

The Evolutive Function of Love

Donna Brown

God guards me from those
 thoughts men think
 In the mind alone;
 He that sings a lasting song
 Thinks in a marrow bone.

W.B. Yeats

Summary

This article discusses the role of the heart and powerful force of love and empathy in developing awareness or consciousness. It touches upon the imbalance between knowledge and wisdom and focuses on the heart's ability to bridge the great and threatening divide between the two. The author attempts to show how the major religious traditions, the ageless wisdom and various branches of science each regard the heart as key to creating higher trajectories of consciousness, global harmony and renewal.

Introduction

There is a marked tendency in some quarters to think that the solution to the world's problems is to be found in better education and the acquisition of more and more knowledge. Knowledge gained through study and the gathering of information certainly contributes to human development and must be a life long, continuous process. Yet the process of education, as the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul reminds us, is not concerned with memory training or the accumulation of knowledge but with the expansion of consciousness.¹ Consciousness, therefore, is more than what one knows, it involves a "sense of identity or self awareness that includes a sense of relation to the whole."²

One well known Yogi³ looks at the relationship between knowledge and consciousness along similar lines. This modern Vedic teacher informs us that "knowledge is struc-

tured in consciousness and education takes place in the field of consciousness. The prerequisite to complete education is therefore the full development of consciousness." He goes on to say that "knowledge is not the basis of full consciousness; consciousness is the basis of knowledge." These statements shed light on the mind-brain problem (touched on below) and point to the distinction between knowledge or passive perception and consciousness as an active force or relationship involving the Knower and the Known.

A look at the world situation makes the difference between accumulated learning or knowledge and true awareness or consciousness dramatically clear. Knowledge alone has certainly not solved humanity's problems. In fact, all our knowledge and scientific or technological know-how may well be the greatest threat to the future of humanity and life on the planet.⁴ As one author puts it, "it is an open question as to whether or not man will be able to survive his own technological ingenuity"⁵ or intelligence.

Although traditional educational methods organize the lower mind and enable people to manipulate information, compete and generally succeed, there is a growing consensus among educators and thinkers that our present educational system is not only dangerously unbalanced, but insufficient to meet humanity's real and future needs.⁶ These needs are inclusive of and inseparable from humanity's so called spiritual needs which allow it to move forward

About the Author

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and progress from one level of awareness and expression to another.

Therefore, any educational system geared toward humanity's evolutionary development and progression must be rooted in an alternative, holistic educational curriculum that concentrates on emotional intelligence, creativity, increased sensitivity, intuitive comprehension, ethical values, social responsibility and global solutions. By focusing on awakening these higher, integral values, education can act as a catalyst for maximizing humanity's full potential and serve to bridge the deep and dangerous gulf between knowledge and wisdom.⁷

The Love and Consciousness Connection

One of the primary tools for developing higher values and increased awareness is through the process of meditation. As esotericists, we know that “the habit of meditation is the basis for all true knowledge”⁸ or consciousness. When we turn inward, thwart the impulses of the mind and establish mental quiescence, we create a vacuum or empty funnel for spiritual impression to enter. Meditative quiescence allows us to see beyond appearances and gain insight into the subtle nature of the Self and the world around us. It creates a bridge or a pathway between Nature and Supernature by invoking the Soul or meditating principle between matter and spirit. Since the Soul finds its first physical expression in the heart, it follows that the heart holds the key to opening the way into new realms and dimensions of being. And when the heart and the intellect parallel one another the great power of love can inform knowledge.

Love and the development of consciousness are inextricably woven together. All the major wisdom traditions speak about the nature of this relationship and place an emphasis on cultivating compassion, empathy and benevolence as a means of moving from one state of awareness to another.

For Christians, love is the foundation of all conduct and the heart is seen as the ultimate source of cognition and understanding. In *Mathew* we learn that those who are pure of

heart shall see God.⁹ In *1 Corinthians* Paul describes Love as “a more excellent way” and as having an “abiding superiority over all spiritual gifts.”¹⁰ The capacity for love is certainly the most distinctive feature of the Christian faith while the heart is seen as the ultimate vehicle for knowing God.

