



The Spiral Path...

The Theosophical Society, American Section — Quarterly Circular — Spring Equinox 2025 — #21

Let a man learn to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting;
let him learn to bear the disappearance of things
he was wont to reverence without losing his reverence;
let him learn that he is here, not to work but to be worked upon;
and that, though abyss open under abyss, and opinion displace opinion,
all are at last contained in the Eternal Cause:—

“If my bark sink, ’tis to another sea.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson



ALL TOGETHER

We are inseparably bound together as one humanity. Though we may appear independent and different in minor outward or even major inward ways, the core of each has the same source. No one is better or worse than any other. No one is more or less important than any other. We must all work together to raise the consciousness of all, to help others who are struggling and who are fragile. We must show them the light. The light of universal love and peace, of compassion and understanding. We are all responsible for where we are as a person, and to relative extents, a family, a nation, and also humanity as a whole. We must inculcate these qualities into our lives every day, every moment. Because we know it, it is our dharma.

Our lives are not our own. We are bound to others, past and present, and by each crime and every kindness, we birth our future. — David Mitchell

In this particular cycle of world history when the peoples of the earth are so lacking in spiritual perspective, it behooves us to probe our own consciousness more deeply, to search out our real motive for allying ourselves with [the theosophical] movement. Why did we join the T.S. in the first place, and what keeps us steadfast year after year? Perhaps if we reexamine our formal objectives as stated in the Constitution, we may uncover fresh meanings, unexplored reaches of application. For once the seed of dedication has been fructified, there is no separating our personal lives from our theosophic responsibility; the truth of our being sends its piercing rays through the entire gamut of our nature, to accelerate both the wheat and the tares into fuller growth. Our sincerity is tested, not by others, but by our own deepest self.

...Those strong in wisdom, while momentarily feeling hurt perhaps at the stupidity of others, will not be greatly affected by the anger or malice, but will continue to fight for right even against the opposition of the whole world. Through long years of purification and self-discipline they have built up that tenuous barrier of self-protection which instantly repels and dispels disturbed astral currents, and which leaves them free to act in harmony *with* the inner forces instead of against them. — Grace F. Knoche

The Chinese Farmer Story

Alan Watts

Once upon a time there was a Chinese farmer whose horse ran away. That evening, all of his neighbors came around to commiserate. They said, “We are so sorry to hear your horse has run away. This is most unfortunate.” The farmer said, “Maybe.”

The next day the horse came back bringing seven wild horses with it, and in the evening everybody came back and said, “Oh, isn’t that lucky. What a great turn of events. You now have eight horses!” The farmer again said, “Maybe.”

The following day his son tried to break one of the horses, and while riding it, he was thrown and broke his leg. The neighbors then said, “Oh dear, that’s too bad,” and the farmer responded, “Maybe.”

The next day the conscription officers came around to conscript people into the army, and they rejected his son because he had a broken leg. Again all the neighbors came around and said, “Isn’t that great!” Again, he said, “Maybe.”

The whole process of nature is an integrated process of immense complexity, and it’s really impossible to tell whether anything that happens in it is good or bad — because you never know what will be the consequence of the misfortune; or, you never know what will be the consequences of good fortune. [As the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* entreats, Do not look for results of actions.]

We all differ and must agree to disagree, for it is only by balancing contrary things that equilibrium (harmony) is obtained. Harmony does not come through likeness. If people will only let each other alone and go about their own business quietly all will be well. ... It is one’s duty to try and find one’s own duty and not to get into the duty of another. And in this it is of the highest importance that we should detach our *minds* (as well as our tongues) from the duties and acts of others whenever those are outside of our own. If you can find this fine line of action and inaction you will have made great progress. — William Q. Judge

Principle or Sentiment?

J.W.L. Keightley

We have all of us met persons whose tendency is distinctly separative. Home, creeds, parties, movements, they struggle for supremacy of action in one or all of these and rend all alike. The sphere of destruction is theirs. They combine, only to explode. What they cannot break down, they condemn. The more inoperative their condemnation, the more insistent it becomes, until the moral sense is blunted and they condemn upon hearsay only; they have lost sight of that basic rule of the truth lover, never to make a statement of fact except upon their own personal knowledge. They lead, only by the power of their personality; when this wanes, they are but names and ghosts. It must ever be so. Whenever the human mind has sown the giant weed of self, cultivating that under the sounding titles of genius or talent, power or charm; whenever the individual force is used for personal ambition and not in the all-embracing ends of Nature's harmonious plan; whenever the individual arrays the Personal Idea against the Ideal Nature; then Nature herself provides the antidote, the force reacts, the individual loses power and minds enslaved are all at once set free.

