



The Spiral Path...

The Theosophical Society, American Section — Quarterly Circular — March Equinox 2026 — #25

You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.

Maya Angelou

I paint my own reality.

Frida Kahlo

You don't make mistakes, just happy little accidents.

Bob Ross



Plastic Potency

Whether we are making our own garments — coverings between our bodies and the world around us; writing an article or book — the act of writing *any* piece can hit us like poetry; or creating a watercolor of a bird or hills or clouds — a beautiful expression of nature; or simply living life in the moment — being and doing the highest good for others that one is aware of; we are each expressing our creative intent from *within* into the outer world. One could be seen as more creative than the other, but they all generate from within ourselves in the same way, and all are creative acts, pulling from the plastic potency of our inner Self, our inner Voice. Others' reactions to those acts keeps them alive, and so is there actually an end product? Or does one act create a new act that creates a new act... Each of our actions therefore, is a creative act, as is every effort, every thought we think, every decision we make — creating a beautiful expression of the light within and manifesting it into the world around us. *Create beautiful acts for others.*

*Listen to the Salutation of the Dawn!
Look to this Day, for it is Life, the very Life of Life!
In its brief course lie all the possibilities and realities of your existence —
the Bliss of Growth, the Glory of Action, the Splendor of Beauty.
For yesterday is already a dream and tomorrow is only a vision;
but today well-lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well therefore to this day!
Such is the Salutation of the Dawn!*

Everyone is a Creator

Rick Rubin

Those who do not engage in the traditional arts might be wary of calling themselves artists. They might perceive creativity as something extraordinary or beyond their capabilities. A calling for the special few who are born with these gifts.

Fortunately, this is not the case.

Creativity is not a rare ability. It is not difficult to access. Creativity is a fundamental aspect of being human. It's our birthright. And it's for all of us.

Creativity doesn't exclusively relate to making art. We all engage in this act on a daily basis.

To create is to bring something into existence that wasn't there before. It could be a conversation, the solution to a problem, a note to a friend, the rearrangement of furniture in a room, a new route home to avoid a traffic jam.

What you make doesn't have to be witnessed, recorded, sold, or encased in glass for it to be a work of art. Through the ordinary state of being, we're already creators in the most profound way, creating our experience of reality and composing the world we perceive.

In each moment, we are immersed in a field of undifferentiated matter [*potentiality*] from which our senses gather bits of information. The outside universe we perceive doesn't exist as such. Through a series of ... reactions, we generate a reality internally. We create forests and oceans, warmth and cold. We read words, hear voices, and form interpretations. Then, in an instant, we produce a response. All of this in a world of our own creation.

Regardless of whether or not we're formally making art, we are all living as artists. We perceive, filter, and collect data, then curate an experience for ourselves and others based on this information set. Whether we do this consciously or unconsciously, by the mere fact of being alive, we are active participants in the ongoing process of creation.

To live as an artist is a way of being in the world. A way of perceiving. A practice of paying attention. Refining our sensitivity to tune in to the more subtle notes. Looking for what draws us in and what pushes us away. Noticing what feeling tones arise and where they lead.

Attuned choice by attuned choice, your entire life is a form of self-expression. You exist as a creative being in a creative universe. A singular work of art.

From *The Creative Act*

The Battlefield of Mind

At present, man is the human battlefield of his own dual mind which is fighting for selfish, personal ambitions and desires on the one hand, and for spiritual thought and impersonal feeling on the other. . . . Our dual impulses both use the brain-mind to "make out a case" for right and wrong in the inner struggles between conscience and desire. When we decide aright, our lower nature loses the strength that is gained by our better side. In recognizing this power of creating a noble character, step by step, we find opportunities of winning point by point in meeting the routine affairs of daily life. These seemingly small victories unite their force and make us equal to the larger issues which try our souls severely. Even the failure to win at times may count as success, for the man who keeps on trying builds up his moral strength, and diffuses something helpful into the very air around him.

Every day is a new beginning for all, no matter what the past has been. To unfold, to advance, to "become" is the natural and vital impulse of every thing and every being. The most dreary and difficult life outwardly, may be a cycle of opportunity for the inner man to show his heroic courage and impersonal power. — Lydia Ross

Our Basic Challenge

James A. Long

What can we most readily do to bring nearer to fruition an active expression of universal brotherhood? In thinking of the vast numbers of our fellow human beings today in whose hearts there is the longing for understanding, for light, and for a more brotherly way of approaching basic problems, one realizes how great is our individual responsibility.

