



The Spiral Path...

The Theosophical Society, American Section – Quarterly Circular – Summer Solstice 2020 – #2

Om, Bhur, Bhuva, Swar...
Om, earth, sky, heaven...

Theosophical Glossary, Bhur-Bhuva entry

Our Days, Our Lives

Each day is relatively the same. Actions, events, sequences, etc. from rising until resting vary little – unlike an action movie, with its always changing background, unknown circumstances and situations, and new acquaintances at every turn. Small daily changes over time is how we grow from an infant to an adult. We observe, learn, inculcate, and grow. This pushes (leads) us into new experiences where we observe, learn, inculcate and grow. Our days can seem routine, uneventful, and monotonous. Often, we look for distractions from this gray that add bright colors to our lives and increase our adrenaline by a new and different, ‘exciting’ event in our day. At times, this excitement is added to our lives by comedy, or at others by tragedy, usually when we least expect it.

Typically active during the day and more passive during the night, our body does our bidding. You might even say that at times we identify with our body-life more than our mind-life. The absorption of ‘life’ is why we need rest, not the depletion of it. We can only absorb so much before we are full and our body is ready to recuperate. Think of a small child getting more and more active and then cranky, and then of a sudden crashes into a peaceful rest. So with us – although sometimes we learn how to handle the cranky part. (Smile.)

The same pattern is true of our greater life. The same cycles are at play. In the end, (which is not really the end, just another phase) we have absorbed so much of life that we need to rest in other realms than the mundane world we see surrounding us. As below, so above. Life and death are not opposites – birth and death are – life is the continuum on both sides. Our true life is not of the body, or our personality; but of our individuality – that which sees both sides of the veil.

Our lives move forward as our days, with action and learning, inculcation and growth. From incarnation to incarnation we pick up another personality each time. Our individuality grows by slowly rising above materiality, moving more and more into spirituality. To do this we do not need to gain anything, for we are actually already there – we just need to see behind the veil, raising the material garment we have come to believe is the real us.

This is true for all of us, no matter our position, situation, tendencies, or *any* aspect of our personal self. Humanity is One at its core. Our friends, enemies, those we love, those we detest or are scared of – all of them are One.

All is One.



‘I am not separate from anything’

By William Q. Judge

Dear Sir and Brother:

In cogitating lately I thought of you in respect to some of my own thoughts. I was reading a book and looking around within myself to see how I could enlarge my idea of brotherhood. Practice in benevolence will not give it its full growth. I had to find some means of reaching further, and struck on this, which is as old as old age.

I am not separate from anything. “I am that which is.” That is, I am Brahma, and Brahma is everything. But being in an illusionary world, I am surrounded by certain appearances that seem to make me separate. So I will proceed to mentally state and accept that I am all these illusions. I am my friends, – and then I went to them in general and in particular. I am my enemies; then I felt them all. I am the poor and the wicked; I am the ignorant. Those moments of intellectual gloom are the moments when I am influenced by those ignorant ones who are myself. All this in my nation. But there are many nations, and to those I go in mind; I feel and I am them all, with what they hold of superstition or of wisdom or evil. All, all is myself. Unwisely, I was then about to stop, but the whole is Brahma, so I went to the Devas and Asuras [Gods and demons]: the elemental world, that too is myself. After pursuing this course awhile I found it easier to return to a contemplation of all men as myself. It is a good method and ought to be pursued, for it is a step toward getting into contemplation of the All. I tried last night to reach up to Brahma, but darkness is about his pavilion.

Now what does all this insanity sound like? I’ll tell you what: if it were not for this insanity I would go insane. But shall I not take heart, even when a dear friend deserts me and stabs me deep, when I know that he is myself?

NAMASTAE! - Z.

KINSHIP

By Angela Morgan

I am aware,
As I go commonly sweeping the stair,
Doing my part of the every-day care —
Human and simple my lot and my share —
I am aware of a marvelous thing:
Voices that murmur and ethers that ring
In the far stellar spaces where cherubim sing.

I am aware of the passion that pours
Down the channels of fire through Infinity's doors;
Forces terrific, with melody shod.
Music that mates with the pulses of God.

I am aware of the glory that runs
From the core of myself to the core of the suns.
Bound to the stars by invisible chains,
Blaze of eternity now in my veins,
Seeing the rush of ethereal rains
Here in the midst of the every-day air —
I am aware.

I am aware,
As I sit quietly here in my chair.
Sewing or reading or braiding my hair —
Human and simple my lot and my share —
I am aware of the systems that swing
Through the aisles of creation on heavenly wing,
I am aware of a marvelous thing:

Trail of the comets in furious flight,
Thunders of beauty that shatter the night,
Terrible triumph of pageants that march
To the trumpets of time through Eternity's arch.

