



The Spiral Path...

The Theosophical Society, American Section — Quarterly Circular — Winter Solstice 2023 — #16

Another Christmas Season has come around to us, typical of the birth of that Divine Principle of Light in human souls, whereby these expand to Eros, the One Ray of Light and Love.

Not love as we know it. But that Love dimly foreshadowed in all the lives of the universe, that Love which is the sum of lives, whereby each responds to each and is in each, itself its core and cause.

Julia Keightley

I and You are One

We are *One Humanity* — despite any outward differences or propensities, our core is singular, Unity itself. The trouble we get into is believing any of our thoughts, opinions, ways, looks, or beliefs separate us. They do not. Despite what some may judge, we are a unified whole despite any outward dis-similarities. It is our selfishness which tries to set us apart. “My way is the right way.” “This is what you should do.” “My belief is the only one that matters and everyone should live by it.” A selfishness which mistakenly thinks it knows better than any other self in the world, now or ever.

The universe is not static. Every celestial body moves, vibrates. Every *thing* in the universe vibrates, moves, is alive. We see only the outer shell of things, not their inner consciousness, which we *are*. That consciousness of each which is the same at its core: whether “ONE,” “ELOHIM,” “GOD,” “ALLAH,” “BRAHMAN,” or simply “THAT” *which cannot be named or quantified*. As things evolve, change occurs. Change happens every moment. A dynamic LIFE is what we are living, and it is constantly changing, growing in expanse.

Live in the HIGHEST, the REAL, the COMPASSIONATE.

God is merely one of man’s concepts, a symbol used for pointing the way to the Ultimate Reality which has been mistaken for the Reality itself. The map has been mistaken for the actual territory.

Idries Shah

The whole Torah is for the purpose of maintaining peace.

Talmud, Gittin 59b



“We Are All Connected”

Anja Rožen, 13yo, Slovenia
Winner of the 2021-22 Plakat MIRU
International Peace Poster contest.

“We are all members of the Earth community and we need each other to survive. ... My drawing represents the land that binds us and unites us. Humans are woven together. If someone gives up, others fall. *We are all connected to our planet and each other, but unfortunately we are little aware of it.* We are woven together. Other people weave alongside me my own story; and I weave theirs.” (Italics added.)

A true Theosophist must put in practice the loftiest moral ideal, must strive to realize his unity with the whole of humanity, and work ceaselessly for others.

H. P. Blavatsky

Home

“What is love?”, you ask
My head spins, recallin’ every song
Story, words, and glorious things I ever heard
Every cliché rings in my ears
Like a bell announcin’ the birth of a new day
Or the death of yesterday
Depends on how you hear it
I haven’t a clue
So I ask love, “What are you?”
Love replies
Can’t you feel me? I’m here
I’m the one holdin’ your hand, remindin’ you not to forget me
I’m the warm feelin’ in your belly when you don’t know why
I’m the ache to the core when one
Someone sways to the other side of a vibe
I’m the tingle on your skin when it’s
Touched by the tip of a thrill you can rely on
The knowing, when your eyes meet eyes that recognize yours
And hold you, loose enough to move freely
But tight enough to never let you fall
I’m the breath you take in and let all the way out to the end
When you’re held and your shoulders drop into arms
You flop that feel like a blanket of truth
And wrap you and sooth you
To the moon you thought was in the sky
I’m the backbone that holds it all together
The vertebrae stacked on top of each other
When it’s all gone pear shaped and wrong
I’m the bitin’ on your lip keepin’ it zipped
Swallowin’ words that could wound and rip apart
I’m choosin’ kindness over bein’ right
I’m the fight in you when you don’t know how
The life in you when it’s gone right out
I’m life when I’m near, hope without fear
I’m nothin’ fancy in a world drippin’ in gold
But a beautiful jewel never bought, never sold
And when you open your heart and let me in alone
You’ll know who I am, because I feel like home

Songwriters:

Imelda May / Davide Rossi / Timothy Jolliffe-bran

From the Editor

Our world is always in turmoil as humans try to grapple with raising the animal self to the spiritual self. Intuition over instinct. Impersonal love over lust. Compassion over killing. Learning to live for *all* others instead of *only* ourselves. We have been working on it for a long time. Many have written about it. Many more will need to teach it over and over until the last human soul understands and accepts. In the meantime...our compassion, our love, our determination to keep high thoughts and perform right action will help the universe express the Divine Love at the Heart.