Judaism too places an emphasis on the heart as a means of acquiring higher knowledge. The Old Testament contains several passages which emphasize the heart as a vehicle for thinking. In *Deuteronomy* we read that Yahweh gives us “a heart to understand...”¹¹ and in *Jeremiah* Yahweh says “I shall put my law ... in their hearts, and all shall know their God.”¹² Kabbalistic teachings also views the heart as the creative power of the Soul and as having the ability to connect one to God's infinite light and wisdom.

Islam sees love, which is never separated from knowledge, as running through the entire Universe. Mystical Islam or Sufism gives the heart an especial primacy. It perceives the heart or *Qalb* as the center or station where the *latifas* or subtleties of knowledge are developed and true vision enters.¹³ The Fast of Ramadan, for example, is intended to “make the inner heart blossom” so that one develops compassion and empathy for all life and learns to understand the distinction between knowledge and wisdom.¹⁴

In the Hindu system, the heart or *Anahata*—the seat of compassion and affinity with others—has always been viewed as the bridge or integrative factor between thought and feeling. Similarly, Buddhism sees the emotions and cognition as co-emergent and incapable of existing apart from one another.¹⁵ In the matrix of Buddhist practice, the focus is on cultivating the light of insight and loving kindness together, so that the four immeasurables; loving kindness, compassion, empathy and equanimity are balanced with mindfulness.¹⁶ One of the highest Tantric practices in Tibetan Buddhism involves the all important Heart Chakra as a means of awakening the *Very Subtle Mind*¹⁷ residing therein.

While love has been seen as the basis of moral and spiritual progress for some classical think-

ers and many of the major religious traditions, classical cognitive science has maintained that “humans are first and foremost cognizers”¹⁸ and that human awareness is rooted in brain structure and function. This has led to the belief that consciousness emerges from and is limited to, the physical brain.

Yet from the esoteric standpoint the brain is viewed as merely the “eye” or recording agent. Consciousness, therefore, is not simply a product of physical forces—it does not originate in the brain; nor is it imprisoned or confined to the material, three dimensional universe.

These ideas are backed by current mind-brain studies which show that in certain situations, consciousness can observe events outside of the body and later re-localize in the brain. Observations in the field of quantum physics affirm the idea that consciousness is non-material, not an emergent property, and capable of independent existence.¹⁹

From the Ageless Wisdom perspective we know that Absolute Consciousness exists outside of manifestation altogether—that it is not evolution that produces consciousness, but consciousness that causes evolution. But in practical terms the many different levels of consciousness, such as universal and individual consciousness, are viewed as a feature of matter, in other words, as intelligence inherent in form and permeating all of nature. However, for consciousness to arise, the innate intelligence in matter or third aspect has to be linked with the Spirit or first aspect. And this, as we know, is accomplished by way of the second aspect or energy of Love-Wisdom. The interplay thus established

“provides every needed grade or type of unfoldment for consciousness.”²⁰

A growing body of new research in the fields of neuroscience and cognitive science confirms the role of love or the heart in this all important interplay. In fact, some scientists now believe that the heart is primary in developing awareness and that cognition has a secondary, organizing influence.²¹ Science is beginning to acknowledge the heart as “a highly elaborate sensory system with its own functional “brain” capable of receiving and processing information.”²²

This same research shows that “the nervous system within the heart (or “heart brain”) enables it to learn, remember, and make functional decisions independent of the brain's cerebral cortex.”²³ Other experiments have established that “the signals the heart continuously sends to the brain influence the function of higher brain centers involved in perception, cognition, and emotional processing.”²⁴

These ideas correspond to the countless passages by Djwhal Khul concerning the importance of the

heart and the energy of love in the development of awareness. In *The Soul and Its Mechanism*,²⁵ we find the following comments: “The heart and not the head is the home of manas; and the former therefore is the centre also of conscious life...through the heart we recognize forms, through the heart we recognize faith ... know the truth, on it speech also is based... all beings are based upon and supported by the heart...it is the empirical home of the soul, and therefore of Brahman—here within the heart is a cavity, wherein he resides, the lord of the universe...”

