

THE HEART'S WISDOM

Tim Boyd

(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 3.1.2018)

We are heart-centered people. At our present stage of development the potentials of the heart are the field of exploration for the human family. Most of us are probably not aware of the degree that our normal conversation, music, and literature is permeated with references to the capacities of the heart. The heart that is open or closed, the cold heart, the broken heart, the full-hearted and half-hearted hearts, the expression in H. P. Blavatsky's "Golden Stairs" — "a pure heart", and countless other popular expressions outline our attempt to understand the functions of this central organ of consciousness. Although one of the hallmarks of our time is the dominance of a concrete, materializing, rational intellect, little about the brain finds its way into normal parlance.

For most people who have given the matter some thought, the heart and brain are viewed as separate seats of consciousness, and references to their function speak more to the limitations we have imposed on their expression than to their higher potentials. In conven-

tional thought and science the brain is more highly valued as the primary organ of cognition. The brain deals with intellect, rationality, the "real world"; the heart is seen as the seat of emotion, sometimes dramatically "irrational", and often divorced from reality. The brain as a physical organ is thought to be either the creator of the mind, or the organ linking mind to body; the heart as an organ is seen as a pump responsible for circulating the life-giving blood. However, in the Ageless Wisdom teachings the heart is the organ of spiritual consciousness.

The mind is more extensive than the science of our day has previously envisioned. Its functions go beyond mere intellect and rational processes, embracing qualities associated with the deeper reaches of the heart — compassion, selfless love, intuition, and perception of unity. The Ageless Wisdom tradition speaks of the capacity for the mind to be illumined, for the light of a higher order of consciousness to shine upon and irradiate the mind, bringing new

understanding and transformed behavior. Today there is a growing awareness of the heart's influence on the brain, yet the heart's potential to extend the limitations of the mind has been the direction of spiritual traditions throughout history. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," is the statement in the Bible; the Heart Sutra, central to Mahayana Buddhism; the "*purusha* in the heart" of ancient Hindu practice; the "Doctrine of the Heart" spoken of in *The Voice of the Silence*, each focuses the sincere individual on the all-important need of connecting with the heart's wisdom.

Today the need for consciously heart-focused individuals has never been greater. In this moment, globally, we are witnessing an ever-increasing integration of cultures, economies, religions, and ethnicities. No place is im-

mune to the knowledge, or the digital and physical presence of the historical "others". At the same time we see strident calls for enforced separation and an open denial of the fact of an interdependent planet. The mind trained in comparison and contrast, in processes of confirmation of separation, is not suited to the task of the moment. The value of an examined and assimilated Theosophy is not merely individual. The next step for the human family depends on the extent that the heart's wisdom infuses the mind. The conviction, in H.P. Blavatsky's words, that "an intuitive and certain knowledge can be obtained by effort", linked with the burning desire which sees the need and submits to it, will move us one step closer to the functional brotherhood envisioned in the founding of the TS.



THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE

To the World for Service and Teaching

(Summary of three Talks delivered on 3.1.2018)

Nancy Secrest

"To the Lodge for inspiration and knowledge; to the world for service and teaching." This is the last line of a quote from Annie Besant's presidential address of 1907. It set the tone for the work of the Theosophical Order of Service that she would initiate just six months later. To Annie Besant, duty, sacrifice, and service were most important. Intent on relieving suffering wherever she found it, she worked as a social activist long before she was a

member of the Theosophical Society.

Years before, in a letter to the TS Convention in 1889, H. P. Blavatsky called "altruism": "The keynote of Theosophy and the cure for all ills." She also said: "For real Theosophy is Altruism, . . . It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth . . ." (HPB in "Our Cycle and the Next".)

What is Altruism? Is there such a thing as "pure" Altruism? What does it look like? How can it be attained? Is it possible to live a life of active Altruism?

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The Ideal of Service

Luke Michael Ironside

Theosophy has at times been accused of attracting dreamers to its cause, and here a misconception arises that Theosophy seeks to escape from the world and, in so doing, retreat from the great issues of the time; a misconception that Theosophists are rather too metaphysical for the practicalities of societal life. Too often do we hear this reproach that Theosophists are somehow divorced from the great battle of the day, from that which touches humanity at its deepest point. And yet, it is

service that rests at the heart of what it means to be a Theosophist.