Just as a journey of a thousand miles begins with the step nearest the traveler, so does every accomplishment have its simple beginning. The seeker after truth, contrary to the average belief, does not make his discovery in the fields of exploration, in books or in experiments, but solely within himself. Just so can we achieve the goal of brotherhood, by beginning ourselves with that which is closest at hand.

All life is based upon a threefold expression of action or living: right ideals or morals; right plans to use in expressing these ideals; and right living, or the carrying out in our daily experience of these enlightened principles. Our greatest source of strength lies in the fact that truth does exist in the universe, and that there is a vast ocean of knowledge and wisdom within reach of all: deep enough in its center to satisfy the most profound thinker, yet so shallow at its shores that even a child may understand.

Our journey is leading us to the broad field of a universal fraternity, not to a particular or limited acreage of brotherhood. Since the yearning for a more active expression of this ideal is manifest in the learned as well as in the most simple, surely there is a way whereby the needs of all can be met. What was it, in the final analysis, that directed us to the way? Was it not the bright light of another's understanding, the light of compassion displayed by one of our fellow human beings whose path we crossed? For the moment, at least, that one became a signpost for us, an animated expression of an enlightened heart, who by his or her innate character silently pointed to our own inherent possibilities and the way toward their development.

It follows naturally, therefore, that he who would be "conqueror of the world" must first be conqueror of himself. Our first duty then must lie with ourselves: the unfolding from within of the divine essence of brotherhood in order that its influence may not only be felt by our daily associates, but act as a stimulus toward the turning of their hearts in the same direction.

Nature works its wonders in the silence, and so we, even though immersed in the daily grind of routine affairs, can ever be silently but surely lighting the pathway around us. The more veils of illusion we destroy in our own nature, the brighter will our light shine; and eventually we too may become a signpost to others, a beacon more brilliant, more penetrating, and more vitally potent with beneficence than the brightest star in the darkness of night.

Sunrise magazine, August/September 2003

Influence

Katharine Hillard

In reading an article in *Lucifer* the other day, I was struck by a quotation from Elihu Burritt [an American reformer, linguist, and peace advocate — celebrated in his own day as "the Learned Blacksmith"] which ran in part thus: "There is no sequestered spot in the universe, no dark *niche* along the disk of non-existence, from which man can retreat from his relations to others, where he can withdraw the influence of his existence upon the moral destiny of the world; everywhere his presence or absence will be felt, everywhere he will have companions who will be better or worse for his influence. . . . Thousands of my fellow-beings will yearly enter eternity, with characters differing from those they would have carried thither had I never lived."

The thought ran parallel with the remarks of our Theosophical Society President [William Q. Judge] last Tuesday upon the multiplied force of concerted action, in showing that, side by side with what we are *doing*, runs the hidden current of our *being*, slow-moving, perhaps, but nevertheless sweeping on with a resistless force, none the less great for being unsuspected. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to realize — this force of passive existence, if I may use the expression. To speak, to act — we can all appreciate as bearing largely upon the character of others; we can all realize the inspiration of a great deed, a noble sentence, but simply to *be* — what can that do for the world? How far can the *nature* of a man, apart from words and actions, affect the great purpose of the Teachers, how much can *being* help to form the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood? It is the first impulse always to ask "What shall I *do* to be saved," and yet what is right action but the fruit of right thought, as that is the blossom of the character from which it depends, as the flower hangs from the tree. The gardener does not try to improve his roses by pulling open the buds and trying to stretch the crumpled leaves to a broader growth, but he turns his attention to the bush on which they grow, grafts it, waters it, enriches the soil around

it, exposes it to the light and air, and the more perfect flowers follow as a natural sequence. And as we cannot think of the perfect rose without its fragrance, so the perfect character cannot be thought of without its *influence*, that perfume of the soul which is as subtle and as powerful as thought itself.

For, after all, what is this influence of which we speak but the aggregate of the man's thoughts and deeds, the real personality which all his tricks of speech and graces of action cannot hide? This is why we are constantly taught that thought is better than action; it is so (as one of the sages has told us) because a man becomes that on which he resolutely and persistently thinks. He puts himself into an attitude of receptivity to a particular influence, and, as the law of force is the same on all planes, that force follows the line of the least resistance, and enters the channel he has prepared for it. We receive those influences that we consciously or unconsciously seek; we give out those influences which are the result of what we have sought. It is useless to forego indulgence in pleasure or in sin while the desire for that pleasure or that sin is still strong in our hearts, because in that case it is but the outside of the sepulcher that is whitened. Kill out the desire for the sin, purify the heart itself, and the body of that sin dies, and its sepulcher, like the fabled tomb of the Virgin, is found full of fragrant roses.

In Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's beautiful poem of "Santa Filomena" he says:

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise.
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

This is the *active* influence, the power we are all ready to recognize, all eager to work for. But there is also the *passive* influence, the "atmosphere" of a person, of which we are all more or less conscious, and which, being a continuous thing and ever abiding with that person, has an even more powerful though less apparent effect. To influence others by the voluntary force of speech or action is comparatively easy, for it is a momentary effort; we poise ourselves for an instant on the topmost heights of our being, and our fellows, kindled at the sight, strive, for another moment, to emulate our altitude. But how much harder the task so to inform our inmost souls that they can give out nothing but nobility, nothing but love! It was said of Lady Elizabeth Hastings [an English aristocrat and philanthropist, widely known in her own time (early 1700s) as a model of piety, charity, and educational patronage] that to love her was a liberal education, and we have all known men and women whose presence was a benediction, and made the brightest vision of Universal Brotherhood seem a thing to be realized tomorrow. So true it is that, as Edmund Burke once said, "Virtue as well as vice can be caught by contact."

For it is precisely by this influence, this tremendous power which we all possess and which we handle as carelessly as children do gunpowder, that that nucleus of Universal Brotherhood is to be formed which, in the language of Walt Whitman, is "to saturate time and eras." We are all occasionally startled by being confronted with some word or deed of our own that we had entirely forgotten, but that, like a chance-sown seed, has borne fruit in some other mind, and now we are told to gaze upon the harvest. It is these occasional glimpses of the far-reaching influences we wield that startle our reluctant souls out of their lethargy, and bring them face to face with the unalterable realities of their past, the glorious possibilities of their future. This again is the *active* influence of the spoken word: but who confronts us with the results of that other influence that never ceases, that weight of character, that force of personality that is continually creating for the soul "the garment that we know it by"? "The words that a father speaks to his children in the privacy of home," says Emerson, "are not heard by the world, but, as in whispering galleries, they are clearly heard at the end, and by posterity."

But how much more power over the destinies of our fellows has the perpetual influence of our nature than the strongest of our spoken words! That which we *say* for good in the course of our lives is very little, that which we *do* still less, but that which we *are* affects every human being with whom we come in contact as we move about the world, and draws within our sphere all the highest forces of the universe to cooperate with us.

This is not a good to be gained by one effort, not a victory to be decided by one battle. It is a long, slow building-up of character, thought by thought, as the coral-insect builds the reef grain by grain. And the work must be done with the good of others as our steadfast aim, with the idea of Universal Brotherhood ever before us as we toil. There is no need that we should sigh for wider fields of action while we wield such possibilities for good or evil as this power breathing from us unawares; but he who works for such a purpose, for the purification of his own soul that others may be benefited, will see ever farther and farther into the heavens. And the task of self-purification will bring with it that beautiful transparency of spirit that enables all men to see and bless the light that shineth from within and enlighteneth all the world.

The power to know does not come from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but mostly from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain mind. As the brain-mind is the receiver in the waking state, it has to be purified from sense-perception, and the truest way to do this is by combining philosophy with the highest outward and inward virtue.

William Q. Judge

Removing Our Human Blinders

Sarah Belle Dougherty

Sometimes it seems that the brotherhood of all mankind has become an accepted idea, almost a cliché. Yet in taking a mental journey round the world, the violence and oppression committed by one group toward another, and by one person toward another, is often the most conspicuous feature of human affairs. We feel moved to ask, if brotherhood is indeed a fact in nature, why isn't it more obvious, why this never-ending conflict? Since human actions grow out of thoughts and feelings, perceptions and experiences, it is here that the causes of the present widespread distress and disharmony lie.

How do we perceive the world? Generally, we think of it as a complex system formed of innumerable separate physical units: people, animals, plants, inorganic structures. In our everyday thinking and feeling we are keenly aware of our individual existence apart from others, and of observing our surroundings from a unique position in space and consciousness. Nonetheless there are many indications that reality actually consists of an all-encompassing unity where, in the words of the poet, "thou canst not stir a flower without troubling of a star."

We need not seek exotic sources to discover such testimony. In 1954 screenwriter J. Allen Boone wrote *Kinship with All Life* about the dramatic change he experienced in his life once he no longer viewed himself either as separate from, or superior to, other life forms. The book describes in detail why and how he developed respect for animals' consciousness and their integrity as feeling, living beings fully equal to himself. In caring for a remarkable, highly trained German shepherd, he eventually was able to experience two-way communication by letting go of his preconceptions of what a dog is and allowing himself to enter a receptive, meditative state open to the consciousness of other beings. Not only did he successfully communicate with such creatures as dogs, ants, and flies, but he tells of others able to communicate even with one-celled organisms.

