



The Light Bearer

Summer
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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Word from the Editor

Dear Theosophists,

Welcome to the Summer 2023 edition of The Light Bearer. The summer edition always arrives at a time of deceleration for the summer months. The grass is greener, the days longer and the general pace a touch slower than the rest of the year. This issue has a lot of great content for passing summer afternoons or deep contemplation on the beach.

In this summer issue we have an excellent recap of the work of the ATCTA by our National President Robert Béland in his *Word from the President*. Feature length editorials about the sage Ammonius Saccas and the intense brotherhood found in Mystery Schools of old come to us from Frank Watson and W.T.S Thackara. Musings on karma and the relationship of matter and spirit can be found in the *Purpose of It All* by Chas E. Luntz and *Everyday Occultism* by Robert Crosbie. Overall this issue boasts strong content focused on transcending our current lives on this material plane.

Of course, we always have interesting *Words of Wisdom* and a little poetry for your summer reading pleasure too. *News & Notes* has an update for any ATCTA members and inquirers interested in ZOOM meetings.

This is a meditative and engaging issue. My hope for the summer issue is that everyone finds a little piece of wisdom or nugget of inspiration to reflect on over these laid back months. I wish you all the best this summer.

Peace,

Reid Pollock, Editor, Lux Study Centre

Word from the President



The summer season is upon us again and with this seasonal shift we see many positive and negative developments in our world. For many, there will be few or no theosophical meetings between now and September. Within professional life, there will be a welcome holiday period during the summer months. We come to this moment looking for a more harmonious life, more time for the family, a less stressful work situation and for most of us, easier living conditions.

Although summer theosophical meetings are less numerous or absent, I think it is important to keep in mind that the development of mindfulness, this project on which many theosophists are working, must continue throughout the year, because “karma, the law of causes and effects, does not take a vacation.” While spiritual development is very important, mindfulness has practical applications in our daily lives, which can bring significant benefits both for the soul we are and for the personality we have.

To avoid some of the tragedies that statistically happen when we’re on vacation I wish that through mindfulness and good choices we will be able to live a more harmonious, restful, calm, and happy life. I hope for the sake of ourselves, our family and all those around us we have a positive and joyful summer vacation.

As this is the last Light Bearer before we reconvene in September, I will close with a summary of the work done this year by your Board of Directors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. It is because of their hard work, patience, perseverance, and teamwork, that everything that had to be accomplished this year has been accomplished, and that our plans for the coming years are also possible.

Let’s talk about these projects:

- All projects aimed at improving administrative operations and reducing costs went very well. This will facilitate, among other things, the work of current and future administrators. I would like to take this opportunity to invite

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you to participate on the Board of Directors or on certain committees. We must keep in mind that the important thing is the study of Theosophy, but if we do not have a structure, it makes this study and it's sharing increasingly difficult.

- As for this major project, which is to make theosophical teachings more accessible, we will soon have a committee that will work to optimize the quality of the messages we are sending, using the tools we have put in place over the past two years.
- The contacts we have with theosophical members of other countries give us access to a broader view of theosophy than we could have, even with the best goodwill in the world, if we remained isolated.
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the international speakers: Tim Boyd, Esteban Langlois, Jacques Mahnich, Jean Iozia, Vic Hao Chin, Kim Dieu, and Mary Anderson, and in Canada, Benoit Raymond, Reid Pollock, Andrie Levey Bates, Dany Ross, André Leblanc, Martine Archambault, Josée Dorval and Lucille Latendresse. They have contributed greatly by offering us a quality program.
- Let's end with some very, very good news! In 2025, the World Congress of the Theosophical Society, which is held every seven years in a country chosen from proposals submitted, will be held this time in Canada. This is a big project, which we've been working on for a few years. I will be in Naarden, Netherlands from 16 to 21 June for a meeting of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, where several important decisions on this project will be taken.

The plan is for this conference to be held in Vancouver from July 22 to 28, 2025. I will keep you updated on developments in the September Light Bearer. I look forward to sending you the details.

I hope you will all have a great summer, and it will be a pleasure to see you at our Annual General Meeting on September 9, 2023.

Thank you.

Robert Béland, National President

THE PURPOSE OF IT ALL



I want to preach the gospel of the present as against that of the past and future. The world seems to be divided into two principal classes – the forward-looking and the backward-looking – those whose gaze is ever fixed on the future yet to be and those who mournfully live in the past. The former class of course is praiseworthy – the latter to be eschewed; but still there seems room for – I will not say a third class – but for the forward-looking to take time as they progress through life to look around as they go and take fullest advantage of the present. While looking ahead to the joy that is to be or retrospective over the joy that was, may we not instead of hastily pressing forward linger awhile over the joy that is?

If we are of the backward-looking variety and love to rhapsodize over the dear departed days, let us think if ten or twenty years ago we really were so thoroughly satisfied with life. if we could be transported back to this very moment twenty years ago and live through a few of the scenes which seem so romantic to us as seen through the glamour of the intervening years, we should find nothing extraordinarily gladsome about them. We should find ourselves probably in a similar state of mind to that which we are in now – either mourning over past glories or looking forward to joys still to come – ignoring the present then as we do it now.

Stop to think. This is the future we looked forward to so hopefully ten or twenty years ago. This is the past we shall look back upon so longingly ten or twenty years hence.

