

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN PORTLAND

503-223-6861

A Branch of the Theosophical Society in America

2377 NW Kearney Street

Theosophical.PDX@gmail.com

Portland, Oregon 97210

www.theosophical.org

SUNDAY AFTERNOON PUBLIC PROGRAMS – February – April 2014

Public programs begin promptly at 3:00 P.M. and generally run an hour or so.

The door is open by 2:00 P.M. for your convenience.

Please arrive early so as to avoid disrupting the presentation and others in the audience.

Basic Concepts of Theosophy

Group Study. A number of our Sunday programs will be devoted to a basic concept of Theosophy presented in an informal format led by a branch member. As a group, we will study and discuss some of these influential concepts. All levels of interest are welcome.

Group Meditation

You are invited to join in a group meditation led by a branch member from 2:15 pm – 2:55 pm (before the public program at 3:00 p.m.) on the following dates: February 2, 9 and 16, March 2 and 16, April 6 and 13. All levels of interest are welcome. If you are new to meditation, brief instruction will be provided.

February 2 Group meditation – 2:15–2:55 p.m.

February 2 **Basic Concepts of Theosophy – DHARMA** – Group Study

The concept of Dharma can be defined as duty, sometimes law, sometimes morality, and sometimes righteousness. As Annie Besant says in her book on the subject, “Morality is an individual thing and varies with the dharma of the individual... Hence, what is right for one is wrong for another. There is nothing absolute in a conditioned universe.” And, as Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita, “Better is one’s own Dharma, through destitute of merit, than the well executed Dharma of another...” In light of the complexity of the present world situation with many individuals, nations and religions struggling to co-exist, our discussion will address the absolute and relative levels of Dharma, from the perspective of the individual to the state.

February 9 Group meditation – 2:15–2:55 p.m.

February 9 **TAROT AND THE SYNTHESIS OF THE CONSCIOUS AND NOT-CONSCIOUS MINDS** – *Chrissy LaVielle*

The major arcana of the Tarot are a pictorial guide to man’s search for the greater Self through the synthesis of the conscious and not-conscious minds. Join us today in a journey of discovery as we examine the images of the Tarot.

Chrissy LaVielle is a life-long student of the tarot and occultism in general. She has taught courses on magic, witchcraft, and astrology since 1995.

February 16 Group meditation – 2:15–2:55 p.m.

February 16 **IMAGINING THE GOOD LIFE USING PLATO’S *REPUBLIC* AS A MODEL** – *Patricia Fulbright*

More than 2,300 years ago, Plato wrote his longest dialogue titled *The Republic, The Political Thing, or Concerning Justice*, in which Socrates spends an entire night discussing with friends how to live

a good life and avoid evil. With them, he imagines an ideal political community and examines his elaborate creation through philosophical dialectic. His stated purpose, however, is not an ideal civic government (368 D-E) but rather the individual human soul, which he describes as a three-part composite. Socrates finishes the dialog with these words: “If we are persuaded by me and believe the soul is immortal and able to keep itself intact in the face of every evil, and every good as well, we will always keep to the higher road and pursue justice with good sense in every way, so that we might be friends to ourselves and to the gods, both while we remain here in this place and when we carry off the rewards for it like athletes on their victory laps” (621 D, translated by Joe Sachs, 2007). Featuring key quotations, this presentation will focus on several core ideas and analogies described in the *Republic* and invite discussion of the text.

Patricia Fulbright has taught early British mythology and literature at Clark College. She is a life long student of Neoplatonic philosophy and ancient Greek literature.

February 23 **THE CHALDEAN ORACLES AND THE HISTORICAL TAROT**—*Michael S. Howard*

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A SPECIAL LONGER PROGRAM running from 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m

The Chaldean Oracles are sayings quoted in Neoplatonic writings of the late Roman period. As a system in themselves, they were brought to the attention of the Renaissance by Gemistos Plethon, who attributed them to Zoroastrian magi. From there, they were translated into Latin and other languages, including one by W. W. Westcott for the Golden Dawn. Describing an imaginal ascent to the Divine, they fit the 15th-17th century tarot sequence in a striking way, as we will see in slides that juxtapose the two, card by card.

Michael S. Howard, Ph.D. graduated from Reed College and has Ph.D.’s from Cornell University (philosophy) and Pacifica Graduate Institute (clinical psychology). He has taught at the State University of New York at Albany and Portland State University. He is a long-time member of the Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church in Portland, where he gives occasional slide presentations on spiritual themes. He is a “close cooperater” of Trionfi, a tarot history organization based in Germany (trionfi.com), and a member of Le Tarot Associazione Culturale in Italy, for whom he helps on Italian to English translations. Le Tarot recently published an expanded version of his “Tarot and Dionysus” presentation, given to the Society a few years ago, on its website: see <http://www.associazioneletarot.it/page.aspx?id=317&lng=ENG>.

March 2 Group meditation – 2:15–2:55 p.m.

March 2 **Basic Concepts of Theosophy – POWER OF THOUGHT** – Group Study

An early member of the Theosophical Society wrote that thought “is a power possessed by all, but intelligently used as yet by few.” Thought by itself can be used positively or negatively and is one of the ways we generate karma. Today’s group study discussion will center on the nature and effects of thought.