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Helena Roerich's evocative volume *Heart* also contains innumerable references to the dominant status of the Heart and its relationship to the evolution of consciousness. We read for example, that the brain is one of the estates of the heart,²⁶ that the highest Yoga, has its roots in the heart and that "the various arcs of understanding and consciousness are fused by the flame of the heart."²⁷ These ideas parallel current research which views the heart as the great conduit or vessel for developing non-egocentric or transpersonal modes of awareness.²⁸

Love and Evolution

The Tibetan remarks that it is not easy to give a full picture of the tremendous role that love plays in the evolving scheme of things. However, he tells us that "Love is the wielding of the force which guides the worlds and which leads to the integration, unity and inclusiveness which impels Deity itself to action."²⁹ Love, therefore, is the line of least resistance, the dominating ray and outstanding influence in our solar system. The energies of Love-Wisdom qualify the life of all the planets, pour through the entire created universe and act as the determining factor for all evolving forms.

The veracity of these statements is emerging in many other ways. For example, there is a current shift in evolutionary theory which is supplanting the notion of competition or rivalry between species. Observations in the fields of biology, ethology and zoology now point to the inherited nature of empathy, symbiogenesis³⁰ and group and collective survival strategies as imperative to evolutionary progression. Organisms ranging from bacteria and insects to primates and humans demonstrate countless varieties of cooperative and mutually nurturing tendencies.³¹ A number of scientists have concluded that the "capacity for empathy is inherent and can be genetically transmitted."³² The Tibetan expresses these thoughts another way when he points out that "the consciousness of loving and being loved, of attracting and of being attracted" enables forms to "enter through the door of intelligence and expand into the human state of awareness."³³

In the Human Kingdom, Love expresses in three major stages: love of self (self-consciousness), love of others (group-consciousness), and love of the whole (God consciousness). Love as we know, is critical to the first stage—to a child's development of self, and to his or her capacity to exhibit empathy and compassion for others. A mother's and father's capacity for love extends even to the unborn child and affects not only the physical and psychological dimensions of the child, but also its brain development and memory.³⁴ In turn, the intelligent understanding, compassion and love that are developed and expressed in the family, extend outward in the second stage of group consciousness, to the interests and activities of others, to the community and to nations far removed from the original family nucleus.³⁵ From love of self or self consciousness the capacity to love intensifies and deepens. It develops into group consciousness and continues to expand until the person recognizes that he or she is an inseparable part of the whole and is at-one with Divine Mind and the Love Supreme that underlies our current System.

Conclusion

It is clear that the expansion of consciousness is spearheaded by the immense power of a loving heart in countless ways. Science, psychology and spirituality each suggest that human consciousness is shaped in the interactive, compassionate relationship between self and others.³⁶ They point out that empathy is a prerequisite for the development of consciousness and that love or empathy releases or liberates the mind so that it can relate and absorb or integrate information more effectively.³⁷ The higher powers, those abilities that put us in rapport with forms of spiritual life beyond the three worlds, i.e., straight knowledge, intuitive perception and spiritual insight, are all developed as a result of group consciousness and the second aspect of divinity or Love-Wisdom.

Empathy and love prompt living organisms, especially humans, to abandon judgments, heal cleavages, sublimate base impulses and move past self concern toward a dynamic, altruistic fusion with diverse individuals and groups.

“Love is,” as one author says, “a state of total organization” bringing all that is outside into its compassionate unifying embrace.³⁸ The attractive, cohering power of love draws us to all that is wholesome, beautiful and true. It encourages us to nurture and sustain, to restore and empower.

Love also inspires us. It spurs us to create arcs of heightened awareness—rousing us to deeper understanding, increased creativity and innovative thinking. It stimulates us to experiment, to explore new ideas, perspectives and possibilities which lead eventually to a more complete, synthetic vision. Altruistic love makes it possible for us to orient our focus towards all that is selfless, exalting and life enhancing.³⁹ The many virtues of the heart and the system of values that it develops, allows consciousness to bring love to a suffering planet. Love and empathy act as guide posts so that the “thoughts men think” are connected to the whole—to the subtle aspects of Nature and do not simply pursue a path of affluence or cerebral advancement.⁴⁰