I am aware of the splendor that ties
All the things of the earth with the things of the skies,
Here in my body the heavenly heat.
Here in my flesh the melodious beat
Of the planets that circle Divinity's feet.
As I sit silently here in my chair,
I am aware.

The great heresy and the only real heresy is the idea that anything is separate, distinct, and different essentially, from other things. That is a wandering from natural fact and law, for nature is nothing but coordination, cooperation, mutual helpfulness; and the rule of fundamental unity is perfectly universal: everything in the universe lives for everything else.

It is this sense of separateness that is the cause and root of all evil. It brings forth the craving for *me: I want, I am, mine*. And it is the sense of personal separateness, imagining that one is utterly separate from all others, utterly different, that prevents one from becoming that inner god within. For by becoming that inner god you become consciously at one with the universe of which you are a child, an inseparable part...

G. de Purucker, *Golden Precepts of Esotericism*, pp. 94-5

...Theosophy is the Esoteric Doctrine, the real truth about man and the universe; the real truth about the human soul and its pilgrimage, and what we are here for, and what the whole universe is about...

It is a perfectly true thing to say that there is only one real Brotherhood on earth. We all know that the human family is one great Brotherhood; and linked to it are all the kingdoms of nature, higher and lower. But do we realize it? Obviously not. Otherwise we would act brotherly. But what prevents this action by us? Simply this: there is a tremendous duality existing in nature, and particularly in man. When he comes into contact with the life-giving waters of Theosophy, if he is serious, sooner or later he will find that within him there is a beneficent force which is seeking entrance into his life, in the light of which he can love and serve his fellows; and there is also a maleficent force, its direct antithesis. Man is really crucified between these two forces. If he follows the light, if he follows the higher dictates of his own soul and conscience, if he follows the way the ancient Teachings show, he will be the recipient of no other force in the universe than the one that flows from the Supreme Itself. But man does not. It is not that he *cannot*, but that he *does not* live on the heights all the time; and when he stumbles and falls, then is the moment that the teachings of Theosophy are needed to explain his psychological and intellectual, his physical and spiritual, constitution.

A. Trevor Barker, *The Hill of Discernment*, pp. 169 & 172-3

The unrest of the age is accepted as fact, but the cause is not a matter on which men can agree, nor is the remedy for it one that is easily recognized or willingly accepted. The cause is rooted in the cyclic law of evolution, of which the world at large knows nothing, and the remedy requires the acceptance of a new conception of the legitimate aims of human endeavor.

R. Machell, *The Theosophical Path*, p. 454

From the Editor

Thank you for your responses from the last (first) new circular. They are encouraging!

In an effort to reduce cost and save time on the paper copy mailings, I have sent a link to all those who have an email address on file. I would like to complete that list, so *if you received a paper copy but have an email address where you can receive a link to this circular online, please send it to me*.

Eventually, we would like to eliminate all but a few paper copies, to those without email or means, and reduced mailings may allow us to send out something more often, as fresh reminders of our ties with theosophy.

Fraternally,
Scott J. Osterhage

Nature gives up her innermost secrets and imparts *true wisdom* only to him, who seeks truth for its own sake, and who craves for knowledge in order to confer benefits on others, not on his own unimportant personality.

H. P. Blavatsky, *Studies in Occultism*, p. 126

Joining the Society of Sinners

By Tony Brown

“Theosophy is not for saints, it is for sinners.”¹

“Even a man of very evil ways, once he is devoted to me,
crossing over every evil in the bark* of knowledge,
will verily come to me.”²

In this day and age of sensory overload and technological clamor, the homepage of The Theosophical Society, with Headquarters in Pasadena, California (“TS”) is something different. No pictures. No flickering anything. No bottom crawl, no pop-up video, no fade ins or outs, no notices about cookies or privacy, no requests for donation or joining an email list. And just look at all that blank, empty space! This must violate a host of public relations and advertising rules of thumb. Given the opportunity, PR specialists and advertisers would rush to fill that empty space with various eye and thought candy as bait for multiple return clicks. But the TS just leaves that space empty. The TS has other priorities.

The left-hand column on the TS home page links to long lists of theosophical books, magazines, and articles. It reminds me of looking down into the Grand Canyon from the rim. The book list is vast. It is deep. The extent and expanse of it is overwhelming. You might wonder, “Is the TS just a book club? Am I supposed to read all of this? How can I possibly absorb all of this material?”

