

# *ALAS and after*



*A Theosophy Forward publication*



**Front cover:**

A painting in the SWAN series by HILMA AF KLINT, a Swedish painter and Theosophist.

Read about this artist on Theosophy Forward the e-Magazine.

<https://www.theosophyforward.com/articles/theosophy-and-the-society-in-the-public-eye/1138-hilma-af-klint>

**Note from the editor**

This small booklet entitled “ALAS and after “is based on a series of articles published on *Theosophy Forward* the e-Magazine throughout the second semester of 2021. They deal with what had become of a groundbreaking initiative called International Theosophy Conferences. This lofty project at one point in time painfully derailed and was stranded, due to the fact that one group of participants took full control of it. Mistakes and faulty approaches, the same ones that occurred during previous attempts trying to bring Theosophical traditions together, repeated themselves.

Open enquiries for those with exploratory minds, became hampered because of forcefully imposed bylaws, declarations and purposes, correlated with only one particular group of participants, thus creating an uncompromising organization, *still in existence*, promulgating a kind of *sanctioned or sectarian* theosophy. The phrase *sectarian theosophy* is obviously a contradiction in terms since theosophists are philanthropists and freethinkers first and foremost, and they should never be tied up in the armor of constrained thinking or narrow minded exploration.

The articles you are about to read, or reread, do not need any further introduction, they tell the detailed story of an attempt that ultimately was doomed to fail. Theosophists, like all other humans, are perfectly imperfect beings and this failure does not mean at all that other attempts, hopefully more successful, won't take off in a nearby future. There are serious lessons to be learned and this booklet is a mere contribution to that learning process.

Life is dynamic, changing constantly and other opportunities will arise, for sure. I write in my own contribution to the series:

The series ALAS AND AFTER has come to an end, but at the same time this “end” implies a new beginning. The dialogue among Theosophists from all four corners of the globe, no matter their affiliation, or independence and all other genuine seekers will continue and expand even without any preconditions or self-imposed rules, since the search for Truth cannot be hindered nor defeated by plain stubbornness, prejudice and ignorance.

I must thank all the contributors for their most appreciated input and special thanks to Theo Mondij in Amsterdam and David M. Grossman in New York for their admirable patience and wonderful assistance putting this modest collection together.

Jan Nicolaas Kind, Brasilia, July 2022

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Jan Nicolaas Kind – Brazil



## International Theosophy Conferences ... ALAS ...

Jan Nicolaas Kind – Brazil

**A look at the Declarations and Purposes of International Theosophy Conferences, its development, its activities and what went wrong.**



*G. de Purucker (1938)*

*In striving to retain the purity of the teachings of our blessed God-Wisdom, let us never drop into the dogmatic attitude, which will spell the death of free conscience, free thought, free speech, sane and legitimate freedom of all kinds, in the T. S.*

GdP,  
The Theosophical Forum – January 1940

### INTRODUCTION - a modest start and after

At the outset, International Theosophy Conferences (ITC), a highly ambitious initiative, was meant to represent and bring together *unprejudiced* seekers from various Theosophical streams. Its main objective was for participants to learn from each other and, more importantly, to break down the barriers that for so many decennia had separated them. As such, the *organization*, ITC, was **not to turn into an instrument for the Masters**, occupying itself with *introducing* Theosophy to the world through the writings or teachings of Helena Blavatsky. For that specific purpose, a number of well-established and respected Theosophical Societies and groups have been in existence for more than a century.

### AN OVERVIEW

After around 15 years of rather informal and local get-togethers, primarily in the USA, and under the guidance of ULT student, *Wiley Dade*. ITC, beginning in 2008, began to grow into a more structured body with well-organized international annual meetings in The Hague, the Netherlands (2010), Julian, California (2011), Olcott, Wheaton II (2012), and New York (2013) The big leap forward came in 2014 when ITC held its annual meeting at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, the Netherlands. This was in fact **the 16th gathering of ITC**, since its humble start in the USA. It was especially clear that this gathering in the Netherlands would determine ITC's further development.

Meetings that followed were held in The Hague (2015), Santa Barbara (2016), Philadelphia (2017), Berlin (2018) and Olcott, Wheaton II (2019).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the planned gathering in Brasilia, Brazil in 2020 had to be cancelled. In its place a Zoom meeting was organized, and this Zoom format was repeated in 2021.

## A CLOSER LOOK

The meeting of ITC on the grounds of the **International Theosophical Centre** in Naarden, the Netherlands in 2014, was very successful in bringing Theosophists from the various organizations, non-affiliated Theosophists and other genuine seekers, together.

**Because of the importance of the ideal, let us look at how events actually unfolded into more detail.**

Invitations to participate in the ITC 2014 event were extended to many officers of the TS-Adyar from around the world: General Secretaries, National Presidents, Federation Presidents. Many of them came. Also, Adyar's International President, received an invitation. He accepted and participated. It would turn out to be a joyful and dynamic occasion.

In order to explain what ITC stood for and hoped to achieve, Jim Colbert, ITC's *inimitable nestor and visionary* of the first hour, gave a meticulous clarification, using seven statements which he read out loud, whilst the relevant texts were made visible on a large screen. After reading each one of them, Jim elaborated on the texts. His comments were deep and immensely profound. For all clarity, here are two of the in total, seven texts, Jim used:

- International Theosophy Conferences explores the path all Theosophical organizations can follow to serve mankind in togetherness, respectfully and constructively, spiritually and cooperatively united, while each organization remains loyal to what it holds and advocates.
- International Theosophy Conferences aims at keeping Theosophy alive for future generations, i.e. not back to Blavatsky, but forward with Blavatsky. Furthermore, through its annual conferences it will bring together representatives of Theosophical organizations and students of Theosophy who are committed to **spread Theosophy as presented by H.P.B. and the Masters.**



*Jim Colbert speaks*

To watch Jim Colbert speak during ITC 2014 or copy and paste link into your browser: [bit.ly/3oQdq43](http://bit.ly/3oQdq43)

These statements explaining the *raison d'être and goals of ITC* were shared with the participants at the very start of the conference, while *the Naarden Declaration* was drawn up only at the end of ITC 2014. Therefore, up until 2014, during a period of approximately 15 years, ITC had functioned without any declarations or purposes.

The Theosophical Society Point Loma Blavatskyhouse (from now on, TSPL) took care of all technical equipment, with various cameras, television screens, mixing panels, wireless microphones and recording equipment. Although it was a very enjoyable event, the Adyar speakers remember very well that they were specifically requested *not to mention* the names of, *nor refer to* the writings of *C. W. Leadbeater, Annie Besant* or *J. Krishnamurti*.

While it was indicated in the 7 statements presented by Jim Colbert—that, what H.P.B. had transmitted and what the Masters' Letters signaled was **the common starting point** for all existing Theosophical organizations, H.P.B. was *never referred* to as the **unquestionable source** or as an **authority** of any sort.

Yet, here is the declaration that was created at the very same conference in Naarden at which Jim spoke:

#### **THE NAARDEN DECLARATION (2014):**

- Having respect for the diversity and freedom of the various Theosophical streams, we will endeavor to act as a Beacon of Light for *bringing Theosophy in accordance with\* the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky and her Masters* to the world. In an undogmatic manner and through harmonious cooperation we will strengthen the Theosophical Movement for the benefit of humanity.
- In the spirit of unity and brotherhood, we endeavor to make Theosophy a living power in the world.
- We commit ourselves through learning, training and cross pollination to popularize and keep the teachings alive for future generations.

**\* in accordance with i.e. in harmony with – in conformity with – consistent with**

Officially this declaration was to be composed from the suggestions that were given by all participants.

*Participants, working together  
in the Besant Hall, ITC 2014, Naarden,  
the Netherlands.*



Representatives of the various Theosophical organizations were approached to assist in drawing up the *final* version of the Naarden declaration. Those who took part in compiling the declaration (it took place late in the evening after an intensive event) after some deliberations, found themselves in a rather heated debate.



It appeared especially that the *leader* of the TSPL, was actively occupying himself, *forcing* a certain phrase *into* the Naarden Declaration:

“... *bringing Theosophy in accordance with\* the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky and her Masters to the world.*”

Adyar members who took part didn't feel comfortable with the proposed first phrase, because here, in contrast with the statements as Jim Colbert had presented them at the beginning of the conference, suddenly, what ITC was going to undertake during future doings, had to be *in full accordance with H.P.B.'s teachings and her Masters*.

That late August evening in Naarden, at the end of a memorable 2014 ITC gathering, brought to light a **striking and fundamental difference in approach** between at least two of the traditions.

A Brazilian participant, a member the TS-Adyar, observed that the first phrase, as it had been suggested, was not in line with Adyar's *Freedom of Thought Resolution*. The leader of the TSPL, *assertively vocal* on the subject and *seemingly determined* to have that phrase added, but not aware of, nor familiar with this key “TS-Adyar” resolution, brushed his comments aside. The result of this disagreement was that all Adyar participants, except one, noticeably not at ease with that evening's developments, left early to go to their quarters. This is how *this controversial, inappropriate, and offensive phrase* was unfortunately, albeit successfully, inserted into the Naarden Declaration.

Soon after ITC 2014, the Naarden Declaration was published, and it immediately triggered tense discussions on the Internet. Many Adyar members worldwide felt that coming together on the ITC platform, had then become questionable because of that very first phrase.

The Asterix \* sentence at the bottom was *inserted later, after the Naarden gathering*, to make certain that there would be **no** misunderstanding.

1. *i.e. in harmony with*
2. *in conformity with*
3. *consistent with* (her teachings).

**There is emphasis on a precondition.**

It is obvious that **in harmony, in conformity with, and consistent with**, confirms H.P.B. as a **sole authority**.

In order to further investigate ITC's objectives as they surfaced after 2014, a comprehensive look at **ITC's Purposes** is needed. These purposes were introduced sometime *after* the 2014 Naarden conference.

## **PURPOSES ITC**

International Theosophy Conferences Inc. is a platform where Theosophical organizations and all other earnest students of Theosophy meet. This infers that ITC won't typically function as another Theosophical vehicle, in spreading Theosophy itself. Instead ITC is committed to connect all Theosophists, **supporting them in their common cause in the light of the purposes of ITC**, which are:

1. **To maintain the principles of the Modern Theosophical Movement presented by H. P. B. as a living power in the minds and hearts of Humanity, encouraging explorations in the light of her teachings.**



2. To foster mutual meaningful intercommunication, understanding and respect among the Theosophical mainstreams, stimulating thereby continuous spiritual Unity.
3. To be a platform, supporting and sponsoring the annual international Conference of Theosophical Organizations.
4. To unite people in sharing the Philosophy of Theosophy, studying and further exploring Religion, Philosophy and Science from a Theosophical Perspective.

The introductory paragraph, points to ITC's platform function and emphasizes that ITC is NOT another Theosophical organization (vehicle). It also states that ITC wants to connect and support all Theosophists. This support however depends on a **solid condition**, because there is a specific requirement:

**... supporting them in their common cause *in the light of the purposes of ITC* ...**

The number one purpose is:

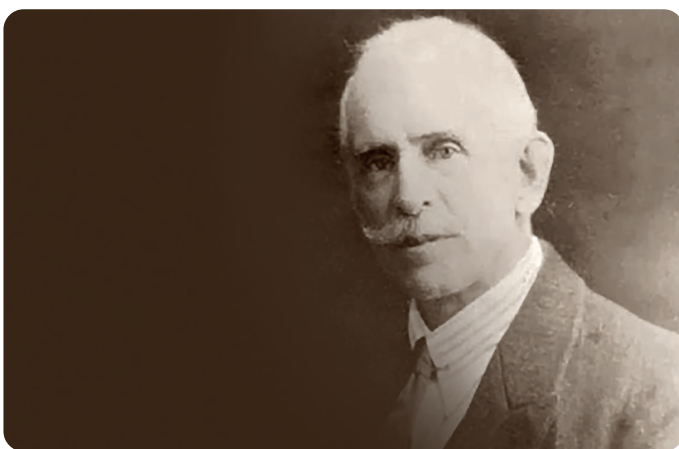
**To maintain the principles of the Modern Theosophical Movement *presented by H. P. B. as a living power in the minds and hearts of Humanity, encouraging explorations in the light of her teachings.***

As with the Naarden declaration (2014) Helena Blavatsky is considered to be a **sole authority** "*the Modern Theosophical Movement presented by H.P.B. .... in the light of her teachings*" is the sentence that does just that.

It is apparent, analyzing this number 1 purpose, that all is subordinated to the *full acceptance* of H.P.B.'s *undisputed authority*. Numbers 2, 3 and 4 of the Purposes are only valid and can be applied, if the first purpose is fully accepted.

Since the word **TEACHING(S)** is so often used, the following reflections:

One can wonder about the use of the word *teaching*. This epistle is not the place to set out on a lengthy intellectual debate about the *teachings* of Helena Blavatsky, but just for the sake of it: what *teachings* are we talking about?



*William Kingsland*

The well-known English Theosophist **William Kingsland (1855-1936)** wrote these lines:

"...She did something *more than teach us* a new system of philosophy. She drew together the threads of our life, those threads which run back into the past, and forward into the future, (.....) and showed us the pattern we had been weaving, and the purpose of our work."

Didn't she **transmit** the Old Wisdom, merely showing us a Path we could possibly choose to tread? Didn't she **reintroduce** a philosophy that had long been forgotten? Was what she gave us hers per se, or did she *collect* and reassemble the forgotten Laws that reign the Universe?

When Helena Blavatsky spoke about her best known book *The Secret Doctrine* very candidly said:

I may repeat what I have stated all along, and which I now clothe in the words of Montaigne: “Gentleman, I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers and have brought *nothing of my own* but the string that ties them.”

A further example of ITC usurping the duty of theosophical organizations is evidenced in yet another “Declaration”, this one drawn up in 2017 at the annual meeting, that year in Philadelphia:

### **THE PHILADELPHIA DECLARATION (2017):**

We commit ourselves to facilitate the creation of working conferences harnessing the unique genius of the various theosophical streams, by:

1. identifying suffering/hot topics that need a solution from theosophical perspective
2. studying and contemplating the theosophical teachings and selecting the relevant principles
3. translating these into modern language/putting these into context
4. developing pure and simple applications (products)
5. inspire, encourage or facilitate theosophical branches or organizations to enter the arena, to offer these solutions

This declaration, it looks more like a pledge, rambles on with vague references to “hot topics” and “products”, and was probably composed “in the heat of the conference.” It encourages Theosophical organizations to go out into the world, *the arena*, to be specific, to offer solutions. Isn’t that what all Theosophists and their respective organizations had been doing ever since November 17, 1875, after having read and studied the letter of the Maha Chohan? There is no correlation here whatsoever with any of the prior ITC principles that were so binding and distinctive during preceding gatherings. There is no mention of the platform function, in order to become acquainted with what others had undertaken in their Theosophical endeavors.

When all 5 points are thoroughly looked at, it sounds more like a TSPL statement.

**In the 7 years that had passed since the Julian meeting, ITC had become an entity, fully run and administrated by the TSPL: making the technical facilities available, taking complete care of the member’s administration, preparing the newsletter *The Bee*, organizing the monthly Board meetings in which the TSPL has a decisive majority.**

### **CROSS POLLINATION**



*One way ... or two ways?*

According to *ITC's description of cross pollination* there is most definitely a phenomenon called false Theosophy. Clothed in long and flowery sentences there is the following phrase, at the end of a paragraph referring to cross pollination:

**“Cross Pollination does not mean a diluting or mixing of pure theosophy with false theosophy!”**

The unique task of ITC, bringing all genuine students of theosophy together, no matter their conviction and affiliation, is now heavily preconditioned. There is *false*, but also *pure* Theosophy according to the self-appointed “custodians” of the ITC platform.

## CALL FOR READINGS FOR THE 2021 ITC

### From the ITC 2021 website announcement:

Submission guidelines: Send a balanced variety of selections from Theosophical teachings and from other sources, ancient and/or modern, *in accordance with the teachings of H.P. Blavatsky and her Masters (see our ‘Naarden Declaration’)*.

The readings are to be obtained from Theosophical publications.

It is utterly wrong and plain silly to imply that the vast amount of more than impressive Theosophical literature published by Adyar authors and scholars after H.P.B had passed, are just *interpretations of interpretations*. This last expression is often used in TSPL circles.

It is a complete misconception of what ITC is supposed to be all about to constantly insist, as ITC through its directives is doing, that only through reading and studying so called *core literature*, pure and true Theosophy is to be found; this line of thinking is *dangerously dogmatic* and hampers *free* thinking.

In this context, those who swear that true Theosophy, or Truth in that respect, is only to be acquired through reading *core literature* should very carefully rethink the word **CORE**.

Look at the core of an apple for example, what is to be found there, and in the core of many other fruits? Yes, seeds, and what happens when those seeds are planted elsewhere? Yes, in case of the apple core, ultimately other apple trees will appear.



## WHO THEN ARE THE “TRUE OR FALSE” DETERMINERS?

Under the TSPL's overly dominant influence, ITC has evolved into a creed, wherein there are conditions, rules, requirements, teachings – *all against which are now measured and judged one's harmony, conformity or consistency*. All these words or phrases are mental tools hindering any *truly open* enquiry. The conditions

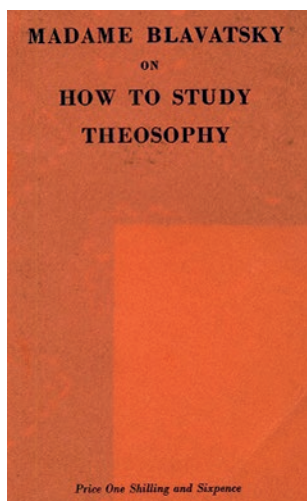
are arranged in such a way that they first must be agreed upon before anything else can take place. We read that there is false and true Theosophy. Therefore a question that arises is, who are those who **determine** this? Who are the individuals, able, competent, old and wise enough to judge what *is* and what is *not*, what is *true* or *false*, *in line with*, *in conformity with*, *in compliance with*, or not?

The answer is not difficult; these are the same folks who very diligently and deliberately added the conditions as described above, in order to keep their own particular way of understanding, approaching and teaching Theosophy, secure, protected and in the forefront. Are they by any chance afraid of something?

In everything that is covered above it becomes *crystal-clear* that the “determiners” have taken an *imposing posture*. The TSPL, fully in control of ITC, has left no room for doubt: there is only one way to study Theosophy and that is **their** way. In simple terminology: unless there is a complete surrender to their way of thinking, there is no path to Truth. There is a clear-cut reference to false and true Theosophy, however without *explicitly clarifying* what is meant by true and false.

Digging just a little bit deeper, it soon is discovered where the TSPL is coming from. Reading their publications, watching their recorded meetings or their live-stream presentations and observing their leader, this line of thinking is based on a staunch “belief” that the so-called original line of Theosophical first-generation publications, obviously starting with H.P.B. **and all it stands for**, is under attack and needs to be preserved and protected, as the TSPL constantly declares, against *misreading*, *misinterpretation* or *falsification*. Historically speaking, this domineering approach has been a part of *Point Loma’s DNA* for many decades.

They are the guardians of the Pure Water. Lo and behold, the writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, as well as the Masters’ Letters have now been elevated to scriptures. They are absolute. They cannot be questioned, nor debated.



*Cover of the Bowen Notes,*

*with thanks to the Olcott Memorial Library at Olcott in Wheaton*

In the Bowen Notes, a record of studies with H.P.B. in London shortly before her passing in 1891, this guidance was given:

**Come to the SD [*The Secret Doctrine*] (H.P.B. says) *without any hope of getting the final Truth of existence from it, or with any idea other than seeing how far it may lead towards the Truth. See in study a means of exercising and developing the mind never touched by other studies.*** (Ianthe H. Hoskins, *Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy*, TPH, London, 1980, p. 64)

Why is the militant insistence on a strict adherence to “core Theosophy” repugnant to many Theosophists and certainly to all true free thinkers? Because absolutizing any expression, no matter how illustrious its author, no matter how luminous its light, is diametrically opposed to freedom of thought, which is the lifeblood of the Theosophical quest.

