



The Light Bearer

Autumn
2023

Published by the Canadian Theosophical Association



Our motto: There is no religion higher than Truth

Theosophy is the wisdom underlying all religions, beyond dogma and superstition

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Mission Statement

To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual Self-transformation, and the Unity of all Life.

Freedom of Thought

Theosophy has always been, from time immemorial, known to a few. Its teachings help achieve the latent spiritual nature in every human being, without dependence and without fear. It demonstrates that justice and love guide the world.

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 in New York City and its headquarters was installed in 1882 at Adyar, India. It has national sections in over fifty countries.

Text of the resolution adopted by the Grand Council of the Theosophical Society:

As the Theosophical Society has spread widely in the world, and Believers of all religions came into its ranks without abandoning dogma, teachings and beliefs of their particular creeds, it seems useful to emphasize that no doctrine or opinion, by any person, who can be taught or supported, is required to fulfil the acceptance of members to the Theosophical Society, and there is none that they can, at their discretion, accept or reject. Approval of the three objects is the only condition imposed on members. Here they are:

- 1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour*
- 2. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science*
- 3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in human beings*

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The views expressed in this magazine are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Canadian Theosophical Association or its Editors.

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Contents

- 5. **Word from the Editor** – by Reid Pollock
- 6. **Word from the President** – by Robert Béland
- 8. **On The Practicality of Ideas**– by G de Purucker
- 9. **Why Freedom of Thought** – by Pedro Oliveira
- 12. **The Power of Ideas** – by Helena Petrova Blavatsky
- 16. **Words of Wisdom** – by David Bruce
- 17. **Effect on Character** – Theosophical Pamphlet Extract
- 21. **Thoughts on Spiritual Life** – by Sigvaldi Hjalmarsson
- 26. **News and Notes**
- 27. **Board of Directors and Lodges**
- 28. **Study Centres, Enquirers and Links**

Word from the Editor

Dear Theosophists,

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 issue of the Light Bearer. This summer was an unstable and turbulent season for the world. Cities burned in the Canadian Arctic, Hawaii, and British Colombia while war continued in Ukraine and floods submerged Libya. It was a summer of smoke and uncertainty; ever resilient we continue to move forward on our planet navigating the fourth round of this planetary cycle.

The concept guiding this issue is one of great importance: Thoughts & Ideas can change the world. I know this sounds lofty in a world beset by so much chaos; however, the feature articles in this issue describe in detail how thought forms influence our lives (and world) for better or worse. Focus and meditation on the power of ideas and thought forms will undoubtedly make your life and theosophical work so much richer of an experience.

In this issue we have pieces from HPB, Pedro Oliveira, and Sigvaldi Hjalmarsson. National president Robert Béland compliments this concept in his Word From the President where he speaks on the need for urgency of action when living a Theosophical life.

For myself the Autumn season is one of reflection, focus and work. I hope these articles can assist you through the seasonal transition and impress on all Theosophists the need for right thought and urgency of action.

Peace,

Reid Pollock, Editor, Lux Study Centre

Word from the President



Hello Everyone,

Autumn is here and this means that the back-to-school season is upon us. This is also the time that we resume our theosophical activities. As we move into the new season it is my pleasure to share with you some news and my thoughts in my Word from the President.

Let me start with the news portion of my report. We had a very busy 2023 that featured many Canadian and international speakers in our seminar series. The year ended with an excellent seminar given by Michele Sender on *the Awakening of Wisdom* through meditative inquiry. For those who did not have the chance to attend the Convention and AGM we will soon post video of the seminar on our website.

During the September study season, we will continue hosting seminars on the first and last Sunday of every month as well as maintaining regular lodge programming. On the first Sundays of the month, we will base our seminars on the work of Pablo Sender, while the final Sundays will see us explore a variety of esoteric topics. During these seminars we will travel a long study path together which will begin with ‘What is Theosophy?’ and will conclude with ‘The Path of Initiation’. I hope that you will all participate in large numbers; it promises to be very interesting.

