

Krishnamurti: Ninety Years of Theosophical Ripples — II

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

From George Arundale's speech:

You have had on this most memorable morning the great privilege of listening first to the representative in the outer world of the world's greatest KING [Annie Besant]. As his representative, she has given to you his message. Not often is it given to the great KING's messenger to convey to the outer world his order and commands. And then you had the great privilege of listening to my beloved brother Oscar, a great representative of the coming Lord. And so I stand before you, and I would like you to think of my dear brother, Bishop Wedgwood, as standing by my side today, as he will be tomorrow. We two stand before you as humble representatives of the third great department of which our Mother has spoken to you. The first, the ruling department, with our Chief as its messenger here today; the second, the great department of wisdom and of teaching with my brother Oscar as its representative here today. And now with the power and the fire comes the need of the third great department, that of the Mahachohan, the great Organiser of the world's forces, whose

pupils my brother Wedgwood and myself have the infinite privilege to be. (p. 314)

From George Arundale's speech:

I have a somewhat difficult, though marvelously fascinating task to take up this morning. I do it with a certain amount of diffidence, because I am speaking here to you this morning by command of my own great Master, the Mahachohan who represents so wonderfully the Activity department of the Logos, and one can only very feebly reflect in human speech the instructions that He has given.

Now, briefly put, it is the desire and intention of the Elder Brethren that with as little delay as possible there should be established a great Theosophical World-University with stress on the word "theosophical". And when I use the word "theosophical", I want you to realise that I naturally include in it the word "Star". I make no distinction myself between the Star and Theosophy, because the Star is all-embracing and Theosophy must inevitably therefore come within its enfolding rays. Nevertheless, speaking as I am to a Star audience, I want

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you to realise to the full that this Theosophical World-University is essentially and definitely a Star activity; the more so is it definitely a Star activity as it happens, as no doubt many of you know, that our beloved Head, Krishnaji, has in the past been associated with Universities. . . .

My Master said only the other day that He would himself guide and control this University. When about the same time we had the privilege of an audience of the Lord Maitreya himself, alluding to this University, He said, that it would have his own great benediction, so that we start under the most wonderful auspices. (p. 318)

From Dr Besant's address:

And the Liberal Catholic Church should be the very heart of the teaching that the Christ will give. The TS was called by a Master the cornerstone of the Religion of the future, where all the religions will meet together in that Church Universal . . . (p. 339)

When Bishop Leadbeater, who was in Sydney at that time, was made aware of the several announcements, including reports of initiations, apostles, and so on, which took place at Ommen in August 1925, "he was 'visibly distressed', according to Ernest Wood who happened to be with him in Sydney at the time. He did not believe in any of it and said to Wood, 'Oh, I hope she does not wreck the Society.'" (Mary Lutyens' *Krishnamurti — The Years of Awakening*, John Murray, London, 1975, p. 214)

From George Arundale's communication:

The Camp broke up on the 14th and the party who had been at Huizen before it opened returned there. George kept saying excitedly all day, "I know something else has happened but it seems impossible!" But the impossible had happened, for the next morning Mrs Besant called Lady Emily, Esther Bright, Rukmini, and Shiva Rao into her room and told them very shyly that she, Leadbeater, K. Raja, George, Wedgwood and Oscar had all taken their fifth and final Initiation on the night of the 13th, but it was to make no difference to the way they were to be treated. (Rukmini later told Lady Emily that she had become an Adept — that is, taken the fifth Initiation — at the same time as the others. She had taken three Initiations in three days!) (*Krishnamurti — The Years of Awakening*, John Murray, London, 1975, pp. 214–215)

Below is Krishnaji's response to the developments at Ommen:

Lady Emily had written to K. from Huizen to tell him about everything that had occurred there and had received a cable from him while she was in Camp asking whether Leadbeater had confirmed all these happenings. She had cabled back that Mrs Besant herself was making the announcements, and added, "Put your trust in her". When she arrived in London, she found a letter from him awaiting her full of a most unhappy scepticism.

(*Krishnamurti — The Years of Awakening*, p. 215)

Krishnamurti: Excerpts of His First Public Talk at Adyar, 29 December 1933

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Mr Warrington, the acting President of the Theosophical Society, kindly invited me to come to Adyar and to give some talks here. I am very glad to have accepted his invitation and I appreciate his friendliness, which I hope will continue, even though we may differ completely in our ideas and opinions.

