



Is Memory Held Outside the Brain?

a Theosophical view

A talk at the United Lodge of Theosophists

Sunday 18th October 2020

the initial reading is at the end

Exploring Memory

Memory, in essence, is the faculty by which information is encoded, stored, and retrieved, the same in principle in living beings or in computer storage. (Wiki)

If we develop amnesia and forget who we are we will lose our whole identity. Memory contains our personal history & defines us.

Human memory is commonly thought to reside in the brain but we will suggest that every person and object has a recorded history, from the earth down to a cell and that is not stored in a brain.

We will show examples of people whose memories of past lives (which must have survived brain death) have been verified.

And we will see what science is discovering about the memory of water molecules, the basis of the old science of Homoeopathy.

What is Memory?

In *Transactions* HPB writes that unconscious thoughts or sense impressions are continually registered in the brain's cells or nerve-centers (neurons), and with the right impulse the brain "slips them off" into the conscious waking memory.

Science currently proposes that such neurons and their synapses form cells which "are thought to result in the storage of information, resulting in memory."

However the process is complex, relying on tiny *electrical voltages* and chemical signals being passed across the nerve cell junction and this process does not seem to be very well understood. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synapse>

On the other hand Theosophy proposes "**There is a sort of conscious telegraphic communication going on incessantly, day and night, between the physical brain and the inner man.** [the astral man, which has a corresponding astral 'brain'.]

"The brain is such a complex thing, both physically and metaphysically, that it is like a tree whose bark you can remove layer by layer, each layer being different from all the others, and each having its own special work, function, and properties." *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, 64*

The Physical Brain, a Receiver not Retainer

These brain cells (the supposed "organ of memory") are the **receivers and conveyors** of all the pictures and impressions of the past, **not their retainers**.

Under various conditions and stimuli, they can receive instantaneously the *reflection of these astral images* back again, and this is called memory, recollection, remembrance; but they *do not preserve them....*

"Nothing that takes place (however rapid or weak) can ever be lost from the *Skandhic* record of a man's life.

"Not the smallest sensation, the most trifling action, impulse, thought, impression, or deed, can fade or go out from, or in the Universe.... it will still be recorded on the **tablets of the astral light**.

"*Universal Memory* preserves every motion, the slightest wave and feeling that *ripples the waves* of differentiated nature, of man or of the Universe."

extracts from "A Note on Memory," *Lucifer*, Oct. 1891, H. P. Blavatsky

Memory & the Astral Light

Memory — the despair of the materialist, the enigma of the psychologist, the sphinx of science — is to the student of old philosophies merely a name to express that power which man unconsciously exerts, and shares with many of the inferior animals — to look with inner sight into *the astral light*, and there behold the images of past sensations and incidents.

Isis Unveiled 1:178-9

The minutest acts of our lives are imprinted on it (*the astral light*), and even our thoughts rest photographed on its eternal tablets. It is the book which we see opened by the angel in the (*Book of*) *Revelation*...

Isis Unveiled 1:178

The Lipikas, Recorders of Karma

Lipikas (Sk.), the celestial recorders, the “Scribes” who record every word and deed, said or done by man while on this earth; they are the agents of KARMA. *extracts from Theos. Glossary*

The Lipikas “are a division, four (Maharajas) taken from one of the Septenates that emanates from Mahat [cosmic ‘fire’, life].”

The Lipika are on the plane corresponding to the highest plane of our chain of globes. (Globes A & G on the SD 1:200 diagram)

Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, 149

Only the Lipikas, Recorders, can cross the Ring Pass Not; there may be a limited communication between them and ourselves.

SD 1:132

The Recall of a Drowning Man

That flash of memory which is traditionally supposed to show a drowning man every long-forgotten scene of his mortal life... is simply the sudden glimpse which the struggling soul gets into the silent galleries where his history is depicted in imperishable colors. [That is to say, in the astral light.]

