



The Spiral Path...

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luminous tendril of celestial wish

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(whying diminutive bright deathlessness
to these my not themselves believing eyes
adventuring, enormous nowhere from)

querying affirmation; virginal

immediacy of precision: more
and perfectly more most ethereal
silence through twilight's mystery made flesh—

dreamslender exquisite white firstful flame

—new moon! as (by the miracle of your
sweet innocence refuted) clumsy some
dull cowardice called a world vanishes,

teach disappearing also me the keen
illimitable secret of begin

e.e. cummings

THE KEEN ILLIMITABLE SECRET OF BEGIN

Cummings' poems have always been intriguing to readers, and this one no less so. Regardless of what he may have intended or what others interpret — in this poem I see: US. We *are* luminous tendrils, present because of a celestial wish. Deathless at our core, we have intuition and discernment which need to look beyond this māyā around us, this illusion, and recognize our true path — immediate, ethereal, birthed from silence to flesh. Each of us in our perfect and precise core is a portion of that first white flame, which, when we perceive it, and become it, causes the world of materiality to vanish. And there is far more. We move. We begin each moment afresh, and constantly have the choice to express our inner life for the benefit of humanity, and ultimately, all sentient beings. That is our “keen illimitable secret of begin.”

From *The Theosophist*

From the Vedas and Upanishads to [recent publications] ... search as we may ... we find but one way only, — hard, painful, troublesome, by which man can gain the true spiritual insight. The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, *become* — he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain. ... The idea of growth involves also the idea of disruption, the inner being must continually burst through its confining shell or encasement, and such a disruption must also be accompanied by pain, not physical but mental and intellectual.

H. P. Blavatsky

Keynotes of Day to Day Living

Hazel Boyer Braun

The fundamental thoughts of a human life might be likened to the keynote of a musical composition. Thoughts are living energies and our tomorrows and our next lives are actually created by the vision of today. It is important to make a deliberate effort to strike certain notes in our lives.

The most far reaching thought we can embrace in the effort to shape our own characters is found in the Ancient Wisdom, in the concept of the Divine Reality at the root of everything that lives. As the matrix of our thought life this revelation colors every phase of our daily existence. It washes out of our minds triviality and personal pettiness, it quickens our feeling of relationship with all beings. All fear is driven out because we can know more of love. Individual responsibility is then so strongly impressed upon us that we have no time to be much concerned about what others do to us or think of us.

As trees grow most of them fling their confining bark to the winds each year, and in this we have an analogy with the development of the human mind. We do break through our crystallized thoughts and fling the old ones away as we awake into broader understanding, lifting the level of our thoughts, expanding the reaches of our consciousness.

We all have flights of imagination, but we each have a certain individual characteristic landing place for all our flights. We have each our special way of thinking which creates our lives and enwraps us in an atmosphere that is felt by every person we contact. Very often we have far more effect on the life of others than we fully realize.

We all have some aspirations, we might say some secret hopes that are truly the keynote of our inner life. There are many who are only vaguely aware of the yearnings of their real selves and the quality and direction of their inner experience is not well defined. Yet the substance of our secret hopes fashions our tomorrows.

When we wake in the morning we really strike the note of the day in those few minutes before we rise and take up our work by the vision we have then of our day. When we die we do the same, our last thoughts are likely to be akin to those deep secret aspirations even more than to our personal loves; and they strike the keynote for our time spent in the dreaming of Devachan, fashioning also to a great extent our next life.

The ancients knew this so well that it actually is the explanation of the icons and the countless statues of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Kwan-yins. They were formed by the artists to help in the visioning of these full-blown divinities, to serve as a model for our expectations, to symbolize the fundamental concept of the purpose of life: becoming divine, knowing companionship with the great Souls.

The Theosophical Forum, January 1949

There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer; there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards there is reward past all telling — the power to bless and save humanity; for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.

HPB

Are There Limits to Striving?

L. Gordon Plummer

He who does his best does enough for us. — Master K.H. in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*

It is probable that most people at one time or another feel that they have reached the limits of their endurance. At such times, it may be that some will wonder if it is worth the struggle. Can they cope with life? Most of us do, and we learn eventually to accept the fact that so long as we have put our best efforts into the solution of our problems, we can put our anxieties behind us, and we can move on to the next thing with renewed confidence.

This preamble is leading to a consideration of one aspect of this subject that may be of interest to all who are seriously striving toward spiritual development along the lines that have been enunciated by the Mahatmas through their most prominent agent H. P. Blavatsky. She set forth certain ideals and goals in a number of her writings, such as “Occultism and the Occult Arts” and in shorter articles. The trials and dangers confronting those who aspire to tread the path of Occultism are clearly set forth, and one may be sure that she did so in order to deter all who do not have within themselves the elements of success in these matters. We have no reason to take issue with any of her warnings.

