



The Spiral Path...

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In Spite Of War

Angela Morgan

In spite of war, in spite of death,
In spite of all man's sufferings,
Something within me laughs and sings
And I must praise with all my breath.
In spite of war, in spite of hate
Lilacs are blooming at my gate,
Tulips are tripping down the path
In spite of war, in spite of wrath.
"Courage!" the morning-glory saith;
"Rejoice!" the daisy murmureth,
And just to live is so divine
When pansies lift their eyes to mine.

The clouds are romping with the sea,
And flashing waves call back to me
That naught is real but what is fair,
That everywhere and everywhere
A glory liveth through despair.
Though guns may roar and cannon boom,
Roses are born and gardens bloom;
My spirit still may light its flame
At that same torch whence poppies came.
Where morning's altar whitely burns
Lilies may lift their silver urns
In spite of war, in spite of shame.

And in my ear a whispering breath,
"Wake from the nightmare! Look and see
That life is naught but ecstasy
In spite of war, in spite of death!"



Heed the promptings of our intuition and
live the brotherhood that is our chief
objective. To be brotherly at all times and
with every individual is indeed a challenging
assignment, but one that we gladly take on,
for we know well that brotherhood among
the nations will come about in direct
proportion to the number of individuals
practicing it in their private lives.

GFK

Despite...

There is grief and pain and selfishness in the world, but there is also love and joy and compassion. Every moment we have a choice: our daily routine, how we respond to things, the way we act in everyday duties—our very *lives*. Each moment we create our lives, our grief or joy, and our futures. It is hard for some to believe that we are each in charge of ourselves to the point that each of us is actually creating our future; but it is so. Our choices *are* ourselves. Truly our acts, lamenting, and rejoicing is what seeds our futures and creates our future situations, our future lives. *We need to find the impersonal love within and live it!*

Seeding Time

Grace F. Knoche

There are many today who doubt that a world as distraught and convulsed as ours has anything but a rather dim future to look forward to. “The time is out of joint,” with thousands of Hamlets torn between the urge to action and passivity; between the decisive measure that will supposedly avenge the public wrongs and waiting, in the rather forlorn hope that somehow things will be set aright and the good life be restored.

In recent months a few of our leading historians, educators and even financiers have begun to articulate their concern as to the viability of our civilization. They cite certain parallels between the modern loss of self-confidence and the gradual disintegrating process that occurred in the ancient Greek world. “Religion has grown self-doubting and unpersuasive. Traditional political forms are under constant question. Government promises the good life but cannot deliver it. Military problems are ascribed to moral failure.” (Editorial in *The Wall Street Journal*, April 12, 1971 by Robert L. Bartley.) As a consequence, a growing segment of the population, including persons of responsibility in many fields, are “turning away from the world, away from rationalism, toward superstition, toward mysticism,” while the greatly increased interest in extrasensory and psychic powers, dependence on drugs, the Tarot, astrology and the *I Ching*, are regarded as symptomatic.

No one will dispute the fact that more and more people, adrift without the security of imposed ethical norms, are looking for instant nostrums to cure the ills of society. All this coupled with the wholesale flouting of established mores, has suggested to some “the unraveling of a civilization, a disintegration of the bonds of tradition and shared value, . . . a failure of nerve” — a phrase first used by the renowned classicist, the late Gilbert Murray, as the real cause of the decline and final dissolution of Hellenic influence.

Everyone knows, of course, that one can’t push historical parallels too far. Nevertheless, Professor Murray’s commentary on the intensity of faith as well as the contempt for the world and its standards that marked the beginning of the Christian era might have been made today:

It is a rise of asceticism, of mysticism, in a sense of pessimism; a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and of faith in normal human effort; a despair of patient inquiry, a cry for infallible revelation; . . . There is an intensifying of certain spiritual emotions; an increase of sensitiveness, a failure of nerve.