How, then, do we apply the teachings of Theosophy on a practical level? How does Theosophy respond to a world of abundant suffering, and to the problems of life that affront us on every side? How may we, as Theosophists, assist in the building of an ethical society upon the cornerstone of Universal Brotherhood in a world where brotherhood is daily shunned? It is these questions that are relevant to us now, more than ever, as we pave the way for the generations to come.

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A Life of Active Altruism

Dr R. Revathy

My life in the Theosophical Society at Adyar has been a matter of continuous learning, giving me the opportunity to ponder certain aspects of Theosophical life. “Life” refers to the existence of the soul within the body; “altruism” refers to selfless service or serving others without expecting anything in return; and “active” very significantly qualifies both “life” and “altruism”.

All of us are aware of the TS motto: “Truth is above all the Religions” — *sathyam-nasthi paro dharmah*. This does not mean we are against any religion, but that we feel there is one Truth which is the basis of every religion. Based on this understanding, we have proclaimed “Universal Brotherhood”.

Every religion declares specific meth-

ods of reaching the ultimate reality, but we the members of the TS are *also* concerned about our fellow beings, considering it as important as the former.

The duality and unity of beings vis-a-vis the supreme power have been explained in the Upanishads with the example of two birds on a tree. One bird on a lower branch is very restless. Suddenly, it sees another bird on the top-most branch of the tree. This bird is very calm and peaceful. So, the first bird goes up in small hops to see the other from close quarters, and eventually becomes one with it. This is how the *jivaatma* becomes one with the *paramaatma*, and it applies to any number of birds sitting on the lower levels. They will ultimately climb up and become one with the highest.

J. Krishnamurti quotes the Master’s

words in *At the Feet of the Master*: “Use your thought power every day for good purposes, be a force in the direction of evolution. Think each day of someone whom you know to be in sorrow, suffering, or in need of help, and pour out loving thoughts upon him.”

The next aspect is about altruistic action, but again, with certain conditions. Our actions must be in the right direction as dictated by our right thought. We should do it with the spirit of doing the work as in the service of the Masters. Lord Krishna has declared in the *Gita* that we need to do what has to be done, but without expectations of the results. Next, we need to do the work with love, knowing only the joy of giving, and not concerned with receiving anything in return. This love, in an intense form becomes *bhakti* and purifies the work from

the evils of egoism (*ahamkaara*). Development of such devotion is the key to true progress in our theosophical life.

While the Society enquires into the ultimate truth underlying all the great religions and the unity of life, Dr Besant went a step ahead and set down practical steps for the path of selfless service, which she named the Theosophical Order of Service. In the TOS we forget the self in working for others, and make selflessness and love the basis of our actions. In the words of our former president G. S. Arundale, the TS teaches the philosophy of Universal Brotherhood, while the TOS provides a platform to practise it. Radha Burnier said that the TOS is not only concerned with the alleviation of suffering, but also with instilling a spirit of altruism and compassionate love in people.

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THE HEART OF THEOSOPHY

Barbara B. Hebert

(Summary of short Lecture delivered on 4.1.2018)

The Ancient Wisdom as expressed through Theosophy is complex and multifaceted. Conversations about the Ancient Wisdom range from the Unmanifest through spiritual evolution to the lives we live on this physical plane. What, one might ask, is at the center of this great teaching? Is there one important component upon which we could focus? Possibly the answers to these questions is quite simply: Love. Can we even imagine a world filled with love? Can we imagine a world in which individuals care for one another with

compassion and understanding? Can we imagine a world in which everyone works together for peace and harmony? Yet, we know that love, compassion, understanding, peace, and harmony are hallmarks of the inner realms of existence. Love beyond all measure for humanity may be the one thing that is at the center of the Ancient Wisdom, the one important component upon which we can focus. Together, we will explore what may be called the Heart of Theosophy and some of the ways in which we can incorporate it into our daily lives.

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THERE IS NO OTHER

Pedro Oliveira

(Summary of short Lecture delivered on 4.1.2018)

In her Blavatsky Lecture delivered at the Centenary Convention of the English Section of the Theosophical Society on 30 July 1988, Radhaji said:

The tradition of yoga, contrary to common belief, is not confined to India, and it is not an esoteric activity into which only a few can gain entry. It is related to a universal stream of enquiry and understanding which flows across the ages in the diverse schools concerned with the transcendence of man. In Egypt and Greece, in Sufi lore, in the teachings of the Buddhists and Taoists, in the Christian tradition, in the Tantra and Vedanta, at the heart of the outer teachings there is a way of life and a training appropriate to the inner quest and direction signified by the word “yoga”.

