the TS in England, Janet Hoults writes, "He made wide use of everyday imagery and scientific ideas to explain and describe some of the deep concepts used in Theosophical teaching." This can be seen in his three Blavatsky Lectures: ***Matter is the Shadow of Spirit***, 1918, ***The Nature and Function of the Soul***, 1946, and ***Whence Come the Gods***, 1959.

Aside from all his in-depth studies on *The Secret Doctrine*, Gardner at the end of his life produced a small booklet that was to cause great consternation in the Society. In his 1963 *There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth: Developments in the Theosophical Society*, Gardner questioned the reliability of the clairvoyance of C. W. Leadbeater, especially in relation to the coming of a World Teacher that was promoted by the Society in the 1920s. He concluded it was an example of unconscious *Kriyashakti*, that is, wishful thinking, the mind projected as actuality what the mind wished to see. He called for a return to principles, not personalities, and whether one agreed with him or not, his declaration did much to cause a re-examination of previous assumptions within the Society.

6. H. P. BLAVATSKY

Before ending our examination of the subject of the Blavatsky Lectures it is necessary to acknowledge the figure of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky whom these lectures invoke by name. She is referenced over and over by many of the previous presenters. As E. L. Gardner noted in the first Blavatsky Lecture of 1918, "Our debt to Madame Blavatsky is one of immense gratitude that in an age of

hard-set materialism she brought a large measure of truth to the Western world" (p. 5).



H. P. Blavatsky

This old woman continues to draw the attention of many within and without the Theosophical Movement. She is now the subject of academic conferences and numerous scholarly monographs and papers. Yet she still eludes definition, for she appears to be all things to all people. This is a point worth noting, for when we come to discuss her we are dealing with a number of different Mme. Blavatskys. The following classification may be helpful:

- There is the Mme. Blavatsky who is dismissed out of hand. There is no need to even discuss her, for, as the American journalist, H. L. Mencken claimed, the philosophy she espoused was "the product of degraded ignoramuses who make India a sewer of superstition."
- There is the Mme. Blavatsky of the missionaries of her time and other orthodox Christian writers who saw her as a tool in Satan's plan to lead humanity astray from the one, true religion. In recent years this has been added to by claims that she was Hitler's guru and a copy of her *Secret Doctrine* was on his desk.
- She was one of the most accomplished, ingenious imposters in history. This was the verdict of the learned men and women who made up the committee of the Society for Psychical Research who examined her case in 1885. The opinion has not changed much among a certain class of people.
- She was a "noble crook". That is, she fabricated her system (who has ever seen a Mahatma?) but as she did not do it for monetary reasons and the results of her fraud have influenced generations of artists, writers, composers, there was something in it after all. This is the academic position.

- There is the Mme. Blavatsky of Theosophists. Opinions can range from agent of Himalayan Masters to inspired wise woman, a teacher in her own right.
- There is the Mme. Blavatsky of the occultists, for she figures highly in this world. To her contemporaries, some of whom may have disagreed with her approach, she was still accorded the position as “one who knows” and her books were regarded as source works. William Wynn Westcott, one of the founders of the Golden Dawn, which taught ritual magic, kabbala and hermeticism, called himself her pupil; Aleister Crowley wrote a commentary on her *Voice of the Silence*, and Israel Regardie, who helped with the modern Golden Dawn revival, always referred to her favourably.
- Then there is the Mme. Blavatsky of the New Age movement. Agent of the Masters, certainly, but not solely. One of many ancestors claimed by this movement.

There is a Blavatsky to meet the needs of everyone. The American theosophical writer Victor Endersby titled his study of her *The Hall of Magic Mirrors*, that is, what people saw in her were really reflections of themselves distorted in the lens of truth. Hopefully we are moving into an age that will allow greater clarity on the subject. Though I am reminded of the words of Mark Twain, “The researches of many commentators have already thrown much confusion on this subject, and it is probable that, if they continue, we shall soon know nothing at all about it.”

