



The Light Bearer

Summer
2024

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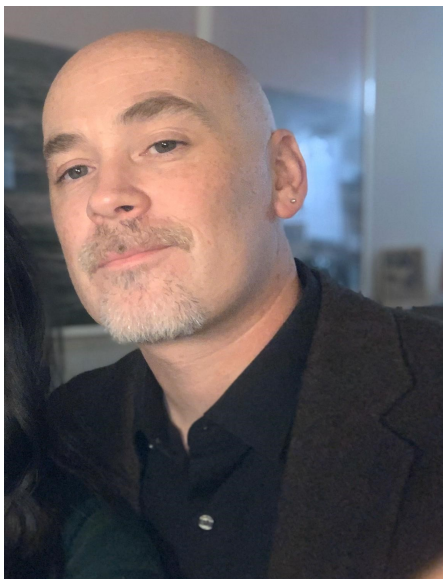
The views expressed in this magazine are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Canadian Theosophical Association or its Editors.

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Word from the Editor



Dear Theosophists,

Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of the Light Bearer. It has only been in the last three days in my hometown of Calgary that I have felt like summer has started to arrive. It has been unseasonably cold and a localized water crisis has kept the swimming pools empty and sprinklers turned off. But alas, the weather has turned for the better and the mellow calm of these months is creeping into our daily lives.

This issue of the LB is full of excellent readings to embrace over the summer months. There is a great piece from Calgarian Ted G. Davy titled the *Depth of the All* that focuses on the monumental work of knowing oneself. An old feature from Henry Steel Olcott chronicles how Adyar became the TS world headquarters, while Mark Davidson discusses the essentials of living an ethical life in *Ideas, Ideals, and Practical Solutions*. These pieces alongside *Words of Wisdom* will act as great supplement for contemplative study since many of our lodges have finished meeting for the season.

This issue has important ATCTA business news as well. There is a notice from the Theosophical Order of Service, a notice about our upcoming Convention and AGM in September, and refresher on the 2025 12th World Congress to be held in Vancouver. While we all settle in to enjoy the slower pace and longer days of summer in Canada, I hope everyone has the time and space to reflect on the depth of Theosophy. It is in these quiet times we remember how important the teachings of HPB and the Masters of Wisdoms are and that we need rest & reflection before continuing the work.

Peace,

Reid Pollock, Editor, Calgary Theosophical Lodge

Word from the President



Hello everyone,

I'm very pleased to be able to speak to you again and provide you with some interesting information.

The time is approaching, starting July 15, when it will be possible to register for the 12th World Congress in Vancouver. During this event, we will also mark: the 100th anniversary of Theosophy in Canada; the 150th anniversary of the Theosophical Society; and the 5th International Congress of the Theosophical Order of Service.

With respect to the Theosophical Order of Service, which has been more or less inactive in Canada in recent years, significant changes will occur this year, and I invite you to look closely at the Light Bearer for more details. You will also receive emails and newsletters throughout the year informing you of major changes for the TOS in Canada.

I would also like to remind you that the AGM of the Canadian Theosophical Association will be held in September. For this occasion, in addition to the Annual General Meeting, we will also include a seminar with three two-hour sessions over a two-day period.

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On Sunday, June 2, we had our last study session of the year, a summary of the themes based on the seminars of Pablo and Michele Sender. Pablo was with us, and the 18 participants were extremely happy to welcome him for this most inspiring meeting.

Jeanne-Louise and I were contacted by M. Samir Coussa and Mrs. May Char, a couple who worked for the Theosophical cause all their lives. The meeting was very interesting and the relationship should continue. They were kind enough to donate about 200 theosophical books in English and French.

In closing, I would like to remind you of the message I have sent several times for the summer season. This is the time of holidays: the time, for most of us, when we are less busy with work; when we have more time for family, leisure, and to enjoy life. I have always thought that even if we are less inclined to study during this period, the more we respect the great theosophical principles, the happier our holidays will be, without unpleasant surprises.

I wish us all this Mindfulness, and that the choices we make will allow us to live a summer that is most harmonious, relaxing, calm, and full of happiness - for us, our family, and all those who surround us.

Robert Béland, National President

AGM, NATIONAL CONVENTION AND 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATCTA

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AND
15 2024**

ON ZOOM

« *THE ESSENTIALS OF THEOSOPHY* »

**SPEAKER : ROBERT BÉLAND, PRESIDENT OF
THE ATCTA**

All information will be sent to you by email





The **Theosophical Order of Service (TOS)** is an international organization founded in 1908 by Annie Besant, the second International President of the Theosophical Society (TS). Its motto is: "*A union of those who love in the service of all that suffers.*"

The TOS is found in many countries in the world and is engaged in various service projects that seek to alleviate suffering, such as medical missions, assistance during disasters, orphanages, scholarships, establishment of schools, rehabilitation of malnourished children, caring for the disabled, preventing cruelty to animals, promoting vegetarianism, character building for young people, etc. TOS members need not be members of the Theosophical Society, but it is administered by Theosophists.

The Theosophical Order of Service serves as a forum where, in an atmosphere of complete freedom of thought, its members address the problems of the world (social, ecological, economic, etc.) in the light of the spiritual ideas of humanity, enlightened by theosophical teachings. The TOS, thanks to its long experience, offers a structure in which people can engage in practical and humanitarian action that promotes the first goal of the TS: Forming a core of the Universal Fraternity of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The TOS extends this ideal of fraternity to all life and to all kingdoms of nature. We could say that the TOS is Theosophy in practice.