If we remain fixated on the body of the teaching and thus develop a mere intellectual rapport with it, we miss a great deal. The history of religions and spiritual movements bear testimony of the endless — and heated — divisions caused by a literal grasp of the teachings. Such divisions are essentially based on a bitter dispute for the source of scriptural authority as well as the tyranny of “the only valid view”. Such attitude can never reach the living stream of truth that lies always above mental representations of any kind. As stated in the little booklet *Madame Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy*, “no picture will ever represent the TRUTH”.

What are the stages on the path?

The Christian mystical tradition speaks of *via purgativa*, *via illuminativa* and *via unitiva*. The first stage is to purge the consciousness of the grosser forms of the sense of self-attachment, self-delusion, self-importance, separateness. The second stage is to bring clarity to the mind by pondering on essential, universal truths. In the third stage the mind, merged with the larger consciousness, becomes a pure vessel for the truth of truths — the Unity of all life.

The Buddhist tradition mentions *shīla*, *samadhi*, *prajna* — harmonious and responsible conduct, the education and purification of the mind, and wisdom. In all traditions one’s actual conduct is the starting point. There can be no other. In this stage harmony is an imperative for one to proceed further. When that is done with some degree of success one can move further in order to understand all the mental currents and habits and begin to educate the mind towards quiet awareness. The last stage is beautifully described in the Third Fragment of *The Voice of the Silence*:

The Dhyana gate is like an alabaster vase, white and transparent; within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of Prajna that radiates from Atman.

The Upanishads state that in order to know Atman, the true Self, which is identical with Brahman, the Boundless Reality, one should proceed through three stages: *sravana*, *manana*, *nididhyasana*

— listening, reflecting, meditating.

The final discovery to be found on the path is indeed a rediscovery: that in this world, in this planet, in the vast solar system, and in the bound-

less universe, there is no other.

In the biblical words of that great master-builder, St Paul: “We are members one of another.”

(Ephesians 4:25)



DANCE PROGRAMME

Bharatanatyam — Bhakti Maargam

The Namaargam Dance Company presented a dance programme, themed Bhakti Maargam, on 1 Jan 2018. It began with a uniquely curated piece that showcased Bharatanatyam as juiced from the extracts of Bharata Muni’s *Natya-sastra*. This was followed by a Nandi Chol, a dance piece set to the syllables of the *mridangam*, originally attributed to Nandi during Lord Siva’s cosmic dance that created the world. The third item was excerpts from “Sami Ninnekori”, a creation of the Thanjavur quartet and coming from the lineage of the pure Thanjavur Bani, and distinctively rendered in their landmark style. Two *padams* “Sivakamasundari” in raga *mukhari* and “Bhavayami Gopalabhavam” in raga *yamuna-kalyani* followed. The

evening concluded with a duet Thillana in a mix of ragas *hindolam*, *amrithavarshini*, and *revathy*.

The performers were Krithika Subrahmanian and Nandini Murali. Krithika, the Director of Namaargam Dance Company, produces and performs rare traditional *margams* and has widely acclaimed works of choreography to her credit. She is also a renowned architect and designer whose unique trademark is a restrained yet eclectic pattern of juxtaposed tradition and modernity. Nandini hails from an artistic family and performs in group productions and lecture demonstrations with Namaargam. She is also a consultant chartered accountant running her own firm.



THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

The **Cuban** Section Annual Convention was celebrated on 14 and 15 January with the theme “Seven Levels of Divine Love”. Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig, from Mexico, presented a series of programs at the national headquarters in Havana from 15 to 22 March, which was appreciated. They gave a public conference about “The Inner Child” and two

meetings for members: “How to Live Theosophy in the Modern World” and “The Philosophy of Impermanence”. The Section’s two-day Summer School was organized as a workshop for members by the Lodges in Havana on *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First series, compiled by C. Jinarajadasa. Their magazine, *Revista Teosófica Cubana*, con-

tinues as an electronic quarterly. The Section, with 572 members in 12 Lodges, is the second largest in Latin America.