I hope that you will all listen to my talks without prejudice, and will not think that I am trying to attack your society. I want to do quite another thing. I want to arouse the desire for true search, and this, I think, is all that a teacher can do. That is all I want to do. If I can awaken that desire in you, I have completed my task, for out of that desire comes intelligence, that intelligence which is free from any system and organized belief. This intelligence is beyond all thought of compromise and false adjustment. So, during these talks, those of you who belong to various societies or groups will please bear in mind that I am very grateful to the Theosophical Society and its acting President for having asked me to come here to speak, and that I am not attacking the Theosophical Society. I am not interested in attacking. But I hold that while organizations for the social welfare of man are necessary, societies based on religious hopes and beliefs are pernicious. So, though I may appear to speak harshly, please bear in mind that I am not attacking any particular society, but that I am against all these false organizations which, though they profess to help man, are in reality a great hindrance and are the means of constant exploitation. . . . Now the beliefs, ideals, virtues, and sanc-

tified ideas which you are pursuing, and which you call knowledge, prevent creative thinking and thereby put an end to the continual ripening of thought. For thought does not mean the following of a particular groove of established ideas, habits, traditions. Thought is critical; it is a thing a part from inherited or acquired knowledge. When you merely accept certain ideas, traditions, you are not thinking and there is slow stagnation. You say to me, “We have beliefs, we have traditions, we have principles; are they not right? Must we get rid of them?” I am not going to say that you must get rid of them or that you must not. Indeed, your very readiness to accept the idea that you must or must not get rid of these beliefs and traditions prevents you from thinking; you are already in a state of acceptance, and therefore you have not the capacity to be critical. . . .

[Y]ou hold certain beliefs, certain dogmas, certain principles with which you oppose any new and conflicting situation, and you imagine that you are thinking, that you are critical, creative. . . . But if your attitude is merely one of opposition, then your mind will not meet mine; then you will not understand what I am trying to convey.

So when the mind is accustomed to opposition, when it has been carefully trained, through so-called education, through tradition and belief, through religious and philosophical systems, to acquire this attitude of opposition, it naturally does not have the capacity to criticize and to doubt truly. But if you are going to understand me, this is the first thing you should have. Please don't shut your minds against what

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I am saying. True criticism is the desire to find out. The faculty to criticize exists only when you want to discover the inherent worth of a thing. But you are not accustomed to that. Your minds are cleverly trained to give values, but by that process you will never understand the inherent significance of a thing, of an experience, or of an idea.

To me, then, true criticism consists in trying to find out the intrinsic worth of the thing itself, and not in attributing a quality to that thing. You attribute a quality to an environment, to an experience, only when you want to derive something from it, when you want to gain or to have power or happiness. Now this destroys true criticism. Your desire is perverted through attributing values, and therefore you cannot see clearly. Instead of trying to see the flower in its original and entire beauty, you look at it through coloured glasses, and therefore you can never see it as it is. . . .

My purpose during this series of talks is to awaken your own true critical capacity, so that teachers will become unnecessary to you, so that you will not feel the necessity for lectures, for sermons, so that you will realize for yourself what is true and live completely. The world will be a happier place when there are no more teachers, when a man no longer feels that he must preach to his neighbour. But that state can come about only when you, as individuals, are really awakened, when you greatly doubt, when you have truly begun to question in the midst of sorrow. Now you have ceased to suffer. You have suffocated your minds with explanations, with know-

ledge; you have hardened your hearts. You are not concerned with feeling, but with beliefs, ideas, with the sanctity of so-called knowledge, and therefore you are starved; you are no longer human beings, but mere machines. . . .

There is no resting place in life. Thought can have no resting place. But you are seeking such a place of rest. In your various beliefs, religions, you have sought such a resting place, and in this seeking you have ceased to be critical, to flow with life, to enjoy, to live richly. . . .

The unknown is not your concern. Beware of the man who describes to you the unknown, truth, or God. Such a description of the unknown offers you a means of escape — and besides, truth defies all description. In that escape there is no understanding, there is no fulfillment. In escape there is only routine and decay. Truth cannot be explained or described. It is. I say that there is a loveliness which cannot be put into words; if it were, it would be destroyed; it would then no longer be truth. But you cannot know this loveliness, this truth, by asking about it; you can know it only when you have understood the known, when you have grasped the full significance of that which is before you. [The full text can be seen at <[krishnamurti.org /content/adyar-1st-public-talk-29th-december-1933/](http://krishnamurti.org/content/adyar-1st-public-talk-29th-december-1933/)>]

Madame Blavatsky on the Essential Work of the Theosophical Society (TS)

Belief in the Masters was never made an article of faith in the TS. But for its Founders, the instructions received from them when

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it was established have ever been sacred.