How then shall we know when this separative force is set in action, whether by another or by ourself? Can we not see when a person is attacked and when a principle? Can we not discern that action which aggrandizes a personality from that which upholds an ideal? Do we not know when the divine in man is encouraged and when the personality is praised? When the lower nature is bidden to look upward in hope, and when disdain and self-righteousness strike it lower still? Ah, yes! We are not so much at ease in our restricted mental atmosphere that we feel no exhilaration from a purer air.

Coming now to the question of the principle of Brotherhood and the mere sentiment thereof, I would point out that the sentiment may exist as a parasitic growth upon the true principle, threatening to stifle that in its false embrace. Sentimentality never discriminates. It advocates a "mush of concession." It rejoices in the exercise of emotion; loves to "feel good" to "feel kind;" to lisp the sugared phrase, the honeyed hope. It never knew that in Justice dwells a higher Brotherhood. Music, light, the enthusiasm of the crowd or of the personal mood are its stimulants. It delights in fictions, as a false peace, an impossible equality. It pays no heed to spiritual harmony; has no respect for the fitness of things: ignores the laws of force; violates the underlying spirit of persons and acts; has no care but for its own expansion, no aim but to bubble and spill. Better than the vast diapason of Nature it loves the tinkle of its own slender tune. It must see itself in evidence and in its own way does quite as much harm as the combative use of the separative force. Why? Because it is, in fact, one mode of that same force. It seeks — what does it seek? Self-gratification, self-exhibition, the generous pose before its own mental mirror. It hesitates not to tread where angels fear to trespass, but goes giddily about its self-assumed task of uniting spiritual dissimilars, heedless what delicate balance of force it disturbs. Its vanity would seek to bind peace and war together; to merge, as only the ONE can do, the two poles of life into the circle, and because its passing sensations can bestow an emotional fraternity upon the most divergent acts or personalities, it fancies it has equalized all. This maudlin streak manifests in most of us and its test is the same as the test of a more spartan virtue. The sentiment of Brotherhood attaches to persons. It views a man as a simple unit, not as a congeries of forces, praises him as if his light were single and white. A principle is too cold and abstract a thing to kindle this facile flame. And that is our fault. When we have made the principle warm and vital with our abounding love, our daily heart-living of it, then, and then only can we complain if it draws not the love of others as a star attracts a star.

Opening lotus,
Pure white in morning sunlight —
Suddenly, a fly.

Alan Harris

Fear nothing that is in Nature and visible. Dread no influence exerted by sect, faith, or society. Each and every one of them originated upon the same basis — Truth, or a portion of it at least. You may not assume that you have a greater share than they, it being needful only that you find all the truth each one possesses. You are at war with none. It is peace you are seeking, therefore it is best that the good in everything is found. For this brings peace.

William Q. Judge

The most powerful way to end something that no longer serves you is to starve it of your attention and energy. By consciously withdrawing your focus from what's draining or holding you back, and instead directing that energy toward new goals, passions, and opportunities, you create space for growth and transformation. It's about letting go, not with force, but by simply shifting your focus to what truly matters. In doing so, you starve the old and nourish the new, allowing positive change to naturally unfold.