A journey is one step after another, one mile after another. If we do not start, we do not move forward.

“...there live to this day adepts who have obtained a thorough control over themselves and over the forces in nature...have these adepts succeeded in developing their powers at once when they begun? [sic]...does it not appear absurd that a man can climb a tree without proceeding step by step? Do you expect a child to be a philosopher as soon as it is born? Are not these illustrations sufficient to convince you that in order to succeed in any thing you must proceed gradually?”³

The tortoise won his race with the hare one persistent step after another. Slow and steady won that race. So, one book at a time. One book leads to another. A footnote leads to another book. A term or concept in one book leads to others. Read. Re-read. Compare. Contrast. Digest. Re-digest. Chew your mental cud over and over. It took months to reach the end of the Oregon Trail, but many people did.

But then what? What to do with that knowledge? Is knowledge the be-all and end-all? Not so. The TS envisions more for its members.

The objectives of the TS are set forth in its Constitution. Among them are these three: to diffuse a knowledge of the laws inherent in the Universe; to promulgate the knowledge of the essential unity of all that is; and to study ancient and modern religion, science, and philosophy. Diffuse, promulgate, study. One must study and acquire knowledge before one can diffuse or promulgate it. So, in that sense, the TS may resemble a book club. But book knowledge is not the end-game. Such knowledge is not intended simply for abstract entertainment or satisfying one’s curiosity, e.g. – what really became of Atlantis? The TS aspires to use theosophical knowledge for far more noble and glorious purposes. Study, yes, but then diffuse and promulgate.

Theosophical knowledge is a tool to hew, cut, carve, mold, and transform character – both our own, and mankind’s.

One expression of the role of knowledge is the Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path. The first of the eight steps in the Path is “right views.” Right views come from right knowledge. The remaining seven steps are actions which are “right” because they express and are consistent with right views:

“the bodhisattva Gautama placed “right views” as the first step on his Noble Eightfold Path. If the brethren could attain right vision — right understanding, right views — then right resolve, right speech, right action, and all the other “right” requisites would be achieved in time.”⁴

The Noble Eightfold Path thus consists of a first step of knowledge followed by seven steps of action. Right action results from minds imbued with right views. One TS Leader, Gottfried de Purucker (“GdeP”), put it this way: “you cannot change men until you have changed their minds. *Teach men properly and nobly to think, and you teach them properly and nobly to live...*”⁵

Though on first reading this might sound like a GdeP exhortation for theosophical missionary work, he was, of course, exhorting us first to change our own minds – to teach ourselves to think properly and nobly. He was not encouraging a missionary zeal to remove a speck from someone else’s eye, while ignoring the log in our own eyes. Wouldn’t that be the blind leading the blind?⁶ The TS urges each of us to build the foundation of our individual self upon the rock of theosophy, lest the floods of maya and our own past karma wash us away.⁷ Only then do we have something worthwhile to share with others.

The New Testament *Book of Matthew* says, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick...I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”⁸ And so it is with the TS. Sainthood is not a requirement for membership. Just the opposite. Former TS Leader James Long said, “Theosophy is not for saints, it is for sinners.”⁹ The TS sings along with Billy Joel, “I’ll take you just the way you are.” The TS takes each of us as we are, with all of our human ignorance and weaknesses. Our lack of knowledge and personal failings are the raw material of Theosophical work. Theosophy is the cure for those things. Theosophy is the right prescription to set the undesirable aspects of ourselves straight. Per the Bhagavad Gita quotation at the head of this article, we board the bark of knowledge (theosophy) to sail across the seas of evil (our own worst selves).

Theosophical knowledge is not an instruction manual which gathers dust on a shelf. It is intended to be inculcated, then applied, not just read without being implemented. Part of TS membership is the opportunity to be the baby bird in the nest with mouth wide open, allowing mother Theosophy to fill our gullets full of wisdom. Hopefully a point comes when we feel impelled to leave the nest and sow the seeds of theosophy in the great wide world.

The application for TS membership says, “I, the undersigned, accept the principle of Universal Brotherhood, and desire to aid in furthering the objectives of The Theosophical Society.” What are those objectives we are asked to further? The TS Constitution lists them as follows:

-to diffuse among men a knowledge of the laws inherent in the universe;
 -to promulgate the knowledge of the essential unity of all that is, and to demonstrate that this unity is fundamental in nature;
 -to form an active brotherhood among men;
 -to study ancient and modern religion, science, and philosophy;
 -to investigate the powers innate in man.¹⁰

Though knowledge and study are mentioned, these objectives also are a call to action. The verbs – diffuse, promulgate, form, investigate – are a to-do list, not just a to-know list. Most simply, we are asked to “take it to others.”

