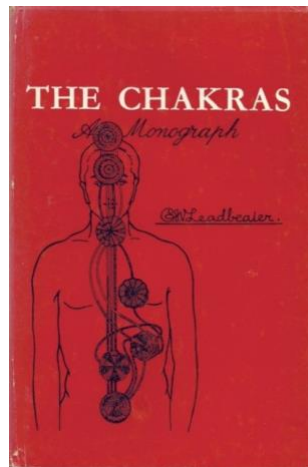


CWL's Books in the Digital Age

Compiled by Pedro Oliveira



In 1881, when prominent members of the theosophical Society in India – A. P. Sinnett and A.O. Hume – wanted the Society to emphasize more psych phenomena than the ethics and metaphysics of Theosophy, a great Adept, who was referred to as the Mahachohan, sent a communication to them through Mahatma K.H. This communication became known as ‘The Mahachohan Letter’ and is considered as one of the foundational documents in the history of the TS.

In one of its early paragraphs, it says:

For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularise 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 neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true Theosophist.

The full text can be read here: <https://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/theos/th-choh.htm>

In her Preface to *The Seven Principles of Man* (Theosophical Manuals No. 1), originally published in 1892, Annie Besant states:

Some have complained that our literature is at once too abstruse, too technical, and too expensive for the ordinary reader, and it is our hope that the present series may succeed in supplying what is a very real want. Theosophy is not only for the learned; is for all.

Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater gave heed to clarion call expressed in the Mahachohan’s communication. Their books attempted to be simpler presentations of the theosophical teachings but based on the fundamental principles of Theosophy.

It did not take long for their books to be branded “Neo-Theosophy” by those for whom Theosophy exists only within the demarcated limits of Madame Blavatsky’s books. In the

mid-1990s, a well-know Theosophist from Europe wrote to one of the officers at Adyar, the international Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, and said that “Leadbeater’s books should be taken off the bookshelves in TS libraries”. Over the decades similar views were expressed.

Fortunately, in the TS, there is a well-established policy of Freedom of Thought. Below are excerpts of the Society’s Resolution in that regard:

As The Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership.

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. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

Some of the harshest criticism directed at Besant and Leadbeater concerns the classification of human principles. They were accused of deviating from HPB’s teachings. Norbert Lauppert, in his article in *The Theosophist*, June 1982, showed how different views of the human constitution are embraced by Theosophical literature:

| Christian Tradition | Greek Philosophy | Arhat-Buddhist' System | Vedanta Philosophy | Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater | Taraka Yoga System |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Soul | Spirit (Pneuma or Nous) | Atma Buddhi Manas | Atma Anandamayakosha Vijnanamayakosha | Atma Buddhi Causal Body | Atma Karanopadhi |
| | Soul (Psyche) | Kama | Manomayakosha | Mental Body Astral Body | Sukshmopadhi |
| Body | Body (Hyle) | Prana Lingasarira Sthulararira | Pranamayakosha Annamayakosha | Etheric Body Dense Physical Body | Sthulopadhi |

Since their original publication by The Theosophical Publishing House at Madras (now Chennai), India, a number of C. W. Leadbeater’s books and pamphlets have been published in many languages of the world. This gives any idea of the reach and influence of his works. The languages include Dutch, Finnish, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Hungarian, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Braille, Serbian, Italian, German, Kannada, Vietnamese, Slovenian, Norwegian, Swedish, Hebrew, Tamil, Telugu, Indonesian, Gujarati, Bengali, Greek, Croatian, Hindi, Bulgarian, Gauhati, Oriya, Bengali, Malayalam, Romanian, Danish, Korean, Singalese, Icelandic, and Polish.

CWL in Online Bookstores

Amazon

In thirty-eight web pages of its website, it shows 614 different editions of his books, including languages other than English, like French, Italian and Spanish. Some of the titles are:

Man Visible and Invisible
The Inner Life
The Astral Plane
Clairvoyance
Invisible Helpers
The Devachanic Plane
A Textbook of Theosophy
Thought Forms
The Hidden Side of Things
Dreams
The Masters and the Path
Occult Chemistry
The Christian Creed
How Theosophy Came to Me
Power and Use of Thought
Vegetarianism and Occultism
Man: Whence, How and Whither
The Other Side of Death
The Monad
The Science of the Sacraments
Hidden Life in Freemasonry
Some Glimpses of Occultism
An Outline of Theosophy
Glimpses of Masonic History
Perfume of Egypt
The Chakras
Difficulties in Clairvoyance (Adyar Pamphlets)
To Those Who Mourn
Creating Character
Talks on the Path of Occultism (vols. I, II and III)
The Hidden Side of Christian Festivals
Starlight: Seven Addresses Given for Love of the Star
The Soul's Growth through Reincarnation
Ancient Mystic Rites
The Christian Gnosis
The Theosophist's Attitude
How Clairvoyance is Developed
The Nature of Theosophical Evidence
The Attitude of the Enquirer
The Etheric Double

The Book Depository

On its website, The Book Depository shows 1,593 different editions of his books, on fifty-four web pages, including in languages other than English, like Spanish, French and Italian. Some of his larger works, like *The Inner Life*, *The Science of the Sacraments*, *Some Glimpses of Occultism*, *The Hidden Side of Things*, *The Other Side of Life*, among others, had some of their parts or chapters apparently published under a different title, but reproducing the original text.

Why Study Theosophy

In his little book *An Outline of Theosophy*, C. W. Leadbeater mentions the natural results of Theosophical study (his writing belongs to an era in which gender inclusive language was not current; his understanding of the word ‘God’ was derived from the Greek word *Logos*, the spiritual intelligence that governs the existence in our solar system):

Thus he will look ever for the good in everything, that he may endeavour to strengthen it; he will watch for the working of the great law of evolution, in order that he may range himself on its side, and contribute to its energy his tiny stream of force. In this way, by striving always to help, and never to hinder, he will become, in his small sphere of influence, one of the beneficent powers of Nature; in however lowly a manner, at however unthinkable a distance, he is yet a fellow worker together with God – and that is the highest honour and the greatest privilege that can ever fall to the lot of man. |

As evidenced above, CWL’s books helped to bring the teachings of Theosophy into the digital age.