Last issue of the Light Bearer I mentioned the World Congress of the Theosophical Society which will be held in Vancouver, from July 22 to 28, 2025. The theme of this event has been determined to be ‘Toward Insight and Wholeness: Our Role in Shaping the Future’. This major event that only occurs every seven years happens to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Theosophical Society and the 100th anniversary of the Theosophical Society in Canada. For those that can attend the World Congress this will be an unforgettable week. I invite you to put this event into your agenda immediately.

Now, I would like to share with you some thoughts that came to me during our seminar with Michele Sender during our 2023 convention. The main thought is:

‘Develop a sense of urgency’

We all notice that when there is a tragedy-such as a fire, flood or hurricane-that everyone mobilizes and devotes their time and resources to resolving the problems that have arisen from the tragedy. There is an urgency to these actions and often when one gets involved in theosophical study such urgency is depleted due to busy schedules and a complex working life. In the Maha Chohan’s letter, it is said that Theosophy, when properly practised can provide the solution to all the problems of humanity. Although we are aware of this it can be difficult to mobilize our actions toward a global solution like we do in moments of catastrophe.

I therefore welcome you to develop a sense of urgency Why not act now, as if the flood, the fire, or poverty has already hit us hard? Fortunately, we are not yet at the point where we must give up everything to work to ensure our survival. But perhaps by developing a sense of urgency, it will increase our motivation and energize us to devote more time and effort to our theosophical work.

I leave you with an extract from Mme Blavatsky's letter number 4, one month before her death. “After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never dormant wish of my heart... Be Theosophists, Work for Theosophy!”

Thank you.

Robert Béland, National President

On The Practicality of Ideas



The Theosophist is often asked what practical good the Theosophical Society is doing in and for the world, and the answer is simple enough and direct to the point of the question. We work with ideas, and we try to show men and women that there is nothing more practical . . . and more forceful than an idea. Ideas shake civilizations and overthrow them. Look what has happened in the past. What brought such changes about? Ideas . . .

Show me something more practical than an idea. If ideas overthrow civilizations, they also build them up. The whole work of the Theosophical Society is to fill the minds and hearts of men and women with ideals of grandeur, inspiring them to ever nobler, more unselfish, and more altruistic objectives; to give men and women thoughts that they can live and die by. Show me something more practical than this. This is our main work.

From G. de Purucker's editorial entitled "The Real Work of the T. S." published in *The Theosophical Forum*, sometime between 1937-1942

WHY FREEDOM OF THOUGHT?



Why has ‘freedom of thought’ been an important policy of the Theosophical Society since its beginning in 1875? Why is it that the books published by the different publishing houses within the Society, over more than a hundred years, have not been presented as its thoughts and teaching? And why have the writings of Madame Blavatsky – the main co-founder of the TS – not been adopted as the official teaching of the Society? In order to address these questions we may have to go back twenty-five centuries.

BUDDHA AND THE ENDING OF THE VIEWS

In the *Aggivachagotta Sutta* (‘To Vacchagotta on Fire’) the Buddha explains to the wanderer Vacchagotta, who was questioning him, the reason why he did not cling to any form of view:

*“Vaccha, the speculative view that the world is eternal is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a fetter of views. It is beset by suffering, by vexation, by despair, and by fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. On seeing this danger, I do not take up any of these speculative views.” **

Vacchagotta replies to the Buddha: “Then does Master Gotama hold any speculative view at all?” The Master explains:

*“Vaccha, ‘speculative view’ is something that the Tathagata has put away. For the Tathagata, Vaccha, has seen this: ‘Such is material form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance; such are formations, such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.’ Therefore, I say, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of all conceivings, all excogitations, all I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit, the Tathagata is liberated through not clinging.” ***

Working with ideas and concepts is a necessary part of any aspect of life. The problems arise when we try to convince others that ‘my idea, my solution, or my concept’ is the only right one. Division and fragmentation set in and communities and relationships suffer. In the search for Truth any attempt to dictate terms to others is not only unhelpful – it renders such a search devoid of meaning.

MASTERS OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

While corresponding with the members of the London Lodge in 1883, Mahatma KH gave them a practical demonstration of why ‘freedom of thought’ is important in the TS. He also showed them that he knew how to walk the talk.

