



The Spiral Path...

The Theosophical Society, American Section — Quarterly Circular — September Equinox 2026 — #27

Birth

I destroy myself so that I can be reborn.

It may not be that we are broken.

We are taking shape.

A weed produces the most beautiful bulb.

Nacimiento

Me destruyo para poder renacer.

Puede que no sea que estemos destrozados.

Estamos tomando forma.

Una mala hierba produce el bulbo más hermoso.

Don Shepherd



Tidepool – Photo by Joslyn Wallenborn

Information

Humanity now posts ~1 million items per minute, or 1-2 billion posts every 24 hours, across all social media around the world. No one can keep up with everything at that rate. It consists of thoughts, opinions, research, lies, poetry, reporting, pictures and reels of unreal things, photos and videos of real things, and a vast variety of other items. How do we know what to believe, or what is true or false? How do we know if what is true is truthful? or part of the Truth? Only through our own discernment. We don't need to believe anything until it touches the test of our *inner Self*. And we cannot convince anyone of anything, as they themselves must see the light. William Judge wrote:

“Urge no man to see as yourself, as it is quite possible you may see differently when you awake in the morning. It is wiser to let the matter rest without argument. No man is absolutely convinced by that. It is but blowing your breath against the whirlwind.” — *Musings on the True Theosophist's Path* Also; “So long a one is governed by his likes and dislikes, logical arguments will not dissipate objections...” — *Respecting Reincarnation*

On Argument

In Conversation with W. Q. Judge

I do not like arguments. They lead into endless labyrinths and convince no one. For conviction must come from the inner consciousness absorbing a truth.

If you overcome an adversary in argument you do not convince him of any fact — save that you are better posted on your side of the subject than he is on his side, and leave him with no intention of adopting your theories, but of studying to strengthen his own that he may the better combat yours.

It is better to ask permission to state your case clearly, producing your evidence, then leave your cause to mature deliberation in the mind of your adversary.

If you have a truth, and the soil in which you desire to plant your seed is ready, he will receive it. If not, it is quite useless to argue the matter thus setting up vibrations of antagonistic force harmful both to yourself and others.

You may say that Plato point by point combated all opposition to the theory of the Immortality of the Soul. True, yet, in all the centuries subsequent, how many have believed in the soul's immortality because of the victory of logic compared to those in whose consciousness awoke a conviction from the gentle teachings of Buddha and of Jesus?

Controversy belongs chiefly to the intellectual plane, and is seldom waged for the pure spiritual uplifting of humanity.

When we have come into a higher conception of brotherly love there will be no argument, for if a brother cannot perceive a truth when its evidence is stated then he is not ready.

Seeds are never *beaten* into the unbroken ground but *sown* in the tilled soil.

The Theosophical News, Boston, July 12, 1897, p. 8; *Echoes of the Orient*, Vol. 3, p. 244.

Chance?

In a whirlwind of dust, raised by elemental force, confused as it appears to our eyes, in the most frightful tempest excited by contrary winds, when the waves roll high as mountains, there is not a single particle of dust, or drop of water, that has been placed by CHANCE, that has not a cause for occupying the place where it is found; that does not, in the most rigorous sense of the word, act after the manner in which it ought to act; that is, according to its own peculiar essence, and that of the beings from whom it receives this communicated force. A geometrician exactly knew the different energies acting in each case, with the properties of the particles moved, could demonstrate that after the causes given, each particle acted precisely as it ought to act, and that it could not have acted otherwise than it did.

In those terrible convulsions that sometimes agitate political societies, shake their foundations, and frequently produce the overthrow of an empire; there is not a single action, a single word, a single thought, a single will, a single passion in the agents, whether they act as destroyers, or as victims, that is not the necessary result of the causes operating; that does not act, as, of necessity, it must act, from the peculiar essence of the beings who give the impulse, and that of the agents who receive it, according to the situation these agents fill in the moral whirlwind. This could be evidently proved by an understanding capacitated to rate all the action and re-action, of the minds and bodies of those who contributed to the revolution.

In fact, if all be connected in Nature, if all motion be produced, the one from the other, notwithstanding their secret communications frequently elude our sight; we ought to feel convinced of this truth, that there is no cause, however minute, however remote, that does not sometimes produce the greatest and most immediate effects on man. It may, perhaps, be in the parched plains... that are amassed the first elements of a storm or tempest, which, borne by the winds, approach our climate, render our atmosphere dense, and thus operating on the temperament, may influence the passions of a man, whose circumstances shall have capacitated him to influence many others, who shall decide after his will the fate of many nations.