The TOS currently has branches in around 25 countries. In some of them it is a separately constituted, legally registered body and in others it operates as an autonomous department of the Theosophical Society. All of its activities are supported and supervised by the International Secretary of the TOS (Nancy Secrest) who reports regularly to the International President (Tim Boyd).

Membership of the Theosophical Society is not a requirement for joining the TOS or assisting in its activities. In fact, anyone may participate without being a member of either organization, though to take office as a National Director or local branch organizer, one must be a member of both.



THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE OF CANADA

The Theosophical Order of Service has been present in Canada since at least 1938, when Mrs. Dorothy Anderson of Calgary, Alberta was listed in the TOS International Directory as National Director for the TOS in Canada.

Theosophy undoubtedly inspired the impulse to serve in Canadian TS members from the earliest days. This spirit is born from the study of Theosophy and our efforts to live according to the three stated objects of the Society, especially to respect the principle of Universal Brotherhood, which includes all the kingdoms of nature. Thus, the TOS is one of the three pillars of the TS, that is to say service, and this is directly linked to theosophical principles. It is therefore essential that TOS Canada must function administratively and do useful work in accordance with these principles. Indeed, since we are actively involved in study and meditation, service must also be an integral part of ATCTA.

On July 27-28 and 29, 2025, the 5th international TOS conference will take place at the University of British Columbia (UBC) following the 12th TS World Congress. During this international event we celebrate the 100th anniversary of ATCTA. Consequently, TOS Canada would like to revitalize the commitment of Canadian members to honour theosophical teaching and practice. We wish to support Theosophy where social action as a spiritual practice is valued and actively nurtured and has transformative value in the world.

To do this, Jennifer Hay and Martine Archambault, respectively Treasurer and National Secretary of ATCTA, will take over the administrative and organizational structure of TOS Canada. They will first have to take care of the membership since it is almost non-existent at the moment. Indeed, they wish to be able to have at least respectable representation in July 2025. One possible avenue would be to solicit monetary encouragement for the TOS in addition to payment of the annual ATCTA membership fee. Indeed, it would be a question of promoting it so that support for the TOS becomes inseparable from that for the TS. Thus, membership in the ATCTA would include the choice to also register with the TOS. This is just a suggestion that, for now, would provide a fresh start for TOS Canada. Obviously, a whole program of donations and service initiatives must be presented not only for international aid but also for national and local actions. In addition, to be able to function

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adequately, it would be desirable to welcome members of the ATCTA to the TOS committee.





XII WORLD CONGRESS 2025

“Toward Insight and Wholeness: Our
Role in Shaping the Future”

5th TOS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

Dear Members and Friends,

We can share more information that may help you to plan ahead for the XII World Congress in Vancouver, Canada, which will coincide with the celebration of the 150 Anniversary of the TS and 100 Anniversary of TS in Canada. As a reminder, translations will be provided.

The venue of the event, as well as the 5th TOS International Conference, will be in the campus of the University of British Columbia (UBC). You may attend either or both of them. The dates to keep in mind are:

The XII World Congress will have a 5-day program (**23-27 July**).

- Arrival 22 July or earlier
- Checking into the World Congress on 23 July at 8-9:30 AM w breakfast
- Opening at 9:30 AM
- Closing will end on 27th July by 5 PM

The 5th TOS International Conference with a 2-day program (**27-29 July**). • Checking into the TOS Conference on 27 July at 6 PM w dinner

- Opening 7 PM
- Closing will end on 29th July by 5 PM

REGISTRATION ONLINE

The link to register for TS WC and TOS IC will be provided on **15 July 2024**. By registering to one or both events and paying the fee you make sure to have a place. Costs in Canadian dollars.

	Registration fee	Meals	Remark
World Congress	200 CAD	560 CAD	Meals from 23 July breakfast, lunch & dinner & 2 snacks daily, until snacks on 27 July 4:00 PM (5 breakfasts and lunches, 4 dinners, 10 snacks)
TOS Conference	20 CAD	240 CAD	Meals from 27 July dinner until snacks on 29 July 4:00 PM (6 meals & 4 snacks)

Notes:

- Children < 4 years no charges.
- The (optional) half-day outing on 25th July during the World Congress will have 4-5 options to choose from; charges are not included. Additional sightseeing tours (optional) following the scheduled events may also be offered during registration.

ACCOMMODATION RESERVATIONS ONLINE

The link to reserve accommodation directly to UBC will be provided on **15 July 2024**.

The final rates are confirmed, varying slightly from those informed in the previous information letter. These rates apply for the duration of the Congress, as well as 3 days prior the commencement and 3 days after the conclusion, which allows some flexibility.

No	Room Type	Rate per night per Room	Max number guests	Rate per night per Person	Remark
1	Gage West Coast Suite	259 CAD	2 3 4	129,5 CAD 94,67 CAD 77,25 CAD	Rate based on single or double occupancy; \$25.00 charge, per night, for each additional guest. Hotel suite with king bed in bedroom, queen sofa bed in living room and private wash-room. Features include luxury linens and amenities, fully-equipped kitchen with microwave, flat-panel TV, AC, complimentary coffee, wireless internet, telephone, and inroom safe.