“We have to stand on our own feet and test; and when you have found something like H.P.B.’s philosophy that holds water, that you can’t knock a hole in, that brings to life the higher part of your being, that enables you to help others, you recognise it. Be thankful for it and take it to others.”¹¹

Does “take it to others” seem too simplistic and humdrum to merit any attention? Perhaps James Long’s explanation of the grand, altruistic purpose behind it will provide sufficient emphasis to take it seriously. As he put it, the “real movement” of the TS, and the work and original program of the Masters, is the “Salvation of the human Race.”¹²

What, then, is the “it” that Theosophists are to take to others? How is the “salvation of the human race” to be accomplished? The Golden Rule, perhaps, doing unto others as you would have them do to you?¹³ Following the example in the Parable of the Good Samaritan? What does theosophy recommend TS members do to implement the salvation of the human race? Good works? Proselytize? Sell everything you have, give to the poor, and follow your preferred prophet or guru?

Governmental law, the rule of law, and moral codes define lawful behavior, promote public order, ethical action, and discourage criminal activity. Parents teach civilized and moral behavior to their children to develop their capacity for independent, ethical decision-making. Good works resulting from these things are obviously a positive thing. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a famous exemplar of this. The Good Samaritan¹⁴ treated the wounds of a victim of bandits and then arranged food and shelter for him. But are all “good works” the same? The best kind are those flowing from a person’s stronger and stronger connection with his inner nature:

“All the world’s suffering, all its misery, all its pain and sorrow, arise out of human ignorance, human weakness, human failings... Change the hearts and minds of men...and all the causes of suffering and misery will vanish...Soup-kitchens, philanthropic institutions...are all admirable...and in their way do good work...But they are nevertheless palliatives; they do not cure; they give but temporary surcease from the evils.”¹⁵

Theosophy’s long-term solution to the evils of the world thus is changing the hearts and minds of men. That is, one person at a time learning to listen to and comply with his inner and higher nature, with his divine monad, with his sixth principle – *Buddhi* – united with his seventh principle – *Atman*. “The Kingdom of God is within you.” The TS aspires to do what all great spiritual leaders and avatars do – inspire men and women to find and unite with their own divine inner nature.

“The direct road to wisdom is the road or path of inner light...when the man himself becomes at one...with the god within himself.” “...I believe [this] to be our duty: to teach men the direct path to wisdom...”¹⁶

A strong connection to the Kingdom of God within us is a cure for human suffering and misery, one person at a time. And a stream of good works flowing from that connection is more than a palliative or temporary surcease from evil.

A. Trevor Barker admirably summarized this discussion in just three words - gather, practice, grow:

“there are three main activities going on in this search for knowledge...the line of knowledge, which is the gathering in of new intellectual and spiritual food...” The next phase is one of practice...to work out your theories, or try to, in practice. This results in what? Growth. And when a given amount of knowledge has resulted in action – and action has produced growth, then comes again a new cycle of gathering knowledge.”¹⁷

Gather knowledge of theosophy – read, study, learn. Practice the theosophy you’ve learned about – live the Noble Eightfold Path day to day and spread the word about theosophy. Grow – your soul aligning more fully with your higher self and less so with your lower self. *Anyone*, TS member or not, who does these things, is voyaging across the seas of evil in a bark of knowledge.

FOOTNOTES

1. Long, James, *1951 Tour Reports*, Haarlem, April 23 <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/jal-1951/4-23haarlem.htm>
2. (* **Bark = Boat**)
Barker, A. Trevor, *Theosophical Forum*, The Mystery of Pain https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/forum/f13n04p229_the-mystery-of-pain.htm
3. Eek, Sven, Compiler, *Damodar: The Writings of a Hindu Chela*, Part V – Personal Letters – Letters to W. Q. Judge, I
4. Knoche, Grace, *Sunrise Magazine*, Theosophy Today and Tomorrow <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/sunrise/38-88-9/th-gfk5.htm>
5. de Purucker, G., *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, p. 143-144
6. *Luke* 6:39-49
7. *Matthew* 9:11-12
8. Long, James, *1951 Tour Reports*, The Hague, April 27
9. https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ts/h_tsubject.htm
10. Barker, A. Trevor, *The Hill of Discernment*, Section 7, A Theosophist’s Attitude to Book-Learning, p. 368
11. Long, James, *1951 Tour Reports*, The Hague, April 27, and Stockholm, May 13 <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/jal-1951/jaltour-hp.htm>
12. *Matthew* 7:12. And for citations to the Golden Rule in other religions, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Rule
13. *Luke* 10:25-37 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10&version=NIV>
14. de Purucker, G., *Messages to Conventions*, To The American Convention, New York, October 23-24, 1937 <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/mess-con/mc-10.htm#american>
15. *Luke* 17:21
16. de Purucker, G., *Wind of the Spirit*, The Direct Road to Wisdom, pp. 66, 68
17. Barker, A. Trevor, *The Hill of Discernment*, Section 7, A Theosophist’s Attitude to Book-Learning

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. Should you wish to not receive this circular, contact me below.