Man, in fact, finds himself in Nature, and makes a part of it: he acts according to laws, which are appropriate to him; he receives in a manner more or less distinct, the action and impulse of the beings who surround him; who themselves act after laws that are peculiar to their essence. Thus he is variously modified; but his actions are always the result of his own energy, and that of the beings who act upon him, and by whom he is modified. This is what gives such variety to his determinations — what generally produces such contradiction in his thoughts, his opinions, his will, his actions; in short, in that motion, whether concealed or visible, by which he is agitated...

This irresistible power, this universal necessity, this general energy, then, is only a consequence of the nature of things; by virtue of which every thing acts, without intermission, after constant and immutable laws: these laws not varying more for the whole than for the beings of which it is composed. Nature is an active living whole, to which all its parts necessarily concur; of which, without their own knowledge, they maintain the activity, the life, and the existence. Nature acts and exists necessarily: all that she contains, necessarily conspires to perpetuate her active existence.

Baron D'Holback, *The System of Nature*, 1770, Vol. 1, pp. 38-40.

Before the Labels

Jim Palmer

Long before we learned what to believe, who to vote for, what religion to practice, or what nation to identify with, we were something far more fundamental.

We were human.

Every identity we now carry was inherited, learned, or chosen within a particular family, culture, history, and community. These identities can enrich our lives. They give us language, tradition, belonging, and purpose. They help us make sense of ourselves and our place in the world.

The danger begins when we forget they are stories about us rather than the deepest truth of who we are.

None of us entered the world as a Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, Republican, Democrat, conservative, progressive, or nationalist. We arrived as vulnerable human beings, dependent upon others, slowly absorbing the narratives that surrounded us.

Over time those narratives became so familiar that they felt less like interpretations and more like reality itself.

Stories are indispensable. Human beings cannot live without them. Every civilization, family, and culture depends upon shared narratives to preserve wisdom and create belonging. The question is not whether we live by stories. It's whether our stories continue serving our humanity, or whether our humanity becomes subordinate to our stories.

That reversal happens more easily than we imagine.

Once an identity becomes absolute, our capacity to encounter another person begins to contract. We stop seeing human beings and begin seeing labels. We no longer meet a person. We meet a category, an ideology, an enemy, an ally. The individual disappears, replaced by a story we believe we already understand.

History repeatedly demonstrates how dangerous this becomes. Every ideology that has justified exclusion, persecution, or violence first required people to become something other than fully human in the imagination of those who opposed them.

The first casualty of absolutized identity is almost always our capacity to recognize ourselves in one another.

This is why existential health is concerned with more than what we believe. It is concerned with whether our beliefs deepen our relationship with reality or insulate us from it. Every one of us carries identities that can narrow our vision. The task is not to abandon them, but to hold them lightly enough that another person's humanity can still reach us.

Beneath every ideology is someone trying to make sense of life. Every political position, religion, and philosophy is, in part, an attempt to answer the same enduring questions: How do I live? Who can I trust? Where do I belong? What gives my life meaning?

Our answers differ.

Our humanity does not.

This is why the deeper we enter our own lives with honesty, the more recognizable everyone else becomes. Our grief is not unique. Neither is our joy, our loneliness, our longing to be seen, or our fear of losing what we love. What feels most intimate often turns out to be most universal.

Recognizing our common humanity does not erase difference. It makes difference safer. Diversity becomes something to encounter rather than something to fear because it rests upon a deeper foundation that cannot be divided.

The future will almost certainly demand that we learn to live with profound differences we cannot eliminate. Political polarization, religious pluralism, global migration, artificial intelligence, and ecological disruption will not make humanity more uniform. They will require us to become more mature.

That maturity begins with a simple act of remembrance.

Before every belief, every nation, every ideology, every religion, every culture, and every identity ... there was a human being.

And there still is.

We may send our literature into every home; we may find our facts upon every man's tongue, and still, our Society will be in an utter failure as a vital, living Brotherhood if the spirit and activity of universal Love is not infused into it. No one can so infuse it but ourselves. Each individual is responsible for its absence, if it be absent, for it alone adequately represents our pledge. We have not given the attestations of our honor to a mere formalism, but to a Reality; to an unlimited energetic Charity, without which we are indeed as brass and tinkling cymbals. — Julia Keightley

Chief Aim of the Occult Brotherhood

Nicholas C. Weeks II

The fundamental motivation of the teachings and presence of this Occult Brotherhood, known to H. P. Blavatsky, was clearly expressed in 1882 by one of the Brothers.