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2	Gage 1-Bedroom Suite	245 CAD	2 3 4	122,5 CAD 90 CAD 73,75 CAD	Rate based on single or double occupancy; \$25.00 charge, per night, for each additional guest. Hotel suite with king bed in bedroom, queen sofa bed in living room and private wash-room. Features include AC, telephone, flat-panel TV, fully-equipped kitchen and complimentary coffee. Wireless internet.
3	Gage Studio	175 CAD	2	87,5 CAD	Studio with queen bed, private washroom, sitting area with telephone, flat-panel TV, fully-equipped kitchen, AC and complimentary coffee. Wireless internet.
4	Gage Signature studio	170 CAD	2	85 CAD	Studio with queen bed, private washroom, sitting area with telephone, flat-panel TV, fully-equipped kitchen, AC and complimentary coffee. Wireless internet.
5	Gage Premium Single	77 CAD	1	77 CAD	Private bedroom with single bed in a four-bedroom shared apartment. Guests share a washroom, and lounge with flat-panel TV, breakfast bar, equipped kitchen and complimentary coffee. Wireless internet. Rooms are not air-conditioned.
6	Orchard semi-private double	152 CAD (rate per unit)	2	76 CAD	Semi-private two-bedroom unit, each private bedroom has a single bed with a shared washroom between the rooms. Multi-level floor lounges offer seating, TV, fridge, sink and microwave. Wireless internet. Sold as unit occupancy only (2 bedrooms). Rooms are not air-conditioned.

- For room types 1-2, non-family members under the age of 19 are not permitted to share a bed. - The two accommodation buildings are located at a walking distance from the Congress Hall. It takes 8 minutes for Gage rooms "1" to "5", and 13 minutes for Orchard rooms "6".

University of British Columbia
Vancouver Campus

ORCHARD ACCOMMODATION

GAGE ACCOMMODATIONS

WC AND TOS VENUE

AMS Nest

ORCHARD COMMONS

GAGE RESIDENCE

WEST COAST SUITES

VISA FOR CANADA

In order for you to make the necessary plans in advance for your attendance, it is advisable to start by examining the visa requirements of your country, consulting the Canadian Embassy Visa pages. Some countries require a visa (you have to apply for tourist visa) while others are exempt and eligible for an eTA (Electronic Travel Authorization) as the entry requirement (see an example table below, as per February 2024).

A letter of Invitation to the World Congress and TOS Conference will be provided upon request to worldcongress@ts-adyar.org

Below are listed several links with useful information regarding entry requirements and ETA:

General link information of entry requirements by country

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/entryrequirements-country.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada.html>

Paper visa

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/visitor-visa.html>

eTA links information

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/eta.html> <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/eta/facts.html> <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/eta/apply.html>

eTA if short visit (entry by air)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visitcanada/eta/eligibility/eta-x.html>

	Country	Requirement		Country	Requirement
1	Africa Kenya	Paper visa	23	Italy	eTA
2	Argentina	eTA if short visit (by air)	24	Malaysia	Paper visa
3	Australia	eTA	25	Mexico	eTA (with conditions)
4	Austria	eTA	26	Myanmar	Paper visa
5	Belgium	eTA	27	Netherlands	eTA
6	Bolivia	Paper visa	28	New Zealand	eTA
7	Brazil	eTA if short visit (by air)	29	Norway	eTA

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8	Chile	eTA	30	Paraguay	Paper visa
9	Colombia	Paper visa	31	Peru	Paper visa
10	Costa Rica	eTA if short visit (by air)	32	Philippines	eTA if short visit (by air)
11	Cuba	Paper visa	33	Portugal	eTA
12	Dominican Republic	Paper visa	34	Singapore	eTA
13	Finland	eTA	35	Slovenia	eTA
14	France	eTA	36	Spain	eTA
15	Germany	eTA	37	Sri Lanka	Paper visa
16	Greece	eTA	38	Sweden	eTA
17	Hungary	eTA	39	Switzerland	eTA
18	Iceland	eTA	40	Ukraine	Paper visa
19	India	Paper visa	41	United Kingdom	eTA
20	Indonesia	Paper visa	42	USA	Passport
21	Ireland	eTA	43	Uruguay	Paper visa
22	Israel	eTA	44	Venezuela	Paper visa

THE DEPTH OF THE ALL



Among the Gnostic scriptures discovered several years ago at Nag Hammadi in Egypt was “The Book of Thomas the Contender”. One of its verses contains this passage:

*For he who has not known himself has known nothing,
but he who has known himself has at the same time
already achieved knowledge about the Depth of the All.*

Students of Theosophy will probably find this passage consistent with their understanding of the age-old esoteric philosophy. It is by no means original. Although the scripture containing it had been lost for many centuries until recently, this statement, which is attributed to a resurrected Jesus, strikes a familiar chord. Perhaps the earlier seekers of wisdom, who studied the scriptures in the Gnostic libraries at Nag Hammadi and elsewhere, could have recalled an earlier Chaldean oracle, which asserted:

Who knows himself knows all things in himself.

And they would almost certainly have known the famous Delphic Oracle, which transmitted a similar thought-provoking message in the fewest words: “Know Thyself”.

Such expressions of wisdom regarding the Higher Self have been aired for a long time – at least for the better part of three millennia in the case of the Delphic oracle – and they were undoubtedly well established in oral traditions long before their preservation was assisted by the medium of the printed word. That so many generations of thinkers have been inspired by this epitome of the Divine Wisdom should be sufficient recommendation to us that these few words contain a philosophy worthy of consideration. And, not only consideration, but action – in the sense of applying this precept in our spiritual evolutionary quest.

What Jesus poetically called achieving knowledge about the Depth of the All is, in other words, understanding the Nature of Self. The lot of most of humanity at the present time is to float on the surface of that “Deep All” but as future cycles push the tidal wave of humanity towards a greater degree of spirituality, it will become increasingly necessary for each one of us to dive beneath the surface and to penetrate and explore that deep ocean of our Higher Self, eventually to become one with it.

The message of Theosophy is that we should not delay this exploration; that there is no call to wait those long eons of time until the incarnation of the human life wave, of which we are part, reaches that phase when the potential for spiritual progress is enhanced. The process of discovery can be started now; and it should be started by all who comprehend the truth revealed by the oracle.