Fraternally,
Scott J. Osterhage

Q: *How far reaches the power of our thoughts? When we have lost a person who is very dear to us, and we think of him with all our love, will our thoughts reach him after his death? And when he is far away, would it help a person when we send helpful and loving thoughts to him?*

A. Yes, indeed. Love knows no barriers either of space or of time, for it is the very cement of the universe, which holds things together, and therefore is nature's fundamental activity, nature's fundamental law, and it is the universal bond of union among all things. Love is all-penetrating. It will not only eat away the obstinacy of the stoniest of human hearts, and dissolve the substance of the most adamant of human minds, but it will slowly infuse its life-giving warmth everywhere. Nothing can bar its passage, for it is the very life-essence of the universe, and no one, however proud in his own vanity he may be, is proof against the working of almighty love.

Love, impersonal love, will reach even the dead, that is to say the nobler part of those who have passed on, and will help them in the sense of comforting them. It will surround them with a bulwark; it will give them peace. Love is protective; love is puissant; it is all-penetrating; and the more impersonal it is, the higher it is and the more powerful.

G. de Purucker, *Questions We All Ask*, #48.

Men and parties, sects and schools are but
the mere ephemera of the world's day.
Truth, high-seated upon its rock of
adamant, is alone eternal and supreme.

H.P.B.

Every animal is enclosed within its own sensory bubble, perceiving but a tiny sliver of an immense world. There is a wonderful word for this sensory bubble — Umwelt. It was defined and popularized by the Baltic German zoologist Jakob von Uexküll in 1909. Umwelt comes from the German word for “environment,” but Uexküll didn’t use it to refer to an animal’s surroundings. Instead, an Umwelt is specifically the part of those surroundings that an animal can sense and experience — its perceptual world. A tick, questing for mammalian blood, cares about body heat, the touch of hair, and the odor of butyric acid that emanates from skin. It doesn’t care about other stimuli, and probably doesn’t know that they exist. Every Umwelt is limited; it just doesn’t feel that way. Each one feels all-encompassing to those who experience it. **Our Umwelt is all we know, and so we easily mistake it for all there is to know.** This is an illusion that every creature shares.

(Bolding added.)

Ed Yong, “How Animals Understand the World”

‘Winter Solstice’

Grace F. Knoche

At this beautiful season when earth, sun and the heart of man unite in silent thanks, as the solar orb within the ambience of its own father sun reverses its cycle and begins anew the northward course, our natural impetus is to give the fullness of ourselves, to the end that peoples everywhere may find a light upon their way. Nature herself responds in kind, for she too is witness to the sacred death-birth experience that transfigures the noblest of men, making divinity to shine forth within the soul.

Yet as we review in swift succession the year’s events, it is as if “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together,” for there is scarcely a nation whose roadways of consciousness are not scarred with the grooves of distrust, of bitterness, of antagonisms so deep-rutted that there appears but little chance of better days to come. Still, as we probe beneath the ordinary, beneath the surface of personal or global disarray, we note emergent trends, light points, few in number yet sufficient in power to lend the sheen of hope for the future of man.

There have been many doorways in the evolutionary history of the race, gateways through which we have successfully passed; and there will be a continual series of these as we progress up the arc of spiritual maturity. Before each portal, we have to cast off the mental encumbrances of the past so that, clean and fresh, we can create new thought-patterns suitable to the coming need. The transition process varies: at one time it may be of long duration, the passage from one cycle to the next being accomplished so gradually that we are unaware of what is taking place; at another, the momentum of change is accelerated, although actually the beginning of every new cyclic phase starts long before it manifests openly.