Then why not live it to the full now while we pass through it. that is what we must do if we would live our life as Nature means us to live it, gaining the full value of each experience, whether it seems good or evil, as it comes to us.

The larger part of the after-death condition – the time spent between incarnations – is employed by the Ego in correlating the causes and effects of the physical life just closed. We survey the various experiences of the personality that represented us and take great pains to understand the inner reasons for every experience that occurred. And being an Ego with sources of knowledge and wisdom open to us far beyond the reach of ordinary man on the physical plane, we ‘get the strait of it’ too. We see how wrong done, perhaps a thousand years ago or more, is responsible for some apparently unmerited suffering which clouded the life recently ended. The full benefit of this introspective work we will reap in our next physical life when we return with additional faculties generated from the essence of the previous life’s experiences which the Ego has absorbed into the warp and woof of our being.

But why wait until then to learn these lessons? That will mean karmic disabilities removed in the next life, but I take it that all want them removed in this. If poverty, hardship, physical weakness, uncongenial conditions are our lot because of some lesson they are expected to teach us, we will want to learn the lesson at once and get these obstructions out of the way. For we must not assume that any given piece of karma has only one piece to teach.

Nature does not waste experiences in that way. Nature does not waste anything in fact – all her creations serve a variety of purposes. A tree, for instance, may bear nutritious fruit which justifies the tree’s existence, but it does more than this. Its wood is of value to us; its branches and leaves form the abode of birds and insects. Its roots also teem with living things. Even its shadow casts a grateful shade to protect man and animal from the glare and heat of the sun. This versatility of purpose is everywhere in evidence, and it is unlikely that in the realm of circumstance which equally is under the control of natural law, we shall find Nature any less satisfied to get the last ounce of use out of the karma she bestows.

I have tried to arrive at the purpose Nature has in mind in her distribution of both good and bad karma. We will first take the so-called ‘bad’ karma. What is its full purpose? Punitive, says the old school; corrective, rejoins the new. Nature does not punish – she only corrects. May I venture the thought that Nature’s purpose is both corrective and punitive? While she corrects, she punishes and very rightly. If ‘A’ kills ‘B’, ‘A’ should assuredly be corrected – taught that it is wrong to kill. Karma takes care of that by bringing ‘A’ to a violent and painful end either in the same or some subsequent incarnation. A corrective, truly, but surely a punishment too, and is it right that ‘A’ should escape without punishment? I can think of many very unpleasant experiences I have had which I now recognize were corrective of the very highest value. They were none the less punishments at the time. Should it be otherwise? Even in the lowest strata of human society the ability to

‘stand up and bravely take your punishment’ is the most highly esteemed virtue and it is a virtue. It teaches what? Endurance if nothing else.

We now have a threefold purpose of adverse karma: 1 – punitive, 2 – corrective, 3 – endurance-cultivating. And it serves these purposes from the very beginning of human history. Even the caveman, the earliest animal-like creature, was reached by karma in so far as these three objects were concerned. And everybody is today. We are punished for our delinquencies – we are corrected by the punishment and taught to do better – and we learn if nothing else at least endurance, though this is far from being the highest of virtues. Still, we must learn it, for certain things must be endured for a while before we can change them by effort. Everything can be cured in time but until the curing process has taken effect it is highly desirable to learn how to endure.

After we have grown tired of mere passive endurance, sometimes miscalled resignation to the “Will of God”, what follows? Effort – and that is the true Will of God. Effort to change intolerable conditions – the effort that has wrought every great advance in human history. By this I mean physical effort combined with prudence, forethought, and exercise of the reasoning faculties. Our psychology has not yet appeared. The four intents of karma so far enumerated – punitive, corrective, cultivator of endurance, and effort – are the four exoteric purposes, we may call them. And it is these four purposes only that karma accomplishes with most of humanity.

But we may feel certain that karma has higher objects in view in addition to these. How many more purposes should we seek for? Nature always seems, in our world at least, to work in sevens. I am not trying to drag in an occult number just to be mysterious but observe: There are 7 notes to the octave. You cannot conceive of there being any more or any less than just 7. So too there are 7 colours in the solar spectrum. There are also 7 days in the week. There are other natural events which are based on this septiform system and of course in occultism the number 7 is of primary importance – 7 principles (or bodies) of man, 7 planes, 7 subdivisions of each plane which in turn are redivided into 7. We have plenty of precedents to expect that Nature probably has 7 main purposes to accomplish with each piece of karma allotted. I have assumed that and have sought for the other three.

I do not think we need to seek far for the fifth. Surely this is ‘vision’, the importance of which runs like a golden thread through all our psychological teaching. It is not aroused in the multitude, but the person of vision is always in advance of the multitude. And what is vision? It is that faculty of the intuition or higher mind which images conditions as they may be in the far distant future – not the conditions of tomorrow or next month or even next year. Ordinary foresight based on physical experience may visualize these, but it is true vision which sees success when physical eyes observe frowning failure on every hand, the vision which sees a city where looms only the desolate plain, the vision which recognizes surpassing ability where the superficial observe only mediocrity or fanciful theory.