The Depth of the All. No need for us to sound this depth, for intuition tells us it is infinite. No need to measure, no need “to test the water”, just . . . dive in. But there is one condition which must be taken into account, rejecting or forgetting which we shall be forever doomed to stay floating on the surface. It is that the All, the Divine Self, contains not only our self, but all the selves; that it is ONE – only the lower self must suffer the delusion of separateness. This condition is the great truth underlying the First Object of the Theosophical Society. If read in the right light, and practiced in the right spirit, the Object is in itself a challenge to every member to explore the Deep All.

Where to start? First we might give some thought to that very good advice offered by the Frog to Jumping Mouse, in that lovely book, *Seven Arrows*: “*Crouch down as low as you can, and jump as high as you can.*”

In our case, we have to delve into the complicated structure of the lower, or personal self, in order to find out something of the Spiritual, Real, Divine Self, and the effort is its own reward. As the Gnostic scripture says, “he who has known himself has *at the same time already* achieved knowledge about the Depth of the All”.

Crouching down, then, as low as we can – to the personal level – we find “self” to be a familiar, yet deceptively simple word. Everyone knows what “self” is, but the closer we examine it, the less clear it seems. It is a word we become conscious of very early in life, and we feel comfortable with it, especially in conjunction with “my”. Gradually, we expand that narrow horizon to include yourself, herself, himself, etc., and in all these forms the word takes on a personal, not to say selfish connotation.

Later, when we develop our ability to use language for more and more detailed communications, the word “self” used as a prefix becomes the basis for hundreds of compound words. Words like self-knowledge, self-realization, self-conscious, etc., which are never long absent from Theosophical discussions, let alone everyday conversation and writing. In the majority of instances, the “self” used in these words refers mostly to one or another aspect of the personality; nevertheless, here is the first step in understanding the nature of

the Higher Self, because, even a smattering of lower-self-knowledge can give us some insight into Higher-Self-Knowledge. In this regard, it is a useful exercise to take a term like self-discipline – any one of the self-compound will do – and meditate on all the subtleties of its meaning starting with the physical self and proceeding through the various aspects of self from the coarsest to the finest.

Perhaps every once in a while we reach a point where we suddenly feel that at last we have achieved a degree of self-revelation. Then, after a time, we realize we were self-deluded – that the self we discovered was yesterday's self. For the lower self has the choice of many masks, and changes them to suit the occasion – or at whim; we are often unconscious which one we are wearing at any given time.

The English language employs the word “self” to cover a wide range of concepts, the extremes being so far apart that it is surprising other terms are not more widely used to distinguish some of its meanings. While in one way this makes things difficult, in another it is indicative that the All is so encompassing that it contains everything we can possibly think of as Self.

At least part of the difficulty is removed if, when referring to the highest reaches of the Higher Self (now jumping as high as we can), the Sanskrit word “Atman” is used. The employment of Atman, which is the general practice in Theosophical literature, avoids not only some of the inevitable confusion with the word “self”, but also the psychological stumbling blocks that can be associated with this word.

Atman has been defined as:

*The SELF; the Divinity or Highest Principle of man;
pure consciousness. Atman is that universal SELF of man
which is the same in every living being and which links
each and all with Brahman, the Self of the Universe.*

One of the first to translate Atman as Self was the Sanskrit scholar Max Muller, and his comments on this are worth noting. He wrote:

*. . . . Atman, originally breath or spirit, comes to mean
Self and Self alone; Self whether divine or human;
Self whether creating or suffering; Self whether one or all;
but always Self, independent and free.*

Atman has been expressed in various ways in attempts to suggest its dimensions and ramifications. The synonym most frequently used for Atman is the Higher Self, and of this,

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H. P. Blavatsky wrote that it is . . . *colorless, cosmopolitan, unsectarian, sexless, unworldly, and altruistic*.

If these descriptions seem strange, even inappropriate, when applied to what is after all nothing less than Divinity, let it be remembered that Atman represents a concept extremely difficult to grasp by finite intelligence. William Q. Judge drew attention to this fact when he said that “*any name given to the Higher Self, in any language, will be but the attempt of man to name that which is nameless*”.

Consequently, there is no alternative but to fall back on metaphor, and we find in our reading such expressions as “Precious Gem of Gems”; “the one Life”; “the Great Breath”; “the I Am”; “infinite Potentiality in Potentiality”. Any one, or a combination of these expressions may help our individual comprehension of the Higher Self. Taken together, they at least reveal, along with its complexity, the **power** of the word Atman. It is almost as if this was a protected word, because it has largely escaped the degradation which has been the fate of so many words which originally pertained to spirituality in the abstract.

Granted, it is far from easy to think in the abstract, and it is always tempting to by-pass the necessity for doing so. To this end, there is the unfortunate human tendency to dilute abstract ideas by anthropomorphizing them. This has been done in all ages, in all parts of the globe; even modern Theosophical writers have been guilty of it. therefore, it is a real benefit to all of us that Atman has avoided being weakened in this way, and ever retains its purity. A strong and incorruptible word, it is an anchor to reality.

Nevertheless, with our limited faculties, and trapped as we are in the labyrinthine maze which the sense of separateness builds around us, it is difficult to study or to conceive Atman directly. Only by considering the aspects of Atman which are the selves we know is it possible to get a glimpse of the reality behind the concept. Easily said of course, but there is no other way. And there is no getting away from the fact that it is complicated. The Master K.H. called it the discovery of . . . “that most noble of all facts, his true SELF. But he will have to penetrate many strata before he comes to *it*.”