7. THE BLAVATSKY LECTURE AND THE FUTURE

When the first Blavatsky Lecture was delivered in May 1918 women were not allowed to vote and a greater part of the country was still disenfranchised. During the next hundred years, situations unthought-of at the time have occurred. The face of our world has changed dramatically since then. The Blavatsky Lecture marks a

subtle response to those changes, if only to provide a respite from the horrors that were occurring. We could disagree without being disagreeable, as George Arundale, the third president of the Society, was fond of pointing out.

There was a civility, a measured tone that exemplifies them. Many of the presenters were quite aware of the transformation that was occurring in society. "The Science of 1922...is not the Science of the day, when Madame Blavatsky penned...*The Secret Doctrine*," Bertram A. Tomes, told his audience in his 1922 *The Secret Doctrine and Modern Science* (p. 1). E. Lester Smith reminded his audience in 1963 in *Science and the Real*, "The solid material world of the nineteenth century physicists, which provoked H.P. Blavatsky's scorn, has been dematerialized as it were, by their grandsons. Matter is now regarded as a kind of airy-fairy froth of inconceivably minute ultimate particles rushing about in all directions" (p. 4).



E Lester Smith

This is an indication of one of the hazards facing anyone who delivers a Blavatsky Lecture, contemporary sources are time bound. Many of authorities cited over the past hundred years, whether they be scientists, physicists, psychologists, have been superseded by newer theories and so appeared dated and in turn make the presenter, however thought provoking their approach, appear dated.

Yet these "monuments of unageing intellect", to use Yeats' phrase, provide a wonderful milestone. A record left by some of the brightest and best of the Theosophical movement as a guide for us. They envisioned a future of hope when the tenets of Theosophy would take hold and its beneficent influence felt.

Their message receives voice in the Blavatsky Lecture of 2015, *The Relevance of Theosophy: Spirituality in Daily Living*, by Tim Boyd, eighth president of the Theosophical Society. As this lecture

has not been printed, I give the following extracts from it by permission of its author.

"Since its founding in 1875 the Theosophical Society has been one of the ways that people worldwide have been exposed to Theosophy. Although any attempt at expressing the Ageless Wisdom necessarily has limitations, the current formulation of the wisdom teachings has had profound effects on the condition of the world – both the world of the individual and the collective, shared one. Anyone who has encountered and allowed themselves to openly examine the teachings of Theosophy comes away changed in some way. For many they have found needed answers to demanding questions. For others they have found needed questions demanding answers. Even the briefest sincere exposure leaves us with the sense expressed in the opening of Shakespeare's Hamlet, that 'there are more things in heaven and earth...than are dreamt of in your philosophy.' Both the world and ourselves are expansive and dimly perceived, with strange and wonderful things beneath the surface.



Tim Boyd

"One of the enduring benefits of Theosophy is that it is practical. Certainly, its teachings are filled with high ideas and often difficult concepts that challenge our thinking. How can the teachings on rounds, races, manvantara, dhyani chohans, sevenfold planes of being, etc be claimed as 'practical?' One way that H. P. Blavatsky described Theosophy was, 'the accumulated wisdom of the ages tested and verified by generations of seers. To the mentally lazy or obtuse it will always remain a riddle.' The wisdom is constant and unchanging, and has been accessible throughout the ages to those who approach it properly. From the beginning one of the demands has been that the mental principle becomes consciously active."

I would like to thank the staff at The Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in America, and especially its Director, Marina Maestas, for making it possible for me to have access to all of the Blavatsky Lectures issued over the past century.