The well-known fact... that we often recognize as familiar to us, scenes, and landscapes, and conversations, which we see or hear for the first time, and sometimes in countries never visited before, is a result of the same causes. (astral sight & not nec. past-life memories)

Isis Unveiled 1:179

A man who knows that he has never visited (in body), nor seen the landscape and person that he recognizes, *may well assert* that still has he seen and knows them, for the acquaintance was formed while travelling in “spirit.”

Isis Unveiled 1:180

The Astral Body's Night-time Journeys

In the stillness of the night-hours, when our bodily senses are fast locked in the fetters of sleep, and our elementary body rests, the astral form becomes free. It then *oozes* out of its earthly prison, and as Paracelsus has it — “confabulates with the outward world,” and travels round the visible as well as the invisible worlds.

“In sleep,” he says, “the astral body (soul) is in freer motion; then it soars to its parents, and holds converse with the stars.” Dreams, forebodings, prescience, prognostications and presentiments are impressions left by our astral spirit on our brain, which receives them more or less distinctly. *Isis Unveiled* 1:179

The Akasa (top 3 planes, eternal)

The Astral Light (bottom 4, periodic)

The Akâsa, as a generic term, has "seven fields," the upper three being eternal and contain Universal Ideation, which is not the records of humanity, these are recorded in the Astral Light.

“When the hour strikes for the Third Logos to appear, then from the latent potentiality there radiates a lower field of differentiated consciousness, which is Mahat, or the entire collectivity of those Dhyân Chohans of sentient life...

“The Astral Light is that which mirrors the three higher planes of consciousness, and is above the lower, or terrestrial plane; therefore it does not extend beyond the fourth plane, where, one may say, the Akâsa begins.”

Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge 95

Akasa, the Universal Trans-personal Memory

Akâsa has several aspects, in its highest it is the Universal Space which contains “the eternal Ideation of the Universe,” from which radiates the First Logos. On the lower planes it is used in every magical performance, and is Kundalini, the occult electricity or the universal solvent, the same *anima mundi* on the higher plane as the *astral light* is on the lower. *Glossary, 13*

“He who would profit by the wisdom of the universal mind, has to reach it through *the whole of Humanity* without distinction of race, complexion, religion or social status.

“It is *altruism*, not *ego-ism* even in its most legal and noble conception, that can lead the unit to merge its little Self in the Universal Selves.”

Raja-Yoga or Occultism, HPB, 36

Memory as a Conveyor-Belt (1)

“If coming events are said to cast their shadows before, past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them.

“...by those shadows of the hoary Past and their fantastic silhouettes on the external screen of every religion and philosophy... we can, by checking them as we go along, and comparing them, trace out finally the body that produced them.”

The Secret Doctrine 2:794

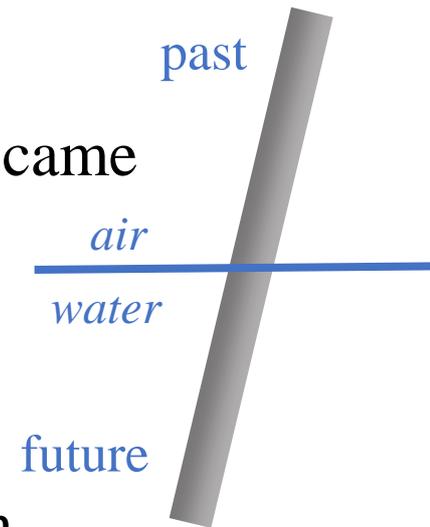
Memory as a Conveyor-Belt (2)

The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration we call the future from what call the past.

The real person or thing does not consist solely of what is seen at any particular moment, but is composed of *the sum of all its various and changing conditions* from its appearance to its disappearance from the earth. [*this implies skandhic memory*].

No one could say that a bar of metal dropped into the sea came into existence as it left the air, and ceased to exist as it entered the water, and that the bar itself consisted only of that cross-section thereof which at any given moment coincided with the mathematical plane that separates, and, at the same time, joins, the atmosphere and the ocean.