## THE RESOLUTION

The **FREEDOM OF THOUGHT** resolution adopted by the General Council of the Theosophical Society-Adyar in 1924. It is printed in each issue of *The Theosophist* on the second page.



## Freedom of Thought (fragment)

...No teacher, or writer, **from H. P. Blavatsky onwards**, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought but has no right to force the choice on any other....

### Some Freedom of Thought contemplations:

- Commenting in the 1987 fall issue of *The American Theosophist*, then National President Dorothy Abbenhouse noted: Members of the Society are free to think, to believe, to work for any truth they find valid; at the same time each must respect the freedom of all other members to find their own truths.
- David P. Bruce, National Secretary of The Theosophical Society in America states: Sharing theosophical ideas with people is one thing. **Imposing those ideas** is something else. For instance: *Theosophy has made a great difference in my life. Therefore I want to make you a beneficiary of my infallible wisdom.* That may be a bit of an overstatement, but perhaps not by much. A sincere desire to help can sometimes morph into a subtle desire to exert control over the recipient of our beneficence.
- Dr. John Algeo, a former International Vice-President of the TS-Adyar in a pamphlet entitled : WHAT SHOULD THEOSOPHICAL GROUPS STUDY?, writes: The “Freedom of Thought” statement (written by Annie Besant in 1923 and passed by the General Council in 1924) is a clear, unambiguous affirmation of the nondogmatic nature of the Theosophical Society, guaranteeing individuals the right to accept or reject whatever Theosophical (or other) ideas they like and to belong to whatever organizations or schools of thought outside the Society they may wish.
- Ali Ritsema, a former General Secretary of the Dutch Section of the TS-Adyar wrote in her article **LAWFULLNESS**: We see that **complete freedom of thought** in itself is based on **Lawfulness** through the very fact that .... each human is him/herself his/her own lawmaker .... .... to realize freedom of thought is **the biggest struggle for humans in this, our, phase of development** ....

### OBSERVATIONS

1. The **Freedom of Thought** resolution is an unyielding pillar in “Adyar thinking.” The current stance of International Theosophical Conferences (ITC), as it is postulated through its Declarations, Purposes and overall attitude, is *incompatible* with the *deeper significance* of this resolution.
2. ITC’s board, due to its inapt composition, has estranged itself from the platform function ITC used to have. Instead, ITC, through its recent annual meetings and programming has turned into a one-sided study consortium. Long prior to each conference, themes and readings are decided upon and it is noticed that, again due to a majority that ultimately decides within ITC’s board, a clear but narrow path is chosen. Speakers, even if they are selected from the three “so called” main-streams, all have in common that they will exclusively cover (study) material or literature, that is in full compliance with the writings of Helena Blavatsky and from a limited number of mainly “first generation” authors, who have the explicit approval of the majority of ITC’s Board. **If ITC’s Board were to be composed of individuals from the various mainstreams equally, ALL of them would have to adhere to, and promote the purposes of ITC as determined and interpreted by the organization that is running ITC on a day by day basis: the TS-Point Loma- Blavatskyhouse in the Netherlands.**

3. The true meaning of the catch phrase “cross-pollination” first introduced by a TS-Adyar member during the 2014 ITC gathering in Naarden, the Netherlands, has not been understood, since it is utterly misinterpreted. Nevertheless this phrase is still supposed to be an essential part of the ITC banner. **Cross-pollination** never took place and ITC events, especially those held from 2017 until 2021, could only deliver examples of *one-way* pollination.

**Cross-pollination cannot be *one-way*,**

## CONCLUSION

The honorable principles contained in *The Freedom of Thought* resolution are incompatible with ITC’s declarations, purposes and overall attitude. The original and lofty ideals initiated by James (Jim) Colbert, his wife Sally and some other early pioneers, have been obscured.

ITC was meant to be an *all embracing* body. Instead it has turned into a patronizing organ, focused on but one small facet of the Theosophical diamond.

+ + + + +

## EPILOGUE

To be quite honest, I never thought that there would ever come a moment that I had to come up with an article as the one above. All those who know me well, and are familiar with my work for ITC from 2011 until recently, even after I had left its Board, will have no doubt that I fully cherished the ideas and values so beautifully laid out by Jim Colbert and others, and perhaps I should not use the past tense because I still fully esteem those values.

Let me also at this point, and for the record, state that I was present when both the Naarden declaration and ITC’s purposes, were compiled. Being a Board member, I served as Vice President. I believe that I was temporarily able to suppress the flat-out rigid implementation of those imposed rules.

## NO GRUDGE

I want to be clear: I do not hold a grudge against any of the members or co-workers of the TSPL or its leader, who also holds the position of ITC’s Vice-President. I came to know him as kind, generous, and hospitable.

Theosophical Society Point Loma, line of succession

H.P. Blavatsky 1874-1891 New York, etc.

W.Q. Judge 1891-1896 New York

Kath. Tingley 1896-1929 Point Loma

G. de Purucker 1929-1942 Point Loma, Covina

A.L. Conger 1945-1951 Covina

W. Hartley 1951-1955 Covina

D.J.P. Kok 1958-1985 Blavatskyhouse

H.C. Vermeulen 1985-..... Blavatskyhouse

*The line of succession, from the TSPL website*

**Regarding the fact that he presents himself as a successor of HPB**, his approach to Theosophy and hence the direction into which he has *deliberately* and *personally* steered ITC, we do not see eye to eye. The *inner*

*circle* around the leader consists of well-versed, hardworking and highly motivated, mostly younger students, who spend much, if not all their free time working for the TSPL organization.

It is a fact that, particularly after the 2015, The Hague gathering, the operational side became fully administered by the TSPL. Why and how that came about is not that relevant. ***It is what it is.*** The TSPL dominance exhibited in everything ITC undertakes is visible for any objective observer. If the TSPL were not to dominate, many from other Theosophical backgrounds would look at ITC with different eyes and feel that ITC is a worthwhile enterprise, step up, and possibly take care of technology and other organizational matters.

## INTENTION

The TSPL is a strict hierarchical, nondemocratic body, where everything trickles from the top (the leader) down. I stay away from analyzing the TSPL; what they do within their own organization is wholly their responsibility, their business. On several occasions I encouraged some Adyar members to follow their courses, because when it is about the study of *The Secret Doctrine* and other **basic literature**, they have something to offer. The *volume of work* they put in for the *ITC experiment* is admirable, the TSPL ought to be applauded for that, but, as we learn in occultism, it is not **the volume** that counts, **ultimately it is all about intention.**

Over the past few years ITC has been altered into a convenient tool dedicated to serving the objectives of the TSPL, which is increasingly flying on ITC's wings. ITC's characteristics, or what is left of them, and those of the TSPL are getting more and more *intermingled*. For as far as their intention goes, more than ever before, because of how they have been able to use ITC, the TSPL can now profile themselves internationally, and they seem to be excited about that. One example: in November 2020, the TSPL lined up with some Brazilian Theosophists, of which quite a few are absorbed by the "Back to Blavatsky" and "Throw Besant and Leadbeater under the bus" mantram. With them, and a few participants from Portugal, Spain and the USA, an international, on-line conference with the theme title "*Undisclosed Instructions by Helena P. Blavatsky. Blavatsky's conversations with her students*" was organized. It was also during this event that TSPL's leader emphasized again and again that *collaboration* and *working together*, is based on studying *The Secret Doctrine* and the Masters' Letters.

[Click this link to read text of the leader's talk during that conference or copy and paste link into your browser: bit.ly/34YEBCm](https://bit.ly/34YEBCm)

To watch the leader's talk during the opening of the ITC Zoom conference, held from July 28 until August 1, 2021

[The introduction the leader gave needs no further comments, it accentuates all arguments made in this epistle or copy and paste link into your browser: bit.ly/3JtbSVf](https://bit.ly/3JtbSVf)

## NO LINKS

Very peculiarly, ITC's Board refuses to have any other Theosophical organizations mentioned on the ITC website, not even those who have been friendly and very helpful when it came to promoting ITC and TSPL events on their respective websites. The opinion of the Board is that this would give the impression that ITC endorses other Theosophical organizations. But what in heaven's name is wrong with endorsing a cooperative sympathizer? This stance is just another proof that the TSPL pushes ITC into controlled exclusiveness.

## FINALLY

As we have seen, the **Freedom of Thought** resolution is not compatible with what ITC these days stands for. The only way as seekers we are able to find Truth is in complete freedom, with a freed mind, without any preconditions or limitations. We should not put the Masters or Helena Blavatsky on a sectarian pedestal. That's the last thing they would have wanted. The adjectives *true* and *original* in relation with the noun Theosophy cannot be applied. They are antagonistic obstacles for the freethinkers' mind and free enquiry.

Members of the TS-Adyar should also look at this as a unique challenge, and take time to read and think about the Freedom of Thought resolution, printed on the second page of each issue of *The Theosophist*, together with the Freedom of Society resolution. While meditating and pondering on its profound contents a better understanding will come about.

My unforgettable co-editor and mentor for years, Dr. John Algeo wrote in his "WHAT SHOULD THEOSOPHICAL GROUPS STUDY?":

An old motto holds that "**Theosophy is everything, but not everything is Theosophy,**" meaning that everything can be viewed from a Theosophical standpoint, although not all standpoints are Theosophical. We can look at any ideas or any system of thought with Theosophical eyes, and doing so is studying and teaching Theosophy.

Earlier in my own journey, I decided to follow the "**it is either Theosophy or it isn't Theosophy**" tenet, later realizing that the Theosophia did not start with H.P.B., nor will it end with her. This is very personal of course and each sincere seeker should choose her or his own path. But in all seriousness, when we begin to implement all sorts of restrictions and prerequisites, the path we tread seemingly to greater heights will soon become a very slippery slope to thinking that the ends justify the means.

Bringing Theosophists together on an occasional platform, not only from the three mainstreams, but all of them, including the independent and non-affiliated students—is not that simple. Next to the organizational or technical part, this also requires particular qualifications: an all-embracing attitude, and an open mindset. Genuine uniters, without a concealed or hidden intent, are not always at hand, or they are being disregarded. Moreover, the ideas we have created in our minds over the years about "what is" and "what is not" should also be carefully examined. Here, we enter the domains of interpretation, vision or that of concepts. I had to ask myself: "How do I see ITC? -What was my objective and ideal when I started to participate in ITC's activities fully and enthusiastically?" It is not pleasant having to recognize that it can happen that you need to let go of your own hypothesis, because unfortunate occurrences caused the result of the initiative, in this case ITC, to move into an erroneous direction.

**Well, I let go. I detach. ITC now serves a different patron; it has become redundant.**

... but the dream is still there though ...

The impulse behind the initial founding of ITC, has not died out at all, even if the current leadership of ITC itself has strayed from that impulse. In my work, and as editor-in-chief of *Theosophy Forward*, there are connections with students of all kinds, belonging to the various organizations and beyond. Instead of exclusively focusing on intellectual study and what I would refer to as the *mental Theosophical technicalities*, we must open up our hearts illuminating our very First Object, coming together on whatever platform available to seriously form and work on a **Nucleus of Sister-and-Brotherhood**.



Let me close with lines I have often used before, but can't stop quoting because it so beautifully wraps up what I have been, and still am working for:

**Fragment:**

... But the original impulse that produced the seed and the tree, the branches and offshoots, the underground runners with their place in the sun, is still within, seeking expression and fulfillment. There is no need to change any boundaries, annex other territories, or dissolve any compartments, save in the prison of the mind. **And a mind that is crippled by memory—by separation and fear—can never be free.** We can find our own place in the sun by going beyond the bondage of the past and serving that impulse wherever we be. **That is our territory; that is our center; that is our Theosophical family.**

(From Dorothy Bell's *Roots and Shoots*)

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**APPENDIX**

**WHAT DID HELENA BLAVATSKY AND MASTER K.H. SAY ON  
“FREEDOM OF THOUGHT”?**

“We may not be in sympathy with materialism, and may even abhor it; yet the Theosophical Society ought never to forget that which it owes to Freethinkers. It is to the unceasing efforts of a long series of adherents to **Freethought**—almost every one of whom has been made a martyr to his convictions at the hands of bigotry—that we, in the present century owe the very possibility of our existence as an organized body.”

Lucifer, 1889, volume 5, n. 25, page 76. *Suppressio Veri Suggestio Falsi*, by the Adversary (HPB).

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“LUCIFER—the spirit of Intellectual Enlightenment and **Freedom of Thought**—is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sandbanks of Life, for Lucifer is the LOGOS in his highest, and the “Adversary” in his lowest aspect—both of which are reflected in our *Ego*”

The Secret Doctrine, Volume II, Stanza VII The Semi-Divine Down to the First Humanity page 162.

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“The “lofty platform” is very flattering, though our modesty urges us to regard it as a mirage developed within the limitless area of our kind “friends and admirers’ “fancy. But, supposing it had any independent existence of its own, we would far rather descend from and abandon it forever, than accept the passive role of a dumb old idol, alike indifferent to the happiness as to the misery and woes of the surrounding world. We decline the exalted position if we have to secure it at the price of our **freedom of thought and speech.**”

Collected Writings volume 4 “The Chosen “Vessels of Election” Blavatsky

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“Valuing **freedom of thought** above all things, as the only way of reaching at some future time that Wisdom, of which every Theosophist ought to be enamoured, we recognize the right to the same freedom in our foes as in our friends.”

*The Dual Aspect of Wisdom*, H.P. Blavatsky. *Lucifer*, 1890, v. vii, n. xxxvii, pp. 1-9.

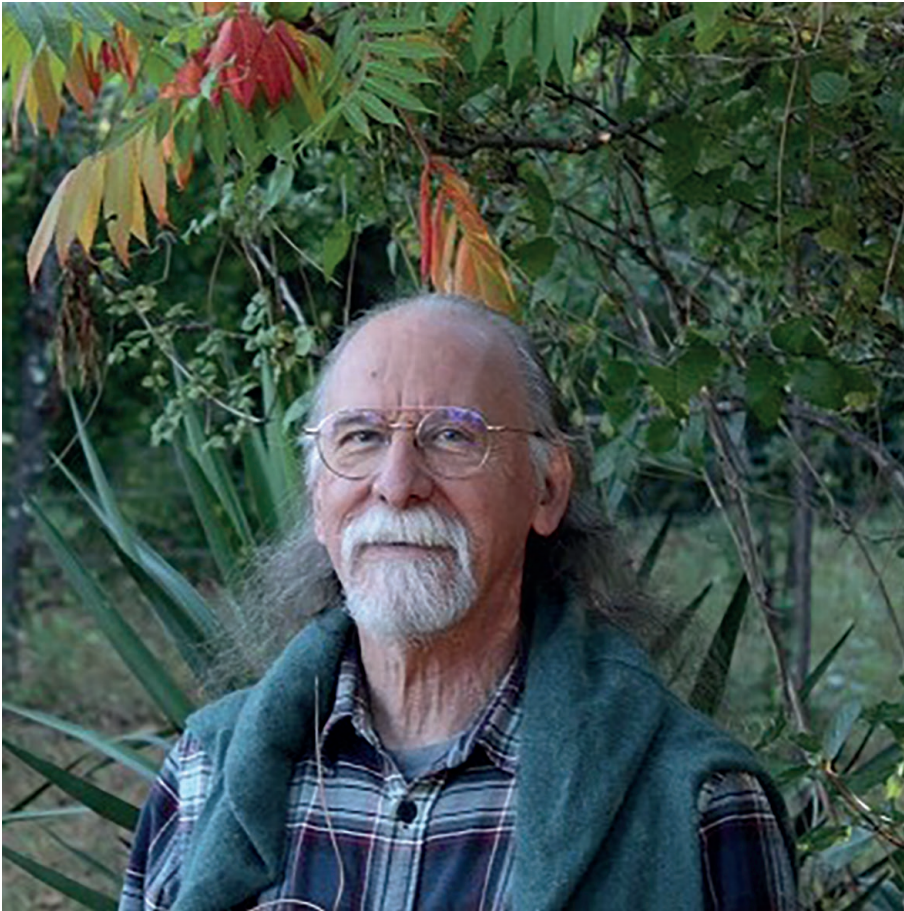
+ + + + + +

**K.H.:**

“I need hardly point out how the proposed arrangement is calculated to lead to a harmonious progress of the “L.L.T.S.” It is a universally admitted fact that the marvellous success of the Theosophical Society in India is due entirely to its principle of wise and respectful toleration of each other’s opinions and beliefs. Not even the President-Founder has the right directly or indirectly to interfere with the **freedom of thought** of the humblest member, least of all to seek to influence his personal opinion. It is only in the absence of this generous consideration, that even the faintest shadow of difference arms seekers after the same truth, otherwise earnest and sincere, with the scorpion-whip of hatred against their brothers, equally sincere and earnest. Deluded victims of distorted truth, they forget, or never knew, that discord is the harmony of the Universe.”

The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett n. 85 / Chronological Sequence n. 120

Jacques Mahnich – France



*Jacques in his garden*

The initiative carried out by International Theosophical Conferences (ITC) for more than 10 years is a good example of the modes of operation and the difficulties that exist in communities which transmit spiritual teachings.

Driven at the outset by momentum, great enthusiasm and a sincere desire to improve the quality and scope of the message conveyed, this type of movement almost inevitably encounters pitfalls on its path. The history of religious, spiritual, philosophical and political movements is littered with difficulties and failures, and they all have one thing in common: **PEOPLE**. More precisely, that part of the human we call the *personality* at this stage of development on this earth, has not yet acquired the maturity to approach the challenges of life with serenity and hindsight. As each failure is also an opportunity to bounce back and rebuild, it is important to understand and properly diagnose the root causes that lead to the difficulties and the inability to resolve them. Lucidity and honesty will be essential, so we do *not* hide behind *pseudo-justifications*.

I joined ITC in 2013, after attending the annual meeting in New York, where I discovered a living, vibrant community of Theosophists from all walks of life. This included those who were affiliated or not, to existing movements, and all were enthusiastic to the idea of acting together in the great spirit and work of transmitting the Teachings of Ancient Wisdom. The diversity of profiles present was enriching and, as the organizational aspect was not *yet* predominant, a scent of freedom floated in the atmosphere. At that time, ITC was governed by a Board of 16 Directors drawn from all the theosophical trends. Then, we had the meeting at Naarden in 2014, the founding meeting, although the origins of the movement can be traced back to the early nineties, around Willie Dade and the Colbert family. Indeed, the presence and the participation of the leaders of the

principal theosophical currents in Naarden, on one of the sites of the Theosophical Society Adyar, resulted in legitimizing a little more, and propelling ITC to the front of the stage. This was later followed by invitations from the International President of the Theosophical Society-Adyar to the President of ITC, and to members of the various theosophical streams to come and participate in various editions of the International Convention in Adyar. This was unique in the modern history of the Movement.

In 2014, the famous “*Naarden Declaration*” laid the foundations for a way of working together for the different participants. This statement, prepared by the working groups on site and then formulated by the executives of ITC, aimed to identify the “lowest common denominator”, that is, the basis of uncontroversial theosophical teachings on which we could lean on to work together. It was *not* intended to establish an absolute dogma from which one could not deviate later. It should be noted that this statement, as formulated by the working groups and which was given to the participants before the leaders’ debate, *did not include* this small annotation which would later alter the scope of its meaning. The initial wording was: “in accordance with \* the teachings of H.P. Blavatsky and her Masters”, the (\*) originally meaning: “in agreement with the participants of ITC 2014”. Later, this little add-on was transformed into “in harmony, in accordance and consistent with”.

Then there was the Den Haag, in English *The Hague*, meeting in 2015 which saw the beginning of “cross pollination” materialize, with the invitation to speakers from the various theosophical movements. There also emerged a form of dogmatism with the advocates of “**TRUE Theosophy**” affirming loudly and clearly, even *during* presentations, their points of view within the framework of joint work. The working groups also reflected this drift.

The 2016 meeting in Santa Barbara, which had as its theme “Theosophy and Social Responsibility” was very rich in content and participation, but it confirmed once more this unfortunate dogmatic drift, in the way of selecting the subjects and the recommended readings, as well as in the organization and preparation of working groups. The consequence was a confinement of *free thought* within a closed canvas that does not tolerate external contributions. This was the last meeting I attended.

