

## **THE PRESENT NEED**

**Mr Tim Boyd**

*(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 30.12.2014)*

When the Theosophical Society came into being in 1875, it was founded with certain clear and stated goals in mind. The most fundamental of those was the formation of a nucleus of people steeped in the deep significance of unity or brotherhood. The initial effort on the part of the founders was educational. Many foreign (to the Western world) and exotic concepts had to first be stated, defined, and promoted. It was difficult, thankless, and pioneering work. H. P. Blavatsky had no illusions about the possibilities for success during her own lifetime. Towards the end of her life she said that the teachings she had come to present would not be capable of being understood until the twentieth century. In order for the larger world to grasp it, certain advances in both world view and the capacities of science were required.

Much of the theosophical work over the years has involved the presentation of the deep resources of the broad view that Theosophy embraces. In many respects the TS has been highly successful

in this work. Ideas such as karma, reincarnation, the multi-dimensional nature of the human being and the universe, and the fact of spiritual evolution and unfoldment of consciousness are now widely accepted in the world's popular culture. These advances in sowing conceptual seeds have now brought us to a point where a deeper work can begin. Although it is rich in profound and potentially transformative ideas, theosophy in its essence is not conceptual. The rich structure of knowledge is necessary to indicate a deeper truth that can only be 'known' experientially.

In many ways it seems that our predecessors have laboured to establish the groundwork for the times in which we are now living. In the Maha Chohan's letter he comments on his view of the direction of movement in human society. The divisions he describes in the 'intellectual portion of mankind' have continued and 'the combative natural instinct of man' has advanced in 'inflicting hitherto unheard-of cruelty

and enormous tyranny, injustice, and so on'. Furthermore, scientific and technological advances have linked the globe together, at least on the level of information and immediacy.

For the person living in the world today there are many challenges. One of the most demanding of those challenges is finding a way to keep up with the rapidly changing world around us. Humans are by nature remarkably adaptable. In times of plenty or in times of lack, in times of peace and of war, invariably we somehow make a way. From the point of view of our spiritual lives our ability to adapt to inhospitable conditions can be more of a curse than a blessing. Krishnamurti famously said: 'It is no sign of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.'

Anyone who pays even the slightest attention to the affairs of the world is aware of certain imminent crises — global warming, the depletion of the oceans resources, deforestation, pollution of air and water, mass extinctions, and global warfare and violence are just a few. All of these are problems directly caused by the unbalancing effect of an undeveloped humanity. One remarkable feature of these impending crises is that known solutions exist for all of them, yet they persist. On the level of knowledge, nothing is lacking to address these issues. Why then do they persist? Albert Einstein made the profound statement that 'No problem can be solved on the level of consciousness that created it'.

Over the past four or five centuries the consciousness that has created

these problems has been moulded by two powerful currents. One has been the rise to dominance of the current scientific worldview — a view that is described as reductionism, or reductionist materialism. The other has been a movement towards a self-centred individualism that has mistaken the profound and spiritually oriented phrase 'all men are created equal' for a statement that places the undeveloped on an equal footing with those who truly know. A materially based science in the service of a self-centred humanity has made for a toxic combination.

What does Theosophy or the Theosophical Society have to add to this mix? Theosophy in its meaning of ageless wisdom has a transformative potential. The worldview which Theosophy describes is multi-dimensional. It is also a view in which real power is found at the deeper levels of consciousness with the deepest and most powerful dimensions expressing in silence. The power to shape and to mould even the material world resides deep within. Although never far from the surface of our living, so much of our daily concern and activities create barriers to its free expression. In loving acts towards others, attraction to beauty, sensitivity to the needs of other living beings, the power that comes from an active recognition of Oneness flows through us and into the world. This is a state of being that we can cultivate. We must learn to live our lives at its limits?at the boundaries that normally close us off from the experience of 'the other'.

The primary attraction of the

Theosophical teachings is the demonstrated history of great beings. Among some of its members and in its inner founders the overarching compassion and wisdom that demonstrate the possibility to connect with a higher life have been revealed. What is possible for one is possible for all who deeply desire it. The need of this moment is

not different from other times. The difference is that with the current global interconnections that have become the norm, the impact of an active and aware individual is greatly magnified. With the many immediate crises facing the world, there is a need for aware individuals and for an organization that supports and focuses that awareness.