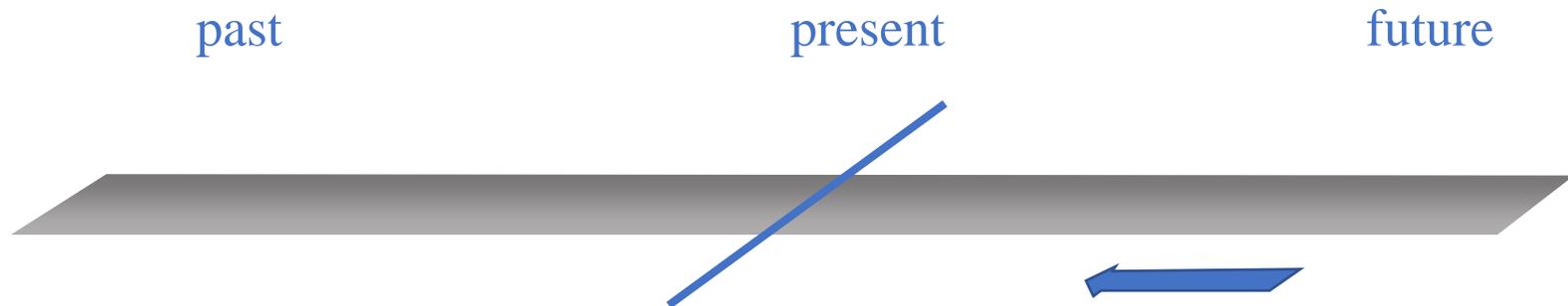
Likewise persons and things, dropping out of the to-be into the has-been, out of the future into the past — present momentarily to our senses a cross-section of their total selves.



Memory as a Conveyor-Belt (3)

a) The Lipikas
write the present
into the Astral
Light

b) The Mind receives
impressions from the past



The Astral Light

c) The Seer
may read the
future

What are the Skandhas?

Skandha (*Sk.*). *Lit.*, “bundles”, or groups of attributes; (1) form, *rûpa*; (2) perception, *vidâna*; (3) consciousness, *sanjnâ*; (4) action, *sanskâra*; (5) knowledge, *vidyâna*.

These unite at the birth of man and constitute his personality. After the maturity... they begin to separate and weaken, and this is followed by... decrepitude and death. *Theosophical Glossary*

It is the Spirit, so to say, of those Skandhas which are the most ennobling, which, attaching themselves to the incarnating Ego, survive, and are added to the stock of its angelic experiences... the material Skandhas, with selfish and personal motives (disappear) from the field of action between two incarnations, reappear at the subsequent incarnation as Karmic results to be atoned for. *Key to Theosophy 153-4*

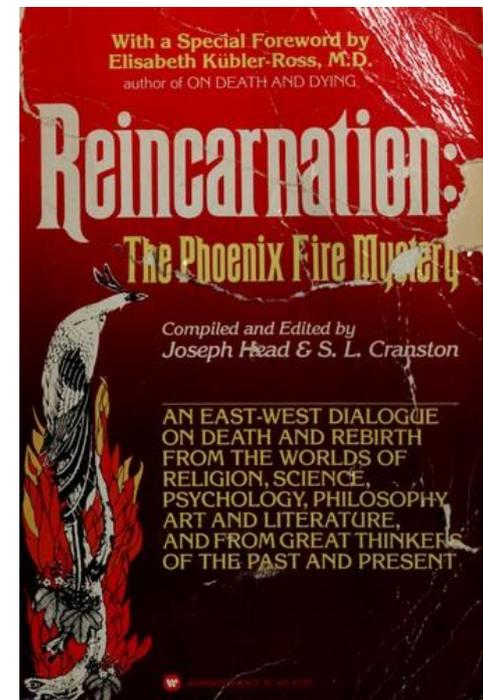
Memories of Past Lives (1)

There is now much more evidence being gathered for past life memories, such as the research by the University of Virginia, Division of Perceptual Studies, USA.