Results such as these are difficult to replicate at will because the state of mind of the human beings involved is a determining factor; it is not merely a question of meeting certain physical or mechanical criteria to produce a given outcome. Why was Boone able to communicate when most of us are not? Because, he says, he began to look beyond the physical and realize that a being *is* its inner consciousness. Further, he realized through personal experience that in this inner realm all forms of life are one rather than separate: each being is in fact interlinked in the most fundamental way with every other. Only our human egoism and mental habits, he concluded, cut us off from our fellow beings.

The case seems similar with the other kingdoms of nature. Books such as *The Secret Life of Plants* have popularized research indicating plants' sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of those around them, whether human, animal, or fellow plant. Other findings suggest that the difference between organic and inorganic forms is one of degree rather than of complete separation: minerals show elementary reflex responses characteristic of organic forms. From this standpoint, life and consciousness are fundamental and cannot be limited to only a few favored forms of existence in the cosmos. Even today many who live in cultures that are in closer contact with nature presuppose such an inclusive outlook.

This broad outlook, so markedly different from our accustomed world picture, presents a realm of interconnected beings bathed in a common ocean of consciousness on which all draw and to which all contribute. Bodies are the temporary physical foci for consciousnesses which, far from being isolated from one another, are constantly interacting. Mystics in many times and places testify to the essential oneness underlying ordinary "reality." Whether called spirit, God, the unconscious, or left unnamed, a sense of union or unity with something within/beyond is felt by those who allow their perceptions to transcend the physical and the egoic. If all beings are expressions of one transcendent source, identical with it in their inmost being, no entity is essentially superior or inferior to another. Each is of equal inner worth and standing, regardless of its current phase of evolutionary expression.

If there is such an intimate connection among animals, plants, and people, how very much closer must we as human beings be to one another? The physical differences — of sex, race, color, and nationality, creed, social standing, and wealth — that form the basis of so many prejudices, opinions, beliefs, and policies are actually of least importance. They are temporary conditions assumed by the inner self like the clothing we wear from day to day,

paling into insignificance beside our shared humanity. Humanity forms an integral portion of the organism that is the earth: an essential expression of one aspect of its being. Together we all have an important planetary role to fulfill, just as the vegetable and mineral kingdoms do. To play our part effectively, we must better understand the universe we inhabit and begin to shape our lives in accordance with this deeper insight.

How can one person help bring about a better world? **The transforming force in human life arises from within, from our perceptions, because we are basically embodied consciousnesses rather than animated bodies.** Recent scientific theories point to the incremental influence of entities anywhere in space or time on the “morphic resonances” or psychoastral molds that affect all. Thus, the consequences of our thoughts and feelings, as well as the acts they spawn, are more far-reaching than most of us dare think. They are not mere abstractions but the most basic causal realities responsible for creating the “habit” called human nature, and the norms of life and thought.

We *can* counter the tide of violence and hatred — forces rooted in human exclusivity and self-centeredness. Striving to go beyond concentration on physical forms to an awareness of the inner reality of the world and its beings is a strong, positive contribution to the welfare of mankind globally. Transcending limited psychological and mental habits allows us to perceive the world more directly and dispel the illusions produced by our physical senses. Removing the blinders of egoism and ignorance leads eventually to personal experience of our oneness with all others. The heartfelt conviction that the visible world is the expression of an underlying unity that infills all consciousness, lives, and forms, not only exposes the illusion behind the many wrongs wrought in the name of our apparent separateness; it also acts powerfully on inner lines to strengthen the myriad forces for compassion and justice throughout the world.

Sunrise magazine, February/March 1992 [Bolding added.]

The duty of the Theosophical Society is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuition.

H. P. Blavatsky

From the Editor

We do not work or act in a vacuum. Fitting articles and quotes for this circular come to me throughout the days from many sources. They come from the whole world — from theosophical posts in Britain, from reading an article published in India, from listening to others nearby in America — but never in the sealed vacuum of self. Each of us draws on a variety of informing sources every day — we need only be mindful of our surroundings; and ask, do those thoughts embrace universal love, compassion, and peace? If so, gather those together and create for others’ consideration through living the life. Isn’t that what a creative act is? A gathering of forces into one point and then coloring them with one’s unique understanding of things? of Life? — *A plastic potency pregnant with possibilities!*

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. — SBD

Theosophy is the science of life, the art of living.

HPB

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.