Adverse karma will develop vision in the more advanced of the race – the vision that desperately leaps all barriers of common sense and probability, if you like, and shouts exultantly: “It can be. Impossible as it seems this thing can be overcome, this condition changed.” It takes vision to see like that. But something further must be evoked if what I deem to be the sixth object of karma is to be achieved – ‘faith’. Vision says, “It can be done”, but faith says, “I can and will do it.” Few have vision but fewer still have faith. Men with vision said, “The airplane is a possibility,” those without said “It cannot be done; there have been many failures; better not attempt it.” Then Orville Wright said, “it can be done. I can and will do it.” He had vision but also faith. Aviators with vision admitted the theoretical possibility of a non-stop flight across the Atlantic, Lindberg with vision plus faith did it. Faith in ourselves, in our ability to attempt the seemingly impossible and succeed, are the higher lessons of karma. Shall we not try to learn them?

And the 7th object. Surely there can be only one thing more that Karma must teach us and what can it be but understanding – a comprehension of the purpose of it all? When we have learned that, together with the other six lessons, we must have everything that adverse karma must teach us.

And good karma. Well, first I think to test our reactions, for surely it is harder to stand up under prosperity which tempts us to take things easy, than under adversity which goads and lashes us to effort. Second, of course, good karma is compensatory, it is an earned reward for good achieved. Thirdly, I think, to teach us gratitude, a hard lesson to learn. Most of us take good karma as our just due but cry out to Heaven at the injustice of the evil which befalls us. Yet it would be well to remember the words of the Masters, “The wise one knows that all good work is done by God alone.” Be grateful if good karma comes to you, for the God in you has done good work.

And fourth, I think good karma comes to give us a chance for cultural development. For while this can be achieved in the face of a struggle for existence, it seldom is. Culture as a rule is the product of leisure made possible by ample means. Culture to the fullest extent implies travel, study of the best in art and literature, the customs of other nations. Nature intends we shall all, in her good time and as we earn them, obtain these opportunities necessary to the production of the perfect human, and this is one of the important things the good karma of prosperity permits.

For the rest, I think the next two objects of good karma are the same as evil karma except to arouse these things for the benefit of others instead of for us. That we shall devote our means with vision and faith to some altruistic project for the help of humanity. And the final object – understanding – must surely be the same for all types of karma, for understanding is equally necessary with good as it is with so-called evil.

Chas. E. Luntz

The Theosophist, December 1999

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY



In every new age and nation there have been all manner and degrees of theosophists who through a variety of disciplines have sought to raise the soul “to the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty – that is to the *Vision of God*.” A significant part of HPB’s effort was to show that a few had truly succeeded. Convinced of the power of theosophy to provide a majestically unifying vision of life, she and her teachers assembled from testimony of history and their own experience a powerful witness of a little known, poorly understood, but universally active community of students and sages, defined by their common aspiration to retrieve for the good of the world a fuller knowledge of the mystery of Being, and to kindle the flames of compassion, wisdom, and brotherly love in the hearts of men and women everywhere.

From the very beginning of her public work, HPB was clear about her purpose and the brotherhood objective she wished to achieve. Realizing that dogmatic churches and scientific academies were unlikely to lend a sympathetic ear initially, she turned to the more receptive, though relatively immature Spiritualist movement as a foothold to reintroduce theosophical ideas. In July 1875, a few months before The Theosophical Society was founded, a Boston Spiritualist journal published her first philosophical article. In it she seeded most of the fundamental concepts that were to be amplified in her later writings. It was a brilliantly composed overture setting forth by hint, allusion, and direct statement the major themes of the ‘music’ to follow.

Responding to an article on Rosicrucianism, her keynote was to suggest that the truths about God, the immortality of the soul, and the mysteries of existence had in fact been known from the remotest antiquity. She spoke about occultism in its original meaning as the science and philosophy of the spiritual principles of life, and of its Oriental “Cabala, or the compound mystic textbook of all the great secrets of Nature.” Upon this “primitive” original were modeled the Jewish Kabbalah and the Hermetic and Rosicrucian systems, each elucidating in its own way:

- ~The nature of the Supreme Being
- ~The origin, creation, and generation of the Universe
- ~The creation, or generation, of angels and men
- ~The ultimate destiny of angels, man, and the Universe
- ~The real meaning of the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures

The notion of ancient brotherhoods preserving and transmitting divine wisdom was, of course, nothing new. Gnostic, Sufi, Monastic, and other secret fraternities had been well known in the West. Emphasizing Ecclesiastes, that there is nothing new under the sun, HPB’s main thesis was to reassert that the sacred original of all mystic fellowship was not a dead relic of the past, neither a myth nor a hoax, but a living body composed of real people, philosophers she called them, who are the present day *“heirs to the early heavenly wisdom of their first forefathers.”*

HPB wished to make clear that the intent of the fraternity was gradually to reintroduce such portions of the sacred science as would dissipate the “clouds and unhealthy mists of a thousand religious sects which disgrace the present century . . . and recall into new life the wretched souls who shiver and are half frozen under the icy hand of killing skepticism.”

HPB had great hopes that . . . humanity could more clearly envision the oneness and interdependence of life, and the key to harmonious living. When all is said and done, what is of lasting value in our lives is the vivifying light of our relationships – of those inner bonds

built on love, trust, and respect. This brings its own blessing and its own potent understanding. But to achieve a realization of true fellowship or brotherhood, let alone deeper knowledge of the divine mystery, which is our common parent, one must begin by living in a brotherly way. And that is the essence of the Masters' call to "TRY."

Tracing The Theosophical Society's roots to this sacred community of "god-taught" philosophers, the founders sought as far as practical to model the Society's educational and humanitarian goals on the original program of its parent. The number, specific wording, and manner of fulfilling these objectives have varied somewhat in accordance with changing needs, but the central focus on brotherhood – as fact and ideal – have never changed.