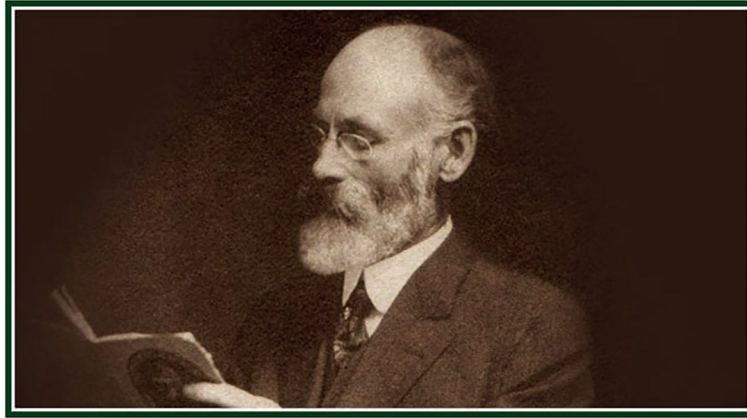
Since then, we have witnessed that some years ago one, of the two Vice-Presidents, who was enthusiastically vocal in supporting and promoting the initial ITC idea left the Board, apparently aware of the dogmatic drift of the movement, while earlier *this year* ITC’s President and one prominent Board member quite abruptly resigned. Because this happened in a relatively brief time frame, it seems to me that there must have been discord about the fundamentals of the ITC initiative.

Now, what can we learn from it and what lessons have we learned in this adventure? The history of the Theosophical Movement is, from its very beginning, littered with such misadventures which have left many scars. These misadventures all have the same thing in common: ...

**... at some point in history, one or more personalities claim to “hold the truth”, “to be the sole guarantors of the integrity of the message”.**

We have seen it with all the splits that have occurred since the departure of H. P. Blavatsky, Judge and his successors, but also Crosby, Steiner, Bailey, Roerich, countless *clashes of personalities*. In 1931, a precursor initiative of the modern ITC was initiated by G. de Purucker, who proposed to bring together members of different theosophical currents on the anniversary of the birth of H.P. Blavatsky, in Point Loma. A “gesture of fraternization and reunion” which was not a success; Ms. Besant and de Purucker both claiming to be the sole holder of “*True Theosophy*”.





*Robert Crosbie*

Robert Crosbie, who left Point Loma in 1904, and, together with some students, launched the ULT in 1909, has left us a testimony, a crystal clear understanding of what we are trying to tackle:

*It is futile to accept revelations on anybody's say-so. They convey no knowledge, and it is actual knowledge that is required by each one. Theosophy is in the world to present the means by which each one can acquire knowledge for himself. Its study and application call forth the judgment and discrimination latent in the man himself. Truth is not a man, nor a book, nor a statement. The nature of Truth is universal ; its possessors in any degree will be found to be applicers of universality in thought, speech and action. . . They will never be found among those claiming to be the chosen spokesman of the Deity.<sup>1</sup>*

Later in time, a unique character added: "*Truth is a Pathless Land* ".

It should be noted that these events also enriched the movement by diversifying it and attracting other sensibilities.

It is helpful to recognize that active participation in any movement of a spiritual nature has an effect of amplifying our patterns of behavior. Our personalities are subject to this "*spiritual field*" which will bring out all the aspects that are obstacles to the change necessary to accomplish our missions, and thus create conflicts of interest, even if we are not aware of it. This is one way to move forward: amplify to make the areas we need to work on obvious. In the case of leaders of movements of a spiritual or religious nature, the resulting blindness leads to behavioral drifts, most of the time unconscious, but which have a strong impact. Orthodox or Latin Christians and Protestants up until this day still fight over ownership of the message of Christianity, Shiites and Sunnis are torn apart over who is the true lineage of Islam. Even some Buddhists, followers of non-violence, participate in massacres of minorities. Of course, in the case of organized religions, the mixture between spiritual and temporal power accentuates the drifts.

However, we know that reality is One, and that we each perceive it under a different aspect, because of all the conditioning that accompanies us. These apparent schisms do challenge us because they have their *specific* and *very important* function: *to push forward the process of evolution.*

Any form of teaching is *fossilized* as soon as it is no longer alive. Simply repeating what was written over a hundred years ago, *or even a thousand years ago*, has little or no impact on acquiring behavioral wisdom that can move the collective consciousness of humanity. Spiritual teachings - *all spiritual teachings* - are mere compasses left by seekers who have dedicated their lives to learning Reality, nothing more.

These teachings can only bear fruit when they are implemented, put into practice. And here too we touch upon a fundamental difficulty on the spiritual path: *confinement in the fortress of the mind*. We are so trained, formatted, to use our intellect to lead our lives that we have a real difficulty coming out of it to perceive and experience Reality. All the great mystics are unanimous in saying, on the basis of their own experience:

**“Learn, then unlearn!” The most powerful of languages is *silence (mind)* which opens the heart and lets the divine flow.**

Most of the “*serious*” spiritual paths, described by many Masters from all the traditions, and trodden by millions of followers, are steep up-hill paths which require the utmost vigilance not to fall in the abysses. We will inevitably stumble but we shall always restart after some rest. What is important is to keep our eyes on the *Guiding Light* in front of us, and keep our confidence in it.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Crosbie – *Universal Theosophy* – The Theosophy Company, 2006

To return to the adventure of ITC, one example among many others, we must consider what a group of humans organized and centered around a common goal actually is. Any organization, spiritual or not, is an assembly of souls, united by a set of core principles, and driven toward a common goal. Any member of an organization brings with him his whole background - and not only from this current life. This means, because we are not all perfect *Arhats* yet, that the personal ego still wants to play its game, and its game is just ... to exist, and justify every thought, every uttered word, every action, for its own sake, which means that all our thoughts, speeches and actions are tainted by it, consciously or, most of the time, unconsciously. When it comes to spiritual organizations, spiritual materialism lurks, and it multiplies the energy of the ego. This is why it is so difficult to keep the steering of the ship on the right direction.

Overall, my experience with ITC has been a great one: I could mingle, exchanging ideas and experiences, with people whom I probably never would have had the opportunity to meet, fellow seekers from all over the world, and from all major theosophical currents. I discovered organizations that offer different models of gaining spiritual knowledge. Some are *very centered around their leader*, others devoid of any form of organization and leader, and there are some still halfway between these two. And each one of the groups produces remarkable theosophical work, each in its own way. Therefore, the combination of all of these formations can only add additional value to the Theosophical movement. So how do you overcome the recurring difficulties that arise?

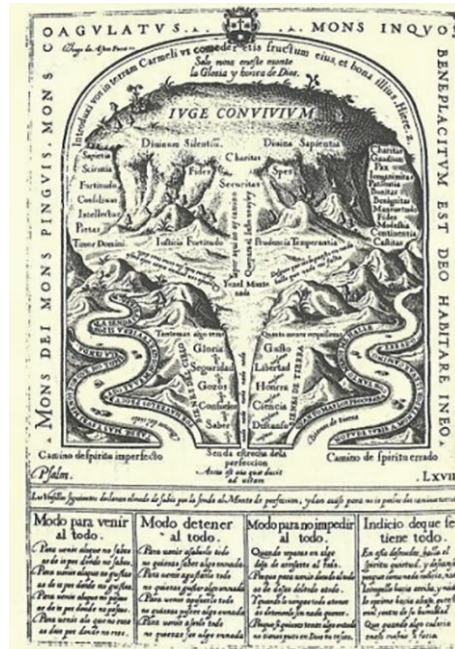
Clearly, the only plausible thing to do is to stop thinking and claiming that you **are the guardian of the Truth**, presenting **True Theosophy**. Theosophy is *universal* and *does not belong to anyone*. Theosophical education is available to everyone and it is up to everyone to draw from it at their source. Then, as in any human community, it can be useful to define - in common - what are the fundamental values around which the group gathers. Naarden’s statement in 2014, *without the small\**, is a good example.

Together, in *communion* with each other, we must define the development the strategy of the initiative and the related plans and means of action, allowing ourselves to revisit and critically look at them regularly, according to progress made.

This may seem quite mechanical as a process, but experience proves that in order to bear fruit, the work of a group needs those notions of values, strategy, action plans, and above all a control loop to quickly discern the drifts or unforeseen obstacles that can hinder any progress. Beyond the mechanics of piloting, the fundamentals of behavior such as *honesty, openness, knowledge*, all in a spirit of *compassion* and *altruism*, remain essential.

The spirit of the initiative led by Jim Colbert and others is still alive and the seeds thus sown can only germinate one day to come, bringing their harvest of flowers of knowledge and thus continue to help humanity in its slow evolution towards the One Reality.

Quote from John of the Cross, a great Spanish mystic from the 16th century, who wrote in his *Ascent of Mount Carmel*:



*To reach satisfaction in all, desire its possession in nothing.*

*To come to possession in all desire the possession of nothing.*

*To arrive at being all desire to be nothing.*

*To come to the knowledge of all desire the knowledge of nothing.*

*To come to the pleasure you have not you must go by the way in which you enjoy not.*

*To come to the knowledge you have not you must go by the way in which you know not.*

*To come to the possession you have not you must go by the way in which you possess not.*

*To come by the what you are not you must go by a way in which you are not.*

*When you turn toward something you cease to cast yourself upon the all.*

*For to go from all to the all you must deny yourself of all in all.*

*And when you come to the possession of the all you must possess it without wanting anything.*

*Because if you desire to have something in all your treasure in God is not purely your all.*

Mr Jacques Mahnich, a member of the TS in France is an outstanding guitarist and violinist but also a scientist, actively working to bring about a synthesis of modern science with Theosophy.

## ALAS and after - Liminality and Theosophy

Ananya Sri Ram – USA



*Ananya in her office*

**Freedom of thought** is imperative within Theosophical settings. Without such ability, the meaning of Theosophy is lost and means nothing. Historically, it is through the process of **freedom of thought** that Theosophy came into being. The latest collapse of the melding of minds under the banner of International Theosophy Conferences, for some time a remarkable endeavor after years of fragmentation in TS circles, shows how important this declaration is. **Freedom**, at one level, allows us as seekers to connect to our higher selves, unknown to others, a sacred place to ourselves. At an even higher level, it follows the laws of nature which hold nothing, allowing everything to unfold in its own way. This **freedom** is liminality or the space in-between.

The journey through liminality has been a topic explored by artists, philosophers, and thinkers of all kinds. The inability to deal with uncertainty or of being okay with unknowing has actually led some to mental instability. Most humans like routine. We like knowing what will happen next. Not knowing, nowadays, has created several cases of anxiety and depression. A good physical analogy of this is when we are learning to swim. If we are afraid of the water and the lack of constriction, we tend to cling to the wall of the pool. We believe we are safe against something solid. If we lose the ground beneath us, we flail in our uncertainty.

Moments of liminality happen to us more often than we think. But most of the time, because we are beings of routine, the patterns in our mind keep us from realizing that our whole life is liminal. From the moment we are psychologically conscious, we are moving from a space of knowing to unknowing and then to knowing again. The process seems to move back and forth, but in reality, it is only moving forward. Nothing stays the same. It is usually when major life changes happen that moving from knowing to unknowing can cause trepidation, anxiety, or perhaps just a sense of unsettling. Studies have shown that there are certain life events that tend to cause more stress for people—moving from one residence to another, losing one’s job, marriage, divorce or death of a partner, the death of a loved one, and so on. (These are not in any particular order.) In the end, it is up to our own sense of self that decides how we are going to react to the liminality we face.

Our journey through the ground of unknowing is often what makes us seek answers to life in general. It makes us ask the question “why?” and moves us toward an exploration of our existence. Within the ground of unknowing we look for knowing, for a framework. For some, this leads to the study and practice of a religion. For others it leads to spiritual enquiry. Perhaps it depends on how much of a framework we need. Religions,



with its scriptures, doctrine, and practices can be viewed as a starting point to a deeper study of oneself. But some people get caught in the net of believing they have found “IT” and go no further. They find comfort in the community they worship with, the teachings and practices, and the guide of an authority. Liminality is still there, but the structure provides a sense of safety.

Those not satisfied with the staid answers of organized religion begin a spiritual practice. They search for answers based on their own inner promptings. Sometimes this leads to a spiritual teacher who provides guidance of some kind—a quasi-framework, if you’d like. For others, liminality is seen as sacred space, a space where anything can happen. Life itself becomes the teacher. What has fallen apart, what will be is unknown. But there is a knowing that life’s process moves in cycles so something new is ahead. In our microcosm of the universe, one must depend on the energy of Vishnu, the maintainer, after Shiva has broken down everything and Brahma has yet to awaken.

Liminality provides no conclusions. But it does provide opportunities. It gives us the adventure of life itself. Staying in liminal space allows us to see how everything—every discovery, every precious or tragic moment, *every* humanity does, has its own purpose and has a connection with everything else around it. What keeps us from jumping into the arena of nothingness is fear. We want to hold on to the side of the pool. We believe we are safe when in reality we are afraid of our own potential.

Perhaps this is what led H. P. Blavatsky on her journey to rediscover Theosophy. HPB lived in liminality. How can one not want to share such a beautiful understanding? The Divine Wisdom if anything is liminal. It is potentiality, the constant movement toward perfection, the effervescence of life itself. At the core of everything, is Theosophy. Theosophy shows us that under all that seems stable and concrete lies a force that is forever changing. Nothing is quite what it seems when seen through a theosophical lens. The intelligence that governs all is also within us. It lies within the container of our physical form no differently than it lies within the material form that we call a tree. And yet we need the physical form to know and experience the divinity within.

**Liminality is what teaches us to trust in the laws of nature that Theosophy brings to light. If we truly led Theosophical lives, we would let go of every judgement, every nonfactual belief, every desire for control, every sense of need, and so on, and just trust that what we have, where we are, who we are, the positions we hold, the money and possessions we have, and the place or space that we are in is where we are and meant to be at that moment. We would work with what is instead of wanting something different and we would work toward the betterment of all, not just our own desires or agenda.**

Becoming friends with liminality can move us from seeing the world as a sedate, routine, solid structure to something that is dynamic, vibrant, unpredictable, but fascinating. It is also what can keep us from living theosophy as a theory to Living Theosophy as HPB writes about in her many works.

**Too often we, like those following a religion without thought, get caught in the net of security. We read the books and teachings, regurgitate what they say and call it Theosophy. But the blueprint is not the house and HPB was only a messenger, not Theosophy itself. She was the founder of a vehicle to allow anyone and everyone to step into the liminality of life. It is within this vast ocean that we can find our true being. To not move on beyond what HPB and her own Masters taught defeats the purpose of the platform of the Theosophical Society and Theosophy itself.**

However, once the fear of letting go subsides, there is hesitancy. We know the wall is there, but there is a pleasure in the expanse of the water. Eventually, we trust ourselves a little more and there is a sense of freedom and security in being able to float. Liminality happens when the only support we have is the buoyancy of the water.

*Ms Ananya Sri Ram is a long-term member of the TS Society in America, President of the TOS in the USA and editor of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) in America publications. She also contributes regularly to Theosophy Forward.*

## ALAS and after - a question and an answer

Robert Pullen – the Netherlands



*Robert Pullen*

### **The question:**

Can Theosophy make a difference in the coming years in our hopelessly divided (theosophical) world?

### **The answer:**

Most certainly, as long as Theosophists do not cling to slogans like “our Society is the only *true* theosophical organization with an *exclusive* and *straight* connection with *the Mahatmas* and the *Hierarchy of Compassion*.”

Such an attitude would turn Theosophy typically into an *ecclesiastic current*, solely transmitting dreadful dogmas, achieving the complete opposite of what it was supposed to be all about. It would become a non-binding, *institutionalized* Theosophy spreading hollow phrases, declaring every full stop and comma found in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky for example, *sacred*.

If, on the other hand, there is *Freedom of Thought*, theosophists who live their lives in the *Spirit of Theosophy* and through their example, will influence others radiating Theosophy, instead of blindly lining up behind an *organization*, a *leader* or, worse even, without an investigative mind, books.

In that blessed spirit they won't be mere walking encyclopedias filled with only book-knowledge, but they will be joyful, warm, hearty Theosophists demonstrating great spiritual devotion and untiring love for humanity as a whole, without distinction of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, descent, personal circumstances or political beliefs.

People with a true spiritual attitude to life are “*freed*.” This doesn't mean that they are not bound by any guidelines. The precepts they know are those of their own hearts. These are not imposed rules on paper, but it is the recognition and acknowledgment that the ethical precepts of the great world teachers such as *Buddha*, *Jesus* and *Krishna* represent the beautiful and eternal bond between the *personal man* and his *Higher Self*.

These are the rules for *inner- or self-realization*, showing that a new world environment can be shaped through an unwavering discipline. It is the *freedom of human thought* to accept these rules as a divine guideline in life and not as *commandments*, in order to discover their meaning and understand them, while accepting them

*voluntarily* and above all with *love*.

Choosing freely for a bond, is not to be mistaken for *bondage*, because that leads to *spiritual suppression*.

*Robert Pullen is a life-long student of Theosophy and chairman of the independent Theosophical Centre “Post Nubila Lux”, in the Netherlands. <http://www.tcpnl.nl> He has lectured widely, authored many articles and a book entitled ‘View through inside – Universal Wisdom, the NOW and our Future’*

[Note from the editor: the excerpt is *based on* a series of questions and answers published in the magazine *Pax Theosophia*]



## ALAS and after - The Conditions of True Union

Henry Travers Edge



*Henry Travers Edge*

Note from the editor: In the series “Alas and after” an historical *and very appropriate* article written by H. T. Edge (1867- 1946). He was a personal pupil of Helena P. Blavatsky, a prolific author on Theosophical subjects and he devoted some *fifty-eight years of his life* to theosophical work. H.T. Edge was a life-long affiliate of the Point Loma-Covina (USA) community, now Pasadena]

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Harmony results from the analogy between contraries, says Éliphas Lévi, and all stability is based on antagonism or polarity. A magnet is a magnet only by virtue of its having two opposite poles; without the simultaneous presence of two dissimilar bodies no electricity is generated.

The Theosophical Society aspires to be a harmonious and stable body, and its permanence as such depends on the existence of antagonisms of opinion among its members. Uniformity of belief would produce a church, for a church is a body formed to uphold certain fixed doctrines, and difference of opinion constitutes heresy and leads inevitably to schism.

But the Theosophical Society is not a church; it professes to uphold truth, not one particular facet of truth; and truth is many-sided and involves what to the shallow-minded seem irreconcilable paradoxes.

Hence in the Theosophical Society we must be prepared to find the most opposite views held by different members, a diversity of opinion which in a church would be instantly fatal, but which is the strength of the Society. The whole truth cannot be reflected in a single human mind, and its different aspects, many of them polar aspects, must therefore be reflected in many minds.

This circumstance is regarded by the superficial observer as a ground for schism, and has doubtless been for some a motive for leaving the Society, while for others it has been the incentive to strenuous and misguided attempts to bring everyone to the same way of thinking, and reconcile the irreconcilable.

To the deep thinker, however, the fact that members hold antagonistic views can be no reason for their mutual estrangement, *for it is the heart that is the true bond of union, not the head.*

*Lucifer*, 1894, v. 15, n. 87, pp. 200-201.

## ALAS and after - Theosophists, Truth, and the Pathless Land

Barbara Hebert – USA



*Barbara Hebert*

Krishnamurti told us that “Truth is a pathless land.” Certainly, one could interpret this statement in any number of ways, but it seems clear that one of the primary meanings of Krishnamurti’s statement is that there is not simply one path that leads us to Truth. There are many paths that lead us in this direction.

We are talking here about TRUTH written in capital letters—Absolute Truth, rather than what is frequently referred to as relative truth (written with lower case letters). When we look at the world around us, we accept certain truths. These truths are relative ones that simply define or describe our physical experience. These truths are ever-changing and, at their base, are temporary and illusory. Absolute Truth, on the other hand, is Reality. It is Truth that is unchanging. It may be interpreted in different ways through various languages and in different traditions; however, at its core, it is the same. It is ineffable and unending: Absolute.