The TS in the **Dominican Republic** has 34 members in 2 Lodges and one study center. The major events of Atma Lodge in Santo Domingo were several lectures given in late March by Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig on keys to overcome suffering. Also in Santo Domingo a group of members inaugurated the H. P. Blavatsky weekly study group in August under the guidance of Felipe de Castro. Theosophical topics are discussed and presented weekly by Nueva Aurora members in Rio Plata for the general public.

The **Mexican Section** welcomed Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig last December, who conducted the Section's School of Wisdom program. The Section also supported the Inter-American Theosophical Federation program in realizing the lectures given by Professor P. Krishna. In September the new Guadalajara study center was certified.

The **Peruvian** Presidential Agency has 33 members in 2 active Lodges, holding 16 public talks between them during the year. They also offered a free internet Course of Theosophy for the public and had their usual studies and meetings for members. Their highlight of the year was that they could finally raise enough funds to buy land in December to build their own hall for public lectures, to hold around 50 or more people, and to possibly house their two Lodges.

The TS in **Puerto Rico** presented public conferences on a wide range of theo-

logical subjects almost every Sunday to reach out to interested walk-in persons. Some examples are "The Seven Bodies of Man", "Interior Harmony", and "The Path of Occultism", delivered by members from their Presidential Agency. They received the visit of Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig, who offered public conferences attended by 40 to 50 persons. The Agency has 40 members in 3 Lodges.

The Regional Association in **Uruguay** gained 2 members, now standing at 58 in five Lodges. They hold weekly meetings and studies based on Theosophical literature, including J. Krishnamurti and E. Tolle. They also study articles published in *Sophia*, the official magazine of the TS in Spain and from the Internet, seeking the convergence of modern science and the Ancient Wisdom. Videos of seminars in Spain and lectures of Juan Viñas in Brasilia were also shown. A course was given by the Organizing Secretary, Ema de Souza Leal, on "An Approach to Theosophy".

The **TS in the USA (TSA)** has 3,323 members in 35 Lodges and 46 study centers. During the year, Tim Boyd, international President, ended his second 3-year term of service as President of the TSA, and Barbara Hebert, former Vice-President under his presidency, assumed Mr Boyd's role as of 1 July. David Bruce remains the National Secretary and Floyd Kettering continues as the National Treasurer. Mr Bruce reports that two new study centers were certified during the year. He organized 42 lectures or workshops at Lodges, study centers, camps, and Federations. The Henry S. Olcott Memorial **Library**

and Archives is central to a growing Theosophical community worldwide. Their archivist, Janet Kerschner, and Pablo Sender continue to coordinate construction of their Theosophy Wiki encyclopedia online, available in English, Spanish, Russian, French, and now in Italian. Boris de Zirkoff's annotated copy of Blavatsky's *Theosophical Glossary* is accessible through this online service. By **webcasting** their Thursday night lectures and other programs, they reach a larger national and international audience. Also they have continued to increase their number of online interactive webinar programs. Pablo Sender's course on *The Secret Doctrine* and Ravi Ravindra's course "Freedom from the Self: A Study of the Yoga-sutras" were very popular. Taken as a whole, these programs advance the mission of the Society and benefit the entire world community. The **IT department**, managed by Chris Bolger, has supported the Quest Book Shop in migrating to a new inventory and point-of-sale system. A complete redesign of the main TSA website, <www.theosophical.org>, is underway. They are also starting a new

project with Quest Books to produce audio versions of some of their more popular paperback titles. These can be sold via download from Amazon.com. The **Quest Book Shop** in Wheaton has an average of 1,000 sales per month, and over 3,000 customers receive a monthly e-newsletter announcing special sales. Theosophical books are their best-selling book category, but books on all major religious traditions, esoteric studies, philosophy, science, mysticism, and contemporary teachings.

The Presidential Agency in **Venezuela** has 15 members in 2 Lodges that meet to study together every Sunday for two hours and then they have lunch together. Their studies include Annie Besant's *A Study in Consciousness*, and *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, vol. I (based on *At the Feet of the Master*) by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater.

In addition to the Lodge in **Israel**, with 67 members, there are 7 more Lodges attached to Adyar: 2 in France, and one each in Croatia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Qatar, and USA, totaling 172 members, including Israel. There are also 29 Fellows at Large (members attached to Adyar).



Number of delegates registered as of Wednesday, 3 January: 962

Printed at the Vasanta Press, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India