## **BEACONS FOR A WORLD IN MOTION: A CLEAR MIND, A PURE HEART**

**Mrs Sabine van Osta**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 30.12.2014)*

In this short lecture, we will investigate the timeless adage which states that no problem can be so complex that it cannot be solved by a stable, clear and intelligent mind and no obstacle can be so high that it cannot be overcome by a pure,

courageous heart. Even today's turmoil, which is only the result of mankind's own doing, can be seen as an open invitation towards the insight that the world's equilibrium only depends upon each and everyone's clear mind and pure heart.



## **BROTHERHOOD, A FACT AND A CHALLENGE**

**Mrs Els Rijnker**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 30.12.2014)*

Every morning, we recite Annie Besant's Universal Mantra or Invocation to the Unity, *O Hidden Life*. . ., here at the International Convention in Adyar. Each atom has this 'vibrant hidden life' in its essence, like a sparkling ray from the One Life. This One Life is our common ground, although in the rush of daily life we seem not to be aware of it.

One human person forms, and is part of a whole set of different physical organs and functions. All are acting as one and doing their jobs, being

interconnected, and readjusting the equilibrium when necessary, in order for the whole to function properly. Everything is working together, in one big brotherhood, all being part of the One Life. That is a fact.

What is meant by the 'challenge' of brotherhood then? Here the main human principle comes in: thought or *kama manas*. We all have our backgrounds of family, school, community, society, nation. Those backgrounds implant ideas, opinions, and prejudices, based on feel-

ings, pains, memories, and thoughts. Here lies the important task for all of us of brave enquiry, trying to see things as they really are; we can only do this ourselves. THIS is our Theosophical work:

reflecting on our thoughts and deeds, living a pure and ethical life, striving for self-realization, and thereby giving our share to the total sphere of *manas*, to humanity, to our planet, to the world.



## **THEOSOPHY AND A NEED FOR IDEALS IN MODERN WORLD**

**Mrs Svitlana Gavrylenko**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 30.12.2014)*

Since ancient times, the concepts of ideas and ideals have been the focus of numerous teachings and philosophies. This included ideals that could help mankind in successfully developing as a highly humanistic civilization. The ideas and ideals presented in theosophy are important tools for fostering the grounds for a new civilization, the implementation of which is an important task entrusted to the Theosophical Society by its genuine Founders.

These ideas include, first of all, the idea of evolution, in its highest exalted spiritual sense, as described in the stanzas of Dzyan and the commentaries on them. Then the ideas of Spiritual Hierarchy, of the Fundamental Unity of All Existence and of the One Life embracing all the Universe. And the Great Hermetic Axiom: '*As is the Inner, so is the Outer; as is the Great so is the Small . . .*'

The essence of work conducted by the Masters on a mental plane is to transfer ideas through inspiration to those receptive souls who are capable of shaping the ideas to become human ideals. Thus, our *manas* perceives and

produces ideas, though only on its own level, and performs this activity very successfully and permanently. These are our human ideals with their exalted and not fully exalted attributes and characteristics. One of them is the main goal of the TS, the ideal of the universal brotherhood of humanity: it is based on the idea of unity of all beings.

Today's world is captivated by materialistic world views. It is governed by pragmatic motives, and the priority of spiritual values is not recognized yet. Success is interpreted as the ability to manipulate people in order to achieve selfish goals. Moral criteria are depreciated and distorted. The information space is saturated with delusions and illusions. All the above provide evidence of a pressing need to introduce pure exalted ideals into the world. This is a social aspect of the service provided by the TS to mankind. These renewed ideals will help pave the way to new life priorities and values, which in turn will alter at first the direction of our mentality, and then, the expression of this mentality in our deeds. And then, the outer world will change.

