

# The Theosophical Society in the Ojai Valley

Established in 1927



**February 2019 to May 2019**  
**Tuesday Evenings, 7:00-8:00 pm**

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Krotona and Lodge Information  
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The lodge meetings take place at Krotona School (#46 Krotona Street, Ojai, CA), unless otherwise indicated. All meetings are open to the public free of charge.

**Donations are greatly appreciated.**

We invite you to support the Society and its work by becoming a member. Membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its objects. Application forms are available in the library and at the meetings.

*Three Objects of the Theosophical Society:*

1. *To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, gender, caste or color.*
2. *To encourage the comparative study of religion, philosophy and science.*
3. *To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being.*

**February 5**  
**Public Talk: From Arjuna's Battle Field to Thoreau's Bean Field**  
Joe Rautenstrauch

Henry David Thoreau wrote: "The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges." In this talk, we will discuss: first, the influence of Indian writings such as *The Bhagavad Gita* on American transcendentalists Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson; and second, the influence of Thoreau, through his book *Civil Disobedience*, on Mahatma Gandhi. We will also explore the questions: does it matter whether we perceive ourselves to be composed of battle fields or of gardens? Can the great lessons given to Arjuna be given just as well in a garden as on a battle field?

Joe Rautenstrauch has been a student of Theosophy since 1990. He has a human services background and held primarily administrative and supervisory positions in a variety of human services agencies.

**February 12**  
**Evolution of the Higher Ego**

In the course of our evolution, the higher Ego not only learns to assert its influence on the personality but also develops the ability to raise its consciousness to realize its oneness with the All. In this session, we will explore the nature of the higher Ego and how we can conduct our daily lives to help in its evolution.

(This discussion meeting is part of the ongoing series of studies using the book *Evolution of the Higher Consciousness* by P. Sender and may assume some background knowledge of Theosophy.)

**February 19**  
**On God and Prayer**  
**(Based on Key to Theosophy by HP Blavatsky)**

Topics for discussion include: What does Theosophy say about God? What is prayer? Is it necessary to pray? Does prayer kill self-reliance?



**February 26**  
**Public Talk:**  
**The Cycle of the Year as a Symbol of our Lives**  
Herman Vermeulen

The four Sacred Seasons of the year have been called sacred for a reason. They symbolize the cycles not only in the life of the human being, but also that of the reincarnating individuality, of humanity, of our planet earth, and of our solar system. It is inspiring to see ourselves as part of a larger living whole, and to realize how we can play a conscious role in it.

Herman has lived and worked for nearly fifty years at Blavatskyhouse, the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society Point Loma. In his many lectures and courses he emphasizes how to transform the metaphysical and abstract theosophical teachings into an enriched, wiser view of life and the problems of living.

**March 5**  
**Evolution of the Higher Ego**

This discussion meeting will continue explorations of the topic started on Feb 12: Achievement of the union of the Higher Ego with the Spiritual Soul results in "the sense of being one with the Universe." Real understanding of spiritual truths comes. There is an immediate knowing that results from a state of silent and direct perception.

(This discussion meeting is part of the ongoing series of studies using the book *Evolution of the Higher Consciousness* by P. Sender and may assume some background knowledge of Theosophy.)

**March 12**  
**On Memory and Past Lives**  
**(Based on Key to Theosophy)**

Much has been written about reincarnation but if there is such a thing, why do we not remember our past lives? What is "memory" according to Theosophical teachings and where does it reside? How is the record of past lives preserved? More importantly, how can it be retrieved?

**March 19**  
**The State of Manas Taijasa**

*Manas Taijasa* means "the radiant mind" or "the human reason lit by the light of the spirit." This is the aim of every spiritual tradition. The evolution of the spiritual ego is greatly hastened by the aspirant's efforts to stimulate this state in his or her daily life. What practices are required to achieve it?

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**March 26**  
**Public Talk: My Journey to Understanding the Primary Human Right**  
Mike Farrell

Best known for his eight years on M\*A\*S\*H and five seasons on *Providence*, Mike Farrell will share with us his journey to becoming an activist for peace, justice, equality, and human dignity. His human rights and peace work over four decades has taken him to many countries in South and Central America, Africa, Asia and the middle East, Europe, and the U.S.S.R. Prior to the invasion of Iraq, Mike co-founded Artists United to Win without War. He is a

spokesperson for Concern America—an international refugee and relief group, and for many years has been part of an effort to achieve a worldwide moratorium on the death penalty.

**Mike Farrell** is an actor, writer, director, and producer. He is Co-Chair Emeritus of the Southern California Committee on Human Rights Watch. As President of Death Penalty Focus since 1994, he speaks, writes, and works to abolish capital punishment at home and abroad. Mike has been active in changing legislation, and is author of two books: *Just Call Me Mike: A Journey to Actor and Activist*, and *Of Mule and Man*.