As seekers for Truth, that is, as individuals in physical manifestation who are seeking, we cannot know Absolute Truth. It is beyond our comprehension at this stage of development. We may perceive glimpses of it in our studies, our meditations, and our experiences, but these are only glimpses. One might even wonder if they are truly glimpses or perhaps more accurately simply reflections of Truth. We can use the analogy of the sun and the moon; that is, we look at the moon and assume it is the sun because it reflects the light of the sun. We may perceive a reflection of Truth in any number of ways, but we must realize that our conditioned and limited minds are not seeing Reality.



*Radha Burnier,  
the 7th International President  
of the Theosophical Society*

How, then, do we seek Truth, if it is unknowable at this point in our evolutionary journey? Former international president of the Theosophical Society, Radha Burnier provides us with insight. She writes:

The first and primary condition for one who would follow the religion of Truth is a profound and persistent interest in finding it. This implies not having pre-judgments or a conviction that one knows already. Truth cannot be discovered by a mind which has fixations, prejudices and biases of any kind. So the mind must become pure and unruffled, free from opinions, biases and self-centered emotions, for only in this state can there be an awareness of Truth.

Burnier points us in the direction of remaining open-minded and consistently inquisitive.

We must question everything, even our most deeply held beliefs. Once we stop questioning, our beliefs begin to crystalize. They become dogma. This crystallization spells doom for our own development and in our search for Truth. We become stuck, stagnant. This is reinforced in Burnier's additional comments in the same article when she says, "the wise man does not come to any conclusion about the truth of things" and "only one who keeps a continually open mind can find the Truth."

Remaining open-minded and consistently inquisitive, questioning our most deeply held beliefs is a very difficult task. Yet, it is essential for our continuing evolutionary journey.

In terms of organizations, the Theosophical Society is unique because of its lack of dogma and its encouragement that each must find his/her own way. Open-minded inquiry keeps us—and our journeys—alive and growing. It allows us to recognize the multitude of things that we just do not know or do not understand, and conversely requires us to admit that we do NOT have the answers. Rather, we have personal perspectives that can be called relative truths. As we continue on our journeys, hopefully our perspectives will change and expand as we grow in understanding through experiences.

As Blavatsky states in her article, "The Dual Aspect of Wisdom", published in *Lucifer* in 1890, "Valuing freedom of thought above all things, as the only way of reaching at some future time that Wisdom of which every Theosophist ought to be enamored, we recognize the right to the same freedom in our foes as in our friends." Furthermore, the Mahatma KH, in Letter 120 (chronological) states "Not even the President-Founder has the right directly or indirectly to interfere with the freedom of thought of the humblest member." This basic theosophical precept regarding freedom of thought keeps us from standing in one spot and proclaiming that we, and we alone, have the Truth.

As many know, a letter was received regarding the Maha Chohan's thoughts about the Theosophical Society and the sharing of Theosophy. In *Theosophy.Wiki*, we read about this letter from the Maha Chohan.

The Maha Chohan Letter, also known as the Great Master's Letter, appears in print as Appendix II in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 4th chronological edition. It was also published as Letter No. 1 in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, 1881-1888*. This letter, produced around 1881, is a summary by *Mahatma K.H.* of a conversation held with the Maha Chohan in reference to some arguments *A. P. Sinnett* and *A. O. Hume* were posing about reforming the nature of the *Theosophical Society*.

This is considered to be the most important letter received from the Mahatmas, for it contains the views of the Maha Chohan on the Theosophical Society.

In this letter, we read the following:

For our doctrines to practically re-act on the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of Theosophy. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself *Nirvana* (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom) which is, after all only an exalted and glorious selfishness, but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbor, to cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true Theosophist.

Therefore, as Theosophists, the Maha Chohan adjures us to share the Divine Wisdom, in order to help humanity. We share Theosophy through our words, our beliefs, and ultimately our actions. We encourage self-awareness; we lead lives that align with the theosophical teachings of unity, study, meditation, and service. We provide an open and inviting environment in which individuals can seek their own path to Truth.

**Unfortunately, we are all aware of those who claim to be Theosophists, but who also claim to *possess* the Truth with their perspective of theosophical concepts being not only the right way, but also the only way. These two statements, being a Theosophist and possessing Truth, are in total contrast with one another. The dogmatic attitude of such a statement inhibits the sharing of the Divine Wisdom with those who are earnestly seeking.**

As Theosophists, we must remain open-minded, searching for glimpses or even reflections of the Truth in every corner, in every book, in every quiet whisper from within. It is as open-minded seekers that we will share the magnificence of the Divine Wisdom through our words, thoughts, and actions, encouraging others to seek Truth in their own way, through this pathless land.

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**ALAS and after** - Cross-pollination through unconditional exchange and open-mindedness:  
a Path to transformation

Catalina Isaza Cantor Agnihotri – Colombia and India



*The author*

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement, gave to the world, through her writings and her life itself, invaluable teachings of which the fundamental value is their application in daily life. One of these compendiums of wisdom is the Golden Stairs, the second step of which reminds us of a point of great importance for life and for those who seek to tread the path of self-transformation: “**open mind**”. Since the foundation of the Theosophical Society (TS), the Masters have warned against two things that should not be indulged in: selfishness, which prevents Universal Brotherhood, and *dogmatism*, which is contrary to an open mind. But what is an open mind?

Perhaps, to give us an idea, we can begin by clarifying what a closed mind would be. We can say that it is a limited mind, to which conditioning, external traditions and values, public opinions, fears, selfishness, etc., have imposed a kind of fence that prevents it from going beyond to question and experience a true relationship with the world. In contrast, an open mind would be one that has no fence and no limits to this relationship, which allows one to examine new ideas and alternatives. The open mind is one that is able to respond with truth because it is free from all hindrance and conditioning, from all impurity. It is able not only to grasp knowledge more directly, to apprehend, but becomes a vehicle for the perception of a deeper wisdom: that which is present in the simplicity of everyday life and which is accessed through intuition rather than intellect. It is the kind of mind that allows us to approach unveiled spiritual perception which is nothing other than the removal of veils through the discernment in which *buddhi* finds its expression.

Open-mindedness is thus the basis for a fundamental premise within the TS: freedom of thought. Such a principle should be the fundamental attitude of one who claims to be a student of Theosophy. Both, open-mindedness and freedom of thought, are closely linked. The very study and understanding of theosophical literature helps us to open our minds. If we engage in serious study and practice, our mind naturally opens as it gradually frees itself from socially and culturally imposed conditioning, in order to be able to understand what is being studied and to be able to apply it. The understanding and practice of the theosophical teachings as a path of self-transformation necessarily involves a stripping away, an unlearning. Let us remember the words of the Master K.H.:

You have much to unlearn. The narrow prejudices of your people bind you more than you suspect. They make you intolerant (...) they predispose you to lose sight of essentials. You are not yet able to appreciate the difference between inner purity and “outer culture”

(Daily Meditations, K. A. Beechey-May 2).

Unlearning involves emptying our mind and rethinking what has hitherto been considered immutable. If we go deeper into this question, we can even see that both open-mindedness and freedom of thought have to do with the realisation of the objectives of the TS. An open mind allows us to examine in depth and comparatively the different religions, sciences, philosophies (second objective). Such a study, in an attitude free of prejudices and conditioning, leads us, through careful and considered examination (with discernment), to realise that there is a common ground.

Realising this on the intellectual plane is a first step and can lead to a realisation, through intuition, that this fundamental unity and common principle is something present on the different planes of existence and that therefore, in a similar way and beyond the outward manifestations of each culture, religion, race, social status, etc., all beings are united by the thread of the One Life. This is a practical realisation of unity in the midst of diversity. This allows us not only to experience universal brotherhood (the first objective), but makes us more inclusive and considerate of the vision of the other. If we are willing to embark on such a journey, it will soon become evident that a learning process has to emerge in order to understand and reduce our prejudices.

In the midst of a fraternal atmosphere it is possible to accept that our point of view is not necessarily conclusive, hence the relationship between fraternity and freedom of thought. Theosophy involves research and intelligent criticism. Having an open mind and a fraternal heart gives us the possibility to transform ourselves in a profound way and to inspire our environment in order to become agents of transformation.

For this reason, it is essential to understand that any attempt to impose one truth upon another or to limit one corpus of study over another within any stream of what we know as the Modern Theosophical Movement limits the freedom of thought that is essential to it, the open-mindedness that its inner founders, the Masters of the Wisdom, warned us to maintain as a guiding principle. Since each of these streams of theosophical thought represents a ray of the shining sun of that Gupta Vidya, it is impossible to say that there are any texts, authors, streams of thought, etc., which are ‘more pure theosophy’ or ‘nearer to the truth’ or to the ‘original source’. It is up to each serious student of theosophy, with an open mind and through discernment, to find his or her own path to the light.

From this point of view, to limit the possession of Truth to one author, one stream of thought, one book, etc., limits and can become an entrapment which places the mind in a situation contrary to openness and freedom of thought. Madame Blavatsky herself, in the message sent to Judge in 1888, emphasises the following:

Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable. It is diversity of opinion, within certain limits, that keeps the Theosophical Society a living and a healthy body, (...) If it were not so, (...) such healthy divergences would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth.

If any of the several streams or currents having their origin in the modern form of the Divine Wisdom known as Theosophy, which expressed itself materially through the Theosophical Movement initiated by HPB, states that their interpretation or understanding is the only correct one, while limiting themselves to the study of *one type of literature ore carefully selected* authors is dangerous.

On the one hand, it ignores the richness and immense range of possibilities in the writings and thoughts of so many freethinkers and theosophical workers who have tried to contribute from their own experience and living to the contents of Divine Wisdom. On the other hand, it implies a disregard for the principle of freedom of thought which goes hand in hand with the creation of the Modern Theosophical Movement and on which HPB deeply insisted. Her life itself was a living example of this premise:

Valuing freedom of thought above all things, as the only way of reaching at some future time that Wisdom, of which every Theosophist ought to be enamoured, we recognise the right to the same freedom in our foes as in our friends (H.P. Blavatsky. Lucifer, 1890, v. vii, n. xxxvii, pp. 1-9).

I would even go so far as to say that, beyond the texts and currents of thought directly related to the theosophical world and its different streams, it is possible to find gems of wisdom and texts, ideas and authors whose content draws from the direct source of fundamental and transformative spiritual teachings.

As students of Theosophy, we must maintain a dynamism and open-mindedness, we must always be ready to examine, study, question and dialogue: to step out of the comfort zone that a specific corpus can provide. This is the only way in which the Theosophical Movement, society, the individual and the world itself can evolve. Let us remember that everything in the universe is in constant motion, in everything there is life and constant activity. To limit ourselves, then, to a single doctrine, implies stagnation and the impossibility of being an active part of the plan of Evolution.

**The attitude of openness, dialogue, dynamism and exchange has been aptly expressed by the term “cross-pollination” which represents possibilities of encounter and growth in all aspects. In fact, this *pollination system*, when applied to plants, allows for greater *genetic diversity* and adaptability, a fundamental mechanism in the evolution of systems. And this is valid not only for the plant kingdom, but also for more complex human systems, in which this practice of creative exchange allows the system itself to advance. This is why it is necessary to provide spaces where members of different streams of the Theosophical Movement can meet for a real *exchange* that takes into account different positions and does not limit itself to only one view, and become dogmatic. Cooperation is essential for growth.**

In this sense, it is also interesting to see how even within the theosophical movement itself there are people who profess different religions without this implying a “clash” with the theosophical vision, quite the contrary. Theosophy urges us to be better Christians, Muslims, Hindus, etc., because it enables us to understand the common principles they share, it enables us to unveil the profound teachings contained in religious texts, and it urges us to foster fraternity, which, ultimately, should be the true goal of religions.

The very creation of the TS and its expansion and strengthening took place in this spirit of respect and openness. Let us recall the attitude of the founders of the TS when they arrived in India. The first public lecture Olcott gave had as its theme the common ground of religions. From the beginning, the TS had an attitude of unification, study and open-mindedness. If the TS simply remained closed in on itself, not encouraging exchange, cross-pollination, the impact of the Theosophical Movement would not have been so strong for the world and, perhaps, it would have crystallised as just another dogma or would have simply disappeared. Let us recall the words of the master:

It is a universally admitted fact that the marvellous success of the Theosophical Society in India is due entirely to its principle of wise and respectful toleration of each other's opinions and beliefs. Not even the President-Founder has the right directly or indirectly to interfere with the freedom of thought of the humblest member, least of all to seek to influence his personal opinion (*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* n. 85 / Chronological Sequence n. 120).

The influence of the theosophical movement in the 20th century is immense, as Silvia Cranston points out in her wonderful biography of HPB, in the arts, literature, science, philosophy, education and politics. We could say that there is no field that has been untouched by such influence, and we owe this to the attitude of openness, of inclusiveness, of deep examination of ideas, of the Theosophical Movement. If this is to continue, from any of the rays or streams through which that Divine Wisdom shines, without limiting ourselves to identification with one or another institution, author, corpus or authority, it is essential to apply what Annie Besant tells us when she reminds us that any institution that has existed for many years is in danger of crystallising and that this can happen when dogma prevails over free thought and adds:

We must everywhere, in our influence upon the world and our influence over our young members, remember that the life of the Society depends on its remaining a Society in which thought is entirely free, and frank discussion is encouraged. We must encourage the expression of new thought, the open expression of any new idea (1930).

**The fundamental thing, if we really want to live Theosophy, is to serve humanity in a respectful way and to cooperate with whomever it takes to do so, trying to overcome our own limitations. It is in the encounter, from an open and free-thinking mind, that we can access Wisdom in order to realise fraternity and transform our own existence with the aim of transforming the world and building a new humanity.**

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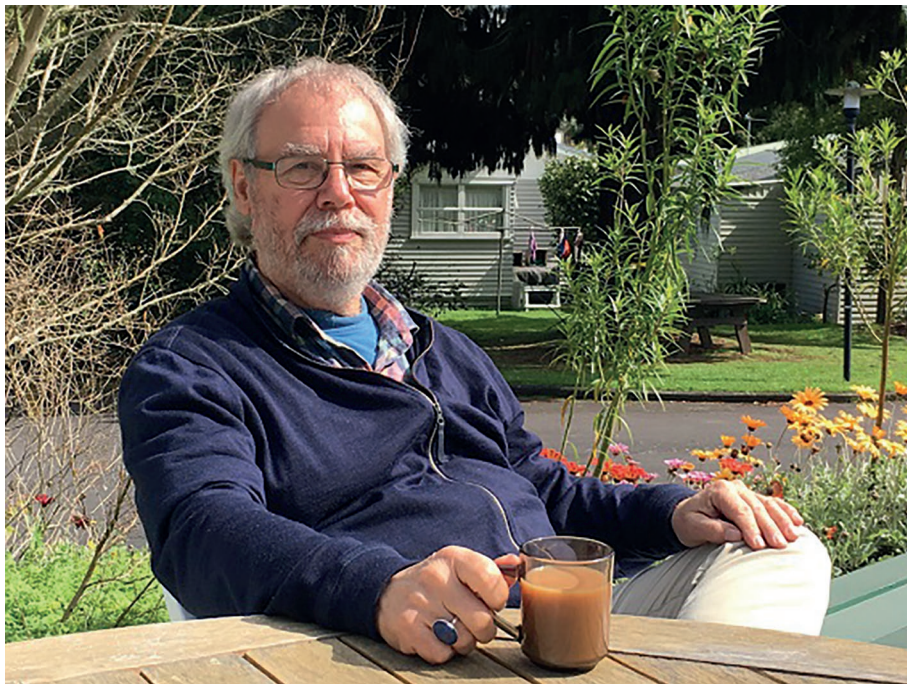
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## ALAS and after – the journey continues

John Vorstermans – New Zealand



*John Vorstermans*

We know that something has life in it when there is activity, growth, open dialogue and a willingness to listen and share perspectives and insights.

It has been encouraging to witness International Theosophical Conferences (*from now on ITC*) over the last decade. Finally, the various arms of the modern Theosophical Societies came together to explore Theosophy. We all grew out of the Theosophical Society formed in 1875 and the published works of Helena P. Blavatsky, which are a part of our core, in one form or another.

During the one hundred years since we separated, each organisation has taken its unique paths exploring Theosophy. A bit like separate roots growing from a tree, they are still part of the tree seeking nourishment through different means. Nevertheless, because of our collective work, the Theosophical Society has grown and influenced many people to prove that there is such a thing as Theosophy, encouraging them to discover it by their means. Is this not one of our main goals?

I found it particularly interesting to meet the *TS Point-Loma-Blavatskyhouse-* and *ULT* students during the Adyar Conventions recently, getting to know them, exploring Theosophy with them, which I appreciated. I especially enjoyed making some new friends. They were all deep students of Theosophy and, at the core working to understand both Theosophy and themselves on a deeper level. We did not look at differences in perspective when we met, but instead we spoke about what inspired us. One of the particular positive aspects that came out of ITC's annual gatherings was the recognition that Adyar in India is the home of all Theosophists. Therefore it has been a pleasure to see fellow seekers from other Theosophical organizations welcomed to their home by participating in the Adyar Convention.

One of the differences we observe in our respective streams, is how we have developed, explored, and understood Theosophy and what material and authors we might study. When working with a group of people, the group will naturally develop a framework for doing things, such as the method they might use to study Theosophy and apply it to their lives. However, the challenge of getting caught up in one methodology can limit our search. A framework is helpful, we cannot build anything without it, however, the structure collapses

if you pull the framework away. For example, our belief systems are a framework upon which we base our view of reality or truth. Yet, *absolute truth* only becomes apparent when we step away from limited belief perceptions. I think that in order to perceive Theosophy, we need to let go of them.

The ITC initiative came together with good intentions, not to recreate one movement but to leave differences behind and share what we have in common. It worked well for many of the individuals who came together at the conferences and found new friends. However, it struggled at the political level, mainly because there was resistance to consider all perspectives because of preconceived personal viewpoints. Taking this perspective away is frightening for some of us, yet to truly explore Theosophy with an open mind, we would need to detach from personal views. As Helena Blavatsky says in the Golden Stairs,

... a clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception,  
a brotherliness for one's co-disciple....

...are the very things we need to awaken within ourselves to be able to perceive Theosophy. Anything that closes our minds and hearts prevents this process from taking place. We need a sharp intellect to discern what is *beyond the words* and develop an *unveiled spiritual perception*, one without a framework of beliefs if there is to be any hope for discovering absolute truth.

Robert Bowen, a student of H. P. Blavatsky's inner-group in London, wrote down his impression from sessions with H. P. Blavatsky on studying Theosophy and particularly *The Secret Doctrine*. He carefully wrote down what she said and then read them back to her later to confirm he had recorded her correctly. These notes were published around 35 years later by Bowen's son, Captain P.G. Bowen, in a booklet entitled *Madame Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy*. The notes were primarily on how to study *The Secret Doctrine*. Nevertheless, H.P. Blavatsky outlined some pertinent clues regarding how to study Theosophy which perhaps gives some context to this article.

“... *The Secret Doctrine (SD)* is only quite a small fragment of the Esoteric Doctrine known to the higher members of the Occult Brotherhood. It contains, she says, just as much as can be received by the World during this coming century... ‘The World’ means MAN living in the Personal Nature. The ‘World’ will find in the two volumes of the *SD*. all its utmost comprehension can grasp, but no more. But this was not to say that Disciple who is not living in ‘The World’ cannot find any more in the book than the ‘World’ finds. Every form, no matter how crude, contains the image of the ‘creator’ concealed within it. So likewise does the author's work, no matter how obscure, contain the concealed image of the author's knowledge.”

Beyond the image, the words, there is a knowledge in *The Secret Doctrine*, and other works, which for those not living in ‘The World’ reveals a depth of understanding that no words can convey, which becomes apparent to those who have an unveiled spiritual insight. As a group of Theosophical Societies, we can be a dynamic force for Theosophy if we can move beyond our own personal views. As individuals in these movements, we are already doing this by meeting and exploring Theosophy together, sharing and understanding, which is a sign that we all have a common interest. From another perspective, *the truth is not in the words on the pages* in such work as *The Secret Doctrine*; rather, it is a means of connecting with the author and being open at the more profound understanding from the deeper wisdom and philosophy of the author. We have to have an awareness that is not limited to the personal, but a more profound insightful nature.