“It seems necessary for a proper and correct understanding of our philosophy and the benefit of those whose inclination leads them to seek esoteric knowledge from the Northern Buddhist Source, and in order that such teaching should not be even virtually imposed or offered to those Theosophists who may differ from our views, that an exclusive group composed of those members who desire to follow absolutely the teachings of the school to which we, of the Tibetan Brotherhood, belong, should be formed under Mr. Sinnett’s direction and within the ‘London Lodge T.S.’ Such is, in fact, the desire of the Maha Chohan.... Every Western Theosophist should learn and remember, especially those of them who would be our followers – that in our Brotherhood all personalities sink into one idea – abstract right and absolute practical justice for all. ...Thus, the Theosophists of Mrs. K’s (Anna Kingsford’s) way of thinking, - were they even to oppose some of us personally to the bitter end, - are entitled to as much respect and consideration (so long as they are sincere) from us and their fellow members of opposite views, as those who are ready with Mr. Sinnett to follow absolutely but our special teaching. A dutiful regard for these rules in life will always promote the best interest of all concerned. It is necessary for the parallel progress of the groups under Mrs. K. and Mr. S. that neither should interfere with the beliefs and rights of the other. And it is seriously expected that both of them will be actuated by an earnest and sleepless desire to respect the philosophical independence of each other, while preserving at the same time their unity as a whole – namely the objects

of the parent Theosophical Society in their integrity – and those of the London Lodge, in their slight modification.

When universal brotherhood – the oneness of all humanity and indeed all life – begins to become a reality in our hearts it will naturally generate the acceptance of differing views, while keeping the focus on the purpose for which the Theosophical Society was established: to let people ‘know that such a thing as Theosophy exists’.

ANNIE BESANT’S VIEW

In a statement from 1913, Annie Besant elaborates this point in a passionate presentation of one of the pillars of the TS work – Freedom of Thought:

“Before dealing with investigations, let me make clear my own position with regards to all questions of opinion and belief within the Theosophical Society itself. Some of our members echo the statements of one seer or another, and seem to consider that such a statement ought to preclude further discussion. But no one in the TS has any authority to lay down what people shall think, or not think, on any subject. We are not in the position of an orthodox Church, which has certain definite articles of faith, which impose certain definite creeds in which all faithful members are bound to believe. The only point which we must accept is Universal Brotherhood, and even as to that we may we may differ in our definition of it. Outside that, we are at perfect liberty to form our own opinion on every subject; and the reason of that policy is clear and an exceedingly good one. No intellectual opinion is worth the holding unless it is obtained by the individual effort of the person who holds that opinion. It is far healthier to exercise our intelligence, even if we come to a wrong conclusion and form an inaccurate opinion, than simply, like parrots, to echo what other people say, and so put out of all possibility our intellectual development.

In fact, differences of opinion among the member sought to be regarded as safeguards to the Society rather than menaces, for our one greater danger, as HPB recognized, is the danger of getting into a groove, and so becoming fossilized in the forms of belief that many of us hold today; ... The Society is intended, always has been intended, to be a living body and not a fossil, and a living body grows and develops, adapting itself to new conditions; and if it be a body which is spiritually alive, it should be gaining continually a deeper and fuller view of truth. It is absurd for us to pretend, at our present stage of evolution, that we have arrived at the limit of the knowledge which it is possible for man to obtain. It is absurd for us to say that the particular form into which we throw our beliefs at this moment is the form which is the form which is to continue forever after us, and to be accepted by those who follow us in time. ...if the Society is to live far into the future, as I believe it will, then we must be prepared to recognize now, quite frankly and freely, that our knowledge is fragmentary, that it is partial, that it is liable to very great modifications as

we learn more and understand better; and especially is this true of everything which goes under the name of investigation”. ****

The essential spirit of the TS is not a set ideology but, as its very name indicates, Divine Wisdom. Dr. Besant’s vigorous elaboration makes it clear how vitally important for the Society is ‘freedom of thought’. Although now more than a century old as an institution, the TS remains unique by affirming that an open mind is a crucial qualification in the search for Truth.