A recommended book is “Return to Life: Extraordinary Cases of Children Who Remember Past Lives” (2013), by Prof. Jim Tucker, M.D., a New York Times bestseller.

Many other accounts are given in the classic “Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery” by Sylvia Cranston & Joseph Head (1979).

This is one of them...

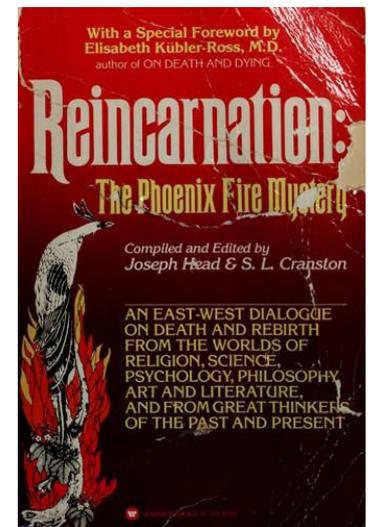


Memories of Past Lives (2)

Xenoglossy is a term coined by the French parapsychologist Charles Richet in 1905 in which a person is able to speak or write a language they could not have acquired by natural means. Richet is quoted in several places by HPB and was well respected by her.

When a prominent NY physician Dr. McDuffie found his twin baby boys conversing together in an unknown language, he took them to Columbia University Foreign Language Dept. But the staff there could not identify it until a professor of ancient languages accidentally overheard them as he was walking past their open door. It turned out they were speaking Aramaic, a language more common at the time of Christ, now little used.

How did they learn this language? It can be more likely attributed to past life memory than other paranormal means.



Memories of Past Lives (3)

“Reincarnation” is a documentary made by an Australian hypnotherapist, Peter Ramster, in 1981.

It remains one of the most thorough ones made.

Watch from **22:40 to 27:15** on Australian lady’s verified memories of an 18th c. French Château and Church, which she describes accurately & was verified from the records of the local priest.

Also from **27:15 to 48:15** on another lady who remembered her last life as a Scottish doctor, James Burns MD. She gives substantiated proofs when recalling changed architectural details of Marischal Medical College in Aberdeen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrXtkYV9sk8>



Is the Future Fixed?

According to the kabalistic doctrine, the future exists in the astral light in embryo, as the present existed in embryo in the past.

While man is free to act as he pleases, the manner in which he *will* act was foreknown from all time; not on the ground of fatalism or destiny, but simply on the principle of universal, unchangeable harmony; and, as it may be foreknown that, when a musical note is struck, its vibrations will not, and cannot change into those of another note. *Isis Unveiled, I, 184*

Cellular Memory

Occultism tells us that every atom, like the monad of Leibnitz, is a little universe in itself.

... and that every organ and cell in the human body is endowed with a brain of its own, with memory, therefore, experience and discriminative powers.