One of the strengths, and sometimes a challenge in the TS Adyar is that we accept the right of individual

*freedom of thought* for every person, and that the teachings are not binding to any member of the Society. This “**Freedom of Thought**” helps to ensure that we do not dogmatise the views of the Theosophy Society and leaves open the journey each individual takes to develop an unveiled spiritual awareness that will one day be revealed to the genuine and true enquirer. When the idea behind “**Freedom of Thought**” works as intended, it allows for authentic dialogue where we listen to each other and make attempts to understand *without any judgment*.

The walls that once separated the various Theosophical organisations are much lower now because of what ITC initially was able to achieve. While there remains with some a political divide, mostly caused by *imposed convictions*, that prevents more open and unconditional dialogues, this has not prevented members of the various movements from coming together in their study and exploration to understand Theosophy in different parts of the world. There has always been a collaboration among the members when you look back at history and this will continue into the future.

I live in New Zealand, so it is not always easy for me to attend gatherings in Europe and the USA. However, here in New Zealand, we have developed a resource website we named **Theosophy World**, as part of an initiative from the Adyar Society, which makes Theosophical related information, articles, audio recordings, books, study material, videos etc. available from all the Theosophical organisations. At this level, we respect the contributions of all those renowned authors and publications which may prove helpful in the search for absolute truth.



Link: <https://theosophy.world>

*Mr John Vorstermans, from Dutch descent is National President of the very active New Zealand Section of the TS. With a team of dedicated workers he publishes an excellent magazine called “TheoSophia” and is heavily involved with the resource website “Theosophy World.”.*





*Alice Bailey*

[**Note from the editor:** This specific quote is to be found in *Spiritual Leadership*, an unknown and almost forgotten work by Bailey. Although your editor is not well-versed on the topic of her work and realizing that she had her own fargoing issues with the Theosophical Society, Alice Bailey is, right or wrong, to be distinguished as another driven seeker and since she refers clearly to the known concerns in relation to so-called **leadership** I find her commentary appropriate in the series **Alas and after.**]

**Why spiritual groups in their second generation face disaster,**

“...The life of the majority of the adherents is largely emotional; their attention is centered upon the defense or the attack of some personality; they are swept off their feet by partisanship and personality antagonisms and preferences. The true issues are lost sight of in a panorama of clashing personalities, and the voices which are sounding forth the cry of ‘Back to Principles and to Fundamentals’ are drowned in the din of battle, and only the cry of leaders rallying their forces to themselves can be heard. This is a fact which deserves our serious consideration.”

—Excerpted from *Spiritual Leadership*, comprising two booklets Bailey\* wrote in **1921 and 1922**, aged 41.

Alice Ann Latrobe Batemen Bailey (June 16, 1880 – December 15, 1949) was a teacher and writer and the founder, together with husband Foster Bailey, of a spiritual movement growing out of the theosophical tradition. She was one of the first writers to use the term **New Age**.



[**Note from the editor:** In the series “Alas and after” an historical and revealing article in which the (anonymous) author warns for “dead letter dogma”, in case too much importance is given to the *written word, symbols or phrases*. This short piece comes from Lucifer, 1887, v. 1, n. 2, p. 134. **Special thanks to Erica Georgiades**]

“**The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,**” this is the keynote of all true reform. Theosophy is the vehicle of the spirit that gives life; consequently, nothing dogmatic can be truly theosophical. It is incorrect, therefore, to describe a mere unearthing of dead letter dogmas as “Theosophic work.”

When a word, phrase, or symbol, having been once used for the purpose of suggesting an idea new to the mind or minds being operated on, is insisted upon irrespective of the said idea, it becomes a **dead letter dogma and loses its vitalising power**, and serves rather as an obstruction to, than as a vehicle of the spirit; but, alas, this insistence upon the letter is too often carried on under the honoured name of “Theosophy.”

A man cannot acquire an idea new to him unless it grows in his mind.

The mere familiarity with the sound of a word, or a phrase, or the mere familiarity with the appearance of a symbol, does not, of necessity, involve the possession of the idea properly associated with the said word, phrase or symbol. To insist, therefore, on the contrary, cannot be theosophical; but would be better described as **untheosophical**.

It would certainly be theosophical work to point out kindly and temperately how certain words, phrases and symbols appear to have been misunderstood or misapplied, how various claims and professions may be excessive or confused as a consequence of ignorance or vanity, or both. But it is quite another thing to condemn a man or a body of men outright, for certain errors in judgment or action, even though they were the result of vanity, greed or hypocrisy; indeed such wholesale condemnation would, on the contrary, be untheosophical.

The one eternal, immutable law of life alone can judge and condemn a man absolutely. “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.”

Were I asked how I would dare attempt “to dethrone the gods, overthrow the temple, destroy the law which feeds the priests and props the realm; I should answer as the Buddha is made to answer in the *Light of Asia*: ‘What thou bidst me keep is form which passes while the free truth stands; get thee to thy darkness.’”

“What good gift hath my brother, but it comes from search and strife (inward) and loving sacrifice.”

## ALAS and after – Unity and Diversity in the Theosophical Movement

Pablo Sender – USA



*Pablo Sender*

The subject of unity and diversity is central in the Theosophical tradition. The general view is that all the diversity we see around us are but different expressions of an underlying Unity. However, this does not mean that diversity is a mistake or a mirage--all the manifested forms are necessary and unique expressions of the Oneness, which provide the divine sparks, a variety of experiences essential for the full realization of their potential. Diversity becomes a problem only when the different expressions fail to work in a harmonious way within the greater context of the underlying unity.

The Theosophical Movement, based as it is on principles of non-dogmatism, freedom of thought, and encouragement of independent investigation, was bound to diversify in a variety of ways in approaching Theosophy, but it is up to each individual Theosophist to decide how he or she relates to these diverse expressions.

The history of our Movement has many things to be proud of and, of course, there have also been mistakes and situations that do not reflect our high ideals. This is only natural, since the Movement has been composed of human beings--many of them quite extraordinary--who are nevertheless in a process of spiritual growth, learning to respond to the extremely deceiving situations presented to us by *maya and karma*.

We should all be grateful for what past generations did, and look kindly at what we may regard as mistakes. It is helpful to keep in mind that, when looking back, we have advantages--both of an exoteric and esoteric nature--that our predecessors didn't have, and which today we enjoy thanks to their pioneering work and efforts.

Since we are operating with these advantages, it seems fair to propose that our responsibility as a Movement is to try to do better in those areas where our predecessors may not have been successful. Passing on to the next generations old mistakes, prejudices, and misunderstandings would amount to relinquishing our contribution to the collective evolution of the Theosophical Movement of which we have the privilege of being a part.

Looking at the history of our Movement, there seems to be today more unity among its parts than at some other periods in the past. However, this aspect can undoubtedly be improved. In the following lines, I'll share

some thoughts about what can help us strengthen this sense of union, mainly as a way to stimulate readers to examine the situation and get their own insights.

The first thought that comes when considering this is that we should be careful not to let the tree hide the forest, as the saying goes. Many Theosophists are devotedly working for the section of the Theosophical Movement they are part of, and it is natural that they become mainly concerned with their organization. But it is useful to make an effort to maintain a wider perspective, reminding ourselves that our main goal is that of spreading Theosophy in the world, and only secondarily to strengthen our own organization--not because the organizations are important in themselves, but because they can be more or less effective instruments for our main goal--that of spreading Theosophy.

Having proposed this first argument, we can naturally ask whether we all mean more or less the same thing when we say "Theosophy." Some may think that there are big differences in what the various sections of the Movement consider as Theosophy, but is this really so? Is it possible that we perceive differences to be bigger simply because we are looking at them with a metaphorical magnifying glass? Let me give an example.

Many Catholics will say that they are very different from Protestants, and vice versa. And even within these branches of Christianity, there are all kinds of differences drawn between the various denominations. However, for those who do not follow the religion of Jesus, there is a clear commonality between these two major branches. When compared with the wider world of religions, it is clear that the doctrines of Catholicism are far closer to Protestantism than those of Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.

Similarly, some teachings from the various Theosophical traditions may differ in several aspects when looked at very closely, but for outsiders they all represent a particular way of considering the cosmos and human beings that is distinctly "Theosophical."

We live in a world that knows very little to nothing of Theosophy. If we can focus on the general goal of assisting "in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists," as HPB wrote in *The Key to Theosophy*, then we will start feeling that the degree of success of any section of the Movement in doing this, is also our own success, regardless of whether this sometimes happens through the teachings of Blavatsky, and other times through those of Besant, or de Purucker, or Crosbie, and so on. Evidently, if the world begins to be more aware of the existence of Theosophy and starts appreciating it, all our local groups will benefit from it.

This, of course, implies a challenge to the idea that there is a "true doctrine," or "true Theosophical teachings." A careful and open-minded exploration of the foundational writings of Blavatsky and the Mahatmas affords enough evidence that the real occult knowledge can never be contained in any book by any author. As Mahatma KH wrote:

The recognition of the higher phases of man's being on this planet is not to be attained by mere acquirement of knowledge. Volumes of the most perfectly constructed information cannot reveal to man life in the higher regions. One has to get a knowledge of spiritual facts by personal experience and from actual observation. (*The Mahatma Letters* #65 or 11 in the Chronological or Barker editions).

The real occult knowledge is acquired on the inner planes during Initiation, and whatever "occult" teachings that can be shared by means of physical-plane words and concepts are only preparatory. So, does it really change much whether we read in Theosophical books that there are twelve globes in a Planetary Chain instead of seven, or whether Mars and Mercury are part of our Chain? In my view, these differences do not matter in



the least. We can embrace whatever makes more sense to us at the moment and, if we follow the way of life proposed by Theosophical teachings, we will eventually come to Initiation where all these details can be easily corrected.

Having rooted our actions in the primary goal (making the world aware of Theosophy), we can look at the secondary goal, which is our wanting the organization that we are part of to be strong, healthy, and successful in its mission of spreading Theosophy. This does not need to be a cause of friction or division. Our challenge here, as Theosophists, is to rise above the natural tendency to look at our work from the perspective of competition in which the world we are part of operates.

If we think about this from the deeper perspective given to us by Theosophical teachings, we realize that we do not need to compare our work with that of others, or judge our organization in connection to others, or measure “success” based on external appearances. We know that a body needs all the various types of organs, tissues and glands that it has. Some of them, are spread all over the body (like the nerves), while others are very small and localized (like the pineal gland). Which organ is more important? Is it the wide-spread skin or the smaller cerebellum? Clearly, the question itself is wrong. Similarly, the Theosophical Movement needs all its different expressions--some of them larger (on the external plane), others more localized. As we know, the work we need to do involves more aspects than mere growth in numbers or activities.

In this, it is helpful to keep in mind that, on this plane of limitations, for every possible approach there is a trade-off. For example, if we want to form a group that works with the teachings very deeply, that group will tend to be quite focused and committed but also smaller. If we want to appeal to more people, the approach will need to be more embracing but, necessarily, it will be less focused. Similarly, there will be advantages and disadvantages in whether our section of the Movement works following a leader or using an election system; if it gives more room to philosophical and intellectual pursuits, or to religious and devotional activities; and so on. It seems to me that the strength of the Theosophical Movement as a whole will depend on its *variety of approaches*, because this will make it more pervasive and able to respond to the differences in tendencies, capacities and dispositions that exist in humanity.

Now, each of us may be more attracted to one approach or the other. There is nothing wrong in this. As cells of the different organs in a body, our individual contribution is in trying to help the organ that we are part of to fulfill its own functions as perfectly as possible, without trying to make all other organs do what ours is doing.

If we can operate from this perspective, we can offer our contribution without falling in the all-too-human tendency of comparing ourselves with others, feeling threatened by those who do things differently, declaring that our ways are the only way, etc. And because we know about the unexplained laws that are at work in all of this, we can trust that if we do our own part well, we don't have to worry about anything else.

From this perspective, it is easier to have a genuine sense of cooperation, being generous and sharing with others what we have found out that works well. Because of our knowledge of the occult laws, we know that openness, generosity, cooperation, etc., will always result in growth and vitality.

It would also be possible to come together and share how the teachings developed within our different traditions. We could, for example, have meetings where we explore what HPB said about a given subject, but also where each section of the Movement shares the insights on that subject coming from their own leaders. All parts of our Movement have had brilliant and sincere people, and they all have interesting perspectives to consider, even if we may still relate more to one author or the other.

In any case, there is much that could be discussed in connection with this subject. It would be great if all those sincerely attracted to this ideal of cooperation, but perhaps still feeling the presence of some inner obstacles, could come together and examine all this, trusting that in so doing we can gain the necessary insights to manifest our high ideals.

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*Jonatan Colbert  
during the 142nd International;  
Convention in Adyar - January 2018*

*The chiefs want a Brotherhood of Man  
Mahatma, K.H.*

*Instead of our three Objects being, as often erroneously supposed,  
separate, distinct, disconnected, they are in truth intimately  
and vitally related to each other.*

Bertram Keightley

During the years of conversing with Jim Colbert (my father) and his consort Sally Colbert as they envisioned the unfoldings of the ITC (International Theosophy Conferences), and during my years of serving on the Board of the ITC, I came to understand that all the distinct theosophical traditions have a unique genius to offer the world. A few years ago, I submitted an essay to *Theosophy Forward* called, “Concentric Circles: Why I Support the ITC.” In it, I made the case that all the theosophical traditions have the same center, that of universal brotherhood. I wrote then and I still believe that integrity, purity, and generosity are the hallmarks of each of the existing mainstreams, each in their own way.

The opening speech my father gave at the Naarden ITC 2014 Conference articulated the *raison d’etre* of ITC and the importance of opening doors between organizations.

(Watch the speech [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIETmrbX-Ec)) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIETmrbX-Ec>. In his extemporaneous comments, he was really talking about opening the doors of the heart. Theosophists of all stripes can and must, he said, become spiritually united, while allowing each organization to remain loyal to what it holds and advocates. He offered examples of meaningful intercommunication he thought should be engaged in, including simply talking to each other, but in so doing, listening more than we talk. He spoke about the importance of working for the future and the unstoppable power of unity in this regard. Poignantly, he suggested that H.P.B., like a mother, provided a primary impulse of the heart that will last for centuries.



*Father and son, swapping chairs;  
the Colbert's home,  
Julian - California*

As many will testify who have endeavored to labor for humanity within a matrix of devotion and cooperation, the uplifting heart-dynamics of caring, patience, and creative expression are released in wondrous ways. Yet, even though, as we say, the various theosophical offshoots are as “branches of one tree,” finding unity through doctrines *per se*, cannot work. It would be like a husband and wife who had become estranged and were trying to get back together, either for the sake of their family, or because at some level they still had a deep feeling for one another—or both: think of how tedious and detrimental it would be if one or both couldn't stop going on about doctrines? Outsiders would say that somebody here is too wrapped up in their head! Wouldn't it be common sense to council that they need to focus on and rediscover the fact of their unity? In the context of the larger theosophical community, the healing balm, then, rather than a return to doctrine, will be none other than a return to the realization of the 1st Object of the Theosophical Movement as a spiritual fact in great Nature.

Without self-awareness and vigilant mindfulness of the spiritual fact of unity, efforts towards reunification and cooperation cannot help but risk degradation into the more entropic and conservative factional motivations of self-preservation and consolidation. If theosophists, then, are to continue the noble objective of opening doors, clarification as to motives, means and methods will become increasingly crucial. A powerful lens for the individual and institutional self-examination that is needed, was given as early as 1890, in an address by Bertram Keightley in New York City to the Aryan T.S. entitled, “The Objects of the Theosophical Society.” His thesis is that critical to the theory and practice of the 1st Object, Universal Brotherhood, is fully grasping the relevance of—and within that context—the artful practice of the 2nd and 3rd Objects:

“...instead of our three Objects being, as often erroneously supposed, separate, distinct, disconnected, they are in truth intimately and vitally related to each other: the Second and Third Objects of the Society indicating the only lines upon which we may reasonably hope to achieve the ultimate realization of our grand ideal, the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.”

*The Theosophist, September 1890*

Keightley makes a thought-provoking, indeed, challenging distinction between Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. He further proceeds to identify the catastrophic cost of a lack of clarity in this regard. Not only does Keightley specify that the “teachings and doctrines of Theosophy” are “in no sense those of the Society,” and



that, “Theosophy is not the creed of the Theosophical Society,” he states that this misunderstanding has, “to a great extent obscured [the Society’s] first and primary purpose”, i.e., “the simple, noble ideal of universal brotherhood.”

The subtle and sublime anarchy of Universal Brotherhood, “excludes by its very nature, every form of dogma or orthodoxy from the hearts of those who truly follow its noble teaching.” The Founders of the Theosophical Society saw Universal Brotherhood as a *Spiritual fact to be realized*, rather than as something to be created or imposed. It is this pivotal insight on the part of the Founders, Keightley contends, that determined the choice of the Society’s 2nd and 3rd Objects.

Contrary to the unhappy view that, by stealth, tiptoes in amongst doctrinaire Theosophists— that the pursuit of the 2nd Object is a way of proving that Theosophy is superior to other religions, sciences, and philosophies— Keightley asserts that the study and process that the 2nd Object represents is that of *removing sectarian differences* and showing the fundamental *identity of all creeds*.

Here, one could add with the Dalai Lama, that the study of the sciences demonstrates the profound interdependence of all life, and, with Plato, that the study of philosophy as the contemplation of transcendental archetypes fosters universalization and synthesis. All of these are instantiations of the Spiritual fact of Brotherhood, cultivating “growth of brotherly feeling throughout all sections of the human race.”

“Universal Brotherhood,” then, says Keightley, “is not only the foundation-stone of the Theosophical Society, but literally the essence of its Second and Third Objects — the life-giving spirit in them all.” In considering the 2nd Object, we find countless examples of mystics who have had beatific visions of unity and solidarity. In this way the 3rd Object becomes accessible as a part of the collective record of human experience. Importantly, in Keightley’s discussion of the 3rd Object, he deemphasizes “psychic” as astral-physiological development, while favoring it as the “spiritual development of the individual.”

This shift of emphasis towards the development of noetic, spiritual, and moral faculties is reinforced both in the “The Maha Chohan’s Letter” and in H.P. Blavatsky’s landmark article, “Psychic and Noetic Action.” Thus, in elucidating the path of noetic awakening, spiritual growth, and moral regeneration, he makes of the 3rd Object the indispensable means to fully discern the all-pervading universality of the 1st Object. In speaking of the all-importance of Universal Brotherhood, he concludes his address thus:

“Without such a goal to strive for, such a lofty purpose to animate us, our liberality of thought would soon become aimless licence, our efforts to study the Wisdom Religion would soon end in the formation of a new sect, the life would die out from among us, and the Theosophical Society would either crumble into dust or remain a frozen and lifeless corpse, encased in the ice of Dogmatism.”

The steep path of Universal Brotherhood, rather than that of the acquisition of doctrines, is the more difficult of the two paths. As Keightley points out, “Few are those strong enough to live in a state of continual growth, of ceaseless mental expansion and change.” Yet, Keightley pioneers an attainable route for us when he points to the 2nd and 3rd Objects as the “only lines” by which the ideal of universal brotherhood can be achieved.

As one brought up in the loosely knit association of students known as the United Lodge of Theosophists (ULT), a large portion of whose *raison d’etre* “is the dissemination of the fundamental principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy,” the idea that there is something more important than doctrinal principles is a bit of a difficult pill to swallow! Yet Keightley’s emphasis on the spiritual fact of Brotherhood is considered

when the ULT Declaration goes on to say that the other half of the work of the ULT is “the exemplification in practice of those principles through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.”

Admittedly, the ULT Declaration says that “the unassailable *basis for union* among Theosophists... is ‘*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching.*” but this is in the context of explaining why an organizational apparatus replete with constitution and bi-laws can be totally unnecessary. One point that is indeed found in the ULT Declaration that I would say that all Theosophists could and should go by is in its statement of who is in fact a Theosophist. This goes to whether a Theosophist is one who studies the body of doctrines as taught by H.P.B. and her Teachers—or, is one who embodies the First Object of the Theosophical Society. It can be judged for oneself what the position of the ULT is on this matter:

“It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization.”