A LETTER FROM A GREAT ADEPT

The core mandate of the TS is not just encouraging an unbiased and undogmatic search for Truth. It seeks to address the fundamental causes of human suffering and fragmentation which have turned the earth into a valley of tears. The well-known 1881 letter from the Mahachohan – the Mahatma’s Master – points to the deeper nature of Theosophical work:

“To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilized* races less than any other, have ever possessed the *truth*. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles – right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egoism and altruism – are as impossible to them now as they were 1881 years ago. (We can still say 2023 years ago) They are as far from the solution as they ever were; but to these there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will prove their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first one to confess that must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives truth and nothing but the truth”. *****

The Theosophical Society became an early custodian of a universal, regenerative teaching. As one of the Mahatmas told Mr. Sinnett, “this Theosophy is no new candidate for the world’s attention, but only the restatement of principles which have been recognized since the very infancy of mankind”. Although in its teaching aspect, articulated through ageless concepts, Theosophy studies and explains universal processes – in the human being, in Nature and the universe – in its deeper, numinous nature, it is Wisdom, a direct, non-mediated perception of the undivided oneness of all existence and a way of life informed by this life-transcending experience.

‘Freedom of thought’ is the beginning. If rightly nurtured it can lead to meaningful study and reflection. But even these are ultimately transcended when we truly come to know what Theosophy is in its essential nature, through the full realization of our first Object.

The Light Bearer, Autumn 2023

- * ** *The Middle Discourses of the Buddha*
- *** *The Mahatma letters to A.P. Sinnett*
- **** *Excerpt from 'Investigation Into the Super physical', Adyar Pamphlets*
- ***** *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom, 1st Series*

From an article by Pedro Oliveira, Australian Section and past International Secretary



~*Words of Wisdom*~

THE POWER OF THOUGHT

The world is becoming smaller and more connected. The principle of interconnectedness is a basic Theosophical principle, as this excerpt from The Theosophical World View shows:

The universe and all that exists within it are one interrelated and Interdependent whole. Every existent being – from atom to galaxy – Is rooted in the same universal, life-creating Reality.

By virtue of our common humanity, we are deeply connected, not only at the material level, but also at the level of THOUGHT. Whatever continent we live on we are connected at those deeper levels where thought and feeling operate. When our ideas are published in books or periodicals, they can influence the reader, but even our private and unspoken thoughts radiate energy outwardly, having their proportionate effect upon the surrounding mental atmosphere. Annie Besant summed this up at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago: “Even as you think, the thought burning in your brain becomes a living force for good or for evil in the mental atmosphere. As we think, thoughts from us go out to mold the thoughts and lives of others. Your thought power makes you creative gods in the world.”

Excerpt from an August 2010 article by David Bruce, National Secretary of the TSA

THE EFFECT ON CHARACTER

Of the Power of thought



It has been said that we are what we think. To a great extent, the quality of our character is formed by the creative power of our thoughts. An old Buddhist scripture begins, “Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think.” In Proverbs 23:7 we find a similar observation: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” The mind has been compared to a garden, which can be cultivated intelligently or allowed to run wild. Thoughts are the seeds that we plant daily in our mind. The soil of the earth will bring forth weeds or flowers, depending on what type of seeds are allowed to take root. For better or worse, the thoughts we plant in our mind will eventually manifest in our lives.

Our mind is the result of our past thinking, both in this life and in previous lives. Each person’s mind has its own unique rate and range of vibration. It has certain tendencies, strengths, affinities, weaknesses, and imperfections, all of which are the outcome of previous patterns and thought. But the mind is not static and it is being modified constantly by our present modes of thinking as shown by recent brain imaging techniques.

Thoughts may be viewed as localized vibrations of mental “matter” occurring in the mental field. In general terms, pure and lofty thoughts consist of rapid vibrations whereas coarse and debased thoughts vibrate at lower frequencies. By deliberately training the mind to take in elevated and inspired thoughts, we gradually increase its capacity to respond to thoughts of a higher quality. Avoiding thoughts of a crass and degraded nature helps to

purify the mind of any tendency to respond to such unsavory influences. A common spiritual practice is to begin each day with an inspiring and uplifting quote, to consider its meaning and application in daily life, and to return to that thought frequently throughout the day. Such a simple practice, in effect, creates a field that attracts similar thoughts while at the same time repelling those that are negative and debased.