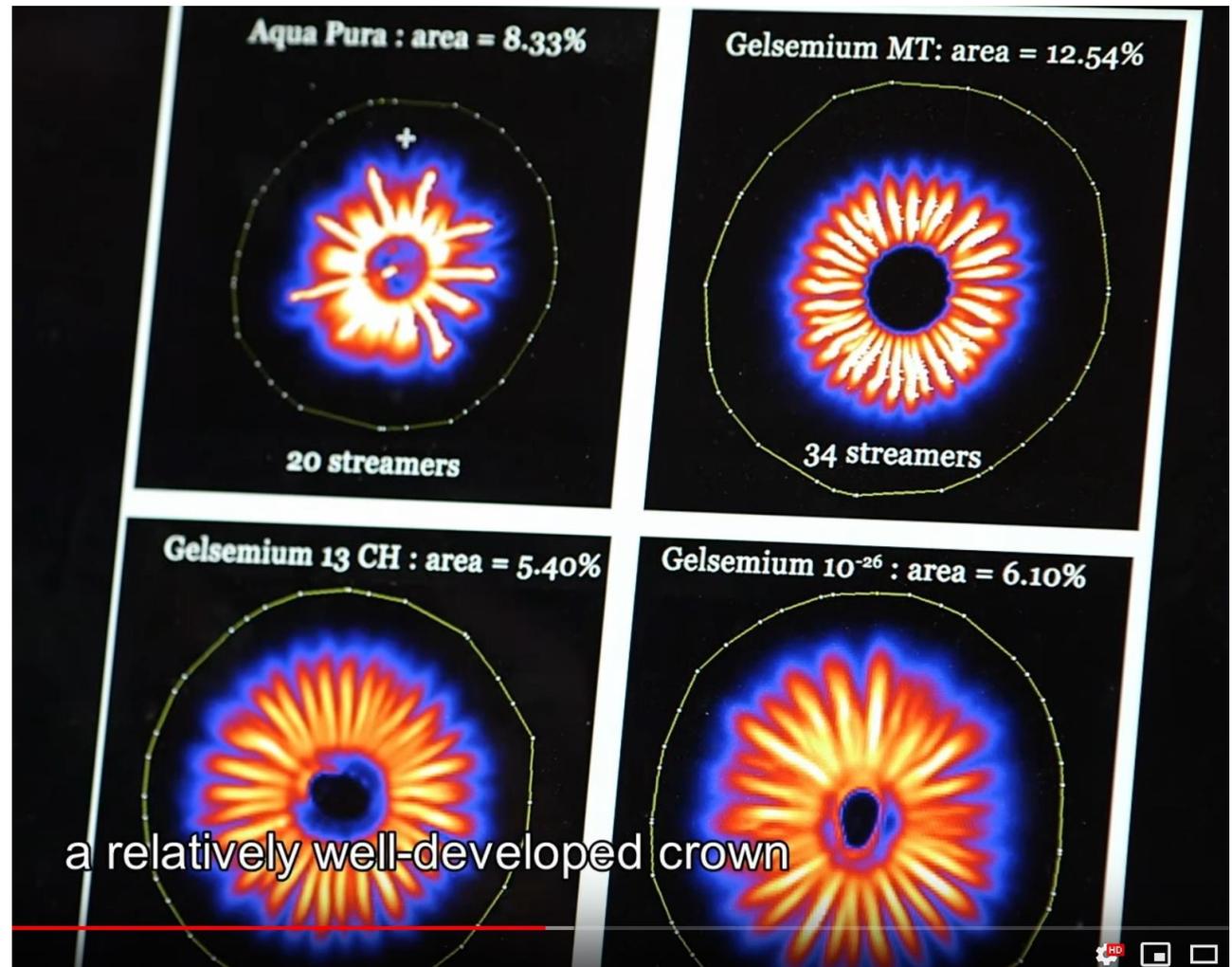
Kosmic Mind, article by H. P. Blavatsky

Cellular Memory in Water, the Basis of Homoeopathy

Electrophotonic
image of water &
homoeopathic
Gelsemium

from "Homeopathy
Another Way" movie,
watch 42:09 to 43:51.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXpp45i4Vrw>



A Note on Researchers : Some Have a “Special Nature”

In a remote-transmission experiment carried by a team funded by the United States Department of Defense several "positive" results were noted, but only when a particular researcher (Jamal Aissa) was running the equipment.