At the present juncture, we are passing out of the Piscean into the Aquarian age, and the changeover is marked by extraordinary happenings. Obviously the dynamism of the current transition has its perils, more particularly seen in the explosive confrontation of nation with nation. But through it all are powerful signs that beneficent forces are at work, quietly yet effectively bringing about the confrontation man *with himself*. We are also moving into the final quarter of the century, with all that this implies. [Written before 1975.]

If, in fact, the convergence of cycles is helping to expose all that is dishonest and selfish in human behavior, it is also allowing the long-buried seeds of altruism to germinate. Nature can and does assist, but it is we who must harrow the field of character and bring into flower our own nobility of soul. From both the long and the short range point of view, we have reason for optimism, for within the core of every human being there is a knower, a way-shower, a Christos-in-seed, observing, protecting, and guiding the larger cycle of his incarnations on earth. Were this not so, would we —

could we — as individuals, and as a life wave, have survived the onset of thousands upon thousands of deaths for so many kalpas¹?

In seeking to find the avenue of expression that would give life to the flow of thoughts that have been coursing through my consciousness at this wondrous time, the old Sanskrit term *Sûtrâtman* came into mind: a simple compound, meaning “thread-self,” from *sûtra*, thread, link or chord; and *âtman*, self or soul. In Vedanta philosophy, it denotes the thread-soul or âtmic consciousness that links our earth lives as well as the various sheaths or *kośas*² in man’s constitution that range in scale from the most tenuous to the most material.

HPB has invested the term with richer overtones, suggesting that the *Sûtrâtman* of man, the “luminous thread of immortal *impersonal* monadship” (*SD* 2:513), not only runs through and connects the entire series of our earth existences in this manvantara, but extends ever so much further back, into “preceding *Maha-Manvantaras* — which have rolled away in the Eternity” (2:79-80). As the śloka³ has it:

The thread of radiance which is imperishable and dissolves only in Nirvana, re-emerges from it in its integrity on the day when the Great Law calls all things back into action....

This is a tremendous conception that, although at the end of the seventh round we, as nirvanis, are absorbed during our interplanetary nirvana in the still loftier consciousness of the Entity in whom our monadic individuality has its being, yet, when the new manvantara opens, the thread of our âtmic consciousness comes forth therefrom intact. And because within the âtman all is contained in seed, to be unfolded step by step as we enter the cycles of imbodyed existence, so our monadic swabhâva⁴ flows forth anew, without diminution, albeit refined and modified by the honing of experience in previous manvantaras.

If we can relate this vast perspective of ourselves to GdeP’s commentary in *The Dialogues* (KTMG Papers 6, 1:257-60), we may gain fresh insight into who we really are: a stream of continuing consciousness, “self-produced from the spirit within,” with an ageless reach of karma stretching infinitely both behind and before us; a stream or thread-consciousness, the *Sûtrâtman*, in which the memory of what we have been and are, in every facet of our being — atomic, human, spiritual and divine — is indelibly impressed “on the records of eternity.”

We may rightly question, what is the value of knowing about the *Sûtrâtman*? What bearing does it have on our role in the world today, with the crushing conditions under which so great a number of our fellows live, and which, as FTS, we are pledged to try to alleviate as best we may — not by working directly with effects, unless our dharma calls us to do so, but by addressing our concern to the causes of human misery? As I view it, there is a direct connection.

Mankind is a living brotherhood of human souls, and how and what any one person thinks or does has its inevitable effect on the totality of world-thought. If more and more individuals could grasp the strengthening truth that we are not mere automatons of fate, but are pilgrims of an evolutionary status far exceeding that of our transient personalities, and engaged in a cosmic mission whose dimensions reach far beyond the limits of our galaxy and its life periods, this would go a long way toward restoring to man his innate dignity. He would realize, first of all, that whatever happens to him in this lifetime he himself had asked for, for he, being his own karma, “self-produced from the spirit within,” could not possibly draw to himself anything that did not belong to him, whatever its quality, pleasant or painful; and secondly, that his essential stream of consciousness, the Sûtrâtman, is, in truth, imperishable, with power to outlast the manvantaras and issue forth again “in its integrity” at the commencement of each new life cycle.