His use of the word “strata” prompts the thought of the human principles; and of course it is usual for students of Theosophy to consider the Higher Self by means of these categories. Such an approach was taken at the 1980 Summer School, and it is useful to recall the presentation on that occasion by Will Ross. Using the peculiar properties of the Mobius Strip, he suggested by analogy how Atman permeates **all** the principles. His conclusions were important:

There are no polar opposites – There is just unity – The unity is never destroyed

Applying this nutshell philosophy to the Depth of the All, once again we meet the inescapable truth: that Atman, the Higher Self, is unity, Oneness. From this truth it is obvious

that our knowledge of the Depth of the All is in direct proportion to the degree that we think and act ONENESS.

Taking Oneness as our principal axiom – which we should for any aspect of Theosophical study – we might turn to *The Voice of the Silence*, that advance manual for would-be explorers of the Depth of the All. Therein is referred again and again to the mysteries of Self. A familiar sloka gives a most explicit injunction of the “Know Thyself” variety:

Sayeth the Great Law: - “in order to become the KNOWER of ALL SELF thou hast first of SELF to be the knower.”

Similar advice to that given by the Gnostic Jesus. The verse goes on to elaborate on this rule:

To reach the knowledge of that SELF, thou hast to give up Self to Non-Self, Being to Non-Being.

In that verse, the word “self” is indicated in several distinct ways. The differences require a lot of thinking about. Which self is which? “In order to become the KNOWER of ALL SELF (the Atman) thou hast first to SELF to be the knower.” (This SELF I take it to be Manas overshadowed by Buddhi). “To reach the knowledge of that SELF, thou hast to give up *Self* (the lower or personal self) to Non-Self.”

HPB once answered the question, “How can I be self and yet *not* self at the same time?” Her answer was:

*Very easily. You have only to postulate that **self** is one, eternal and infinite, the only REALITY; and your little self a transient illusion, a reflected ray of the SELF, therefore a not-Self.*

All these wise words are meant to awaken, or rather to re-awaken, the conscious realization of the meaning and purpose of existence. Once awake, if we don’t let ourselves fall back to sleep, there shold soon come the urge – a self-directed resolve – to put the words into practice in our lives and thoughts. In short, to *self*-consciously initiate our own spiritual evolution which proceeds, in the words of one of the fundamental assertions of the Theosophic philosophy:

... first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts. . .

In the effort to know ourselves, we seek understanding through a number of means that are open to us: psychology, with its many departments; religion, also present in a myriad of varieties and degrees; meditation – again, taught in so many different forms; philosophy the most neglected area of all in modern times; and through intellectual studies generally. Each of these in itself is worthy of serious application; however, to limit ourselves to any

one or two of these means of self-discovery is likely to leave us in ignorance of the Real Self.

Moreover, to devote all our energies to religion alone, or meditation alone, or to intellectual pursuits alone, will likely be counter-productive because the narrowness of the focus will surely and inevitably lead to a closed mind – the very worst of conditions for the student of Theosophy. The better way, surely, is to examine ourselves in the special light that each of these means provides, with the eventual goal of evolving a synthesis of them.

In this regard, the Second and Third Objects of the Society indicate the direction to travel in our quest. But there is a prerequisite. Before starting out on the quest, it is essential that the spirit of the First Object is being pursued, and that we are trying to live the Theosophical Life. Without this, whatever path or paths we explore in attempting to discover the Self, they will lead nowhere except back to where we started.

Few there are who are ready to answer the question, ‘What is Self?’ The Mahatma K.H. asked this very question in one of his letters to Sinnett: “. . . what is the Self? Only a passing guest, whose concerns are all like a mirage of the great desert.”

Helpful to keep in mind “*Only a passing guest. . .*” when we are tempted to view when we are tempted to view the lower self as a permanent or semi-permanent entity. Indeed, to view it as anything other than an illusion.

But assuming that, one way or another, we do manage to discover a little about the lower self, and in so doing a little about the Higher Self, what then? In matters of this kind it is difficult to go far without being confronted with paradoxes – at least what appear to be paradoxes, because material logic doesn’t necessarily apply on other planes. Of these, what seems to be the most significant is, for want of a better expression, the “simultaneous effect”. It is mentioned in the *Kathopanishad* along these lines:

“Whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained.”

Another expression of this paradox was caught in a felicitous phrase by the classical scholar C. Kerényi. Writing about the Dionysian Mysteries, he said the devotees of the god Dionysus . . . awakened him by being awakened by him. A beautiful expression. Of course, Prof. Kerényi had something quite different in mind; he was dealing with the Mystery at a much more fundamental level, but no matter, because his phrase is remarkably applicable to this paradox. For we too have to wake up the divinity within by being awakened; hence the hidden truth in the words of the gnostic Jesus.

Perhaps this should be called the esoteric paradox, because it surely contains the key to the greatest mystery that confronts any aspirant to spirituality. It is one of those facts that can be tested only in the crucible of the heart, and any attempt to comment on it is *self-defeating*.

Another paradox has been skated over; that is, the word Self being applicable to the highest degree of spirituality on the one hand, and to the puny personality on the other. This leads to yet another paradox. Having received and acted on the precept “Know Thyself”, we are elsewhere given what seems to be a contradictory instruction. The most concise statement of this rule is found in an unlikely place, the Index to Vol. VII of HPB’s *Collected Writings*, where the compiler has included an entry which reads, tersely, “Self, forget it.” Annie Besant caught it in a memorable line: “The self without must vanish, before the Self within is realized.” This requirement is found throughout the teachings of modern Theosophy, in terms that leaves no doubt as to their meaning. The very highest source has stated unequivocally:

All of us have to get rid of our own Ego and the illusory apparent *self*,
to recognize our true *Self* in a transcendental divine life.