H. P. Blavatsky, *The Original Programme of the Theosophical Society*
(1886)

(Online text: <theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/theos/th-origp.htm>)

The above statement from the principal Co-Founder of the TS is relevant because it is an expression of truth. There is no official, institutional belief in the Masters in the TS nor is it a requirement for membership. The TS policies in fact forbid the imposition of any such beliefs on its members. The Society is not a belief-based organization but an enquiry-based one. But there were and there are members for whom the reality of the Masters and their work is an inwardly-centred realization which has made all the difference to their lives. It is also the result of their deep study and assimilation of Theosophy as a Wisdom teaching. However, this is a private matter and not an institutional one. The Theosophical Society was and remains free from organizational beliefs.

In the following statement, HPB suggests that the efficient work of the TS involves a “process of inner enlightenment” which is brought about by the weakening of the “feeling of separateness” in ourselves, points which were also taken up by Krishnaji in his writings:

It is not the policy of self-preservation, not the welfare of one or another personality in its finite and physical form that will or can ever secure the desired object and screen the Society from the effects of the social “hurricane” to come; but only

the weaken-ing of the feeling of separateness in the units which compose its chief element. And such a weakening can only be achieved by a process of *inner enlightenment*. It is not violence that can ever insure bread and comfort for all; nor is the kingdom of peace and love, of mutual help and charity and “food for all”, to be conquered by a cold, reasoning, diplomatic policy.

It is only by the close brotherly union of men’s inner SELVES, of soul-solidarity, of the growth and development of that feeling which makes one suffer when one thinks of the suffering of others, that the reign of Justice and equality for all can ever be inaugurated. This is the first of the three fundamental objects for which the Theosophical Society was established, and called the “Universal Brotherhood of Man”, without distinction of *race, colour or creed*.

H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings,
vol. 10, pp. 74–75

The Mahatma Letters

The following passages from *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* show similarities with the teachings of Krishnaji in what concerns the timeless nature of intuitive perception, the disastrous results of self-centredness and the age-old conditioning of the human mind. (Source: <theosociety.org/pasadena/mahatma/ml-con.htm>)

Believe me, there comes a moment in the life of an adept, when the hardships he has passed through are a thousandfold rewarded. In order to acquire further knowledge, he has no more to go through

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a minute and slow process of investigation and comparison of various objects, but is accorded an instantaneous, implicit insight into every first truth. . . . [T]he adept sees and feels and lives in the very source of all fundamental truths. (ML 31 / chron. ed. 17)

The real evil proceeds from human intelligence and its origin rests entirely with reasoning man who dissociates himself from Nature. Humanity, then, alone is the true source of evil. Evil is the exaggeration of good, the progeny of human selfishness and greediness. Think profoundly and you will find that save death — which is no evil but a necessary law, and accidents which will always find their reward in a future life — the *origin* of every evil whether small or great is in human action, in man whose intelligence makes him the one free agent in Nature. It is not Nature that creates diseases, but man. (ML 10 / chron. ed. 88)

As for human nature in general, it is the same now as it was a million of years ago: Prejudice based upon selfishness; a general unwillingness to give up an established order of things for new modes of life and thought — and occult study requires all that and much more; pride and stubborn resistance to Truth if it but upset their previous notions of things; such are the characteristics of your age. (ML 1 / chron. ed. 1)

The following quote provides evidence of how loose talk about the Masters hinders their essential work:

The cant about Masters must be silently but firmly put down. Let the devotion and service be to that Supreme Spirit alone of

which each one is a part. Namelessly and silently we work, and the continual references to ourselves and the repetition of our names raises up a confused aura that hinders our work. (Master KH to Annie Besant, August 1900, in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, Letter no. 59, TPH Adyar)

N. Sri Ram on Krishnamurti

Writing to a TS member in India, in July 1953, N. Sri Ram, the fifth President of the TS, said:

Our late President, Dr Besant, hoped for certain great events to take place, but it could not be said even at that time that they would take place in the exact manner in which the expectations were framed.

I personally feel that there is an intimate connection between Krishnamurti and the Great Teacher, but also believe that the message which comes through him is put in form which is Krishnamurti's own, so that we need not think that every word is literally "inspired", as devout Christians think of the words in the Bible. I have a very great respect for Krishnamurti and have also been influenced in my thoughts by what he says. (TS Archives)

Writing to another correspondent in December 1953, Sri Ram addressed the criticism of Krishnamurti within the TS:

I do not know how the report started that "the Theosophical Society is about 'to make peace' with Krishnamurti". I have great regard for him, and also affection. I believe there is a profound value in what he says, but at the same time I also think that in

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what we call “Theosophy” there is a magnificent conception, which in truth does not contradict what Krishnamurti says. So I do not think in terms of conflict and making peace. . . .