*(Please bring refreshments to share.)*

**April 2**  
**The State of *Manas Taijasa***

Continuing from the March 19 session, we will delve into practices that can help us cultivate an “inward-turned consciousness” that leads to the state of *Manas Taijasa* or the radiant mind.

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**April 9**  
**On Eternal Reward and Punishment and on Nirvana**  
*(Based on Key to Theosophy)*

In this discussion meeting, we will consider such topics as heaven and hell or eternal reward and punishment in the light of Theosophy. How do these ideas fit in with the teachings of Love, Justice and Mercy? What is the meaning of Nirvana? Come and explore these topics with us.



**April 16**  
**Public Talk: Revering Nature**  
Jonathan Colbert

Honoring 2019’s Earth Day theme, “Protect Our Species,” Jonathan Colbert’s multimedia presentation will focus on the vision of a theosophical science, religion and philosophy of ecology. The profound interconnectedness of all life, from the elemental, mineral, plant and animal kingdoms to human beings and beyond, will be discussed. A deep reverence for nature, visible and invisible, will be explored as well as the possibilities of helping and cooperating with nature as an ally, friend and servant.

Jonathan is a third generation theosophist associated with the Los Angeles United Lodge of Theosophists. In his 20’s he and his family moved to Santa Barbara where he initiated, with others, a small theosophical community called “Shanti Seva Niketan, The Abode of Peace and Service.” Jonathan owns and operates an environmental company specializing in soil rehabilitation and stabilization and native plant revegetation. He is a regular speaker at the ULT in Santa Barbara and is on the production team of *Vidya* magazine. He also serves on the boards of the Institute of World Culture (IWC) in Santa Barbara and International Theosophy Conferences (ITC).



**April 23**  
**States of Consciousness**

There are four states of consciousness, each focused on a different level from the mundane to the divine. What are these states and what practices can help us raise our own consciousness to attain the sense of “the observer becoming the observed,”—a state of spontaneous awareness on all levels, a state of high spiritual consciousness?

(This session is part of the ongoing series of studies using the book *Evolution of the Higher Consciousness* by P. Sender and may assume some background knowledge of Theosophy.)

**April 30**  
**The Thought Producer**

In this session we will explore some meditative techniques that can help us to cultivate the sense of our true self and to learn to dwell in it.

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**May 7**  
**White Lotus Day**

The lotus plant is a symbol of the human being. Rooted in the mud (our physicality), it rises through the murky waters and blooms in the free air and light of the sun. On White Lotus Day each year, we commemorate the passing of HP Blavatsky. Using excerpts from *Light of Asia*, *Bhagavad Gita* and *Voice of the Silence*, we reflect on the lesson of the lotus and our own striving for full spiritual awakening.

**May 14**  
**Tai Chi and Qi Gong, an Introduction to the Ancient Art of Harmony and Healing**  
Rafal Brzozowski

Tai Chi is a form of internal martial arts from China. Its gentle movements bring strength, tranquility and good health, harmonizing mind, body and spirit. Qi Gong cultivates life energy, Qi. It combines breathing exercises, body alignment and mental focus for improved energy flow and healing. Regular Tai Chi and Qi Gong practice strengthens the immune system, lowers blood pressure, increases energy and improves balance. This session will

present a simple routine combining meditation, stretching, Qi Gong breathing, and a short Tai Chi form called “Eight Positions.” We will tune in to the vast ocean of life energy, or Qi, which is within and around us.

Sifu Rafal Brzozowski, (Sifu, a teacher, a master in Chinese Kung Fu tradition) started training in Kung Fu, Tai Chi and Qi Gong in his early twenties. He found Theosophy around the same time, thus completely immersing himself in the fascinating world of Chinese Martial Arts and the profound teachings of the Ancient Wisdom. These two influences brought him to Santa Barbara, CA in 2001 where he opened a Kung Fu Temple. He has been teaching Martial Arts since then and has been a frequent visitor to Krotona Institute of Theosophy, participating in many of its programs and rich spiritual life.

*Venue: Krotona Hall. Comfortable clothing suggested.*

**May 21**  
**The Sense of Space**

We will use HP Blavatsky’s Diagram of Meditation as our basis for meditation, which begins by prescribing the cultivation of an awareness of being in all space and time.

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**FOR MEMBERS ONLY**  
**May 28**  
**Annual Business Meeting and Elections**

*(Pot-luck dinner starts at 6:30, business meeting at 7:00 pm. Members please bring food to share.)*