That is from the *Maha-Chohan’s Letter*. It is a theme to which Madame Blavatsky and her teachers came back again and again: “True Occultism or Theosophy is the “Great Renunciation of *self*” unconditionally, in thought as in action. To renounce self is hardly popular philosophy. Mired as we are in materiality it is only too easy to suffer the delusion that such an undertaking results in a joyless existence. Yet the reality is quite the contrary.

In an essay entitled “The Need for Self-Understanding”, former President N. Sri Ram also spoke of the Depth of the Self, and noted how in the modern age, “Our expansion has been horizontal at the expense of depth, the expansion being related to all things that are without, and the depth belonging to that which is within.” He summed it up in these words:

All true philosophy can have only one end: that is to enable man to find within himself the joy and the love and the freedom and the peace that he seeks outside himself. All this is part of the meaning of the depth that is in himself. The whole of the ancient teaching in its broadest aspect converged towards this central truth.

To sound the Depth of the All then, is a task in which is discovered not only the Self but also the source of “joy, love, freedom and peace” – to which may be added wisdom. In the words of HPB: “It is not the ‘Fear of God’ which is the ‘beginning of wisdom,’ but the knowledge of our Higher Self and of SELF, which is WISDOM ITSELF.”

*Based on a talk delivered at the 1981 Annual Convention and Summer School of the TSA
by Ted G. Davy*

A Houseboat Journey with HPB (And how Adyar became the TS Headquarters)



In all our years together HPB and I had never been so closely drawn together as on this boat journey on the Buckingham Canal [in Madras (now Chennai)]. Hitherto we had lived and worked in the company of third parties, whereas now we two were alone in a *budgerow*, or small houseboat, with our servant Babula, and the coolie crew as our sole companions while the craft was in motion.

Our quarters were cramped enough, to be sure. At either side of the small cabin was a locker covered with a mattress; the lid arranged to lift on hinges, the inside forming a huge chest for storage of one's effects. Between the two lockers – each a bed by night and a chest of drawers by day – was a portable table which, when not in use, could be folded up and hung from the ceiling. A lavatory, a small pantry with shelves, a cooking platform outside, behind, with a broken earthen pot-bottom, laid on sand for a fireplace, and some few indispensable cooking utensils, a large jar for drinking water, and our camp table-furniture completed our domestic arrangements and sufficed for our wants.

When a fair wind blew, a sail was raised and we glided before it; when adverse, the coolies jumped ashore and, with the towline passed over their shoulders, dragged us along at the rate of perhaps three miles an hour. Our destination was the town of Nellore, a two-day's journey by water.

The Light Bearer, Summer 2024

As we has not started for Nellore until 7 p.m. (on the 3rd of May 1882) and the moon was almost full, it was a sort of fairy voyage we were making on the waveless, silvery water. No sound broke the silence after once leaving the city limits, save the occasional yelps of a pack of jackals, the low murmur of our boat coolies' voices, talking together, and the lap-lapping of the water against the boat.

In place of glass sashes, there were hinged venetian blinds, with hooks to fasten them to the overhead deck-beams if we wished, and through these a gentle night breeze blew cool, and brought us the smell of wet rice-fields. My colleague and I sat, enchanted with the scene and grateful for the refreshing and unaccustomed rest from our life of excitement and publicity. We talked but little, being under the witchery of the night, and went to our beds with the certainty of a refreshing sleep.

Wafted along by the breeze of the southwest monsoon, our boat sailed steadily throughout the night, and morning found us well on our way. At an early hour we tied up at the bank for the coolies to build their fire and cook their curry and rice; I went for a swim, and Babula cooked us a capital breakfast. Then on we went once more, the boat as noiseless as a specter.

HPB and I occupied the whole day with arrears of correspondence and editorial writing for *The Theosophist*, with occasional breaks for conversation. Of course, the one theme for us was the condition and prospects of our Society and the probable ultimate effect on contemporary public opinion of the Eastern ideas we were spreading. In this respect we were optimists in the same degree, no shadow of doubt or difference crossing either of our minds.

It was this ever-potent, overmastering feeling of confidence that made us so indifferent to calamities and obstacles which might have otherwise brought us to a standstill fifty times during our career. It may not be gratifying to some of our present colleagues, yet it is strictly true, that our forecasts dealt with the coloring of modern thought with theosophical ideas far more than with the possible extension of the Society throughout the world; of that, we had practically no expectation.

As, when leaving New York for Bombay, we did not even dream that the Society might cover India and Ceylon with Branches, so now, on that silently moving boat, we gave no thought to the possibility of its creating a popular agitation that would plant its branches and create its centers of propaganda throughout America and Europe, to say nothing of Australia, Africa, and the Far East. Why should we? To whom could we look then? Where were the giants fit to carry such a heavy load on their shoulders?

Remember, this was in 1882 and outside Asia there were but three Branches of the TS in existence (not counting the New York center, which had not yet been reorganized). The London Lodge and the Corfu (Ionian) Branch were inert bodies. Mr. Judge was away in South America and nothing like an active propaganda had been organized in the United States. We two old people in the boat were practically managing the thing alone, and our

field was the East; and as HPB showed no more prophetic gift than myself at the time, we talked and worked and built our foundations for the great future that neither of us foresaw.

How many of the present multitude of Fellows of the Society would give almost anything to have had the close intimacy I enjoyed with my friend on that boat journey! What made it more the more pleasant and profitable was that she was in good health and spirits, and there was nothing to mar the charm of our companionship; otherwise, I might almost as well have been a cage-companion of a hungry lioness at the zoo. Dear lamented friend, companion, colleague, teacher; none could be more exasperating at her worst times, none more lovable and admirable at her best. I believe we have worked together in previous lives, I believe we shall work together in lives to come, for the good of humankind.