As a vehicle for disseminating universal theosophy and fostering better human relations for the benefit of the world, the Society's mandate directs it to be nonexclusive, international in scope, free of sectarian interest, with absolutely no one to stand between an individual and his or her divine source. There is to be no dogma or creed to be binding upon its members.

From its inception, the founders realized that the TS, as a body of and for humanity, would be vulnerable to human shortcomings – to the divisive influences of selfishness, dogmatism, and fanaticism. Therefore, HPB and her teachers counseled repeatedly that the fellows of the TS must make altruism and brotherly living the basis of their lives. Otherwise, this new presentation of theosophy could become just another set of ritualized intellectual dogmas, and the Society one of those "other countries" with no port of entry for the life-giving spirit of compassionate wisdom. Aside from the commonsense ethic of brotherly conduct and the protection it naturally affords, there is a far deeper, more philosophical reason for brotherhood.

Love and wisdom are deathless and belong to the infinite resources of the great inscrutable Mystery, from which the "outflowing" and "inflowing" of countless universes continue into eternity. From the first moment of every cosmic birth there is bipolarity and the evolution of consciousness and substance proceeds by sympathy and attraction. In human life, similarity of thought and action automatically induces a harmonic resonance, and the moment we are sympathetic with something or someone, we automatically link together in direct proportion to the strength of our desire or aspiration. In the region of creative spirit our light calls to LIGHT. Whether it be named the Light of Christ or of the holy Buddhas, a fusion occurs, and the world will be blessed by it. Conversely, negative energies may be aroused in like manner, and we are reminded to give care to the quality of thoughts we invite into our soul.

As offspring of the divine mystery, we and all beings in the universe are brothers in fact and divinities in potential. Trying to live as brothers, working from the best of ourselves to the best of each other, being helpful and considerate, forgiving the hurts done to us out

of ignorance, curbing anger, and just plain loving our neighbor, evokes a resonance of spirit that brings peace surpassing understanding.

In principle it is not difficult to find the courage to be a brother, for courage – as the word implies – comes from the heart. Self-discovery is a process of awakening vision; of the fact that I and Thou are indeed one in essence and purpose, and regardless of how “high” or “low” on the evolutionary scale (cosmically we humans are pretty much in the middle), each of us has something vital to contribute. Once we volunteer to resume our ancient vow of altruism – of being true to all, however imperfect we are – we link ourselves with a fellowship of kindred spirits that embraces the universe.

The opening new age has brought with it greater hope for a better and more harmonious world, but where the light is bright, deep shadows also form. How then to distinguish genuine wisdom from psychic delusion and egotism, both outwardly in the world, and within the soul? The ability to recognize authenticity amidst the din of fictitious claimants is another gift of brotherhood that is simple to understand: like recognize like. Discernment is not a consequence of sentimental feeling but derives from the sustained application of principle.

For all her volumes of teaching and guidance, HPB’s last message to theosophists and to humanity were summed up in four simple words, spoken shortly before she died: “Keep the link unbroken.” For nearly one hundred and fifty years these words have been given perhaps as many interpretations as there are individuals who have searched their meaning. Amidst the diversity of possibilities, there is one with which even the most fiercely independent theosophist would probably concur – inwardly, the link with the divine mystery and its fellowship and, outwardly, with humanity and the world –.

Although we must discover our own strength and wisdom individually, we depend upon each other to solve creatively the challenges ahead. Here, it seems, is the harmonizing keynote to all our human relations, the gift HPB wished to impart: the immortal link of compassion that connects us with the universal brotherhood of life.

Excerpts from an article by W.T.S. Thackara in SUNRISE, April/May 1991

~Words of Wisdom~

God's Plan: Evolution

In all the world, there are only two kinds of people . . . those who know, and those who do not know; and this knowledge is the thing which matters. What religion someone holds, to what race they may belong, these things are not important; the important thing is knowledge – the knowledge of God's plan for us. For God has a plan and that plan is evolution. When once we have seen that and really know it, we cannot help working for it and making ourselves one with it, because it is so glorious, so beautiful. So, because we know, we are on God's side, standing for good and resisting evil, working for evolution and not for selfishness. If we are on God's side He is one of us and it does not matter in the least whether we call ourselves Hindu or Buddhist, Christian or Mohammedan, whether we are Indian or English, Chinese or Russian. Those who are on the side of the Divine know why they are here and what they should do, and they are trying to do it.

From "At the Feet of the Master."

WHO WAS AMMONIUS SACCAS?

Condensed from VIDYA



Ammonius was born in Alexandria around the middle of the second century. His parents were very poor, and the boy was obliged to add his share to the family earnings by working as a porter on the docks located in the Egyptian, or Rhakotis portion of the city. There he saw ships from far-off lands, heard strange dialects and met people from very different backgrounds. Perhaps he gained his first acquaintance with the philosophies of the East from some Hindu sailor. The song of Krishna is always on the lips of the sons of Hindustan.

The parents of Ammonius were devout Christians, and he was sent to the Christian School where he learned about the Christian Christ. He must have heard that Krishna too had been immaculately conceived, was persecuted by a wicked King, and had finally died upon a cross. Why were the stories of the two Christs so familiar? Could it be possible that

both were legends? If that were the case, there must be other legends of such Christs in other lands. The priest told him there was only *one* Christ. All the others were impostors. The priest told him to *believe*, but what he wanted was to *know*. So, he left the Christian School and started upon his journey of honest investigation.