— *Five Stages of Greek Religion*

Other parallels might be drawn, not least between the ruthless attempt by the early Christians to eliminate every trace of pagan tradition, every memory of the once pure but by then degraded Mystery religions, and our own century’s turbulent rejection of everything that smacks of hypocrisy.

Yet nothing is preordained absolutely, for man is intrinsically a free spirit within the cosmos of his own thought and aspiration. Collapse of our civilization is not certain, for we in this century do not have to repeat the failings of previous centuries. We, as a race, can choose whether to remain in the rutted paths of self-centeredness that all too long have marred our progress; or whether to evolve humanely, intelligently, utilizing the flood of our new knowledge for the world’s good.

We dare not condemn out of hand what we do not fully understand. Behind the explosiveness, behind the idealism, powerful currents are at work. This surging cry of our youth for putting our vaunted principles into practice, for a return to the natural in place of the artificial in living, for jettisoning the arsenals of war and finding some way to live and work together in amity, are clear indications that our civilization, far from “unraveling,” is more vital than ever. Some of the established forms, possibly a good many of them, may go by the board; but is there any reason to lament the disappearance of forms? We who change our cars and our apparel quite regularly seem ever wont to offer the worn-out skins of a previous cycle for the new wine of the spirit.

However, there are dangers here, more particularly for those who in their zeal to get rid of the public ills forget that he who would conquer the world must first conquer himself. It may be very exciting to throw oneself into some great big job of demolition, careless of the possibility that only the stumps of our forest of values will be left for posterity. But how much better it would be to thin out the trees and the underbrush in such a way that the forests will reseed themselves.

Classical Greece had a word for this — *Sophrosyne* — gentleness, moderation, “the spirit that in any trouble thinks and is patient, that saves and not destroys.” The golden mean of Pythagoras, the middle way of Gautama — this is difficult to find, difficult to maintain. Yet were everything to remain in perfect equilibrium there would be no growth. It needs the daring of the innovator, even at times the destruction of the thoughtless, to shake us out of our grooves. The secret is to recognize this and, when the storms of change howl about our heads, to let go of the limited, hold fast to the good, the while opening up our consciousness to the invigorating currents of the new.

Perhaps we should take a longer view of ourselves, our world, and of our partnership in the cosmic design. Were we here on earth simply for a one-stop visit, there might be reason for despair that we could accomplish so little; or for not caring a whit what happens — to ourselves or others — and so burying still deeper those yearnings for the immortal that abide deep in the soul. Seers, poets, writers of every age and race tell a different story, a story of man’s endless past and of his equally endless future. We are *not* brand-new creations, thrown on the wheel of life in a moment of caprice by some

Potter far removed from ourselves. No, every human being is the creation of his own individual Potter. Our entry into earth life is but the fruitage of seeds sown aeons ago; the consequence of a long, long series of experiences on this amazing planet of ours. And for no other purpose than to bring forth into ever grander expression the beauty, power, and goodness that was seeded by the divine element within us in the forgotten ages of our spiritual origins.

The future belongs to us, if we will but assume our true dignity as pilgrims of eternity: inhabitants of a planet, itself a living being, whose journeyings in time and space are as inextricably linked with the orbiting of our sun around its own central focus of light, as that solar being itself is linked with the larger destiny of the galaxy. Were the ancients, of Greece, Babylon, Persia, India and China so foolish in believing that the starry hosts were really only the bodies of divinities working out their celestial destinies within the still grander sweep of some supergalactic entity whose vehicle of expression was the universe?

As all growth, whether of man or star is spiral, the procession of the millennia has a way of bringing the human race around to much the same type of challenges that prevailed in some previous cycle. Astronomically speaking, due to the precession of the equinoxes, the sun is now leaving the sign of Pisces and gradually entering that of Aquarius, just as some 2160 years earlier it moved out of Aries into Pisces. Briefly, this means that once again we are passing through one of those dynamic change points which signal the ending of existing conditions and the beginning of new ones.