It seems nonetheless that we should not overlook the other side of the coin. In the words related to us by G. de Purucker, “I am a servant of the servants of the Law,” we have a hint of the immense joy or service. This joy is not fleeting. It grows with the progress of the student who attains to some awareness of his place at the heart of the work to which he is dedicated. Why are there warnings then? Well, we can draw many lessons from Nature, and for this one, we might turn to astronomy.

Now much interest has been aroused by the discovery of rings around the planet Uranus similar to those of Saturn. This is held to be one of the most important discoveries of the century. The existence of rings associated with any planet will provide a lesson that might be applied to the matter in hand. Why do we observe rings associated with Saturn, and now Uranus? Here is one explanation as given by modern astronomy.

Every heavenly body has a gravitational field. In the case of our own moon, its gravitational field is about one sixth that of the Earth. This is because the Moon is only one sixth as massive as is the Earth. The Moon, at a distance of approximately 240,000 miles, is likewise affected by the Earth’s gravitational field, just as we are affected by the moon’s gravitation. Hence, we have the tides. At the distance of the Moon

from the Earth, our gravitation is far greater than is the pull of the Moon. If it were not so, things would be very different on our planet from what they are today. It has been calculated that at the time when the Earth was young, the moon was much closer to us, so close in fact, that the tides rose to a height of a mile instead of a few feet as they do today! It is equally true that the Moon feels the gravitational pull of the Earth, but to a less degree than the strength of its own gravitational field.

Now, there is a critical distance between any planet and its satellite known as the Roche Limit. At this distance, the gravitation on the satellite would be equaled by the gravitational pull of the planet, and if the satellite were to come any closer, matters would become very serious indeed. The greater pull of the planet's gravitation could tear the moon apart. It is believed by some astronomers that this is what happened in the cases of three of Saturn's moons. They were so close to the planet that they broke into small pieces that continued to orbit the planet in the form of rings.

Now, what has all of this to do with the subject at hand? For the sake of clarifying our thinking, we might say that each of us has his "Roche Limit." In the case of our problems with living, this would be the point at which our own vitality and endurance are in danger of being overcome by life's pressures. We can avoid being crushed by stopping short of our own individual "Roche Limit," and keep ourselves from being swept off our feet by taking a more relaxed attitude of mind, knowing that when we have done our best, even though we fall short of our goals, we need the time to pause and reflect. We cannot change the world; we can only change ourselves; since the world is made up of individuals with their own karmic destinies, it changes very slowly.

Turning now to the more specific subject of this article, in the treading of the path of genuine Occultism, each student has his own "Roche Limit" as it were. In this case, we are not referring to gravitational fields, obviously. We are now speaking of spirituality. The path of Occultism cannot be disassociated from those who exemplify it in their own lives and work. Their existence is no secret. We have only to study *The Mahatma Letters* in order to come to some understanding of the Hierarchy of Compassion. Since the very nature of this Hierarchy is spirituality to a vastly greater degree than is exemplified in any individual student, any of us has his own "Roche Limit." As we are in our present state of inner development, we could not tolerate the full force of the spiritual energy that we would inevitably feel were we to come too close to the real heart of the work that is being accomplished. Such close proximity might well disrupt our psychological natures, and none of the Teachers would allow this to happen. If it seems that we are kept at a distance, regardless of our aspirations, we may rest assured that it is for our own protection.

However, let us not think that we have been abandoned. Far from it. Each one receives all the light that he can safely use. Fortunately, this "Roche Limit" is not a fixed irrevocable thing. It changes with our growth, and it is only ourselves who set up a seeming barrier. Actually, there is really none, and in the final analysis, it is all a matter of growth. This comes about in its time and is fostered by our own dedication to the high principles that have been so amply given to us. Only work in the Cause that we love will hasten the growth of those spiritual qualities that we have already in potency, and in time, the "Roche Limit" will disappear altogether.

It would appear then that undue striving is not the answer. We have no reason to worry about it. As we learn to give of our best, we discover that these things are not as remote as we had thought. The spiritual life is with us always, and as we grow, we find new opportunities for service. That is all that matters.

Theosophia, Fall 1977

This is a period of great uncertainty, when all that human beings most value is weighed in the balance. Will we individually and collectively have the insight and courage to make the transformation from egocentricity to a perspective of planetary and solar dimension? In fact, it is already happening in the quiet, like the seed germinating under the snows of winter. So, rather than concentrate on the ugly and poisonous in human relationships, let us celebrate the joy of life.

Grace F. Knoche

A Spell of Insight

Marjorie Hall

On July 1, 1931, I stepped out into our very ordinary backyard, and the universe came suddenly and exquisitely alive. The sun looked over the rooftops and said, inaudibly but very distinctly, "Greetings, my friend." I seemed to feel arms extended towards me in friendship.