The word God was invented to designate the unknown cause of those effects which man has either admired or dreaded without understanding them, and since we claim and that we are able to prove what we claim — *i.e.*, the knowledge of that cause and causes we are in a position to maintain there is no God or Gods behind them....

The God of the Theologians is simply an imaginary power... Our chief aim is to deliver humanity of this nightmare, to teach man virtue for its own sake, and to walk in life relying on himself instead of leaning on a theological crutch, that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery.¹

Therefore, the purpose of the Brotherhood is to reduce human misery by replacing the ancient, false, personal God-idea with the timeless Truth at the heart of the Wisdom of the Ages.

The fundamental Law in that system, the central point from which all emerged, around and toward which all gravitates, and upon which is hung the philosophy of the rest, is the One homogeneous divine SUBSTANCE-PRINCIPLE, the one radical cause...

It is called “Substance-Principle,” for it becomes “substance” on the plane of the manifested Universe, an illusion, while it remains a “principle” in the beginningless and endless abstract, visible and invisible SPACE. It is the omnipresent Reality: impersonal, because it contains all and everything. *Its impersonality is the fundamental conception* of the System. It is latent in every atom in the Universe, and is the Universe itself.²

Since most of humanity identifies with and is only familiar with our “manifested Universe” and manifested personality, we naturally are deluded by this limited illusion that we appear to be. However, rather than take the arduous route of questioning our most cherished and apparently obvious persona, we take instead the broad and easy way of assuming that something of a personal nature is the source of our self and our world. The Ageless Wisdom teaches just the opposite.

The Secret Doctrine points out... that Mankind, collectively and individually, is, with all manifested nature, the vehicle... of the breath of One Universal Principle, in its primal differentiation.³

The original fount of our higher and lower selves is not a particular God, even the supreme God, the Logoi, or any combination of Gods and Logoi. While we are connected with these higher Lives, they are not the Source, but at best more radiant links in the living network which is the Universe. As H. P. Blavatsky put it:

Everything, from spirit to the tiniest particle, is part of the whole, at best a link.⁴

That which lives and thinks in man and survives bodily death, “is the ‘Eternal Pilgrim,’ the Protean differentiation in space and time of the One Absolute ‘unknowable.’”⁵ Thus, the very Root of our personal being and personal world is that “unknowable,” the “One divine Substance-Principle.”

Since “impersonality is the fundamental conception” of the only Reality, perhaps we should reconsider the “reality” we invest in our self and our God; whether a He or She, a Planetary Logos, Solar Logos, or beyond.

But does the question of personal God or impersonal Principle really matter? The Master K.H. answered a similar query as follows: “I say, it matters everything...”⁶ One of the highest members of the Brotherhood, also said why “it matters.”

The world in general and Christendom especially, left for two thousand years to the regime of a personal God as well as its political and social systems based on that idea, has now proved a failure.⁷

We have only replaced that old, prosaic, God and His angels, with such revamped “theological crutches” as the Goddess, Her Solar Logos, and His Planetary Logoi, the Christ and His Masters, not to mention the channeled “guides” that chatter so continually. This constant seeking to contact, channel, invoke, or be guided by a divine entity, rather than our own “celestial ray from the One,” is dangerous folly. As H.P.B. wrote:

Though they are “gods,” still they are not to be worshiped.... With the Pralaya... Brahmâ and all the other Devas, and the gods are merged into the Absolute. Therefore, occultists do not worship or offer prayers to them... The worshiper... would do better far to remember that every man has a god within, a direct ray from the Absolute, the celestial ray from the One; that he has his “god” *within*, not outside of, himself.⁸

No theosophist, no *Occultist* in the true sense of the word has ever *worshiped* Devas, Nats, Angels or even *planetary* spirits. Recognition of the *actual existence* of such Beings — which, however exalted, are still gradually evolved *creatures* and finite — and even reverence for some of them is not *worship*.... An Occultist’s reverence for certain high Spirits may be very great in some cases... But it stops there. For the Theosophists these planetary “angels” occupy no higher place than that which Virgil assigns them:

They boast ethereal vigour and are form’d
From seeds of heavenly birth,

as does also every mortal. Each and all are occult potencies having sway over certain attributes of nature. And, if once attracted to a mortal, they do help him in certain things. Yet, on the whole, the less one has to do with them the better.⁹

Around two thousand years ago the great Bodhisattva Nagarjuna wrote:

In seeking rebirth in the heavens or in seeking liberation, one must diligently cultivate right views. Even if one cultivates good deeds when possessed of wrong views, everything one does ends up producing results involving suffering.¹⁰