Nothing, however, is ever exactly identical in quality or form, for nature is not static. There may be nothing new under the sun, yet everything is ever new within the cosmic domain, for at every moment the entire solar system with its vast cargo of living entities is transiting into a different space-time of our galactic home.

It would be as stupid to write all this off as mere superstition, as it would be to feel we are but pawns, unwilling victims of astrological forces, as some have done in the past and are doing even today, regarding the configuration of sun and planets with the zodiacal signs as absolutely fateful influences about which man can do little. The succinct Latin saying expressed it well: *Stellae agunt, non cogunt* — the stars impel, they do not compel.

Nevertheless, the fact that science records a variation in the intensity of solar energy at certain cyclic periods, leads us to believe that at these particular junction points a specific quality of solar force finds entrance into the earth's atmosphere, which we humans are bound to feel. In this connection, Professor Murray himself noted the marked difference in tone between the classical age and that of the Christian era. It was as though "a soil once teeming with wild weeds was to all appearances swept bare and made ready for new sowing. . . . The new quality is not specifically Christian: it is just as marked in the Gnostics and Mithras-worshippers as in the Gospels and the Apocalypse, in Julian and Plotinus as in Gregory and Jerome." In short, it is a *universalizing* force.

In view of the current precessional change-over may we not reasonably deduce that an inrush of like power is working its alchemy at this present juncture? Time alone will reveal what new firmaments of human achievement it will open up, but judging by the upheaval already caused, and by the world-wide urge to end the divisiveness of the past and go forward together as brothers, we can surmise that its dynamism will leave a powerful impress upon the civilizations to come.

Plato spoke of cycles of spiritual fertility when men were more attuned to the time-honored principles of nobility; and of cycles of spiritual barrenness when the ancient truths went unrecognized, and so fell into disuse. We are, as we have said, at the intersection of two major astronomical cycles, and possibly of larger ones as well. Whether the incoming tide will be on a rising scale and we shall experience a minor resurgence of wisdom; or whether we shall descend into an even darker period of human suffering, we cannot know. The force of destructiveness spreading to all areas of the globe gives one pause; but when we think of it as part of the harrowing process, so that the new seeding can take place in fresh soil, we have every reason to hope.

What, then, is the lesson of antiquity? The fall of Athens in 404 B.C., followed shortly by the death of Socrates at the hands of the Athenians, the stripping of that fair city of all that her citizens had cherished most: honor, supremacy in the arts, democracy, the esteem of neighbors in war and peace, had been a shattering blow. The trauma had gone deep. But these were signposts; they were not causal. The corruption had already had its seeding within, undermining the very pillars of her matchless splendor. Seeds sown at the pinnacle of her glory which lay fallow until, despair taking hold, the 'failure of nerve' did its unholy work and the scepter of power eventually passed to Rome.

But here is the moving challenge for us. At the very hour when Athens was in its nadir of hopelessness, we find her philosophers turning inward, searching their very souls to find the strength from within to meet the onslaughts from without, sowing in the minds and hearts of their listeners the ancient seeds of probity, of purity, of philosophic wholeness. Curiously, the very seeds thus sown in defeat were, through the writings of Plato in particular, to inspire many through the coming centuries, not to outer triumph but to inward recognition that the Good, the True and the Beautiful are the only viable principles in human life.

As Francis Thompson said, "the fall doth pass the rise in worth." Just as in the prime of material success all too often we allow the weeds of selfish motive to take root and germinate, so too we may be assured that at the darkest hour of the soul's travail the seeding time for a new and finer flowering is quietly taking place.

