

## Books Suggested for Further Study

### **The Basic Ideas of Occult Wisdom**

Anna Kennedy Winner

### **The Key to Theosophy**

H.P. Blavatsky

Abridgement ed. J. Mills

### **The Miracle of Birth**

Geoffrey Hodson

### **Karma and Rebirth**

Christmas Humphreys

### **Life: Your Great Adventure**

Felix and Eunice Layton

### **From Death to Rebirth**

James Perkins

### **Freedom of Thought**

#### **Resolution passed by the General Council of The Theosophical Society, 1924**

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 or writer, from H.P. BLAVATSKY onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the 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. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict

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### **The Theosophical Society**

The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together people of goodwill whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

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# **BIRTH: Another Opportunity**

**“There is no death but only in appearance - even as there is no birth save only in seeming. The change from ‘being’ to ‘becoming’ seems to be birth and the return again from ‘becoming’ to the state of ‘being’ seems to be death.’**

**- Apollonius of Tyana**

Although birth and death are twin mysteries our preoccupation with death seems to have assumed more importance than our entry into life. This event is as important as our departure from the physical body. The entrance of a soul into a new body can be explained by the timeless concepts of Reincarnation, Evolution and the Law of Cause and Effect.

The long period between lives is somewhat like the hours between meals, a period of digestion and assimilation as necessary as the meal itself. The Ageless Wisdom teaches that between lives the soul extracts and assimilates the essence of its experience in its former physical life and this influences the circumstances of the new incarnation.

### **Dual Mystery**

Birth involves a dual mystery. Firstly, there is the mystery of the growth of the embryo from the physical union of the sperm and ego of the parents. The embryo develops into a complex and uniquely formed human baby. The second half of this mystery is the union of the soul with the physical body. Drawn by an inner urge to seek new experience on the path of return to its Divine Source, the soul returns again and again to physical life. Theosophical teachings suggest that the soul attracts not just a new physical body, but also emotional and mental ‘vehicles’ appropriate to its new incarnation.

The characteristics of the individual’s nature are said to be the outcome of experiences from past lives. Former thoughts, desires and actions therefore influence the present circumstances and environment into which the birth occurs.

### **Guiding Intelligences**

The term ‘Guardian Angel’ is commonly used when a child comes unscathed through a dangerous adventure. Theosophy suggests the existence of spiritual intelligences that guide the working out of residual Karma from the past. These beings help bring a soul into an environment where it may best balance the consequences of past actions and provide new opportunities to express itself. It is further suggested that the child’s new circumstances may continue relationships from past lives. Unfortunately, there are some instances in which past ties were not harmonious and these karmic bonds need to be transformed into ties of love and understanding.

### **The Drama of Birth**

Although much has been written about leaving the physical body at the moment of death, perhaps we should discover more about the needs of the newborn infant at the moment of birth. The process of birth is as dramatic for the baby as for the mother. Some babies seem to rush eagerly into life; others seem to resist entering a new incarnation. The French physician, Le Boyer, and others, have emphasised that babies should be brought into a quiet atmosphere with diminished lighting. This can assist the most gentle transition possible from the soothing surroundings of the womb into the very different circumstances of physical life.

Poets and mystics have hinted at childish recollections of existence before birth. However, these are quickly forgotten as the new physical life unfolds. As we mature and grow in spiritual Wisdom, a fuller understanding of our evolutionary purpose is revealed.

### **Responsibility of Parents**

Parenthood is seen to be much more than responsibility for the care of a child. The physical baby is an expression of a soul which the parents are destined to nurture for a short time. Modern psychologists stress the child’s need for love and a

sense of security from the moment of birth. Many parents are deeply aware of the responsibility they have undertaken in assisting the birth of a soul into a new body. They understand the importance of creating an atmosphere conducive to the soul’s physical, emotional and mental development. They recognise this opportunity to assist the soul’s growth by helping the child to develop its strengths and latent talents while overcoming inherent weaknesses. The parental influence, if provided in an atmosphere of love and respect, is of great assistance when the child moves into the larger environment and faces inevitable difficulties.

Birth is an experience which we do not normally consciously remember. Yet the atmosphere into which a child is born can be one of the most significant experiences the parents can provide as a harmonious and positive environment provides a basis for steady growth.

### **A Pilgrim Soul**

A newborn child provides a vehicle of experience for a pilgrim soul. Wise parents seek the best possible ways of aiding the child to understand its emotional nature and to direct its mind in positive ways, thus encouraging the child to develop Spiritual Wisdom.

Ageless teachings propose that the journey which begins with birth is a universal and often repeated one, with the goal being the eventual return and reunion with the Divine Source.

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The Theosophical Society is an international organisation dedicated to the promotion of brotherhood and to the encouragement of the study of religion, philosophy and science, so we may better understand ourselves and our place in the universe.

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