All this suggests to me that ongoing attempts at opening doors of the heart between students of various organizational affiliations might do well, with Bertram Keightley, to focus on the 2nd and 3rd Objects as important means of realizing the prized ideal of universal brotherhood. It is noteworthy that in her Preface to *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B., writes,

“Even the two volumes now issued do not complete the scheme, and these do not treat exhaustively of the subjects dealt with in them. A large quantity of material has already been prepared, dealing with the history of occultism as contained in the lives of the great Adepts of the Aryan Race, and showing the bearing of occult philosophy upon the conduct of life, as it is and as it ought to be.”

Sound like the 2nd and the 3rd Objects? Different people have different things to say about whether H.P.B.’s prepared material along these lines saw the light of day, either in her own lifetime or posthumously, but what I wish to draw attention to here is her indication of the *need for such a study*. We find suggested in the writings of the Tibetan reformer, Tsong Ka Pa, a similar curriculum, and in this case, including all three Objects:

“To go beyond the attitude of seeking the bliss of peace for oneself, one should cultivate over a long time love, compassion and the altruistic mind of enlightenment... Next, one should learn of the deeds of the Bodhisattva and nurture a wish to train in them. When one can bear the burden of the deeds of the Conqueror Sons, one should take the Bodhisattva vows and practice their precepts.”  
(as cited in *The Jewel in the Lotus*, Concord Grove Press, Santa Barbara, CA)

### **What if Theosophists of various stripes, in exploring the dynamics of unity inherent in the 2nd and 3rd Objects, determined to share research and expression via presentations and round-table discussions?**

In the spirit of the 2nd Object, the great heroes of humanity such as Buddha, Shankaracharya, Pythagoras, Plato, Iamblichus, Plotinus, Hypatia, Boehme, Bruno, Pico Della Mirandola, Marcilio Ficino, Emerson, Thoreau, Gandhi, and King could be considered, to name but a very few. As the study proceeds from one hero to another, our “mental grooves” would of necessity have to be abandoned to give full attention to each new subject at hand.

In the spirit of the 3rd Object, what if such themes as-- ”**Metaphysics and Ethics**”, “**What is True Self-determination?**”, “**What is Self-Knowledge?**”, “**Meditation and Self-study**”, “**Continuity of Noetic Consciousness**”, “**Ideation, Health and Self-magnetization**”, “**Spiritual Gestation and Growth**”, “**The Potency of Silence, Sound and Speech**”, “**The Efficacy of Vow Taking**”, and “**Swadharm and The Call**

**to Action**--again, to name but a few, could be considered? All of these represent spiritual capabilities within each human being, waiting to unfold, do they not?

If, we can remember with Cervantes, that “the road is always better than the inn,” there will be a unifying richness of potential in the investigation of these remarkable faculties latent within each human being, wherein a living nucleus of universal brotherhood could be established, enjoyed, and celebrated.

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My heart has become capable of every form;  
It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,  
And a temple for idols and a pilgrim's Ka'ba  
And the tables of the Torah and the book of the Qu'ran.  
I follow the religion of Love; whatever way  
Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

### **Ibn Al-'Arabi**

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## ALAS and after – Alas Maybe ... but Never Too Late

Eugene Jennings – USA



*Gene in his home office ...*

Having been one of several individuals active in and with the efforts of International Theosophy Conferences (ITC) since its incipient days, after Willie Dade's passing, I have seen its emergence and evolution from the beginning. From participant point of view to vice-president, to president, whatever it has accomplished, whatever it has become, for better or worse, I feel and bear, a direct connection and partial responsibility. Even more so do I bear responsibility for how it has become shaped, and the direction it has taken, over the last few years, until my resignation on January 4th, 2021. For the record: a resignation related to the realization that there is a proper "time, season and karmic reason" for all things. At the same time, while in good health, I recognized the need to fit myself for other necessary duties that had arisen in life.

Although I had been hearing echoes of diverse concerns from various quarters, i.e. members of ULT, TS-Adyar, trying to remain neutral and more of a guiding than dictating presence within ITC's Board of Directors, the Board was encouraged to act and grow according to its own majority vote and organic process. (1) In the meantime, it appears, one of the most important goals was, and still is, being accomplished, that of the yearly conference. In general, since the majority of the feedback at the end of such conferences has always been very positive, it was believed that all was good, with how and what was being done. To this day, it appears the conferences provide a virtual center, and a meaningful and positive platform for the coming together and sharing, by the diverse theosophical traditions and free-standing individual students, of theosophical ideas, during presentations, small group sessions, and Q&A's. This is greatly amplified today, by the use of modern technology via Zoom. (A small gift from corona virus.) More often than not, I recall having heard that when in the conference, sharing and speaking together, the question of what tradition or school of theosophical thought one belonged to, did not arise, nor was it important at the time. All *seemed well*. Everyone thought, based on such positive feedback, that we were doing a good job at promoting theosophical union and meaningful intercommunication.



Having recently read over the various contributions to “Alas”, perhaps the echoes, at that time, should have been paid more attention to by me. Reading and reflecting upon the “ALAS” series after having stepped away from the position of ITC’s President, I can only wish that I had been more aware then, of what I have come to understand and appreciate now. Thinking over “ALAS”, it appears, that as ITC took shape, all voices, although perhaps in agreement with its end goal, were not heard, especially in regards to *path, means* and *methods*.

These voices take nothing away from the good that ITC accomplished over past decade. They do provide a basis, if acted on appropriately, through progressive, flexible and meaningful communication and thought, by which ITC could have become stronger, through enrichment with, and by such diversity. This would have only created a stronger nucleus, and greater as wider, support system as well as commitment to its primary purpose of unity through union. Union reflecting the ability to come together as theosophists, and work, each in their unique way or ways, as one, for the greater solidarity of Humanity.

Perhaps in order to better understand the present, a visit to ITC’s incipient beginnings might be helpful. This takes me back in time to the simpler days with *Jim* and *Sally Colbert*. My encounters and experiences with them, are sandwiched between two distinct periods. One of which was the era of Willie Dade. She had a simple, yet deeply inviting way of bringing people together to share in the ambience of theosophy. The recipe, simple food, conversation, comfort and reciprocal sharing amongst kindred spirits. All souls welcome, to come together, without labels, and share theosophical ideas through small talks, amidst the food, and free conversation. The other, *the formal birth of ITC* while Jim and Sally were alive. This was followed by several mini transformations, until its existence, as it stands currently, with its efforts reaching outwards to embrace the many theosophists of different traditions, around the world, as well as independents.

As said, Jim and Sally stand for me between these two efforts. Perhaps we might add, all the efforts that have existed since such superficial divisions first arose within the society, independent of its great cause and intent. For whatever reasons, all these efforts, up to the present, but not inclusive of ITC as such, have faded. Will ITC fade away quietly as the others? That depends on the motive of all of us. Us being, those theosophists, able and willing, to engage in deep, honest, and open communication. Exploring theosophical diversity and understanding of views, interpretations, and applications of doctrine without statements relating to what is and what is not true theosophy is important for its vitality and avoidance of dogma. As is the case with all other theosophical students, independent or affiliated with one of the vehicles, I want to underscore that I believe it is imperative to keep the Original Teachings of Theosophy as presented by HPB and her teachers as they were written. I believe that having such a genuine base available for study, reference, and comparisons, one can extrapolate in one’s studies, from such a base, in a way that is consistent with such teachings and allows for inner growth, realization, and development. Although ITC has its current purposes as stated, and several working declarations plus its By Laws, as suggestions for those interested, this is either not enough, or too much. As seen from some of the comments pertaining to “Alas”, its current ways are not appealing to all, nor do they satisfy such needs. And perhaps the “ways and means” cannot appeal to, or satisfy all, even though the goal of union, may be the same wish of all. And this type of union must, as often spoken by Jim, Sally and others, transcend all differences of theosophical traditions and individualities, in its efforts. For such a transcendence speaks again to the idea and ideal, of a universal sister and brotherhood of life and humanity, which is our true *raison d’etre*.

But going back to Jim and Sal, and the *original impulse* behind this current effort, as it was not even consciously in the mind of Willie Dade as such, it is reflected in something Jim and Sally said themselves.



*Jim, Sally and your editor  
at Olcott-Wheaton, 2012*

A letter, dated November 14th, 2012, signed by “Sally and James Colbert” was sent to ITC’s Board of Directors. It concerned the planning for the ITC NY 2013 conference. In it, their view is clearly and simply stated, and in spirit remains, or at least should remain one of, if not the ruling purpose of ITC’s efforts, in its current incarnation.

**As stated by them:**

“Our view is that the **Primary Purpose** for ITC is to foster and bring about intercommunication with and between Theosophical Traditions. We are directly asking if this vision is shared by the Board of Directors of International Theosophy Conferences? It is important to recognize that together ITC has done something that had never been accomplished in over a hundred years of theosophical history. Holding our conference in Los Angeles in 2009 in association with The United Lodge of Theosophists, holding our conference in the Netherlands in 2010 in association with Point Loma Theosophical Society, and holding our conference in Wheaton in association with the Theosophical Society in America is an extraordinary accomplishment. Hundreds of theosophists from all over the world, starting in 1907 had attempted to bring about this type of intercommunication. We stand on their shoulders and recognize that their effort has led to our success. ... Some might say that fostering intercommunication between Theosophical traditions is **only one** of the purposes of ITC ... **we would** not agree. Intercommunication between Theosophical traditions reflects the First Object of the Theosophical Movement – Brotherhood. By doing this **we have the united strength** to help spread the teachings and reach out to other groups. So again, we are asking the present Board of Directors of ITC if they do, in fact, agree that the **Primary Purpose** of ITC is to foster and bring about intercommunication with and between all Theosophical traditions?” (All bold and underscored their own).

We might add, having discussed this with both Jim and Sally, real intercommunication was meant to go far beyond simple speech! Jim shared a vision that was inclusive and expanding, not exclusive and limited.

Thus, the only original intent was to nurture and foster meaningful intercommunication between all theosophical traditions. Inclusive of independents. The only addition we might add retrospectively to help onwards such intercommunication as the basis of Sisterhood and Brotherhood in theosophical life, is that we spend time, **understanding the culture and philosophical position** of such groups, their basis of belief, their traditions, and individual views, before we begin to silently compare them against our own *preferred*, hence *prejudiced*

stance. This level of intercommunication, free of judgment, bias, and preference, involves genuine open and thorough transparency of motive, communication, listening, deepening understanding, an unbiased openness and acceptance, and perhaps an immersion of types, putting oneself in the world, mind, body, thoughts and culture of the others. It requires a clear mind of equanimity, not one clouded with preconceived ways, means, and words. It requires full self-reflecting and reflective consciousness, having awareness of its own biases, that might hinder the great task at hand and the end in view, as well as its self-imposed obstacles that might stand in the way. Doing so, a more authentic and perhaps truer communication and listening, leading to the greatest possible understanding for the cycle and time, might occur. All preconceived ideas, beliefs, and prejudices must be given up in this endeavor. Such a position requires none to give up their affiliations, but suggests that each remain loyal to their tradition, or none, with which they most identify, during this incarnation, and while trying to exemplify a theosophical life in this pseudo reality.

With this as a basis, having in mind the readings of “ALAS” and communications with others, we can try to begin to understand the spirit of the other, within and behind each one’s dynamic ideas. What follows below then, are some of the ideas gleaned in *my own words*, which must be appreciated from the originator’s stance, of which I was not aware then, but wished I would have been, concerning our initial attempts at genuine intercommunication.

#### **A COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS:**

**Ideas such as *freedom of thought; avoidance of organizational structure, hierarchy, and leadership; belief in a right and /or a wrong way; honoring the silence concerning ideas that remain too sacred to speak openly of; having the true theosophy that others do not have; the idea that unless a thing is done in our particular way it is not valid; being free of and not bound or chained to the idea of one and only path from the worldly side; Believing that one’s own tradition, is the only one connected to the “Masters” and their school; the need to be free for self-exploration and SELF Realization for and by that SELF and according to ones’ karmic path; The freedom to experience and share in a deep and profoundly *real cross pollination* without rules and ways; moving beyond the crude partisan idea of “infection” by teachings not vouched to be authentic; avoiding dogmatic tendencies; and the reading of special authors only; The importance of avoiding the “clash of personalities”; understanding how and why “*Truth is a Pathless Land*” and even if not believed accepting and honoring that belief in others; Being free of erroneous ideas concerning ownership; The necessity of appreciating the point of view and level of perspective, as well as the lens through which one describes the clarity and emptiness relating to the idea of Reality with its coeval wisdom; Having an *open mind and the inexhaustible freedom* that goes along with it; Moving beyond all boundaries and designated ways while being free to examine life in order to find the best way for oneself; Having the courage to listen and “*unlearn*”, that other ways and methods just as genuine may be tried for better or worse; Refusing to impose a truth or dogma on another; the importance of not insisting or imposing on another one’s own ideas concerning a thing or way, but again being fearlessly open, with genuine listening and sharing concerning the needs of the other; Sharing to embrace a truer unity through diversity; A frank refusal of dogma, or insistence on one way only and a recognition of the value of independent devotion, study, and inner experimentation, concerning the cause of theosophy; A recognition of the uniqueness and genius of each; As the teachers have expressed in so many words in *The****

***Mahatma Letters*, they prefer independent thinkers, having a base in the philosophy for its intrinsic value and light shed on truth, rather than blind followers; Other ideas concerned the nature of one aligned with “Liminality” and Freedom; The ability to be able to awaken the courage to deal prudently with ultimate uncertainty and unpredictability, especially in a world of constant change and adaptation.**

For real communication to occur with all those sharing such diverse perspectives, yet related beliefs, in the oceanic system of theosophy, there must be a working attempt to arrive at a method of positive, cooperative, synthesizing, yet transcending dialogue. This dialogue, leading to right understanding, must be followed by proper action and interacting with all involved. Each position must be appreciated for meaningful exchange to have been demonstrated. The drive and quiet fierceness, that allows one to enter and exist in the boundless depths of a conceptual space in the ocean of Divine Wisdom, can only be recognized as their own, and not easily shared with another in words. Yet it is each one’s unique, although universal experience, that subsequently must question, and in a way challenge, the very legitimacy of cold dogmatic structure, rules, purposes and regulations. This must be carefully done, and always with an eye and motive for the greater evolutionary unfolding. Perhaps it is only by sensing and being in deep rapport with such a one, or such a state of liminal darkness, perceived as light, that real appreciation can occur. This appreciation must then lead to that meaningful communication and understanding, of what moves such beings and their actions, decisions made, and points of view valued, as well as being able to communicate with others not so moved. Such transcendence of understanding, breathes beyond any identifiable or conceptual opposites, hence can and must embrace all.

I can only imagine, that within all who have chosen at some point, and for some reason, perhaps not to be actively engaged in the ITC efforts there are more “ALAS’S”, that should be heard and understood.

It is likely near impossible to appreciate all the reasons that have prevented a full theosophic union, existing without and beyond care or concern for differences of views, opinions, or organizations. Still, somehow it must be possible among ourselves to move towards a universal sister and brotherhood of life and humanity. If so, such must be based on meaningful, open, honest, transparent, motive free communication, and mutual respect, amongst theosophists.

If we can learn from our past choices, choices not necessarily in the best interest of all, making better choices aligned and centralized around a common and strong objective, perhaps with real dialogue and meaningful intercommunication, understanding, and sharing, as per Jim and Sally’s original idea, we will not throw the baby out with the bathwater. There is a real need to be open to, and address the many concerns and points of view, expressed in these few articles and even others not so expressed. ITC as it functions in 2022, has evolved to be simply what it is; so be it! Yet, without being directly involved in any manner, it is heartening to observe that currently and organically a dialogue is going on among various theosophical groups; the energy is there! Perhaps it only needs fine-tuning to resonate to a greater harmonious degree with all. Such would coincide with the initial intent of Jim and Sally, to bring about meaningful intercommunication among ALL THEOSOPHISTS. Such efforts, continued through and beyond differences concerning any organized effort, would be carrying forward an ideal that leads to the establishment of a nucleus of Universal Sisterhood and Brotherhood of Humanity, at least amongst theosophists. To paraphrase a statement of WQ Judge: “with 500 dedicated and committed theosophists, the world could be changed for the better.”

Concerning theosophy, we have been given the idea that all spiritual truth has to be experienced, examined,



tested, verified, and found of itself to conform to that degree of Reality, that perhaps the most primordial Chohan touches and senses with the opened “*Eye of Dangma*.” This implies that each is and must be allowed to walk their path, and allowed to express truth as they see it, comparing it to the Eternal Truths uncovered and proven throughout endless time. The freedom to walk such a path belongs to each one alone, in their way alone, and none other can dictate. As the Greater Teachers are aware:

“Once unfettered and delivered from their dead weight of dogmatism, interpretations, personal names, anthropomorphic conceptions, and salaried priest, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be proved identical in their esoteric meanings, Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shown as different **means** for one and the same royal highway to final bliss-Nirvana.”

(3) (*Theosophical Articles and Notes*, The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles 1985.

The Great Masters Letter, page 19)

And as fallible as we all are, this must pertain to us as aspiring theosophists as well. Even what is considered our “way and understanding” can lose its living spirit and become a dead dogma if we are not careful. Perhaps it is a razor’s edge that we walk in our proclaiming of any so-called truth, not to mention that body of Sacred Wisdom, we call Theo-Sophia. This is especially true if we are without having had the proper training of our divine and spiritual sense, our properly clarified and awakened mind, and the appropriate words with which to express such truth, whatever that may be.

The one wish of the Chohan, almost an idealistic one, is yet possible. Can we work together to accomplish it in real time and space? Will we? Only we can determine that for ourselves and with each other, through self-induced and self-devised efforts and methods, in agreement with Eternal Law.

So, although there may and must be many more “ALAS’S”, we are not without hope. It is never too late to learn from our previous ways if we have open minds and hearts. It is never too late to change those ways to embrace greater numbers of humanity. And in doing so, our circle of Kindred souls, in the work of the realization of the meaning and implications of the “One Life” reflected in a Universal Humanity, will become as boundless as life itself.

I would like to say thank you to a select group of theosophical friends who, not that long ago, shared with me their honest thoughts. I have hopes that the good spirits and intents of all who have written, and those that they represent, as well as those that remain silent, will somehow be examined, and embraced, such that Theosophy may accomplish that goal for which it was given to the world, through each in their own best way, and yet all together. Such is a *Universal Sister and Brotherhood*, through the continual awakening of the *Buddhi-Manas* of the Race, despite our short comings as aspiring Theosophists. As it has been said, *we must become the change we want to see!*

Since there is no religion higher than truth, and no experience greater, whatever is true within ourselves or others, whatever falls within the domain of that Divine Wisdom or Theo-Sophia, that we should embrace, no matter its appearance. Whatever is false, no matter how beautiful, should simply be abandoned.

Whoever, ourselves or another included, seeks truth, love, and its way, through a truer realization of *Universal Sister and Brotherhood*, those we should embrace; wherever and whenever we encounter hatred and division, whether within ourselves or another, such disease, we should abandon, replacing it with an understanding love and acceptance.

Whatever great teacher, amongst all the Great Souls or Mahatmas, one feels attracted to follow, and whose

truths one seeks to embody and enact in the world, if their teachings, words and actions are the echoes of Eternal Truth, such words we should strive to understand, and enact in the world, for then, each in their own way, becomes a reflection of the One Reality, all students and learning lights, under the guidance of the One Teacher.

For often, the best way, is the worst way for others, as the seeming worst, the better way for others. Thus, in the world of relativity, let us all remain open to and mindful of the infinite shades of gray, realizing that each is lighter or darker, when compared with the one next to it. Knowing this, we may then, at the right time, use the right methods and techniques, for the right persons, for the right reasons. Living mindfully in the infinite gradations and shades of gray, there is no right or wrong as absolutes, but simply a way, for the moment, that benefits those with whom we dance, for the moment.