This open page of my Diary with its few fragmentary notes, brings back to memory one of the most delightful episodes of the theosophical movement, and I see a picture of HPB in her shabby wrapper, sitting on her locker opposite me, smoking cigarettes, her huge head with its brown, crinkled hair bent over the page she was writing on, her forehead full of wrinkles, a look of introverted thought in her light blue eyes, her aristocratic hand driving the pen swiftly over the lines, and no sound to be heard save the liquid music of ripples against the boat's sides, or the occasional rub of a coolie's naked foot on the roof above us, as he moved to tighten a rope or obey some order of the helmsman. . . .

After formally organizing the Nellore TS our business there was finished and we then moved on to a canal station called Mypaud, where the boat had been taken to save eighteen miles of canal travelling. Our writing was now resumed and in due course we got to Padaganjam, the limit of canal navigation in the hot season. In order to proceed to Guntur, our ultimate destination, we had to take palanquins and *jampans*, or carried chairs. They did not turn up until the following day and as the coolies had to rest, we did not start until just before sunset.

Our caravan consisted of four palanquins and one jampan which, added to the baggage-porters made our coolies number fifty-three persons. We soon came to a ford (shoal) where the river had to be crossed, and the performance made me laugh heartily and HPB to swear. The water was so deep that, to keep our palanquin floors dry, the bearers had to balance the thick poles on their heads, to lift us high enough. Before entering the water, they stripped naked, all but their *langooti*, or loin-cloth. Picking their steps with greatest caution and sounding with their staves, they went in deeper and deeper until the water came up to their armpits. I politely led the way so that HPB might know if I was drowned and turn back.

It was a ticklish experience to sit there motionless, so as not to destroy the balance of the round pole resting on my six coolies' heads and, fancy what a mess I and my papers would be in in one of the men made a misstep; however, one travels to gain experience, so I lay on my back as still as possible. When in midstream I began to hear the sound of a familiar

voice from the next palanquin, and presently HPB began shouting at me that these men would surely upset her (tip her over). I shouted back that it didn't matter since she was too fat to sink and I should fish her out. Then she began to use weighty objurgations at me, with occasional diversions at the coolies who, not understanding a word, kept on their way as before. At last, we reached the opposite shore and my colleague rested herself by getting out and walking about. After a few cigarettes she had forgotten her recent troubles.
...

Back to Nellore, on the way back to Madras, a great Brahmin pandit of the Vedantin School came to see us that evening evidently with the sole purpose of showing up our ignorance; but in us two campaigners, especially in HPB with her wit and sarcasm, he got more than he bargained for, and in a couple of hours we were able to expose to the company present his intense selfishness, vanity, and bigoted prejudices. Our victory cost us something however, for I see a post scriptum note in my diary that he subsequently showed himself "our active enemy". Good luck to him and to all the noble army of our "enemies"; their hatred never did them the least good nor the Society the least harm. Our ship does not sail on the wind of favor.

Seventeen letters, three articles for *The Theosophist*, and the reading of a pile of exchanges kept me fairly busy the next day until evening when I lectured on "Arian Wisdom". The next day was the same and the next, until we – at 5 p.m. – took bullock carriages for Tirupati, seventy-eight miles away, and the nearest station on the Madras railway. In that scorching weather it was a hot and tedious journey, but it ended at last and so did our twelve hour wait for the train. Then followed by the journey to Madras which we reached in due course and where we were met and escorted by friends to our former bungalow.

In my travels over India and Ceylon I had been observing places, people, and climates, with a view to selecting the best place for a permanent Headquarters for the Society. Liberal offers of houses, free of rent had been made to us in Ceylon and certainly the island presented a most charming appearance to one seeking an Asian home; but several considerations, such as its isolation from India, the cost of postage, and so on . . . overweighed its loveliness and led us to choose India in preference. Up to the present time however, no good property had been offered us and we had made no definite plans.

On the 31st of May however, we were begged by Judge Muttuswamy's sons to go and look at a property that was to be had cheap. We were driven to Adyar and at the first glance knew that our future home was found. The palatial building, its two riverside smaller bungalows, its brick-and-mortar stables, coach house, storerooms, and swimming bath; its avenue of ancient mangos and banyan trees, and its large plantation of casuarinas (one of the cone-bearing trees) made up an enchanting country residence while the asking price – Rs 9,000 odd, or about 600 GBP – was so modest, in fact merely nominal, as to make its purchase seem feasible even for us.

We accordingly decided to take it and in due course this was affected by the noble help of P. Iyaloo Naidu and Judge Muttuswamy Chetty, the first of whom advanced part of the money and the other secured a loan for the rest, on very easy terms. An appeal was at once issued for subscriptions and within the next year I had the satisfaction of being able to pay it all off and receive the title deeds. The cheapness of the price is accounted for by the fact that the opening of the railway to the foot of the Nilgiri Hills brought the lovely sanitarium of Ootacamund within a day's ride of Madras, which caused the high officials to spend half the year there and threw their grand Madras bungalows on a market without bidders.

What I paid for "Huddleston's Gardens" was about the price of the old materials if the buildings should be torn down. In fact, that was going to happen if we had not turned up as buyers just when we did. We stopped a week longer in Madras during which I lectured twice and more new members were admitted.