APPENDIX

The Blavatsky Lecture: 1918 – 2017

| Year | Lecturer | Title |
|------|----------------------|---|
| 1918 | Edward L. Gardner | <i>Matter is the Shadow of Spirit</i> |
| 1919 | Charlotte E. Woods | <i>The Self and Its Problems</i> |
| 1920 | D. N. Dunlop | <i>Nature Spirits and the Spirits of the Elements</i> |
| 1922 | Bertram A. Tomes | <i>The Secret Doctrine and Modern Science</i> |
| 1924 | Ernest Wood | <i>Personal Psychology and the Sub-conscious Mind</i> |
| 1925 | Percy Lund | <i>The Evolution of Man: Individual and Social</i> |
| 1926 | J. I. Wedgwood | <i>The Distinctive Contribution of Theosophy to Christian Thought</i> |
| 1927 | J. Émile Marcault | <i>The Psychology of Intuition</i> |
| 1930 | C. Jinarājadāsa | <i>Personality of H. P Blavatsky</i> |
| 1933 | Josephine Ransom | <i>The Occult Teachings of the Christ</i> |
| 1934 | Adelaide Gardner | <i>Indications of a New Culture</i> |
| 1935 | Sidney Ransom | <i>The Ethics of the Secret Doctrine</i> |
| 1937 | Iwan A. Hawliczek | <i>Mankind To-day and To-morrow</i> |
| 1941 | Elizabeth W. Preston | <i>The Contribution of Theosophy to Freedom</i> |
| 1942 | Josephine Ransom | <i>The Direction of The Theosophical Society by Masters of Wisdom</i> |
| 1943 | Corona Trew | <i>Theosophy and the Changing Outlook in Science</i> |
| 1944 | G. Nevin Drinkwater | <i>Theosophy and the Western Mysteries</i> |
| 1945 | Greta Eedle | <i>The Power of Love in the Struggle for Light</i> |
| 1946 | Edward L. Gardner | <i>The Nature and Function of the Soul</i> |
| 1947 | Charlotte Woods | <i>The Mystery Religions</i> |
| 1948 | Laurence J. Bendit | <i>Adam, the Prodigal Son</i> |
| 1949 | C. R. Groves | <i>On Order and Purpose in Evolution</i> |
| 1950 | Ianthe H. Hoskins | <i>The Science of Spirituality</i> |
| 1951 | V. Wallace Slater | <i>Man Creator of Forms</i> |
| 1952 | Doris Groves | <i>Brotherhood and the Enlightened Mind</i> |
| 1953 | Phoebe D. Bendit | <i>The Sacred Flame</i> |
| 1954 | Edward Gall | <i>The Yoga of the Serpent Fire</i> |
| 1955 | Hugh Shearman | <i>Purpose Beyond Reason</i> |

| | | |
|------|----------------------|---|
| 1956 | L. C. Soper | <i>The Opening of the Doors of the Mind</i> |
| 1957 | Dudley G. Gower | <i>The Reign of the Spirit</i> |
| 1958 | K. Chodkiewicz | <i>Physical Forces and Spiritual Intelligences</i> |
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MICHAEL GOMES



My work has been for a better appreciation of that much maligned woman, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. My contribution has been in raising awareness of how much documentation there is for Theosophy and I hope I have helped over the past fifty years by bringing some of this source material to light.

A large part of my work has been in codifying H. P. Blavatsky's extensive literary output into a more accessible form with abridgments of her *Isis Unveiled* (1997) and *The Secret Doctrine* (2009), as well as producing a one-volume anthology of her articles in *H.P.B. Teaches*, which was issued for her death centenary in 1991. The transcription I did of the unpublished dialogues with her in London from 1889 was published as *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries* in 2010. I have also edited for publication her Esoteric Instructions to members of her Esoteric School.

My first book, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, was published in 1987. It is the only study devoted solely to the origins of the Theosophical movement since H. S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* appeared a century before. My annotated bibliography, *Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century*, 1994, was the first book-size bibliography on the subject. It contains over 2000 entries and is a required starting point for any research on Theosophy.

An interest in theosophical history was fueled by the work of Beatrice Hastings, an English writer who had taken up the case for Mme. Blavatsky in the 1930s. Comparing the charges against Blavatsky with the actual events she found a number of discrepancies and issued a series of critical studies. Her work was cut short by her death in 1943 and my search for her unfinished research led me to catalogue her books and papers in my early twenties. In pursuit of this, my research led me to become familiar with some of the great resources throughout the world, including the Archives and Library at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, India, where I would spend three years.

Aside from accessing the mental world that the people around Blavatsky inhabited, there is the temporal aspect of their lives, the physicality of it, the geography of place. This is why I have always stressed the value of on-the-ground research. Locating A. O. Hume's home in Simla, North India, gave a spatial understanding of the events that had occurred when Blavatsky was his guest. In knowing the limitations and extremes of these situations one begins to understand and appreciate the remarkable contribution of those early Theosophists who risked ridicule and scorn so one could enjoy freedom of belief.