March 9 **SPIRITUAL CINEMA – 3 short videos followed by group discussion**

PLEASE JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE OREGON FOOD BANK! In lieu of donations to the Theosophical Society for today’s program, we ask that you bring two cans or boxes of nonperishable food items for donation to the Oregon Food Bank. Please help us feed the hungry in Oregon. Thank you!

Bicycles and Radios (36 min) - This film made in Thailand by a first-time filmmaker will delight viewers with its exotic beauty and subtle nuances. This film allows the viewer to believe again in the mysteries that bring us healing when we most need it, and love when we least expect it! (2004-vol.8)

The Letter Writer (11 min.) - This clever and touching short film, so simple yet so profound, about a man in the midst of writing a letter, will resonate for a long time to come!

The Limited (12 min) - You'll be taking a journey on The Limited, a mysterious train that we all board at one time or another. "The Limited" is a great example of how powerful short films can be as works of art.

March 16 Group meditation – 2:15–2:55 p.m.

March 16 **AN INTRODUCTION TO JAINISM** – *Steve Herrington*

Thought by some to be the oldest extant spiritual tradition of India, Jainism is best known today as a religion centered upon the principle of *ahimsa* or pro-active non-violence. We'll explore this tradition, its leaders, history, practices, temples and art. We'll also compare and contrast Jainism with the other two most famous religious traditions of India: Buddhism and Hinduism. Jainism is indeed an extreme but beautiful path.

Steve Herrington is a local Portland artist, author, and student of multicultural esoteric traditions.

March 30 **THE MAHATMA LETTERS TO A. P. SINNETT** – *Jon Knebel*

In 1880, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, an English newspaper publisher living in India, was enabled through the help of Madame Blavatsky to enter into a correspondence with her teachers, the Mahatmas K.H. and M. The letters which the Mahatmas wrote to him give us a fascinating look into their philosophy and ethics.

Jon Knebel has been a student of Theosophy for over 20 years. At the Olcott headquarters, he co-facilitated, with Sy Ginsburg and David Bruce, the "What Is Man?" course in 2009 and has been leading the Mahatma Letters Thursday study group since September 2011. Jon also serves on the board of directors of the Theosophical Order of Service.

April 6 Group meditation – 2:15–2:55 p.m.

April 6 **Basic Concepts of Theosophy – MEDITATION** – Group Study

It has been said that prayer is when we talk to God, and meditation is when God talks to us. By quieting the "monkey mind," the lower mind that flits constantly between details and attachments of our daily lives, we can strengthen the higher mind to help us realize our true spiritual being. A steady practice of meditation can increasingly shift our focus from the physical plane to the higher planes to help us achieve this Realization. A discussion of various types and importance of meditation will be beneficial for neophytes and experienced meditators alike.

April 13 Group meditation – 2:15–2:55 p.m.

April 13 **HERMETICISM** – *Adam and Isidora Forrest*

Hermeticism is an ancient spiritual, philosophical, and magical tradition. It is a path of spiritual growth. Hermeticism takes its name from the God Hermes Trismegistos (Greek, "Thrice-Greatest Hermes"), a Græco-Egyptian form of the Great Egyptian God of Wisdom and Magic, Thoth. What the Hermetic Fellowship defines as Hermeticism has also been called the Western Esoteric Tradition, and embraces the Perennial Philosophy or the Ageless Wisdom.

Join *Adam and Isidora Forrest*, founders of the local Portland-area Hermetic Fellowship, for a casual talk on the Hermetic tradition as well as its expression in a modern context.

April 20 Library closed for Easter Sunday. No public program

April 27 **TAOISM – YIN, YANG AND BEYOND . . .** – *Steve Herrington*

The most indigenous of China's spiritual traditions, Taoism embraces extreme simplicity as well as deep complexity. Visiting the texts most central to Taoism, such as the *Tao de Jing* (*cont on next page*)

and the *Yi-Jing*, we'll also dive deeply into lesser known aspects of the tradition such as its essential meditation, *chi-gung* and *nei-gung* (internal alchemy) practices. From its prehistoric Shamanic roots to its modern expression in syncretic traditions such as the *Dragon Gate* school and *Falon Gong*, we'll look at the history, central beliefs and key historic and legendary individuals of the Tao – along with its interweavings with Confucianism, Buddhism, Chinese Medicine and Communism.

Steve Herrington is a local Portland artist, author, and student of multicultural esoteric traditions.

This is the end of the second half of this season's programs.

The program for next fall will be distributed in late summer.

A contribution of \$5.00 is appreciated. An informal social hour follows all presentations.

Your donations are critical to funding our Sunday public program series.

We turn no one away for lack of funds, yet ask that you be as generous as you can be with your donations. Thank you.

◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ **We welcome book donations.** ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇
We have new and used books for sale. Please check with our librarian.

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LIBRARY HOURS:

Fridays 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Sundays 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(but closed from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. during Sunday public programs)
The library will be closed on Sundays following major holidays.

“Theosophy in its central aspect is essentially the science of Life, its nature, potentiality, and action. It has also been termed the science of the Self. But when the self in the ordinary sense disappears, then there is Life appearing in its place, in all its extraordinariness, its beauty, its depth, its intelligence . . .”

N. Sri Ram