Together love and intellect, heart and head, form the twofold path of ascent.⁴¹ In other words “love must be united with intellect to escape drowning, and intellect must be fused with heart or love in order to avoid losing itself in the dry desert.”⁴² The Tibetan describes the linking of these two as *heart thinking* and as the transmutation of desire or feeling into intelligent, discriminative love or wisdom. He goes on to say that when the “mind and heart are linked illumination comes” and we gain access to levels of Super consciousness that supersede the mind or Nature as we know it. This makes love-wisdom the great catalyst behind the growth and development of consciousness—the key underlying humanity’s collective future and the ladder by which life on earth can rise to the next evolutionary plateau.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Education in the New Age*, Lucis Trust Publishing Co., New York, NY, 1954, Back Cover.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*. Lucis Trust Publishing Co., New York, NY, 1950, p. 184.

³ Maharshi Mahesh Yogi.

⁴ Kishore Gandhi, *The Evolution of Consciousness*, National Publishing House, New Delhi, India, 1983, p. ix.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁸ WorldNet Dictionary.

⁹ *Matthew* 5:8.

¹⁰ *1 Corinthians* 13:13.

¹¹ *Deuteronomy* 29:3.

¹² *Jeremiah* 31:33.

¹³ Kabir Helminksi, *The Heart: Threshold Between Two Worlds*. The Threshold Society, Talks and Essays on Sufism, p. 3.

¹⁴ M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, *What is Ramadan? Questions of Life, Answers of Wisdom Vol. 2*, The Fellowship Press, Philadelphia Pa, 2006.

¹⁵ B. Allan Wallace, *Intersubjectivity in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8, No 5-7, 2001, p. 7.

¹⁶ Wallace, *Intersubjectivity in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 9.

¹⁷ The “Very Subtle Mind” can be described as a continuum without beginning or end, existing at deeper levels of consciousness. It is likened to the omniscient mind of the Buddha.

¹⁸ Evan Thompson, *Empathy and Consciousness*, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 8, 2001, p 19.

¹⁹ Granville Dharamawardena, *A Quantum Mechanical Model of the Brain and Consciousness*. www.QuantumMechanicalMod.com.

²⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. I*, Lucis Trust Publishing Co, New York, NY, 1936, p.336.

²¹ Evan Thompson, *Empathy and Consciousness*, p. 11.

²² Heart Math Research Center, *The Science of the Heart*

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *The Soul and Its Mechanism*, Lucis Trust Publishing Co, New York, NY, 1930, p. 101.

²⁶ Helen Roerich, *Heart*, Agni Yoga Society, Inc. 319, West 107th Street, New York, NY, 1932, p. 339.

²⁷ *Heart*, Agni Yoga Society Inc, 319 West 107th Street, New York, NY, 1944, p. 8.

- ²⁸ Wallace, *Intersubjectivity in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 23.
- ²⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*. Vol. I, Lucis Trust Publishing Co. New York, NY, 1944. p.10.
- ³⁰ Symbiogenesis: A term coined by Russian biologist Merezhkovsky to describe the merging of organisms into new collectives. Symbiogenesis is now seen as a major source of evolutionary change on Earth.
- ³¹ Harold Bloom, *Global Brain*, John Wiley & Sons Inc. New York NY, 2000. p.58.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- ³³ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. I, p, 337.
- ³⁴ Robin Allot, *Evolutionary Aspects of Love and Empathy*, Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems, Vol. 15, # 4, p.6.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1
- ³⁶ Evan Thompson, *Empathy and Consciousness*, p. 3.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ³⁸ Robin Allot, *Evolutionary Aspects of Love and Empathy*, p. 15.
- ³⁹ Parry, Rene-Marie Croose, Evolution-Consciousness-and the phenomena of Love, Human Quest, Jan/Feb, 1999, p 1.
- ⁴⁰ Gandhi, *The Evolution of Consciousness*, p. 171-186.
- ⁴¹ See: *Mediations on the Cantos of Dante's Divine Comedy, Inferno Cantos I-VII*, A.S.Kline, 2002 Med V:1. www.tonykline.co.uk
- ⁴² Robin Allot, *Evolutionary Aspects of Love and Empathy*, p. 15.