Right View consists of confidence in the law of Karma, plus the unreality of both personal self, and all phenomena. The dreadful fruit of such ideas as “God” or “self” would be that one would never be able to spiritually advance beyond this present world, and spiritual stagnation means spiritual death. But could a “God” conception, especially if sincere, really be so disastrous? Not for one or two lifetimes, perhaps. But after many lives of sincere but erroneous belief, the magnetism and other invisible results attracted to the person are almost impossible to remove. Blavatsky’s teacher, when commenting on some Hindu theists who would not, or could not, give up the notion of God, wrote:

Faith in the Gods and God, and other superstitions attracts millions of foreign influences, living entities and powerful agents around them, ... unprogressed *Planetaries* who delight in personating gods and sometimes well known characters who have lived on earth. ... These are the gods the Hindus and Christians and Mahomed and all others of bigoted religions and sects worship.¹¹

No matter how foolish, bigoted or evil followers of Theism may be, Karma forbids any direct assault upon their freely chosen beliefs. This is why the Brother did not write of destroying the God-idea or converting ardent theists, but of “delivering” humanity from its theistic nightmare. Only those whose minds are open enough to consider the truths of the Wisdom Religion should be exposed to these ideas. As that same Brother once wrote, “Degrade not truth by forcing it upon unwilling minds.”¹²

Some theists or even secularists, may learn from their karmic trials and look for a better way, but Karma will do most of the “converting” that may occur, not the Occult Brotherhood or its admirers. One other reason for so little proselytizing by followers of the Occult doctrine is the certainty that the “celestial ray” — given one is altruistically striving for selflessness — will provide, or help one find, all the inspiration and guidance one needs.

Let us hope these thoughts, from the Noble One, the Patron of all true Adepts, Gautama Buddha, will help all theosophists to do our duty, by striving to wake humanity from its nightmare:

Those who mistake the unreal to be real and the real to be unreal, dwelling in wrong thoughts, never arrive at the real. Those who know the real to be real and the unreal to be unreal, dwelling in right thoughts do arrive at the real.¹³

Oneself is one’s own refuge; what other refuge can there be? With oneself fully controlled, one obtains a refuge which is hard to gain.

By oneself indeed is evil done and by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone and by oneself indeed is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one can purify another.¹⁴

NOTES

1. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, pp. 52-3. 2. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I:273. 3. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II:492. 4. H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, X:395. 5. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II:728. 6. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 143. 7. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p.507. 8. H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, X:345. 9. H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, X:13-14. 10. *Letter From a Friend*, tr. Bhikshu Dharmamitra, p. 85. 11. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, pp. 462-463. 12. *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom, First Series*, Letter 12, p. 34. 13. *Dhammapada*, vv. 11-12, tr. Venerable Acharya Buddhārakkhita Thera. 14. *Dhammapada*, vv. 160, 165, tr. Walpola Rahula, in *What the Buddha Taught*, p. 130.

Conversations on Occultism

William Q. Judge

Student.— How is one to know when he gets real occult information from the Self within?

Sage.—Intuition must be developed and the matter judged from the true philosophical basis, for if it is contrary to true general rules it is wrong. It has to be known from a deep and profound analysis by which we find out what is from egotism alone and what is not; if it is due to egotism, then it is not from the Spirit and is untrue. *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. — *The Path*, November 1894, p. 245.

My purpose is not to promote a path or a way, but to stir within you, the excitement and uniqueness of your own evolutionary process. May you discover your own river and may your life become a meaningful voyage. — Hal Stone

From the Editor

The surest way to not advance in your journey is to listen to others and not your own inner Self. What I say, or what any proclaimed teacher says, or what anyone who simply claims to know the heart of the heart, the true pathway; is not the way.

One must find, hear, see, inculcate, and live their own truth, which is their own path, which is the only path anyone need follow.

Others' words may be true and meaningful, and may satisfy the inward emotions or intellect, but can never lead one's inner Self to Itself.

Read and listen all you want, all you can, but know that until you make it part of your inner Self, part of your BE-ing, you will not truly understand or walk on the right path.

This also follows for your words to others. They can hear, they can think they understand, but until they have made those words part of their life, they will not truly know, truly understand.

Each of our stories is different, because each of our lives is different. The story we tell ourselves is different than the story we tell others, because words fail. So the only way one can understand is to "LIVE THE LIFE."

No one can decide for another what is right for that other to do, because, however wise and good he may be, it is impossible for him to understand all his brother's nature and circumstances, to say nothing of the unseen influences which his Karma heaps about him. Therefore none may be the keeper of his brother's conscience, nor, for the same reasons, can he be his brother's judge. — Katherine Hillard

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 circular.