Theosophy and Epidemics

Brooklyn *Eagle*, September 1892

At the meeting of a branch of the Theosophical Society in New York yesterday William Q. Judge, the president, spoke on the subject of epidemics. He said:

The United States is now face to face with a disease which threatens to become epidemic if not prevented from entering the land. Cholera has been here once before to devastate and may get in again. Existing in perpetuity in India it travels over the globe by way of Muslim pilgrimages to Mecca, from thence to Russia and then through Europe here. It now skulks in our bay and is perhaps about to be brought into our country through other points. This is a physical epidemic, very important for the time but not so important in the eyes of the theosophist as other epidemics which can develop in the mental and moral organization of man.

Cholera, or yellow fever, or grippe [influenza, flu], are peculiar diseases which terrify by their sudden action, but which are really physical and preventable, often curable. Grippe and cholera seem often to flash up suddenly at places very different from their first appearance, leading some to suppose there is a mystery which is not physical in it all. But when we consider that some snake bites in the East act throughout the whole body in a few seconds, and others produce death on the instant, we see that the mystery lies in the ignorance about the disease. Late experiments with cobra and other snake poison have shown that the poison destroys the cells of the blood with inconceivable rapidity, the corpuscles appearing to send the infection along on the instant. In a similar manner, bacteriologists have proved how the microbes of different kinds increase by the million with amazing speed.

No theosophist should deny that science is right in saying that microbes produce disease and also prevent it. For it is an old theosophical, and once secret, doctrine that the microbes — then called lives — are divided into two classes, one called builders and the other, destroyers. These, it was held, warred with each other, and whichever side won, the result was disease and death, or health and life. This, too, the old theosophists held, was the cause of man's term of life. For if the builders won all the time up to maturity they again divided themselves into two classes and, beginning to devour each other, at last brought about the death of the body at about 70 years of age.

The theosophists also assert that this microbe theory obtains in the mental and moral spheres, and that epidemics of a moral character may break out among men, causing sudden changes of character in persons who before that were very discreet. The French revolution, in which rivers of blood ran, was brought to its awful pitch by the sudden increase of mental microbes, which produce moral disease sweeping over vast numbers of men. Lynchings and riots such as that of New Orleans, he said, were of the same origin and were nothing more than the sudden development of these criminal microbes in the natures of men, who at other times were perfectly respectable. In the French revolution many excellent persons were carried away by the epidemic and led into the doing or countenancing of dreadful deeds. He referred also to the witch burning in Salem a century ago and declared that the otherwise eminent and respectable citizens who took active part in them were the victims of a mental and moral epidemic that drew them into actions of a criminal sort.

Turning to the present day, Mr. Judge pointed out that in the United States a microbe was developing in the mental and moral spheres which would sooner or later develop so quickly as to infect large masses of men. The recent strike riots and crimes on both sides evidence this, and if our thoughts, our mental feelings, were not speedily changed a vast revolution would be the result. Irrespective of the rights of either side in these struggles, the reason for them was to be found in the selfish character of our civilization, which ignores the idea of Universal Brotherhood. Great numbers of respectable men are incensed at each other and sides are being taken. Every person should stand aloof or he may be a victim to the epidemic on one side or the other. Even some well known members of the clergy have begun to assert that the country's legislation is in the interest of capital as against labor, and newspapers criticize them. The microbe is spreading. When it has made a few more advances it will gain a force overwhelming, and spreading then in vast numbers we will see suddenly springing up a revolution into which all will be drawn — one side the aggressors, the other, defenders.

And the discoveries of "mental suggestion" and "hypnotism" will not be forgotten in this disturbance. By suggestion an artificial reproduction of these moral and mental microbes will be brought about and thus natural capacity added to. One side will have its army of suggested persons to do its bidding, and so will the other.

The remedy proposed by Mr. Judge was a vigorous spreading of the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, together with the actual practice of good deeds by those who have time and money. The laborers should go to the rich and preach these as compellers of kind acts. The rich should hasten to show to the poor by immediate and universal benevolences that they are acting as nature intended, that is, as nature's trustees of their wealth and time. In that way and none other can the day of revolution be averted. Legislation is idle, arguments on rights and legalities vain. The poor, almost to a man, believe that the rich oppress them. The middling-well-off are between the two other classes.