# LOVE AND DEATH IN THE MYTHS OF INDIA — THEIR MESSAGE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

**Mr Manoj Das, Renowned Author**

*(Summary of Besant Lecture delivered on 29.12.2014)*

Mr Manoj Das, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo, took his audience on a spiritual journey to discover the power of love and death in world and Indian mythology, and thus within ourselves. Those who listened to him understood that mythology is in fact psychology writ large, and the enchanting stories of the churning of the Ocean of milk, where demons and gods competed for immortality; of Nachiketa, who was determined to understand the mystery of death; of Markandeya, who avoided death by entering Shiva-consciousness; and Ruru, whose journey into the underworld was familiar to those acquainted with Greek mythology, as the Orpheus legend, led us deeper into the shared inner world of all humanity: into ourselves. He could show us that any human emotion can be elevated when it is turned towards the divine. This is the path of evolution through which the expanding heart is able to eventually include the entire universe. Finally, Savitri's legend was an example of how human love turned into divine power could conquer death and destiny, offering hope in the evolutionary crisis of the half-animal/half-divine human being. Like the lotus flower emerging out of the muddy lake, human emotions may be transformed and rise up to the Divine with devotion. Following is a portion of his Besant Lecture:

Very few people today realize what a splendid unpublicized work was done by the Theosophical movement in the last century. It was this movement which made millions across the world realize that there is more to life than meets the eye, that there is a different dimension to normal existence. I am happy to give a talk in memory of Madam Annie Besant, who did so much for this country during the last century. Apart from her Theosophical activities all over the world, her contribution for India's freedom movement, and for stirring pride in India's ancient traditions, was splendid! Part of these traditions are the myths of India.

Myths are those stories which have survived hundreds, and some

even thousands of years. In Madame Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, it is said that the essence of lost civilizations might have survived through a myth. There is a wave of misconceived ideas, thanks to Sigmund Freud, that love is nothing but an inherited animal instinct, slightly developed, culturized, and so on. But the real concept of love is quite different. Love is something Divine sent upon the Earth from the heavens. This concept is immortalized in the myths of India. In one of India's myths, Vishnu goes into the ocean in search of knowledge and comes up with the Vedas. But this quest for knowledge is not confined to India.

Many ancient civilizations had this quest. For example, the familiar Myth

of the Sphinx: Atop a hill, along a lengthy road, there sits a strange creature — the face of a woman, the body of a lion, the paws of a dog, a snake for its tail, and whoever happened to pass by, it would shout at the traveller, ‘Stop, you cannot cross this road unless you’ve answered the riddle I’ll put to you.’ What is this riddle? ‘Name the creature who walks on four legs in the morning, walks on two legs as the day grows, and walks on three legs in the evening.’ The Sphinx would set a time limit — until sunset. And if no traveller could answer this riddle as the sun went down, the Sphinx would pounce down on the hapless traveller and would tear him asunder.

Years, and probably centuries, passed. One day the great hero Oedipus happened to pass by, and the moment

the terrible being put the question to him, he shouted: ‘I am the answer!’ The Sphinx demanded an answer, and Oedipus said: ‘In the morning, the dawn of my life, I crawl on all four — two hands and two legs — I walk on four legs. “As the day grows” means, as I grow up I walk on two legs. “In the evening” means, in the evening of my life I take recourse to a stick, I walk on three legs.’ The moment the answer has been given, it is the Sphinx who jumps to its own death.

It is a wonderful and significant myth: The day man knows himself, death dies, there is no longer death for him; so death is self-illusion. The very constitution of the Sphinx makes it an illusory creature. What a great truth remains embedded in such a short story!



## THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

**Puerto Rico** and the Dominican Republic are both headed by Presidential Representative Magaly Polanco, who says that in Puerto Rico they have had very fruitful meetings, offering public lectures focusing on theosophical subjects every Sunday from 10 am to Noon. Mr Gaspar Torres, from the Krotona Institute of Theosophy and former General Secretary of the TS in Cuba, gave 3 lectures, and also led a workshop, with over 50 participants. Puerto Rico completed the painting of their building at a high cost with the contribution and efforts of all the members. In the **Dominican Republic**

they received the visit of Mr Jesus López from Puerto Rico, who gave 3 lectures over a month’s time. Mr Torres also visited this Presidential Agency, holding a series of presentations and a day-long seminar, in addition to being the keynote speaker at the White Lotus Day celebration on 8 May. He also gave a public lecture, a seminar in Santo Domingo, a meeting for members only, and a lecture to over 100 high school students in San Cristóbal.