In addition to having distinct vibratory rates, clairvoyants have observed that thoughts may take definite shapes and exhibit various colours. In Theosophical literature these are called thought forms. Most thought forms are of a transient nature lasting only a few moments, while others may last for days or years, depending on the intensity of concentration and amount of energy put into their creation. A mathematician working intensely on a math problem may create a thought form that is quite well defined and which lasts for days in the mental field. On the other hand, a thought form inspired by a whimsical daydream may last only a few minutes. In Christian churches, a thought form of the Christ may last for years as new generations of worshippers continue to add their individual thought energy to the existing thought form created by earlier congregations. On the negative side, collective racial and ethnic prejudices may create lasting thought forms of hate and animosity, which hover in the atmosphere over nations or groups of people for decades and even centuries. The constant repetition of a thought helps to extend the longevity of the associated thought form which, as mentioned before, exerts a subtle but definite influence.

It should be obvious that a prolonged habit of negative thinking will not only have harmful effects for the person who generates such thoughts, but also for persons nearby or to whom such negative thoughts are directed. It is well established that there is a strong connection between negative mental thought patterns and some physical maladies such as high blood pressure, digestive disturbances, etc. By the same token, people who chose to take a positive outlook on life populate their mental atmosphere with thought forms of a beneficial nature. Since every thought and emotion produces a permanent effect by either strengthening or weakening a tendency within us, the greatest care must be exercised as to the type of thoughts and emotions that we permit ourselves to engage in.

Exercising such control over our thoughts may seem like an impossible task, but many people have proven that it can be done successfully. The proverbial 90-pound weakling who enters the gym for the first time may have difficulty envisioning himself with a strong, healthy body, but we all know that successful body builders were not born with magnificent physiques. They had to work hard to obtain their goals over a period of time by eliminating harmful foods from their diet and adopting a program of rigorous exercise. In the same way, spiritual aspirants learn to take responsibility for their daily thought patterns by avoiding such habits as malicious gossip, idle chatter, displays of anger or resentment, and deliberately replace them with positive qualities such as sympathy, tolerance, understanding and forgiveness.

The Light Bearer, Autumn 2023

Taken from: *The Theosophical Study in America*, a TSA series of information pamphlets.



THOUGHTS ON SPIRITUAL LIFE



N. Sri Ram concludes his book titled '*An Approach to Reality*', with the following statement: "The path to reality lies in the transcendence of ourselves." It means the coming into being of an entirely new dimension in our consciousness.

When a new dimension comes into being it is more than a kind of extension of those dimensions which were present before. An entirely new quality appears, such a tremendous new quality, as makes the totality of all the former dimensions quite insignificant, as we can see by comparing a square and a cube. I deliberately avoid carrying this simile further, but I shall mention other attempts to give an idea of the same thing.

In the Tibetan esoteric philosophy, we frequently come across the words "to go beyond" – to go beyond wisdom, to go beyond virtues – which is to go beyond everything that we ordinary people regard as highest and best, leaving everything behind and passing into something which is entirely new and unknown, something which is qualitatively new. And in modern literature we have the phrase: "letting go", implying the same indescribable quality which is not to be discussed but to be lived.

In fact nothing is more necessary than to realise that this is not to be discussed. You either are it, or you miss it altogether. As the ancient Chinese Sage, Seng-tsan, said: "The more you talk about it, the more you think about it, the further from it you go." Very simply because in talking and in thinking lies the barrier which cuts us from it.

It is because of this that spiritual instruction, sometimes referred to as esoteric teaching, is most often given in disjointed sentences, some of which being rather obscure or even paradoxical, from the point of view of the ordinary intellect. But those sentences should be thought of as different rungs in a ladder leading us into the unknown, but failing to convey any meaning if the student does not undertake the climbing.