When he grew older, he attended some of the lectures in the pagan schools and eventually became acquainted with the basic ideas underlying all the great philosophies. He pondered over the profound statements that he heard and often in the night their meaning, it is said, was revealed to him in dreams and visions. In the course of time, people began to speak of him as *theodidaktos*, the “god taught.” But Ammonius was a modest man and called himself merely a *Philalethian*, or a “lover of truth”. He started the Neoplatonic School in Alexandria in the year 193 A.D.

The object that Ammonius Saccas had in view were the same as those of HPB when she co-founded the Theosophical Society in 1875. The first of these objects was to form a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood without distinctions of any kind. Ammonius knew that Brotherhood means *unity* on every plane. He saw that without this idea of unity the entire manifested universe would be an expression of chaos. With unity as a basis, it would appear as an expression of law and order.

The second century of the Christian era was marked by tolerance, not by unity. The ancient Wisdom-Religion, which is the only true basis for unity, was now all but forgotten. The Schools of the Mysteries were gradually dying, and with them the knowledge of the Wisdom-Religion. The various Schools of the Gnosis were presenting different aspects of the wisdom –Religion, but their underlying unity was still unperceived, despite Valentinus’ efforts to disclose it. Ammonius recognized that religious tolerance was not enough, for even tolerance, without a philosophical basis, soon sinks into apathy. He saw that the only way to establish the brotherhood of religions was to show the identical source from which all of them had sprung, and from that point to explain the diversities. He began by postulating the existence of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and showed how all religions sprang from that, as the branches of a tree from a common trunk.

Using that one source as a basis of comparison, Ammonius proved the essential identity of all religions by making his students acquainted with all the different systems of thought. In his School – the Vedantic, Zoroastrian and Buddhist systems were studied side by side with the philosophies of Greece. The doctrines of Plato and Pythagoras were compared with the philosophies of the ancient East, the teachings of the Jewish Kabala with those of ancient Egyptians. This comparative study of religions and philosophies of all nations accomplished the second of Ammonius’ objects and gave to his School the name of Eclectic.

The third object that Ammonius had in view was to make the study of philosophy a living power in the lives of his students. To accomplish this, he consistently used the method of correspondence and analogy, demonstrating to his students that the myths and legends found in the different systems were but symbolical representations of the experiences

through which every soul must pass. Therefore, the members of his School were known as *Annalogeticists*.

The School of Ammonius Saccas was divided into two sections: exoteric and esoteric. This was merely the continuation of an ancient custom, for all the religious and philosophical schools of the past were divided in the same manner. The Mysteries of every nation consisted of the “lesser” and “greater.” The “lesser” mysteries were given to the people and consisted mainly in ethical teachings. The “greater” mysteries were reserved for the *few*. All the great Adepts of olden times gave out their *secret teachings* only to those who had pledged themselves to silence. Even the Jews had their *Mercavah*, or outer vehicle which concealed their highest knowledge. Northern Buddhism has its “greater” and “lesser” vehicle, known as *Mahayana*, or esoteric, and *Hinayana*, or exoteric, Schools. Pythagoras called his Gnosis “the knowledge of things that are,” and revealed it only to his pledged disciples. Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables and kept his secret teachings for the few. Therefore Ammonius, in dividing his own School in two sections, was following the lines of his predecessors.

The Alexandrian Theosophists were divided into three classes: neophytes, initiates, and masters. Their Rules were copied from those which had been used in the Ancient Mysteries of Orpheus who, according to Herodotus, had brought them from India. These Rules had come down to the Neoplatonist as their natural inheritance.

What Orpheus delivered in hidden allegories, Pythagoras learned when he was initiated into the Orphic Mysteries, and Plato next received a perfect knowledge of them from Orphic and Pythagorean writings.

Alexander Wilder, Neoplatonism, and Alchemy

In the Orphic system, the divine Essence is inseparable from whatever is in the manifested universe, all forms being concealed from all eternity in it. At determined periods these forms are manifested through the process known as Emanation. All things having proceeded from this Divine Essence, all things must return to it. Innumerable transmigrations or reincarnations and purifications are needed before this final consummation can take place.

The philosophical system of Orpheus was revived in Egypt by Ammonius Saccas. The central idea of the Eclectic Theosophy was that of a Supreme Essence. Unknown and unknowable. The system was characterized by three distinct features: first, the theory of this Supreme Essence; second, the doctrine of the human soul called an emanation of the Supreme Essence and therefore considered to be of the same nature; third, Theurgy, the art of using the divine powers of man to rule the blind forces of nature.

One Common Faith

The aim and purpose of Ammonius was to reconcile all sects, peoples, and nations under one common faith – a belief in one Supreme Eternal Unknown and Universal Power which governs the universe by immutable and eternal laws. His object was to prove a primitive system of Theosophy which in the beginning was known alike in all countries; to induce men to lay aside their quarrels and strife's and unite in purpose and thought as the children of one common mother; to purify the ancient religions, now corrupted and obscured from all the dross of human element, by expounding their philosophical principles. His chief object was to extract from the various religious teachings, as from a many-stringed instrument, one full and harmonious chord which would find a response in every truth-loving heart.