In Memory of Wynn Wolfe

Long-time member Wynn and I had just started up an artful dialogue after both moving to Tucson very recently. He passed on April 28, 2020, after an unexpected fall. In his whimsical way I'm sure he is following Jack on his Sunstalk to our home star. We thank him for the work he did, and wish him well on his journey. We will definitely continue our dialogue far into future lives. sjo

Description of Wynn's Collage in his own words...

The topmost image is that of a CME (Coronal Mass Ejection). Search Wikipedia, Google, and YouTube for more detail.

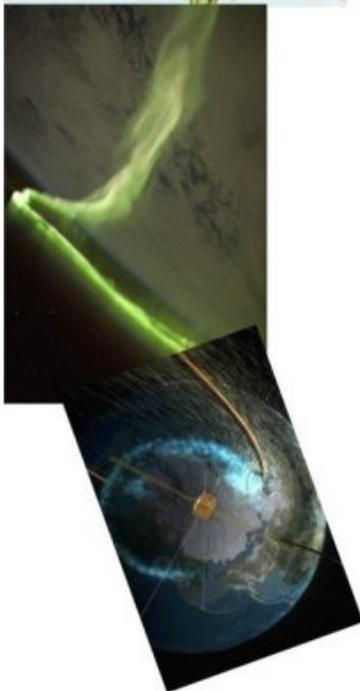
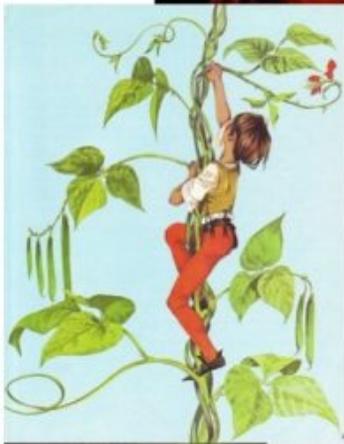
Second image down is Jack on the Sunstalk [Jack and the Beanstalk] which is one of innumerable universal myths (reminders) of Self-awakening, personal enlightenment, or depiction of "individuation" as psychologist C.G. Jung describes it, as part and parcel of a dynamic choreography of cosmic evolution.

Third down: "This NASA image shows the Aurora Australis observed from the ISS (International Space Station). It's believed it was most likely caused by a 'coronal mass ejection' from the Sun on May 24, 2010. A portion of the Earth's inverse horizon is visible behind the aurora."

And the last picture down is a NASA artist's drawing derived from THEMIS data and images. It stands for the Time History of Events and Macroscale Interactions during Substorms, caused by 'Coronal Mass Ejections' (http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/themis/mission/index.html). It is NASA's first five-satellite mission. "The discoveries include giant magnetic ropes that connect Earth's upper atmosphere... The satellites have found evidence for magnetic ropes connecting Earth's upper atmosphere directly to the Sun," says Dave Sibeck, project scientist for the mission at the Goddard Space Flight Center. "We believe that solar wind particles flow in along these ropes, providing energy for geomagnetic storms and auroras... the rope formed and unraveled in just a few minutes, providing a brief but significant conduit for solar wind energy. Other ropes quickly followed: They seem to occur all the time," says Sibeck."

Furthermore, since we are "part and parcel" to the grand scheme, it seems within reason that mankind, too, is invisibly tethered to the Sun by these magnetic lines or ropes. If so, are all other planets in our solar system likewise?

Radio astronomers, et al, have long observed the polar auroras at Jupiter and Saturn in our solar system, and since have built and operate LOFAR (Low Frequency Array) which began in the Netherlands and was further developed in several other European countries to detect auroras on exoplanets up to 150 light years out. LOFAR is yet another deep-seated intuitive effort designed in the work of substantiating extraterrestrial life here in our cosmos.



Wynn Wolfe, *Jack on the Sunstalk*, Digital Collage, 2017
From his ebook *PhilARTsophy*