Does this not affirm with a clarity that cannot be denied that karma inheres in the âtman and therefore is inviolable, self-produced through countless aeons, to manifest from the core of our being as time and opportunity permit? And as compassion is the ultimate law of Being, this means also that not a single noble thought, not one generous heart impulse, but reverberates forever, to yield its blessing not merely on our future destiny, but on the lives of who knows how many of our brother-humans who are struggling along, as we are, to find the truly right solution to the pressing needs of the daily experience.

Sûtrâtman may seem a strange word to focus upon in a Christmas/New Year letter, but the more I reflected upon the import of this season, its ancestry of symbolism, its certain influence on the whole of nature, the more its wide-ranging meaning converged on the sacred theme of divinity willingly offering a portion of itself so that man, and all the life-waves of entities both above the human kingdom and below, might enter into and pursue their respective destinies.

Perhaps this marvelous drama of self-becoming, which is all that evolution is, should be called the play of light upon darkness: light hiding itself in ever-heavier “coats of skin,” in a series of condensations of ever-increasing material substance around the central core, in order that a two-fold purpose might be served. First, the awakening of the potential light within “the smallest of the small,” impelling it through one after another phase of its journey towards becoming “the greatest of the great”; and secondly, in that very process, the enrichment and illumination of the monadic individuality as it gains in compassion, in breadth of perception of the function its particular hierarchy is expected to fulfil within the greater cosmos.

If that which is above is the same as that which is below, and vice versa, then the light energizes the entirety of the macrocosmos, from super galaxy with its lesser hosts composing its complex constitution, to atom with its families of infinitesimals that give it being.

What a panorama this opens to view: man, a luminous consciousness whose “centre is everywhere and circum-

ference nowhere” — the monadic heart of his auric egg pulsating in synchrony with the core of every god-spark in all of nature’s kingdoms, from dhyâni-chohan⁵ to elemental⁶, each life form itself a focus of light, of consciousness, of divinity in action.

Oral wisdom reports that teachers, messiahs, avatâras and guides are traditionally “born” at the winter solstice when, in the darkest nights the star of enlightenment points the way, inspiring the wise of every age to become as they: a risen Christos, an awakened Buddha, a winged Quetzalcoatl, a single-eyed Odin — illumined men who having drawn from the well of primeval truth returned to live and work among their people on the chance that a few, at least, would heed the deeper call.

“The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not” — what is an avatâra but a descent of light, a concentration of divine radiance within and upon the buddha-nature of a highly advanced soul, for the sublime intent of dispelling the shadows of earthly confusion, truly an “underworld” for it? Tradition records a few of these exalted ones — Krishna, Śankara and Jesus; their teachings, though impaired by the ravages of human limitation, remain to inspire millions to follow their lead.

Again, as above, so below: let us remember the lesser “descents,” the minor avatâric fusions that do occur, if only momentarily, whenever the soul succeeds in making union with its divine source. We tend to overlook the further possibility that even within the very small compass of a truly sincere aspirant, his own avatâric radiance may, at times, send a shimmer of light upon the way before him.

NOTES

1. kalpa = a period of cosmic activity.
2. kośas = ‘vehicle;’ one of the ‘sheaths’ around the divine monad.
3. śloka = stanza; verse.
4. swabhâva = the real nature of a thing; self-becoming; true individuality.
5. dhyâni-chohans = cosmic or planetary spirits.
6. elemental = nature-spirits presiding over the elements; lower than the minerals.

LOVE and TRUST are the only weapons that can overcome the REAL enemies against which the true theosophist must fight.

W.Q.J.

Let the Silence within, Speak...

This quarterly circular is issued by the American Section National Secretary. Material, subjects, or ideas for potential publication in this circular are welcome from the membership. Let me know if you do not wish to receive this circular.