Ammonius Saccas, like many other of the great sages, left nothing in writing. The records of his teachings have come down to us through the works of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblicus. In relation to the school founded by Ammonius Saccas, Alexander Wilder writes in *The Esoteric Philosophy*:

Their doctrines were adopted by pagans and Christians in Asia and Europe, and for a season everything seemed favorable for a general fusion of religious beliefs. The Emperors Alexander Severus and Julian embraced them. Their predominating influence upon religious ideas excited the jealousy of the Christians in Alexandria. The school was removed to Athens and finally closed by the Emperor Justinian.

HPB was very aware of Ammonius Saccas and praise him as a great seer in her *Key to Theosophy*.

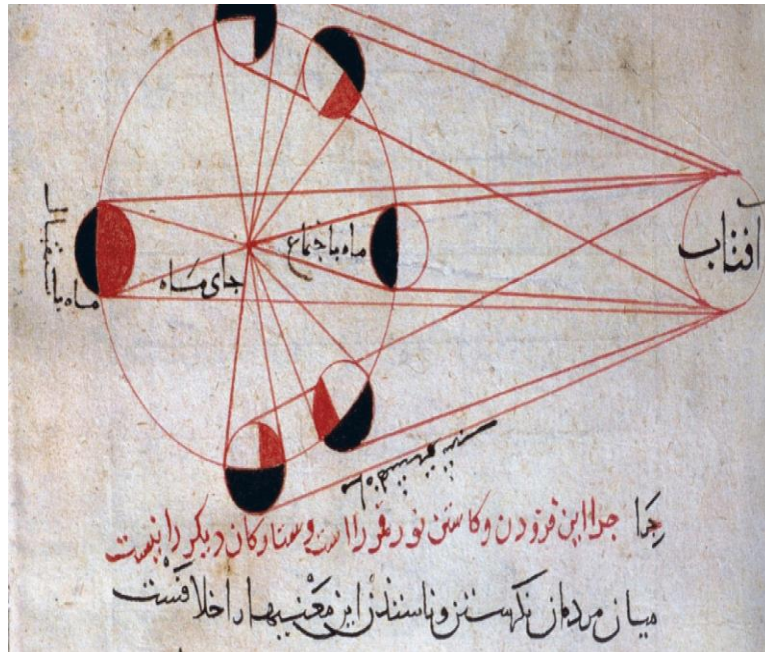
Alexander Wilder (1823-1909) was an American physician, a [Neoplatonist](#) scholar, and one of the earliest and prominent member of the [Theosophical Society](#) having been admitted on December 1, 1875.

"I was passionately desirous to know. I was disposed to ferret out the reason of things. I could not believe a thing right or wrong because anybody said it was..."

[Boris de Zirkoff](#) pointed out, "Many statements by HPB, particularly in [Isis Unveiled](#), the [Key](#) and the [Glossary](#) are taken from

Dr. Alexander Wilder's small booklet: [New Platonism and Alchemy](#), Albany, N.Y., 1869."

EVERYDAY OCCULTISM



What, then, is matter and what is Spirit? This is the question of the ages, and the only answer known to mankind at large is what humans accept as their religion and their science, whose fruits have ever been the same – “birth, death, decay, sickness, and error”: the unending succession of the rise and fall of civilizations and religions. Arjuna represents the man of religion who has come to “the end of the trail.” Students of the Wisdom-Religion in all ages have fallen victim to the same misconception that prevails in what are technically as well as popularly called religion and science. Ignorant of, or ignoring, the fundamental basis of all actions, spiritual and intellectual, as well as physical, they are deceived – that is, glamourised, intoxicated, by the results flowing from this or that system, belief, practice.

Physical scientists are materialists in nearly every case. Why? They have been able to obtain results by a study of Nature that they could not obtain by a study of *Revelation*. Religious people believe in their God and their prayers, despite prevalent Materialism. Why? Because they know that they, too, get results that no amount of scientific knowledge can produce – happiness, “peace of mind,” contentment with their fortune or misfortune.

Their power of perception centered on the results achieved, neither scientist nor religionist can rise above the plane of effects and observe the sphere or world of causation pure and simple. Were that done, the scientist would be a materialist no longer, the religious person would be a sectarian no longer. The follower of any religion would soon see that the followers of every religion achieve the same results as his or her own, though their prayers are addressed to another God and their works based on another ‘revelation.’ So, with the scientist: he or she would soon see that whoever sets up a physical cause is bound to get a

corresponding result, and this quite regardless of contradictory hypotheses as of contradictory revelations. Taking this simple universal truth into the region of the metaphysical, both the religious and the scientifically minded person could easily verify the same apothegm – Like causes produce like results, whether in the world physical or the world metaphysical, the world spiritual or the world psychic. Behind any perceived world of effects lies its opposite pole, the world of causes. But behind both worlds lies a third and eternal world, the world of Self-being, which includes and penetrates the others – that world which the religious calls the Will of God, the scientist calls Law, and the Krishnas of all time call “the Principles” of Nature and of Man. Because it is the world of the SELF or the One Life, that Spiritual Universe can never be perceived by the eye of sense, which perceives only effects and results; not by the eye of reason or intellect, which perceives only relations, *i.e.* cause-and-effect. The ignorant man sees effects dissociated from their causes, the more educated sees a combination or concatenation or relation between the visible and the invisible, but even the wisest fails to see the continuity of the One Life, whether we divide it into visible Matter and invisible Energy, into Spirit and Soul, into Law and God.