People glibly speak of Madras as "the Benighted Presidency" and as being insufferably hot. The fact is however, that as regards climate I prefer it above the others, and as to Sanskrit Literature and Aryan Philosophy, it is the most enlightened of the Indian Presidencies. There are more learned pandits in the villages, and the educated class, as a whole, have been less spoilt by Western education.

In Bengal and Bombay there are more *litterateurs* of the class of Telang and Bhandarkar but I cannot recall one equal to T. Subba Row, of Madras, in bright genius for grasping the spirit of the Ancient Wisdom. And his being at Madras was one of the causes of our fixing upon that Presidency town for our official residence. Although he is dead and gone, yet we have never regretted our choice, for Adyar is a sort of Paradise.

Henry Steel Olcott

Ideas, Ideals, and Practical Solutions



Mankind overall, is not very tolerant of what, I believe, is a basic truth of nature, namely, that all problems, suffering, and ignorance will be alleviated only through solutions founded on the noblest ideals. When faced with the grandest of ideals – a brotherhood of all mankind which embodies all the virtues and more – we may become very indignant, “for the world’s problems,” we would say, “are not going to be solved by ideals alone; we need practical solutions.” Well, of course, we need practical solutions to fit this or that necessity. But, unfortunately, practical solutions do not automatically step right up and present arms. They first have to be ideas – and where do we come by such ideas unless properly motivated and/or inspired? And just what is it that inspires us if not ideals?

Ideals are something all of us can identify with for they are our noblest thoughts and feelings. Clean and unspoiled by our personalities, they are associated with what is good and right. Not tangible, they exist on the perimeters of our thinking mind, ever on the horizon of understanding and attainability and therefore ever eluding definition. Nonetheless, ideals are realities, manifesting through thought and action.

While ideals may correspond to the heaven world of man's constitution, ideas come from his mind as by-products, and are the blueprint of this manifest world. All practical invention is first born in and created on the idea plane. This scheme – ideas to ideals to practical invention – can be recognized as a pattern throughout our various modes of expression. A craftsman conceives in his inner nature that which he wishes to produce; he sees the image only fleetingly at first, but it arouses his creative sensibilities. This, we could say, is the ideal, the fine and pure thing before the eyes of our heart. The craftsman must then begin to assemble the proper environment around himself in order that he might create his vision and bring it to birth. Ideas start to materialize with regard to balance, form, contour, and size, color, mood, texture, and line, and it is only after these ideas are formulated that the stage is set for the practical work to begin.

The needs of our communities today are on a very practical level indeed, and one might think the application of our ideals in such an arena would be hopeless and naïve. However, I see no other way to rid ourselves of hatred, greed, and all the other vices inherent in our selfish natures except through the practice of right thought based on high ideals translated into right action. No man can ignore the society in which he lives and expect that time alone, without our efforts, will mend its ills. Every person has the right and the duty to try to understand the problems he sees about himself in order to help those within his area of endeavor. If our means are simple and modest, this is no cause for discouragement. This is just the paradox of idealism: while our caring for humanity and our yearning for improvement of its general welfare may not put an immediate end to aggressions half way around the world, or even right down the block, yet the very nature and quality of a truly altruistic feeling will have its effect on the people around us. And if they, in turn, radiate this feeling to others, eventually all of us will realize the virtue and necessity of living our ideals. Then perhaps millennia from now, all mankind will be a brotherhood.

Mark Davidson

WORDS OF WISDOM

Something of Value

“No man is an island” – never have these words been truer than today when the events in all quarters of the globe cast their shadows in our living rooms, our lives, and our hearts! Bombarded from all sides by news of suffering humanity we have become anxious, fearful, and often despondent about the future. Among the turmoil of our daily life it remains for each of us quietly to reassess our own lives and try to pursue a course in which universal brotherhood becomes more of an actuality and not just a far-off dream.

Everyone has, *within his or her own sphere of influence*, the ability to “turn away wrath” – it is indeed a tragedy that generation after generation has spilt blood over wrongs inflicted an hour, a day, a century or more ago. It is up to us to teach our children “born in innocence” that to hate is a crime against them as well as ourselves. To influence another to dislike or turn against another human being because of our own bigotry and ignorance by irresponsible talk, or worse still by active venom and antagonism, is to keep strife alive in the world. Governments reflect those who elect them so how can we expect governments to bring peace to the world when their country’s inhabitants are not peaceful and tolerant?

One of the most precious gifts we have is each other – without friendship and human warmth we wither. Loneliness and neglect cause mental illness, proving that we *are* our brother’s keeper in the very real sense of the word, and there is no one among us who can’t give friendship and a little time to another traveler on the road of life. In fact, because we belong to the great human family and are an integral part of its life, we have a duty to care for it and what happens to it – and the only way we can do this is by improving the quality of our own lives and thereby the lives of those we touch.

N.B. this is a small excerpt from an article that was written in the late 1990’s

N. Davidson

News & Notes



AGM, NATIONAL CONVENTION AND 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATCTA

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AND 15, 2024

ON ZOOM

« *THE ESSENTIALS OF THEOSOPHY* »

SPEAKER: ROBERT BÉLAND, PRESIDENT OF THE ATCTA

All information will be sent to you by email

As we break for Summer, we need to remember that our National Convention, AGM and 100th Anniversary celebration of the ATCTA will be happening this September 14 & 15. All theosophists are welcome and attendance is a great way to interact with members across the country. The ATCTA will email all details in regards to the AGM and Convention in the next two months.

Theosophical Order of Service

Anyone interested in learning more about the Theosophical Order of Service should contact us via the ATCTA website.

TOS International Newsletter

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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
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- T.O.S.: www.international.theoservice.org – NEW website in final stages of development
- Wikipedia, Theosophical Society America: www.tswiki.net