The lead researcher stated “certain individuals consistently get digital effects and other individuals get no effects or block those effects.”*

This compares with what *The Secret Doctrine* says about J. W. Keeley having a certain “*capacity inherent in his special nature*” to operate his machine which he could not pass on. SD 1:559

Jonas, Wayne B.; John A. Ives, Florence Rollwagen, Daniel W. Denman, Kenneth Hintz, Mitchell Hammer, Cindy Crawford, and Kurt Henry (January 2006). "Can specific biological signals be digitized?". *FASEB Journal* 20 (1): 23–28. doi:10.1096/fj.05-3815hyp. PMID 16394263. <http://www.fasebj.org/cgi/content/full/20/1/23>. Retrieved 2007-06-05. — this paper includes an excellent references list. [from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_memory retrieved 21 May 2011; there's a new file location for the report at <https://faseb.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1096/fj.05-3815hyp>, 18 Oct 2020]

Looking Backwards Without Attachment

To end with, there appears to be beneficial and also harmful ways to revisit past experiences.

“Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.”

The Voice of the Silence, 18

However in **Samma Sambuddha**, which comes at the final initiation, we know that the Yogi recollects *all his past incarnations*. Is it that he does so unattached? A clue is in the fact that Samma Sambuddha is also the title of Buddha, the “Lord of meekness and *resignation*”; it means “*perfect illumination*”.

extracts from Theos. Glossary

Summing up

We conclude with the following propositions

- There is evidence that memory resides largely outside the brain and there is a coherent philosophy to explain it;
- That access to trans-personal wisdom (the universal mind) depends on definite qualities such as altruism;
- The development of this real wisdom and self-reliance must be built on a *true knowledge* of the laws of Nature, which in turn are discoverable by the study and practice of a universal system of ethics.

Q&A

Reading from Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, pages 17-20

ARJUNA:

"What, O Keshava,* is the description of that wise and devoted man who is fixed in contemplation and confirmed in spiritual knowledge? What may such a sage declare? Where may he dwell? Does he move and act like other men?"

KRISHNA:

"A man is said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge when he forsaketh every desire which entereth into his heart, and of himself is happy and content in the Self through the Self. His mind is undisturbed in adversity; he is happy and contented in prosperity, and he is a stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger. Such a man is called a Muni (a wise man). When in every condition he receives each event, whether favorable or unfavorable, with an equal mind which neither likes nor dislikes, his wisdom is established, and, having met good or evil, neither rejoiceth at the one nor is cast down by the other. He is confirmed in spiritual knowledge, when, like the tortoise, he can draw in all his senses and restrain them from their wonted purposes. The hungry man loseth sight of every other object but the gratification of his appetite, and when he is become acquainted with the Supreme, he loseth all taste for objects of whatever kind. The tumultuous senses and organs hurry away by force the heart even of the wise man who striveth after perfection. Let a man, restraining all these, remain in devotion at rest in me, his true self; for he who hath his senses and organs in control possesses spiritual knowledge.

"He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern; from this concern is created passion, from passion anger, from anger is produced delusion, from delusion a loss of the memory, from the loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all! But he who, free from attachment or repulsion for objects, experienceth them through the senses and organs, with his heart obedient to his will, attains to tranquility of thought. And this tranquil state attained, therefrom shall soon result a separation from all troubles; and his mind being thus at ease, fixed upon one object, it embraceth wisdom from all sides. The man whose heart and mind are not at rest is without wisdom or the power of contemplation; who doth not practice reflection, hath no calm; and how can a man without calm obtain happiness? The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away his spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean. Therefore, O great armed one, he is possessed of spiritual knowledge whose senses are withheld from objects of sense. What is night to those who are unenlightened is as day to his gaze; what seems as day is known to him as night, the night of ignorance. Such is the self-governed Sage!

"The man whose desires enter his heart, as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean, which, though ever full, yet does not quit its bed, obtaineth happiness; not he who lusteth in his lusts.

"The man who, having abandoned all desires, acts without covetousness, selfishness, or pride, deeming himself neither actor nor possessor, attains to rest. This, O son of Pritha, is dependence upon the Supreme Spirit, and he who possesseth it goeth no more astray; having obtained it, if therein established at the hour of death, he passeth on to Nirvana in the Supreme."

* Keshava — he whose rays manifest themselves as omniscience — a name of Krishna.