It is for the same reason that the realm of esoteric study is like coming into an empty room. The student must realise that he or she is not able to discover any truth except in the proportion that he or she becomes a new person.

What we can do is something that has a certain quality which is beyond thinking and may be ordinarily called '*seeing and understanding the workings of the thinking principle*'. The same has been given forth in the past using different terms. The ancient Indian guru named Tilopa, who was much admired and followed in Tibet for many centuries, gave the following instructions for meditation, commonly called *the six rules of Tilopa*: "Do not imagine – do not think – do not analyse – do not meditate – do not reflect – keep the mind in its natural state". There is also an old esoteric axiom attributed to Pythagoras which encourages us "to know, to will, to dare and be silent".

We have to understand that keeping the mind in its natural state, or being really silent, is in fact the same as to listen and become the listening, or to observe and become the act of observing. This is purification, this is the cleansing of the heart or, to use the more modern language, to free the mind of all thought on all levels. What is experienced then is called: emptiness. In some Tibetan yoga treatises it is also called "clear light".

It is said that the "emptiness" or the "clear light" is to be found in the space or interval between thoughts, sensations and events of life, when observed as they are, without any kind of comparison or interpretation. We can also experience it in the moment of falling asleep or in the moment of dying – after the waking state of consciousness has ceased but before the dream state or after death state of consciousness has come. It is really experiencing bottomlessness, a complete annihilation with full awareness, which means resurrection or a new birth.

In the daily life of a person who has thus been able to transcend him or herself, "thought only arises for the purpose of communication".

This is a remarkable statement.

The thinking principle is in complete rest – except when the individual, who now acts from beyond thinking, wishes to make use of the thinking faculty, as we ordinary men and women resolve to use our hands for a specific action. The automatism of the thinking activity has ceased for ever.

By: Sigvaldi Hjalmarsson (1921–1985) President of the Iceland Section of the Theosophical Society, member of the General Council of the Theological Society and of the Board of the European Union of Theological Society. Journalist and author of books on Oriental studies.

News & Notes

The end of the summer saw months saw the ATCTA Convention and AGM arrive on September 9 & 10th. This year's convention featured a three-part interactive series on Meditative Inquiry with Michele Sender from the TS in America. Meditative Inquiry is a wholistic approach to bridging the gap between our senses and the spiritual consciousness.

For those Theosophists who missed the AGM and would like to consult the financial statements of the ATCTA for the financial year ending April 30, 2023 you can request them from our National Treasurer, Jennifer Hay: treasurer.atcta@gmail.com who will send them to you.

The Calgary Study Centres resumed meetings on September 3, 2023 and will be conducting a joint study of Isis Unveiled in person and on ZOOM. Interested parties or inquirers may reach out to Lux Study Centre for more information: Contact Reid Pollock at reid.pollock@gmail.com



Theosophical Order of Service

Anyone interested in learning more about the Theosophical Order of Service should contact Seray Caglayan at tosincanada@gmail.com

TOS International Newsletter

Find out how other TOS groups are improving our world!

Please sign up for *In Touch*, the TOS International (free) Newsletter by [clicking here](#). You can view old issues by [here](#). This is part of your benefits as members of the Canadian TOS.

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Blavatsky Lodge, Vancouver, BC (www.theosophyvancouver.org)

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Président: Jeanne-Louise Dufresne

Les Montagnes Bleues, Magog, QC (lesmontagnesbleues@gmail.com)

Président: Josée Dorval

Satya Lodge, Montréal, QC (theosophie.satya@gmail.com)

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Group Secretary: Svetlana Riddell

Enquirers

Anyone interested in learning more about the Canadian Theosophical Association should contact Jennifer Hay at camerjon@hotmail.com

External Links

- Canada: <http://atcta.org/en/home-2/>
- Independent Francophone Theosophical Site: www.theosophieauquebec.com
- Australia: www.austheos.org.au
- USA: www.theosophical.org
- Europe: <http://www.ts-efts.eu/>
- International Theosophical Society, Adyar: <http://www.ts-adyar.org/>
- T.O.S.: www.international.theoservice.org – NEW website in final stages of development
- Wikipedia, Theosophical Society America: www.tswiki.net