I know that in the past there have been misunderstandings between those who are ardent supporters of Krishnamurti, and those who are partisans of the theosophical movement. But in a cosmopolitan organization there is no room for any kind of partisanship. (TS Archives)

In my book *N. Sri Ram — A Life of Beneficence and Wisdom* (The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai, 2009), I included an interview with Sri Ram, conducted by the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in India. The interview was published in the December 1989 issue of *The Theosophist*, the N. Sri Ram Centennial Issue. A few excerpts, which relate to the relationship between the TS and Krishnamurti, are given below.

Q: *Mr Sri Ram, what was in Dr Besant’s mind when she declared Krishnamurti as the coming Teacher?*

NSR: Mrs Annie Besant believed that she was in touch with certain great beings whom the Hindus would call *rishis* or *mahatmas*, that is, *jivan-muktas*, liberated beings. She accepted the idea from Madame Blavatsky when she joined the Theosophical Society in 1889. And Mrs Besant practised certain forms of meditation and went in for rigorous self-training, and in that way she came, inwardly, not outwardly and physically, into touch with more than one of those *rishis* or *mahatmas*.

Their names are mentioned in theosophical books. They are usually referred to by their initials: Mahatma M. and Mahatma KH.

As she was in contact with those beings, she would receive certain instructions from them. I think she came to understand through this contact that the world was at a critical stage and the world teacher who is also one of the great beings called by the Buddhists, the *bodhisattvas*, was in all probability going to take a physical form in order to help humanity through this crisis. She believed that if Mr Krishnamurti grew up and proved worthy, he might become as it were, linked with the consciousness of the great World Teacher. So she believed that Krishnamurti had a great mission to perform.

This was about the year 1909, when Mr Krishnamurti was only fourteen years old, but both Mr Leadbeater and Dr Besant, who were in touch with these Mahatmas, believed that Krishnamurti would probably grow up to be a channel for the teaching of the supreme World Teacher, who, as I said, was one of the liberated beings and that was the reason why she took charge of him from his father.

His father was a Theosophist. She told the father about the possible destiny of his son, and the father gladly gave her the charge of Krishnamurti to be looked after. His father lived in poor circumstances. She could give many opportunities that he could not. She wanted him to be very well brought up, perfectly healthy, well-developed physically, have a good education, not in India, but perhaps in Oxford or in some places like that, and in every

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way helped him to fulfil his mission, and that was the reason why she took over charge of Mr Krishnamurti. I was myself at Adyar at that time. I remember seeing him as a boy in 1910, walking about these grounds along with his younger brother, Nityananda, who passed away later on. (pp. 180–182)

Q: *Did you also see some promise in Krishnamurti at that time?*

NSR: It was difficult for anyone to see the kind of promise, perhaps, which one would expect. He was not academically brilliant at that time. He was dreamy and mystical. He was not particularly interested in his studies. He did not do well as a comparatively small boy or as a child in his studies. So it is all the more surprising that Mr Leadbeater and Dr Besant should have seen something remarkable in him when no one else could see anything of that sort. (p. 182)

In my article, “There is No Religion Higher than Truth” — Views on E. L. Gardner’s criticism of C. W. Leadbeater (published in <cwlworld.info>), the following was mentioned:

In November 1963 E. L. Gardner, a former General Secretary of the English Section of the Theosophical Society and respected student of Madame Blavatsky’s writings, published a booklet entitled *There is No Religion Higher than Truth: Developments in the Theosophical Society*. In it Gardner presents a strong criticism of CWL’s perception of the Masters which is encapsulated in his following statement: “With the advantage of forty years perspective, plus the letters to Annie Besant and the events of 1920-30, it is now clear (as some have long known or suspected) that the Lord Maitreya and the Masters with whom Leadbeater was on such familiar terms were his own thought-creations.”

(To be continued)

Where there is a following and where there is a leader in matters spiritual or psychological, there is bound to be confusion. In that, there is a contradiction between your own deep-down urges and compulsions, and the imposition placed upon them by the leader, by what you think you should do. So there is a contradiction psychologically, and that contradiction leads to conflict. Where there is conflict, there is effort, and where there is effort, there is distortion. A religious mind has no conflict. A religious mind does not follow anyone. It has no authority because authority implies imitation and conformity. There is conformity because you want success, you want to achieve, and therefore there is fear.

J. Krishnamurti

From Public Talk 5, New Delhi, 4 February 1962