Perhaps such freedom and flexibility exists as a reflection of the One Being, the One Initiator, that Wondrous Being, the “Tree from which in subsequent ages, all the great *historically* known Sages and Hierophants, such as the *Rishi Kapila, Hermes, Enoch, Orpheus*, etc., etc., have branched off. ... And it is he again who holds spiritual sway over the initiated Adepts throughout the whole world.” (4)

With such a One as the above example, indirectly responsible for the different ways, methods, paths, of all initiated Adepts, it would appear that at Heart, they are one. Each working in their own way, according to different times, cultures, and developmental rounds of humanity, to accomplish the great goal, and end in view. If their ways, means, and methods must vary, it is likely that ours will too. We only need to look to the fruit to know the inner motive. With such a basis as our ideal, moving forward, perhaps our current phase is only an additional stage in the growth and expression of the **Ideal of ITC**. Hence if healthy, we will watch and participate in yet another turning, taking another step, as foreseen in its initial vision, beyond traditions, to a place that transcends our superficial differences. Since it is Never too Late, we may and will realize together, in Thoughts, words, and deeds, the various ways by which we can serve humanity, without giving up a traditional stance, without apparent discord and separation, and with the one goal in view! Recognizing the Unity in diversity, and the diversity in Unity of a *Universal Sister and Brotherhood of life* as humanity.

Namaste and wishes of solidarity to the Immortal Light Within All, which is Only One, yet expresses itself in an infinitude or ways.

#### **FOOTNOTES:**

(1) Although there is a natural inherent flaw within such majority processes, it was felt to be the best option available at the time.

(2) We should recognize that the secession, subsequent divisions and splits, in the world of theosophy, had nothing, yet in a subtle way, everything to do with the validity and acceptance of theosophy as systematically presented, and the sources pointed to, by HPB and her teachers.

(3) Yet not without helping others to see that same truth in their own possible way. The result? Perhaps a true nucleus reflective of that Divinity, which will serve as the central sun around such seers and knowers will dedicate themselves to spread broadcast the very means and way by which each realizes for themselves, the One Life and Truth.

(4) *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume I, The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles CA. pages 207-208.

*Dr Eugene (Gene) Jennings, a psychiatrist by profession has been a student of Theosophy since his early twenties. He is an international speaker, authored various articles and contributes regularly to Theosophy Forward's category "Notable Books".*

**ALAS and after** – Gottfried de Purucker and the PLTS:

The Universal, Non-sectarian View Beyond Dogmas, Books and Labels.

**Questions and Answers with Kenneth Small.**

[Note from the editor: Kenneth Small is to be considered a reliable and unbiased source. For many years he and both his parents, Carmen and Emmett Small, were involved with *Point Loma Publications* and through this interview we come to know firsthand facts. For earnest students it is interesting to observe that Kenneth sheds a rather different light on Gottfried de Purucker as a person and his work. In 2007 he sent an invitation to the leader of the *TS Point Loma-Blavatskyhouse* group and his wife, to attend the ITC conference in Petaluma, California and introduced them to those who, at the time, were involved with organizing the annual ITC meetings in the USA]



*Kenneth Small*

*1. Who are you and what was, or still is your involvement with the Theosophical Movement?*

My name is Kenneth Small and I live in California. Growing up in a Point Loma theosophical family, from the exile esoteric group, I was mentored in theosophy from a young age by lifelong students of Theosophy and their inclusive universal view has always inspired me throughout my life. I am in accord with Blavatsky's view that the Theosophical Movement is a global one and much vaster than the organized theosophical organizations or groups. Blavatsky says, quoting Vaughn:

“A Theosophist,” he says-- “is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis.” In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist. Hence, Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions.”<sup>1</sup>

I am grateful to have also experienced deep theosophical wisdom not only within the theosophical view that I was raised in but also within these global perennial traditions. Today I teach ongoing weekly Zen and meditation practice within Buddhist groups in San Diego and perennial wisdom classes.

I initiated a few years ago, the Enso Project, with a small group of friends and associates, where I teach theosophic perennial wisdom, meditation and inner transformation methods. I have given presentations and classes on the perennial wisdom and theosophy at the Krotona Institute, the San Diego United Lodge of Theosophists, lectured at the TSPL, The Hague, presented at the ITC (NYC 2013) on the ‘Voice of the Silence’ etc. I have during the past three years, established and facilitated the Lomaland Theosophical Community historical archive at San Diego State University. At various times, I have belonged to a few of the organized theosophical groups, including the ULT and more recently the Adyar TS. I have also applied these principles of theosophic wisdom and insight within my natural healing vocation; integrating mindfulness, ethnobotany, herbal and energetic healing modalities.

*2. In the series “ALAS and after” there are many references to the “TS Point Loma-Blavatskyhouse” group (from now on TSPL) based in The Hague the Netherlands. It is not always understood how this Society, which started off in the USA, ended up in The Hague. Could you give us a brief overview of its history?*

KS: The Point Loma Theosophical Society-USA, (PLTS) lineages post 1942 until today are often not well understood. A deep schism within the PLTS took place from 1945-1951, which subsequent fragmentation, produced by 1980, as many as seven administratively autonomous, unconnected different groups and autonomous societies. Attempts at unifying these groups have not been very successful with only moderate cooperation possible since that time.<sup>2</sup> Today, it should be made clear that after Purucker’s death, there are three primary lineages<sup>3</sup> : The TS Pasadena with lineage as follows: Purucker (1929-1942)- Arthur Conger (1945-1951) - James Long (1951-1971) - Grace Knoche (1971-2006) Randall Grubb (2006-current) ; the TSPL- Covina-The Hague with its lineage as follows: Purucker - Conger - William Hartley (1951-1955), an interim ‘council’ under Mrs. Steward (1955-1958). After William Hartley’s death in 1955, Mrs. Steward with the Cabinet elected in 1958 to lead their group, D.J.P. Kok from the Netherlands, who was followed in 1985 by Herman C. Vermeulen (current); and then an additional PLTS non-organized group, which we will call, for lack of a better term, the *PLTS exile esoteric group*<sup>4</sup>. For this group, the so-called ‘succession’ ended with Purucker.

*4. In 1909 Robert Crosbie founded the United Lodge of Theosophists, after he had left the Point Loma TS at that time led by Katherine Tingley. What was the main reason for him to start another Theosophical organization?*

KS: Robert Crosbie was initially an extremely enthusiastic supporter of Katherine Tingley and he lived at the Lomaland community with his wife and young family from 1902-1904. Tingley’s focus at Lomaland was “to make Theosophy intensely practical”, with primary emphasis on education, Theosophic expressions of the creative arts; music, art, drama, literature. Also Crosbie, at Lomaland with his family, was one of a very few participants who received a stipend for managing the telegraph. One of the factors that precipitated his leaving was when finances at Lomaland couldn’t sustain this and there also may have been some additional personal issues. This combination of elements led to his leaving Lomaland. He then initially joined a group that earlier had branched off of Tingley, headed by Ernest Hargrove. This didn’t work out, so then Crosbie left it and then started the United Lodge of Theosophists in 1909.

*5. In the TS Adyar (their Esoteric School with its Outer Head is a separate entity) there are no officials who*



are called “leaders” but there are International Presidents, General Secretaries and National Presidents etc. who are chosen democratically by all members in good standing. With the TSPL this is not the case, because there is a clear line of succession.

KS: Under Purucker, while he was Leader for life, all the national and lodge presidents were democratically elected. Purucker viewed the democratic process as essential and made it clear that he could be removed from office as well.

**5 follow up.** For many Adyar members and other students this is utterly confusing; a line of succession starting with H.P. Blavatsky, therefore, when did this line of succession actually materialize and what is its significance, if any?

KS: When Blavatsky formally initiated the esoteric section in 1888, she was the Outer Head of the Esoteric School and Henry Olcott was the President of the TS. The succession issue arose later, when upon Blavatsky’s death she appointed William Q. Judge and Annie Besant co-heads of the esoteric school, so they were both Blavatsky’s appointees and designated *esoteric* successors. Judge at that time, was also the president of the TS in America.

When the TS split in 1895, Judge was then elected ‘president for life’. It was at this point that the leadership of the outer Presidency of the TS and the esoteric school conflated into one person: William Q. Judge. This then continued within the PLTS, through Katherine Tingley to G. de Purucker. When Purucker became the Leader after Katherine Tingley, he removed from the TSPL constitution some of the more *autocratic elements* she had placed in the constitution. Purucker left no designated successor upon his death in 1942. The PLTS governing Cabinet, headed by Iverson L. Harris jr., followed Purucker’s written instructions and governed from 1942-45.

The Cabinet waited these three years and as no ‘successor’ appeared, then elected an administrative exoteric TSPL President. Col. Arthur Conger from Washington D.C. who had been President of the PLTS national section was viewed as a good administrator and was therefore selected and voted into office solely as (the exoteric) President of the Theosophical Society Point Loma.

Quickly after his being elected, however, Conger declared himself the Outer Head, and esoteric successor going back to Blavatsky and *in contact with the Masters*. Then, many of the core members of the esoteric school declined to accept Conger’s claims of esoteric authority, including the last remaining PLTS esoteric student of Blavatsky, Henry T. Edge. Others included the well-known Theosophists: Iverson and Helen Harris, Boris de Zirkoff, Emmett and Carmen Small (my parents) , Helen Savage (Todd), Gordon Plummer, Geoffrey and Ila Barborka, Judith Tyberg etc. Conger promptly proceeded to remove from official duties those who declined to accept his esoteric status and lifelong members were forced to move from the headquarters which had then moved from Point Loma to Covina, California. The subsequent results of this schism was some hundreds leaving the PLTS society between 1945-1951. This is a complex history, with a variety of differing viewpoints and more details can be found within the Theosophical History Journal<sup>5</sup>.

6. Like many others, also De Purucker made clear that “Freedom of Thought” was a must when exploring the teachings. His extensive works were and still are eye-openers for serious seekers.

KS: Yes, he states clearly in many places, both in editorials and in his talks and lectures the essential foundation of freedom of thought within the PLTS. In the appended extracts from his writings, I have given a few examples of his view on freedom of thought in Theosophy. For example, Purucker opposed a declaration in the 1930’s, that was similar to ITC’s Naarden declaration in 2014 to form a Theosophical allegiance based on *adhering to*

*a designated list of agreed upon points of doctrine.*

**6 Follow up 1:** *It is evident that some are convinced that Purucker's oeuvre contains some kind of "final word." This stance leads to the thesis that all other deliberations on Theosophical teachings are mere "interpretations of interpretations." From your point view is this attitude correct and although it is speculative, what do you think GdP himself would have thought about this?*

KS: Well, I doubt that Purucker would be happy with anyone viewing him as having the "final word" on anything. I would say that mere replication of any sacred text is a way to avoid a genuine and deep emulation or embodying of a truth. While during the 1930's, Purucker felt he had a 'mission' to give what he often referred to as 'technical Theosophy', he was always careful and very clear about not fixating on any presentation of Theosophy as a 'final word' especially his own writings and talks.

As students of the theosophic Perennial Wisdom, the challenge is in integrating and living this deeper 'truth' within our daily life, given our always ... *limited and evolving* ... experience and understanding.

The Theosophists that were both close friends and those who mentored me in my early study of Theosophy were all lifelong residents of the Lomaland community. Additionally they were also participants and some held significant positions within the esoteric school at Lomaland<sup>6</sup> and Purucker's inner group. I only mention this to make clear that those within this core group knew Purucker as a person very well, worked and collaborated with him both as a teacher and in friendship.

Purucker was a *deep contemplative*, who had been rather obscure within the Lomaland community, who after he succeeded Katherine Tingley as the PLTS Leader, felt he had a mission to *revitalize* Theosophy within the broader Theosophical Movement. He frequently stated that crystalizing one's mind around a topic within theosophy regardless is always a danger and to 'break the molds of mind', that no teaching, *as given*, is the final word. Even going so far as to suggest that *higher views* always move past the more limited one. Purucker's approach was equally an approach of Blavatskian based Theosophy, yet based on the *inner necessity* of what could be called, 'process Theosophy'; always universal, inclusive, non-dogmatic, compassionate.

In Purucker's Esoteric Teachings<sup>7</sup>, his thoughts on Forgiveness and Impersonal Love, the Paramitas, the Path of Compassion are the foundation of the path. He makes clear that the fulcrum is higher awareness in awakening to our inner or higher SELF; wisdom and compassion harmonized together. It is this direct relationship to our inner awakening that is primary and for example any direct link to the 'Masters' an individual inner matter, possible within the intuitive aspirations of each person and not needing of any outer intermediary.

**6 Follow up 2:** *Also, could you describe what kind of person Purucker was in his day to day activity?*

KS: Purucker's favorite aphorism was from Horace: *Est modus in rebus*, 'there is a proper measure in all things' or balance point. Purucker was a deeply contemplative person always spending the last later hours of the day before sleep in meditation. He lived his life this way and in his daily interactions with those who worked closely with him he was a very kind, considerate person, never a micro manager and who entrusted those in positions of responsibility to engage in their respective roles fully and completely relying on their own inner guidance. For example, my father, Emmett Small, was editor (with Marjorie Tyberg) of *the Theosophical Forum*, and Purucker, with his full schedule, fully trusting the editors, would often only read the issue after it was printed. To individuals within the PLTS or even the esoteric school Purucker never interfered in the sanctum of students inner spiritual guidance. He never directed students with anything like: "The Masters have told me x, y, or z and therefore you need to do so." He was continuously reducing any mode of seeking outward

‘authority’ and in his letter of instructions to the Cabinet (1935), he made clear that any successor should be chosen based on their qualities and that anyone claiming contact with the Masters should be automatically excluded from consideration. It is also important when reading his printed writings that almost in their entirety they are *transcribed stenographic* reports of his talks. In the case of letters, they were all dictated verbally to his secretary Elsie Savage (Benjamin) and then she would type them out etc. This explains his ‘wordiness’ at times, as there was little editing done.



*Ken's parents:  
Emmett and Carmen Small (1988)  
A life dedicated to Theosophy*

7. In the TSPL/The Hague there is a strong belief that, what they call the original writings as found in the core literature, should never be edited or modified, but kept in their original state, even if there were to be grammatical errors. (quote from a presentation by the leader of the TSPL: “Better to break the grammar rules than breaking the basic concepts of Theosofia.”)

To watch this presentation click see <https://bit.ly/34YEBCm>

*This approach fully ignores the fact that language as such is dynamic and over time subject to change and meaning. The English language for example has gone through major linguistic changes over the past centuries. (Read: “A brief history of the English language”). As a publisher and scholar, what is your opinion?*

<https://www.oxfordinternationalenglish.com/a-brief-history-of-the-english-language/>

KS: While I cannot speak for the TSPL-The Hague, I can give a brief outline of the TSPL during Purucker’s time. (1929-1942) Purucker gives as the basis or view: “Chelaship is a matter of being..”<sup>8</sup> In his teaching he is constantly balancing wisdom, compassion and method and pointing out what is perhaps the biggest obstacle in the study of Theosophy; what he termed the ‘entification of abstractions’.

This sounds obscure, but is very simple: *labeling and memorizing* some terms or ideas doesn’t make them REAL in our direct experience. Purucker frequently pointed out that we must endeavor to move beyond mere terminology or diagrams and the danger is to artificially infuse these mere mental abstractions with a life they don’t have. This is to mistake the finger pointing to the moon, for the moon itself.

Purucker often describes the dangers of *mental fixation* and he used the term ‘bibliolatry’<sup>9</sup> to point out the pitfall of those who worship the book, for when a student uses any book or text, as a final pronouncement of *THE truth*. He clearly stated that *rigid fixation* on the ‘written word’ from any teacher however exalted, would indicate that the TS had become a sectarian and narrow cult, if it would ever fall into this mode<sup>10</sup>.

Purucker was a polyglot and he had a very thorough grasp of the Sanskrit language and he translated from Sanskrit the *Bhagavad Gita* and from Latin, Seneca’s *Researches into Nature*, for example. During that time at Lomaland they began to correct the errors in Sanskrit made for example in earlier editions of the Theosophical writings of Blavatsky and others.

Earlier during the time of Katherine Tingley, Fred J. Dick, the Irish Theosophist who knew Blavatsky, when he lived at Lomaland, he worked on the editing of typographical and linguistic errors in the editions of Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*, which was then published at Lomaland. There has often been a tussle or even competitiveness between different Theosophical groups and sub groups about the 'purity' of the teachings. Often the curious litmus test of who is most authentically 'pure' seems to have devolved upon who kept the 'original' writing, the *most* original, even down to keeping mistakes in spelling or broken fonts *or* faded pages reproduced from the 'original'. When this fixation on literalism arises, the inner more spiritual creative qualities subside.

8. *How important is it that the various Theosophical currents stay in touch with each other in order to exchange knowledge? ... without any preconditions?*

KS: Open exchange *without any 'conditions'* is essential. The last ITC I was able to attend was the one held in New York City in 2013. I experienced that ITC gathering as a beautiful example of *inter* Theosophical exchange and dialogue with a clear universal basis and view pervading the presentations and proceedings. Meeting new friends in Theosophy at that gathering was an enjoyable experience. However, I was unable to attend the ITC in Naarden in 2014, as I was laid up recovering from a broken femur. If I had been there, I would have seriously questioned the Naarden Declaration and personally I would not have supported it. In my view it moves into the direction of *limiting freedom of expression and exchange* in Theosophy. While not quite establishing a core group of teachings to agree upon as William Kingsland proposed in the 1930's, which Purucker declined to support, it moves, I feel, too close in that limiting dogmatic direction.

The basis is Universality of view and openness of inquiry. So I question whether the original PLTS/Purucker would have accepted the Naarden Declaration as written. This needs to be explored more carefully and fully. The designating of 'what is core theosophy' opens up the idea of a fixated 'creed' and is actually counter to a basis for open exchange and unification. I believe this is not an approach to organizing or unifying at all but rather automatically cuts off the openness of universal view and therefore freedom for deeper inquiry which is essential<sup>11</sup>.

An example of this broader openness is the website of the Australian TS (Adyar) where there can be found broad and inclusive listing and links for theosophical study resources from all the different Theosophical teachers (Blavatsky, Judge, Besant, Purucker, Leadbeater etc. are listed).<sup>12</sup>

Elsie Savage Benjamin, who was Purucker's personal secretary commented (1977) in her CFL Bulletin<sup>13</sup> that there is:

"The need of using both mind and heart ... Theosophy has no dogmas that a student must believe in. HPB encouraged unorthodoxy as desirable 'but within certain limits'. In other words, not everything one chooses to believe is necessarily theosophy. On the other hand, in a group of 5 students who have had years of study, there could easily be five different conceptions of a point at issue. Or even more if opinions are changed after listening to another's view."

Again the emphasis is non dogmatic with an open universal flexible view. I have extracted some quotations from the writings of Purucker on these various subjects of freedom of expression, non-sectarianism, the universal view and how to approach in the study of theosophy in what follows.

9. *Lastly, if you could make a wish for the Theosophical movement as a whole, what would that wish be?*

I would wish for more development of what could be called '**Engaged Theosophy**' or '**Theosophy in**



**Action**, with more emphasis on education, the creative arts and humanitarian service. At this times, the Adyar TS has the 'Theosophical Order of Service' with its many activities and there is the great educational effort in the Philippines of the Golden Link College, the School of Theosophy at Krotona and also the newly forming Adyar Theosophical Academy. These are great examples to emulate. I would hope for these kinds of 'compassion in action', which are so needed in the world today, to be developed more broadly in all Theosophical organizations.

**Notes:**

1 Blavatsky C.W. II pp 500-507

2 The last attempt to unify the 'Point Loma' fragments was initiated by Emmett Small in the early 1980's. A large gathering of 3-4 hundred took place in the Netherlands but neither the TSPL-the Hague or TS Pasadena participated and the effort did not produce significant results.

3 At least two or three additional autonomous groups in Europe with direct lineages to the PLTS exist currently. (2021)

4 When I have been asked about the Point Loma Esoteric School post 1945 until today (2021), I have answered as follows: "It neither ended nor formally continued." Emmett Small (1903-2001) was the secretary of the inner group under Purucker at Lomaland and continued as the secretary of this group post 1945. Some of the well-known members of this group, from Purucker's time, were Boris de Zirkoff, Gordon Plummer, Iverson and Helen Harris, Helen Savage Todd, Geoffrey and Ila Barboroka, Elsie Savage Benjamin, George Cardinal LeGros etc. In the post 1950 period the members of this esoteric group belonged to any Theosophical organization of their choice or none at all, yet maintained their esoteric linkage and activity. So when I have been asked about the Point Loma Esoteric School, I have answered: 'it did not close nor formally continue', which of course means that it has continuation.