Glancing at a creeper trailing on the wall and at some stubby grass, I saw that they were made up of tiny individual lives. These little lives bowed and said, silently, so that the words dropped clearly into my thoughts: "We honor you, great being." "But," I replied in great surprise, "you plants surely cannot like us humans, we trample on you and cook you and bury you alive." They answered, "Well, yes, you do all that to our physical shadows, but we don't seem to notice very much what happens to those. It is a great honor and joy to us to come close to the consciousness of human beings and to serve it. The instinct which prompts people to have flowers and plants about them on big occasions such as weddings and funerals, especially funerals, is a deep and true one, for we can help in our own special way to link the inner spiritual world with the outer human world, even though people may not be aware of the fact."

Then I saw that it was not my human self or that of anybody else which they regarded as a great being, but a golden center of consciousness which radiated through me, and that everyone has this individual golden center, and the little lives recognized it as beneficial and holy to them.

At this point the words of an ancient invocation presented themselves — "O my divinity, thou livest in the heart life of all things, and dost radiate a golden light, that shineth forever and doth illumine even the darkest corners of the earth." With the new eye that had opened inside me I could see the golden light spreading to far countries, touching and sustaining souls who were completely unaware of its presence. Then came more of the invocation — "O my divinity, thou dost blend with the earth and fashion for thyself temples of mighty power," and with it the vision of my own golden center helping to sustain the earth, and at the same time going about its own vital business in the inner worlds! It was quite evident that our real selves live and work in this inner universe, and that we human personalities have got our attention so concentrated in the shadow or underside of reality that we have quite lost sight of the true state of affairs. My physical body seemed to be entirely separate from me, clumsily stuck on outside, so to speak. Quite limited and incapable of expressing very much of the wonders that glow behind it.

I knew that if even one human being were completely destroyed the whole universe would come unstuck, because the setup of every star and planet would have to be unraveled in order to separate all the parts of him that would be knitted up with them. This unity of life does not mean sameness or monotony. On the contrary it ensures the strongest individuality and variety, for every spark of life is part of the source of life, joined up with eternal newness. This shows even in the physical world; scientists tell us that no two leaves are exactly alike among the countless numbers in the plant kingdom.

Another piece of knowledge which stepped into my brain was the clear truth of the words: "I stand amid eternal ways, and what is mine shall know my face." Each living soul has always been a part of the universe, and we have condensed our mixed destinies around us by wise and unwise action in times far past. The best way to clear things up for the future is to seek right thought and action now. The conditions and events of our daily lives are exactly suited to our individual needs of growth.

There also came a vivid intimation that death is bliss and fulfillment beyond all our imagining, but that it must be earned by bearing all life's responsibilities and trials and not grabbed by cutting life short. Although reincarnation is a fact, death is by far the greater part of existence, full development and achievement on all planes being one of nature's many purposes.

All that I have written was a real experience, much more convincing and satisfying than the events of daily life. I am sure it would be very comforting for anyone to be able to believe and to know that our common lot has this wonderful background.

All through eternity we shall keep on finding out new and most wonderful facts about existence and our own lives. "In Thy presence is fullness of joy."

Sunrise, June/July 1986

Amid the din and strife of men,
The Call Divine I hear again;
Its telling is of things apart;
Above the tumult of the heart.
High o'er where sin's dark pathways wind
Waits the wise willing of the mind;
Beyond strong Passion's guarded Gates,
There Peace awaits — there Peace awaits.

James Allen

The key is self-forgetfulness! Remember that the very heart of Nature is harmony, which means love; for love and harmony are one, being two sides of the same thing. Wisdom is but another name for the same thing, for love is wise: it is wisdom and clairvoyance; and wisdom is always harmonious. Actually, love and wisdom and peace and harmony are really words for the same inexpressible Mystery which men in their ignorance call God. When we begin to delineate it and define it, we endow the Divine with our merely human figments of thought, imperfect, limited, because we are imperfect; and therefore it is that we Theosophists always speak of this wondrous, ineffable Mystery by the one word THAT. This is infinitely more reverential than to begin to label the Divine or to ticket it or to qualify it with the imperfect attributes of our human existence.

G. de Purucker

From the Editor

We follow the path before us, consciously or unconsciously, and work to find our way through the obstacles that life presents back to us — those obstacles which we have placed before ourselves in the past by working counter to Nature's flow. In order for us to mitigate producing these challenges, we must live and act in accord with Nature, and thereby become one with her, partners in creating each future moment of the (our) universe. That living is to see all as interconnected, the "good" and the "bad," and concentrate on helping and showing others — by example — the path which Those have chosen before us and then shared with us. The choice is always ours, from our beginnings through our now-observed future. We choose, and the universe thrills or chills our next steps depending on our choices. When we become more god-like — or at least more human-like (versus more animal-like) — we will eventually realize and live in our true inner Self, and help all those around us do the same. "There Peace awaits."

Theosophy has no creed, no dogma, no set of beliefs that must be accepted,
because truth is not something beyond or outside us, but in fact is *within*.

GFK

Let the Silence within, Speak...

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