All these mighty problems have been discussed by Krishna, not in a series of chapters or Discourses, as we read and study *Gita*, but in *continuity*, in unbroken sequence. From Principle to Principle of Nature and of Arjuna’s own being he has united, elevated, the same SELF which before saw only good; then only evil; then only contradictions; then only a *Muni*, a Great Soul, who might be followed but never emulated – to the point where this self-same Arjuna can see for himself, in himself and in all Nature as well as in the Great Teacher, the Superior Nature, the “Knower in every mortal body.” This is that “Eye of Wisdom” dwelt upon in the fifteenth chapter, but in the seventh called “Devotion by means of *Spiritual* Discernment.” All men and all beings “animate or inanimate” have Discernment, the Divine Power of Perception. But if that power is exercised through the “eye of sense” – the perception of physical results or cause-and-effect – the Self is limited by what it sees to what it sees, “earth, water, fire, air, and akasa.” If that same power is elevated to the region of causality, if the “eye of reason” be employed as well as the eye of sense, then there results the perception of and limitation to “Manas, Buddhi, and Ahankara” – which, for present purposes we may take to mean the Personal consciousness of cause-and-effect, with ourselves as the experiencer, the victim or the beneficiary of our interactions with the rest of Nature. All this is the “inferior nature” of the SELF – that is to say, Human Nature. We do not regard “ourselves” from the highest imaginable standpoint. Quite the contrary, we regard the highest imaginable presentment of Nature and Man, or Spirit and Matter, from the standpoint of human nature.

The YOGA of Krishna or Buddha or of Christ or of HPB calls on us to regard human nature from the Divine plane, not Divine nature from the human plane. Raja Yoga is, therefore, reduced to terms, three sequential steps as an evolution, synthesized and symbolized by the development of the three “eyes” or instruments of perception – the eye of sense, the eye of reason, and the eye of wisdom, sometimes called the “Third Eye.”

Once, we all had the eye of Wisdom and the eye of Reason – in other words we were in the state called Atma-Buddhi-Manas, the state of every Savior, every Mahatma. We “incarnated” in beings having only the “eye of sense” – in order that we might see Life through their eyes and that they might see Life through our eyes. To effect that *partial* Union, which is what “incarnation” means, we had to set aside the “Eye of Wisdom,” in the same way that to produce an ordinary electric light the current itself has to be “stepped down” through a “transformer” to adapt it to the resistant strength of the light-bulb; otherwise the light-bulb, our animal body, would be destroyed by the impact. Thus “Ahankara,” the false, *i.e.*, the relative or isolated idea of Self, replaced the Absolute and Universal consciousness of SELF which is the meaning of Atma-Buddhi. This for the time being, was spiritually our loss, but it was the gain of Nature below us in the evolutionary scale of progression, for “man” became a *human* instead of an animal being only. We gained the eye of sense; the “animal-man” gained the eye of reason. Now, our task is to *re-gain* the “Eye of Wisdom” without losing either the eye of reason or the eye of sense. No Being is complete – perfected – until he becomes Mahatma, “able to see, able to hear, able to stand” in all three worlds – the world spiritual, the world intellectual or psychic, and the world physical or astral.

This is to become consciously and uninterruptedly the KNOWER in any or every mortal body – to have found out for oneself the continuity of consciousness or spirit. Few humans yet have reached that point in the cycle of existences where they are consciously striving for *perfection*, and who *will struggle* till they achieve it. Such are the Arjunas of mankind. And “amongst those so striving perhaps a single one” in any given incarnation becomes Krishna-Arjuna instead of Arjuna-Krishna. For they mistake the opening of astral-perception, psychic-perception, for the opening of the “Eye of Wisdom”; in other words, their *Ahankara* has been transferred from the physical to the astral plane, with consequent enormous expansion of the purely Personal Ego. But Medium or Psychic, theologian or scientist, or the merely “ordinary person,” each achieves whatever “results” are in the line of his or her faith, ideas and works.

All the arts – and artifices – of “human nature” in its manifold attempts to “reach perfection” by pulling down the Divine to the personal, the Spiritual to the psychic, have given us our religions, our sciences, our civilizations, with their mixture of true and false, of good and evil, but they never have, and they never will give us the “Eye of Wisdom.”

From a series of essays on the Bhagavad-Gita by Robert Crosbie

THEOSOPHY, April, 1975

The Great Law

I ask no good where'er I go,
That I have not by service won;
Nor ask that any joy shall flow
Into my life, that I to none
Have given joy. I cannot draw
From empty store – that is the law.

I hold this true, it is my creed
Within me lies my heaven or hell.
It is but my own thought and deed,
I build the home where I must dwell;
A marble mansion – tent of straw,
I am the builder – 'tis the law.

My harvest in the yet to be
Is that which here and now I sow.
I am uplifted and made free
By that of wrong which I outgrow.
If lifelines I distorted draw,
I must erase them – 'tis the law.