5 The Theosophical History Journal volume 8, no 1, January 2000, The Conger Papers 1945-1951:

<https://theohistory.org/issue-archive/volume-viii/>

6 Boris de Zirkoff was secretary of the PLES first degree and co-editor with Helen Harris of Purucker's twelve Esoteric Teachings books, Helen Harris (recording secretary of the PLES), W. Emmett Small, (secretary of the Inner Group/Third Degree of the PLES. Col Arthur Conger was elected the administrative exoteric leader of the TSPL in 1945. After his election, Conger claimed esoteric succession, contact with the Masters and to be the Outer Head of the esoteric school. Boris De Zirkoff, Helen Harris and Emmett Small were formally expelled by Col. Conger from the TSPL during his regime, for not accepting his claim of esoteric status and contact with the Masters. See The Theosophical History Journal volume 8, no 1 January 2000, The Conger Papers 1945-1951:

<https://theohistory.org/issue-archive/volume-viii/>

7 Purucker's Esoteric Teachings series consists of twelve booklets. It was published in condensed form as Fountain Source of Occultism by Theosophical University Press and in complete series by Point Loma Publications in 1980's. It is now available from the Theosophical Society Point Loma/the Hague.

8 Esoteric Teachings v. 1 The Esoteric Path: Its Nature and Its Tests p 16

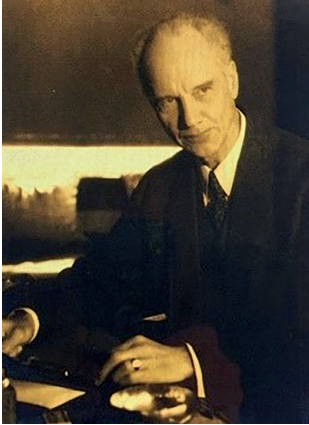
9 Bibliolatry see de Purucker Messages to Conventions p 196

10 Non-Sectarian reference: Messages to Conventions by G. dePurucker; edited and compiled by Emmett Small, Covina, 1943, pp 181-2

- 11 This issue came up during the 1930's with the 'Back to Blavatsky' group with William Kingsland and some United Lodge of Theosophists supporting a designated series of doctrinal points of teaching to equate with Theosophy. Purucker and the Lomaland theosophists in the 1930's opposed such a list of teachings that were proposed to agree and unite upon as 'core theosophy', for the reason that freedom of speech in theosophy is an essential component to prevent dogmatic fixation with sectarian narrowing and decline. For this reason, I doubt that Purucker and the post Lomaland PLES group would have supported the recent Naarden declaration because it begins to move in this direction of dogmatic limitation. See Messages to Conventions by G. de Purucker pp 198-199, 241-243, p 246, p 182, p 104-105, p 94, p 92, pp 88-89, p 42, p 39 etc.
- 12 The Theosophical Society in Australia (Adyar)  
<https://theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
- 13 The Corresponding Fellows Lodge Bulletin (from issue 375 September 1977) edited by Elsie Savage Benjamin was issued monthly with over 400 issues and distributed to subscribers from all Theosophical groups and individuals. She was Purucker's personal secretary during his time as Leader of the PLTS from 1929-1942.

## APPENDIX 1

### G. de Purucker



*In his office at Lomalind early 1930's*

***The T.S. A Living, Growing Organism***  
**Caution Against Dogmatic Sectarianism**  
**(Excerpts from *Messages to Conventions* - pp 181-2)**

“The Theosophical Society, please remember, is composed of all the Theosophists who unite to make it. There is no organization more worthy nor superior to the men who compose it; it is precisely the men who compose it who make it. The standing, spiritual and intellectual, of the Theosophical Society is gaged by the men and women who compose it, and it will be just as low or just as high as we individuals make it, because of what we ourselves are. To the degree that we as individuals follow with fidelity the grand and beautiful instructions that we have received, to the degree that we show in our own lives how much inner growth we have achieved -- otherwise, what we ourselves have learned and have grown to, and having learned are prepared to pass on to others: to *this* degree will our Society be high or low, and will retrograde or march steadily forwards.

**May the gods in high heaven ever prevent, through our efforts both collectively and individually, the Theosophical Society from becoming a mere sect, depending upon a book or books, however grand this or these may be in themselves; may they prevent our pretending to live alone on the Word received from our predecessors; but we may continue to grow from within ourselves and become independent thinkers and workers steadily raising the level of ourselves and therefore of the Theosophical Society**

May the gods in high heaven ever prevent, through our efforts both collectively and individually, the Theosophical Society from becoming a mere sect, depending upon a book or books, however grand this or these may be in themselves; may they prevent our pretending to live alone on the Word received from our predecessors; but we may continue to grow from within ourselves and become independent thinkers and workers steadily raising the level of ourselves and therefore of the Theosophical Society. Let our beloved Society continue forever to be a living, growing organism through which pulses the inspiration of our blessed God-Wisdom. We can best render our homage of immense reverence and devotion to our Teachers, higher and lower, by striving to improve ourselves as individuals, as individuals to advance ourselves in all things great and good, and as individuals to become independent, strong characters. If we can do this, then we shall for ever be able to retain and to manifest to others those principles of conduct which have ever graced the lives of the noblest of our predecessors, and this likewise will insure that our Theosophical platform shall be ever free, growing, in all the best senses of the word, and therefore becoming ever more truly a nobler platform for the elaboration and dissemination of Theosophy to the world.”

## APPENDIX 2

G. de Purucker

### *Freedom of Conscience, Thought and Speech in the T.S.*

*(Messages to Conventions pp 193-4)*

“Keep the teaching unadulterate and pure for the future” -- Oh how these words ring in my heart; for it is what I want too; and yet I feel impelled and compelled to call your attention to a very serious danger here. Agreeing absolutely with the principle of the thing, I must call attention to the danger, and it is this: In striving to retain the purity of the teachings of our blessed God-Wisdom, let us never drop into the dogmatic attitude, which will spell the death of free conscience, free thought, free speech, sane and legitimate freedom of all kinds, in the T.S. By all means retain the purity of the teachings, it is the grandest thing we can do; but never refuse to a man his right to speak, and to speak freely, even if you know what he says is not true, or distorted. The principle of freedom is so precious, it must never be forgotten.

It was just there that the primitive Christians stumbled and became in time a dogmatic sectarian church: Desiring to keep the teachings of their Avatara-Master pure, unadulterate, simple and glorious as he gave them, they laid down certain dogmatic rules, credos, tests, somewhat like the fourteen points, twelve points, sixteen points, etc., etc., that we have heard of recently [William Kingsland and others in the 1931 ‘Back to Blavatsky’ association - KS] in Theosophical matters -- a sure way to start a creed; and so anxious were people thereafter that all Christians should conform to these as it were codified laws of belief, the codification of belief, that they utterly forgot the inherent right of the human soul to think and to think freely. Thereafter you have the Christian dogmatic church, and immediately they began to wax strong. Why? Because they all had one simple form of belief, and exoteric united force behind that belief.

But what you lose when you get unity and force and nothing else? You lose everything of greatest value. Force is only good or even decent if it is the force of the spirit, which means no imposition of will upon any other mind: the force of conscience, the force of truth, the force of abstract right, the force of justice. That is the only force that is excusable in human affairs. Any other force is from hell.

So let us therefor never allow the establishing within our own ranks of a dogmatic testing (which is but a creed) of other men’s understanding of what we all, including these other men, hold so dear. It may be quite possibly true that these other individuals are brilliant, it may be even intuitive; and we can be grateful for the results of their studies and meditations; but to establish any form of testing by which others should believe, is to work a mischief that at all costs we should avoid.”



## APPENDIX 3

G. de Purucker



*On board the Dutch steamer S.S. Nieuw Amsterdam October 1931*

### *Countering Bibliolatry*

*“Theosophist is who Theosophists does.”*

**“...anyone who has looked into the luminous deeps of his own spiritual consciousness, and who is wholly at one with the bright essence of being which he find there, will have no difficulty finding the proper pathway to follow”**

*Messages to Conventions - Back to Brotherhood p196-7 extracts*

“It is shameful that Theosophists who teach brotherhood and who preach it so glibly, should fail to practice it themselves; and in the instances where this occurs should shelter behind plausible excuses of doctrinal texts, and should support themselves by random passages drawn from Theosophical text-books, much as in the same manner as the Christian sects in the past have disgraced themselves by adhering to what were supposed to be points of rigid doctrine.

It is not bibliolatry based on our Theosophical text-books which makes the genuine Theosophist. It is not shutting ourselves within the narrow and restricted bounds of egoistic and self-sufficient organizations which will prove those doing so to be genuine Theosophists, nor are they true to the teachings of the Masters and of their Messenger H.P. Blavatsky, who preach and teach Theosophy, but refuse to practice it. “Theosophist is who Theosophists does.”, once wrote H.P. Blavatsky, and wiser words were never written. Mere brain-mind acquaintance with Theosophic text-books does not prove the genuine Theosophist. The genuine Theosophist is he who has love for mankind in his heart, combined with a deep knowledge of the Theosophical teachings, and who carries these teachings into actual practice in his daily affairs. It is brotherhood: first, last, and all the time, that should be the guiding principle in life, not only of each Theosophist’s own life, but of the policy guiding any Theosophical organization; and anyone who has looked into the luminous deeps of his own spiritual consciousness, and who is wholly at one with the bright essence of being which he find there, will have no difficulty finding the proper pathway to follow. ...

Genuine Theosophical fraternization is the polar antithesis of mere sentimentality or emotionalism. The very core of the spirit of fraternization is the seeing in others of the same lofty Theosophic sentiments that exist among ourselves; it is the feeling, likewise, that other Theosophists can, as much as oneself, have the spirit of devotion to truth and the love of high-minded and honorable dealing. Fraternization will be a farce unless it is based on principles of mutual confidence, mutual trust, and on genuine brotherly love.”

## APPENDIX 4

G de Purucker

*“Keep the processes of thought and one’s consciousness , constantly fluid”*

*Esoteric Teachings, vol. 9: Death and the Circulations of the Cosmos II p 38-39.*

There is a vast suggestiveness in these few hints given of far higher and more difficult teachings; and the student is earnestly requested to ponder over them, striving to keep his thoughts fluid, and not be tempted to let his mind crystallize about some ‘brilliant idea’ and thus imagine that he has fully ‘got it’. When the student feels this, he is in danger of losing correct grasp or comprehension, for this feeling arises in the activity of the astral-material brain-mind, which dearly loves to ‘pigeon hole’ facts, carefully to docket bits of information, and then, to use a popular phrase, ‘to get ones ideas in order.’ Well, I admit, readily enough, that having one’s ideas ‘in order’ is very necessary, provided, however, that the even more necessary truth is not lost sight of, to wit: *Keep the processes of thought and one’s consciousness , constantly fluid*, thus avoiding the danger of mental crystallization, and the perilous self-satisfaction of feeling that there is ‘not very much more to learn about it.’

## APPENDIX 5

### G. de Purucker



*After a talk in the Temple of Peace at Lomaland.  
Photo taken by Marguerita Sirén, 1930. (early color photo)*

#### ***The Approach to Truth***

***Man in Evolution* by G. de Purucker, edited by Helen Savage Todd, chapter 1, pp. 1-6.**

**Point Loma Theosophical University Press 1941**

It is truly a wonderful universe in which we live! And yet how little we know of it- even of our own Mother Earth! What brought it into being? What is its past? What is its vital inner and to most of us its invisible structure? What is its destiny? And what of man, its child? Yet there is an answer to these questions, an explanation which by its nature is wholly satisfactory both to the spiritual part of us and to our intellect. It is an explanation of the facts of being which is wholly true, which is not based upon the changing viewpoints of men who, however noble and earnest they may be, are nevertheless researchers only, going ahead warily step by step in their most laudable endeavor to know more of the mysteries of Nature. It is an explanation which has been handed down from immemorial time by great Seers, men with wide and profound spiritual vision, who have penetrated behind the many veils of the outward or phenomenal universe, who have sent their spirit with its accompanying consciousness, deep into the womb of Being, and have brought back conscious records of what the universe is behind the veils of the outward seeming, and have handed it on down through the ages to their disciples, earnest and truth-seeking men, desiring to know the truth at all costs.

This transmitted truth, this coordinated explanation of things, is given to the world today under the name of Theosophy. It is not based on dogmatic statements. It does not demand of anyone an unquestioning and blind adherence to some or to any declaratory assertions made by anybody either now or in the past; but it calls upon everyone to study what he reads or what he hears, and from that earnest and self-revealing study, to draw out for his own benefit, as well as for the benefit of his fellows, for his own self development and understanding, as well as the self development and understanding of his fellows, the truths which those who have advanced beyond the average understanding of men have told us that they have found and experienced in these teachings. Test these teachings yourselves. Study them honestly, and above all abide by the honest decisions which you yourselves will draw from your study. We say this for one reason more than for any other: in thus exercising your inner faculties of will and judgment and intuition, you open within yourselves doors to the entrance of spiritual rays; you open the doors by which the radiant truth may enter your souls, because you aspire towards truth, and that is a spiritual exercise of the noblest kind.

If, on the other hand, you wish to follow mistaken paths, if you wish to turn to the Left-hand, as we say, rather than to the Right-hand, if you desire to kill your intuition, then be satisfied with the dicta of someone else; accept what others teach to you as dogmatic truth. Yet, indeed, no true spiritual teacher ever so teaches. None ever so taught. Always is the appeal made to the soul and intuition of the listener. This is one of the tests by which you may know the true teacher from the false, one of the tests by which you may know Religion from a religion, Truth from barren dogma.

There is Truth in the universe. What is that Truth? It is the universe itself, or rather the nature of the universe as manifested in the operations of that universe, which is thus self-expressing itself. Its laws are the courses of action of that universe manifesting itself in cosmic terms; and a true philosophy, a true religion, a true science, attempts to interpret these essentials in formulations of thought. The illuminated human intellect can so interpret these essentials because we, as off springs of the universe, have all the faculties and powers latent in us that the universe has, expressing themselves in us as our own powers and faculties. Thus we have the organs to understand the universe, and this understanding comes to us through the unwrapping of the enshrouding veils of our nature.

Now the faculty of understanding is something we can evolve. This does not mean that we must build up an organ of understanding much as a man will build a house of wood and bricks. Not at all. Our understanding is within us, not without us; and we grow to understand ever more clearly because of our increasing growth in self-consciousness, the manifesting of the inner light that is within each one of us. Therefore has every Teacher said: Look within! Follow the path leading inwards! You can go on for all eternity inwards, with ever increasing knowledge, gaining ever increasing light, gaining ever increasing spiritual and intellectual life, and incidentally gaining ever increasing joy deepening into bliss; because the universe is harmonious; it acts according to an ethical order; it acts strictly according to the laws of the harmony innate in itself - laws of harmony which are not imposed upon it, but are born of itself, which are its own character, its own nature, which furnish the consistency in action that we see in the universe- its so-called laws. Know these laws; then you will know Truth. Each one of you thus becomes the pathway to truth, because in you lies the understanding. The thing to be understood lies likewise within yourself. And in following this pathway within yourself leading to spiritual and later to divine goals, you unravel riddles, you solve all problems, you gain all possible knowledges of everything there is to know.

***Hence, if you want to prove all things, then do it in the manner that Paul of the Christians said, and that all other great philosophers and thinkers have said: Cultivate within yourself your inner faculty of understanding; and this can be done by deep thinking, meditation, refusal to accept others' say-so, by the exercise of will-power in an inflexible determination to solve questions for yourself, cost you what it may.***

Each one of you, each for himself, is a key to all the portals of the universe. By following the pathway which reaches from your own heart and mentality, along the lines of your spiritual being, always inwards, you attain an ever closer approximation towards that sublime goal which on account of your expanding consciousness grows ever greater and larger and seems to be ever receding into some higher and grander truth; literally into that universal life in whose roots every human being takes his origin, verily the Heart of the Universe itself.

Yet, though truth comes ultimately from within, we can learn much from the fruitage of the mature thought of another mind. Even though it is an importation into our mind and is not the fruitage of our own inner revelation, we can learn much from what great and good men may tell us if we take it into ourselves and



honestly ponder over it and seek to understand it.

A man comes to me and tells me something, and says, "This is a truth." I should say to him, "I will examine it; it may be true, but it is not true to me until I have proved it by submitting it to the tests of my own inner consciousness. When I have proved it, then it is true to me, but I am going to bring to bear upon your statement every faculty that I have within me: spiritual, intellectual, mental, psychic, emotional, yea, and those minor faculties in which we live on this our present sphere of matter, and which collectively form what we call the brain-mind- fancy, instinct and common reason." Then if I find that the statement is true, I am willing to accept it, and I will accept it, and I will thank him for having brought me something that I did not know before.

What did Paul of the Christians mean when he said to "prove all things and to hold to that which is good"? Who is the judge of the good? Is it not the inner faculty of judgment and understanding? Or are we going to take somebody's say-so and prove all things that come to us by that some body's say-so? If so, we are merely testing one dogmatic declaration by another dogmatic declaration, and this we positively refuse to do.

Anything you accept from outside, you take either on trust or on faith, unless you have the faculties developed within yourselves of judgment, discrimination, intuition, and understanding, these four being fundamentally one. Is it not therefore clear that the information enabling one to prove all things is the developing of the inner eye, so to speak? Where else on earth, or in the heavens, or in the regions under the earth, could such an infallible touchstone be found?

Hence, if you want to prove all things, then do it in the manner that Paul of the Christians said, and that all other great philosophers and thinkers have said: Cultivate within yourself your inner faculty of understanding; and this can be done by deep thinking, meditation, refusal to accept others' say-so, by the exercise of will-power in an inflexible determination to solve questions for yourself, cost you what it may.

Such mental and spiritual exercise develops the faculties within you; or, to put it more truly, tears down the barriers preventing those faculties from expressing themselves; tears away the veils from before the face of the inner spiritual sun, whose rays are those inexpressibly fine things within yourself. Do this and exercise yourself in it, and as surely as the sun deluges the earth with light will you attain to what you are seeking, the faculty of proving all things by knowing them for true or for false. There is the whole thing in a nutshell.



The series ALAS AND AFTER has come to an end, but at the same time this “end” implies a new beginning. The dialogue among Theosophists from all four corners of the globe, no matter their affiliation, or independent and all other genuine seekers will continue and expand even without any preconditions or self-imposed rules, since the search for Truth cannot be hindered nor defeated by plain *stubbornness*, *prejudice* and *ignorance*.

About International Theosophy Conferences, all what had to be said was said, all what had to be written was written, and now it’s up to each and everyone’s discernment to come to conclusions; as a dear friend of mine often says: “IT IS WHAT IT IS.”

On our journey, trying to find the answers, while all our actions ought to be based on the *Freedom of Thought* principle, it ultimately all comes down to OPEN-MINDENDNESS

Considering how difficult true open-mindedness is to achieve, perhaps it would be beneficial to think of it as a craft of which we are apprentices. This invites us to participate in a step-by-step learning process of learning and unlearning, while acknowledging the importance of the undertaking. All forms of craftsmanship demand a gradual attunement of head, heart and hand. The craft of open-mindedness is no exception. Implicit in the idea of apprenticeship is the promising hint that there are journeyman masters and that we, too, can move in that direction.

The craft of being openminded calls for *acceptance* and, most importantly, *tolerance*. Acceptance is obviously something that is connected with knowing how certain developments took place and led to existing realities, which, by the way, doesn’t mean one has to stop being discriminative. Tolerance is possibly the most difficult one of the two, especially when there is a strong difference in points of view. Hearing an opinion, which directly opposes our own and learning to deal with that in a mature manner is a painful exercise, demanding perseverance and psychological discipline.

To be truly open minded is a craft, and like with any other discipline, if we want to do it well, we need to prepare ourselves to patiently and consciously find our way. A mark of fulfilling it will certainly be when we come to realize that we all might come from different wells, but swim in the same river.



*A Theosophy Forward publication*