Theosophy does not seek to abolish rights nor to alter social claims. It declares, however, that each man must serve his neighbor, and that selfish indulgence by the wealthy to the neglect of the poor is a source of destruction. A great charity organization should be formed by every well-to-do woman devoting herself to the poor, and every well-to-do man giving her the means to do so, and all cutting out at once their rounds of balls, parties, teas and frivolities. Otherwise the direful result of an epidemic in the moral sphere cannot be averted.

[Underlining by this Editor.]

In these very critical times for mankind and all on earth, we cannot afford to perpetuate negative habits of thought. The realization that other people everywhere are like ourselves grows stronger with increasing global contact and communication. Such direct knowledge gives us the opportunity to abandon old caricatures formed by the distorting lens of fear, historic animosities, and self-interest. Not to control our own inner negativity makes ever more real the possibility of massive destruction of mankind, whether through nuclear war, the continued series of local atrocities committed worldwide, or one of the other myriad manifestations of human selfishness and ignorance. The antidote lies with each of us — to expand our sympathies to include all people, and indeed all life, so that we contribute our portion to the cosmic pattern of compassion and love. — *S. B. Dougherty*

From the Editor

Each of us must choose our path. It is our life's course. It is in essence who we are. We can choose any path for ourselves. Some choose to follow family or friends or fellow workers. Some choose to follow a charismatic leader or group whom they believe is right. Some choose to listen to the religious thought or some philosophy they knew when young, or still know and believe in now. Some choose a different philosophy or religion, or even science. Some follow the latest fad or influencer. Some follow the path of the natural world. Some simply follow a quiet spiritual road into the unknown. Our path defines us and our very lives, and gives us strength to deal with the daily moments of choice. Which path defines you? Does it embrace UNIVERSAL LOVE, COMPASSION, and PEACE?

Maud Oosterwijk passed away peacefully on October 31, 2025, at the age of 102. A lifelong student of the ageless wisdom, she became a member of the Theosophical Society in the mid-twentieth century. Though of Dutch heritage and born in Indonesia, Maud spent many years in South Africa, where, following the passing of her husband Hugo, she succeeded him as National Secretary in 2005. Together, she and Hugo had founded the SA Section quarterly newsletter, *Contact*, in 1989. In late 2006, Maud relocated to the Netherlands to be close to her daughter and family. Reflecting on her memory, current SA National Secretary Alice Yetman shared: "I knew her as a gentle, compassionate, and gracious soul, who taught me much about our wonderful teachings. Like many others, I was sad to see her leave South Africa. She holds a very special place in my heart."

Death is a quiet blessing of Peace and Harmony as one withdraws into the Heart of the Universe...

In life there is harmony, rhythm — more or less regular occurrences. Sure, it is easier sometimes to let go of all rules and to do what you want to do. But here duty steps in: you must fulfill your daily obligations. Man is the only creature on earth who can neglect his duty, and I think this point is worth observing. If we studied ourselves and our surroundings more closely, we would be astonished at how both great events and little details occur at regular intervals.

We all, at times, get confused and feel we just can't move or take the next step. Then is the time to strive. Don't give up! If you should despair one day and think you have lost your inner harmony of body and mind, go for a long walk in nature. Think of your specific duties and your loved ones, that they need you, each in their special way. Then you won't feel like a piece of driftwood floating in a big ocean, but rather like a tiny drop of water, mingled with countless others which all together make up the great body of water. Soon a ray of light will stream through you and give you fresh hope, courage, and love to start a new episode of your life. — *Judy A. Jachimow*

Let the Silence within, Speak...

This quarterly circular is issued by the American Section National Secretary. Fitting articles, quotes, or ideas for potential publication are welcome from the membership. Notify me if you do not want to continue receiving this.