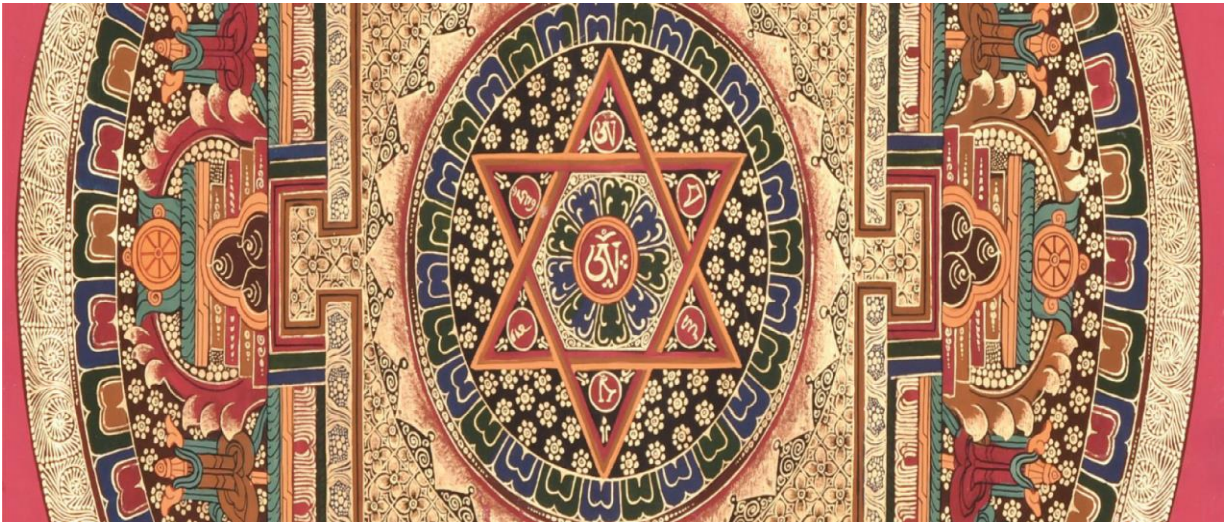
I weave the garments I must wear,
If beggar's rags or robe of king;
'Tis I the warp and woof prepare,
'Tis I alone the shuttle fling.
No one for me can thread withdraw
– Myself alone – it is the law.

My Saviour is the good I've done;
From this alone my heaven is grown.
My crown, the love that I have won
And deep within is God enthroned.
I to myself shall surely draw
That which is mine – it is the law.

The Light Bearer, Summer 2023

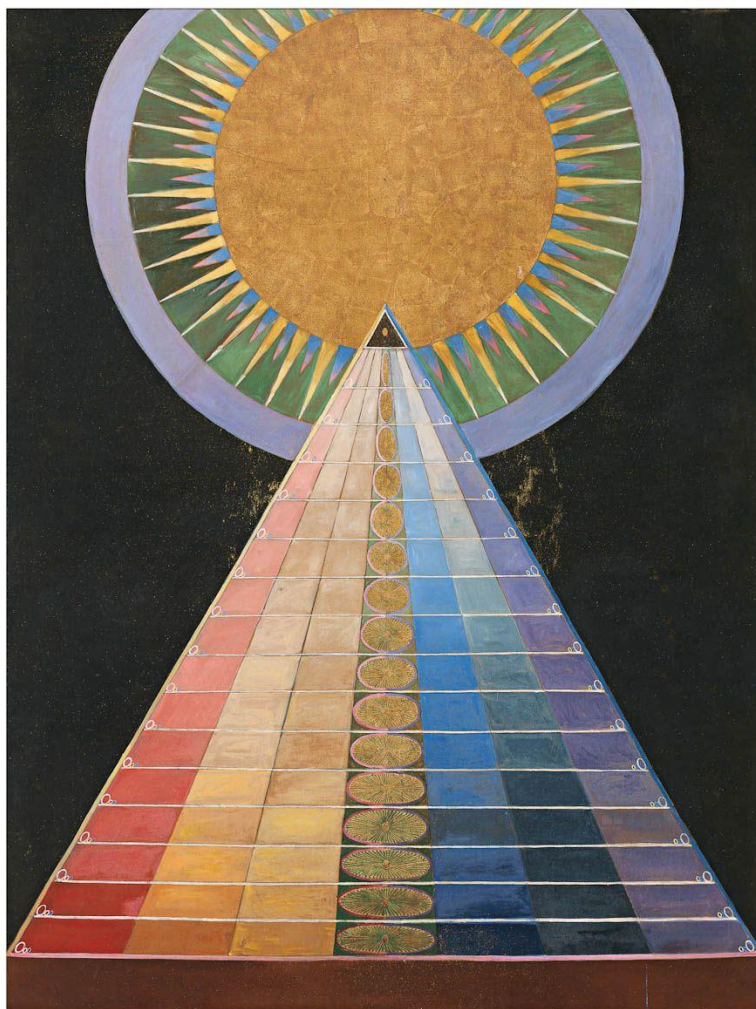
None questions but the voice within,
And mine accuser is my soul.
My judge is that stern discipline
That ever seeks to make me whole.

I cannot from this court withdraw –
I must bear witness – 'tis the law.
M. M. Baker



News & Notes

Since the 2023 study year began Lux Study Centre, Veritas Study Centre, and Calgary TS have decided to hold joint ZOOM meetings and a monthly in-person meeting will soon follow in Calgary. Currently we have finished studying the *Key to Theosophy* by HPB and are on our semester break until the first Tuesday of September 2023. In the fall session we will begin studying *Isis Unveiled* by HPB. We encourage any inquirers or members who wish to join us on ZOOM or on the material plane to reach out to Greg Gourlay at gourlay1@telus.net.



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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Group Secretary: David Sztain

Veritas Study Centre, Calgary, AB (wioletr@gmail.com)

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