**Costa Rica** has gained 2 members during the year, with 5 Lodges and one informal Centre for Theosophical Studies. Presidential Representative

Maria de los Angeles Orlich informs us that they have a study group in Cartago City that meets weekly. The Regional Association in **Central America** has a new Organizing Secretary in Beatriz E. Martínez who was elected during the year with a two-year term. They also made changes to their Constitution. A directed study on *The Voice of the Silence* was conducted and also a series of public lectures and video conferences. Finally, after a period of silence, the TS in **Venezuela** writes that they have three coordinators: Ms Nelly Nouel, Oscar J. Hernández and Omar González, who are trying to revive and strengthen the activities in the country.

At the **International Headquarters** in Adyar, there have been some changes apart from the new President. Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy has been elected as the international Vice-President and Ms Marja Artamaa has been appointed as the international Secretary. Other appointments include Mr S. M. Umakanth Rao as Acting Manager, Theosophical Publishing House, and Dr Cyril Samuels as Veterinary Doctor in the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary. The Estate Administration Committee and the Election Committee steered the affairs of the TS well particularly in the absence of the late President. Two main roads were repaired and two others were newly laid, the lift in the Leadbeater Chambers was replaced, several wells were desilted, and repair and painting work was undertaken in many buildings. Mr S. Ramkumar chipped in whenever necessary.

The turnover of the **Theosophical Publishing House** was Rs. 2.1 million this year, a little less than the previous year's turnover of Rs. 2.3 million. Subscription to journals has increased. Only 8 reprints were brought out during the year but several more have been authorized by the newly constituted TPH Council. The accounts of the TPH, which were neglected between October 2013 and March 2014 have been brought up to date. The **Adyar Library and Research Centre's** work was strengthened by the appointment of Prof. T. Narayanan Kutty as Director, Dr S. Bhubaneswari as Research Officer, and Mrs Padma Padmanabhan as Research Assistant. The Library's bulletin, *Brahmavidyā*, 2012-13, was published along with a supplement containing articles on *The Secret Doctrine* by HPB on completion of its 125th year of publication. A specialcommemorative issue of *Brahmavidya* for 2014-15 in honour of Dr Radha Burnier, former Director of the Adyar Library for 20 years, is under preparation. Four sessions of the **School of the Wisdom** were conducted by Mr Pedro Oliveira, Prof. R. C. Tampi (Director of the School), Venerable Olande Ananda and Dr Ravi Ravindra. The **Olcott Education Society** continued its work through its five units. One of its former units, the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary, was transferred to the Management of the TS as approved by the OES Board and the Executive Committee of the TS. Formal approval of the Government was received this year for upgradation of the Olcott Memorial High School to a Higher

Secondary School. OES was able to get adequate financial help from Indian and other donors to support the upgradation of the School, to the Higher Secondary level and for higher wages now being given to the teachers and other staff of OES. The school students are doing well overall. A computer centre was set up in the school with help received from a Corporate donor. The **Social Welfare Centre** continues to run a day-care centre cum nursery school for about 60 children of working parents from low income groups. The Vocational Training Centre has 22 women students undergoing one year course in weaving, tailoring, and embroidery. Recently the Vocational Training Centre has been collaborating with the Unnati Foundation of Bengaluru to conduct short-term vocational training in various trades for unemployed youth aged 18 – 30, to help them find employment. The first batch of 8 students, including 2 former students of the Olcott School, completed their training and have found employment earning from Rs.7,000 to Rs.12,000. The HPB hostel is running well. It accommodates 12 boys from class 5 – 12. The Visitors' Centre is operated by the OES, which has many Theosophical books, magazines, infor-

mation booklets, beautiful photographs of flowers, trees, birds, and buildings from the TS campus. The **Besant Scout Camping Centre** was used by 22 institutions/scout groups, benefiting about 1,200 children through camping activities. The **Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary** continued its work taking care of animals, with 3,226 cases treated during the year. The Centre is helped by the Animal Welfare Committee, now chaired by Mr Anoop Jaiswal. The **TOS International** continued its work with Mrs Diana Dunningham Chapotin as its international Secretary. It had a year characterized by increased collaboration with the TS. It emphasized projects to protect women against discrimination and violence, and assistance for education of children in Karachi and to families displaced by war in Syria. Work was intensified in Ukraine, France, Italy, India, Spain, Australia, Congo, and Pakistan. A special effort was made in November 2013 to support the TOS in the Philippines following the super-cyclone that hit parts of Southeast Asia. Donations flowed in from all over the world. There was greater coverage of TOS work in TS magazines and Lodges.

TIM BOYD