Robert Edward Grant

Fear and Grief

Julia Keightley

What, then, holds us back from giving that love in measure so ample that every thought is permeated with its sunshine? What restrains us from unbarring the door of the heart to that Light? Why send we not forth streams of devotion to call down the waiting Radiance? What impedes the union of the Light and the heart? Arjuna [in the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*] gives the names of our jailers: they are Fear and Grief. Fear for all our lower selves and interests, for just as each one of us has his lower and his higher self, so can each love in others the lesser or the greater. It is for us to choose what we will contact in one another, and we have touch with the lower phase of our friends only when we fear, just as that which fears is the weaker and the lower in man. The high soul knows no fear of loss, disaster, death, ruin of the world, for well it knows that it can never lose its own. Many a thought of the brain-mind, due to education, custom, or the thought-vibrations about us, come between our hearts and this clearer vision of the Soul. When we begin to argue, to marshal images of loss and sorrow within the mind, we may know that we are doing the Dweller's* work for it. The powers of darkness have found an ally and a helper in us and cease from troubling that we may the better do their destructive work in ourselves. This interior process by which we produce an interior result which we call fear — or grief — is one both curious and occult. The images of desolation are evoked by us, pictures of supposed future losses to ensue upon some given action, and then their long array defiles before the soul. Now that soul, spectator of Matter, and Life-in-Matter, from which it seeks to learn, that it may recognize itself — that soul has a mirror, the mind. It looks into the mind for a clear, true reflect of life. But man steps in and by the deliberate action of his will throws false images upon the mirror: these false images bewilder the soul. A numbness comes over the heart; its interaction with the soul is paralyzed.

“When the perfect man employs his mind, it is a mirror. It conducts nothing and anticipates nothing; it responds to what is before it but does not retain it. Thus he is able to deal successfully with all things and injures none.”

*[Dweller on the Threshold (coined in the romance *Zanoni* by Bulwer-Lytton) = A malevolent entity which tempts the aspirant.]

The work of healing and of compassion must be accomplished on the ideative plane first, if it is to have lasting effect on the physical plane. We must labor in the vineyard of minds and hearts and center our energies on rooting out the inner causes of the wretched conditions on our globe. **While many of us may not be able to do much in a practical way to better the material conditions, there isn't one person who cannot contribute to the unselfishness in the world, who cannot strengthen the light forces.**

Grace F. Knoche

There are two forces at work in the T.S., as well as in the world and in man. These are the good and the bad. We cannot help this: it is the Law. ... Let me say one thing I KNOW: only the feeling of true brotherhood, of true love towards humanity aroused in the soul of someone strong enough to stem this tide, can carry us through. For LOVE and TRUST are the only weapons that can overcome the REAL enemies against which the true theosophist must fight. If I, or you, go into this battle from pride, from self-will, from desire to hold our position in the face of the world, from anything but the purest motives, we shall fail. Let us search ourselves well and look at it as we never looked before: see if there is in us the reality of the brotherhood which we preach and which we are supposed to represent. ...

Do you know what it is to resist without resistance? ... If one fights one is drawn into the swirl of events and thoughts instead of leaning back on the great ocean of the Self which is never moved. Now you see that, so lean back and look on at the ebb and flow of life that washes to our feet and away again many things that are not easy to lose or pleasant to welcome. Yet they all belong to Life, to the Self. ...

Do not allow bitterness to come up; keep off all personalities all the time; let the fight be for a cause and not against anyone. Let no stones be thrown. Be charitable. Do not let people be asked to step out, no matter what they do; when they want to go they may go, but don't have threats nor discipline, it does no good but a lot of harm. — *Letters That Have Helped Me*

Hope is being able to see that there is light
despite all of the darkness.

Desmond Tutu

From the Editor

Destruction and regeneration are all around us. The Theosophical Library Center recently lost in the Eaton fire in Altadena was opened by Grace F. Knoche in 1972. She had this to say at the time:

To achieve this harmony of outer and inner is very, very difficult, but it is an ideal we can hold, not alone in this or in any other public form our work may take in the future, but in the sanctuary of private endeavor. Books will never accomplish it; *certainly not a library*, nor the teachings either, essential as they are to a richer comprehension of man's role in the ongoing cosmic life processes. No, not even these grand universal ideas which have weathered many rounds and races, indeed manvantaras, will of themselves keep the theosophic impetus a living power in human destinies — unless there is circulation, circulation of heart-force, of the vitalizing current of dedication from our inmost being into and through the soul of mankind. — “From hearts to hearts are ways.” [Italics added.]

Robert Betz, FTS, recently wrote:

Our light has not faded...but grows brighter as this existence has become darker around us with the loss of our library. For a single light in the darkness can be seen from afar... and so our work will continue unwaveringly!

Let the Silence within, Speak...

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