



The Spiral Path...

The Theosophical Society, American Section – Quarterly Circular – Autumnal Equinox 2020 – #3

Love is the bridge between you and everything.

Rumi

The Unknown

The unknown. What is it? Where is it? Why is it? When is it?

Our consciousness is right now limited, and does not encompass the entire scope of the Universe, from the smallest to the largest, the past to the future. There are, therefore, things which we do not know, cannot fathom, maybe do not, can not even conceive of, to know that we do not know. Logically, what we do not know is the Unknown. It is in our minds usually dark and foreboding, like finding our way without light.

The unknown comes to us each moment in the form of the newly known, and in that respect, we come to *know* the Unknown. A large portion of the Universe is unknown to us, especially those things that are not on any wavelength or vibration that we can sense. We see only a small bit of the entire spectrum of light, hear only a small slice of the music of the spheres, and smell, taste, and feel even a smaller amount. Yet, at our core, we are inherently the entire Universe, the entire Kosmos. Perhaps that's why we sometimes feel or think things that we cannot adequately describe, in any form.

The Unknown, however, is not something to be feared. It is not out to get us, or intentionally oppositional. The Universe has our back. In its infinite equilibrium it simply adjusts itself based on input received from the Beings who inhabit it. The equilibrium, or as some call the operation of cause and effect, *karma*, adjusts things utilizing those effects which eventually zero-out all the causes we input. In this way, nothing we experience is ever unwarranted, and is, in fact, what we have set in motion while we learn to work in harmony with Nature's unfailing *compassionate* laws.

Therefore, fear not at all. All is well, for the heart of you is the universe, and the core of the core of you is the heart of the universe. As our glorious daystar sends forth in all directions its streams of rays, so does this heart of the universe, which is everywhere because nowhere in particular, constantly radiate forth streams of rays; and these rays are the entities which fill the universe full.

G. de Purucker, *Golden Precepts of Esotericism*, p. 67

It is a mistake to think that by fearing or being unhappy you can progress. Fear is always a feeling to be rejected, because what you fear is just the thing that is likely to come to you: fear attracts the object of fear. Unhappiness weakens the strength and lays one more open to the causes of unhappiness.

Sri Aurobindo, *Living Within*, p. 52



Never Worry

There is never any need to worry. The good law looks out for all things, and all we have to do is our duty as it comes along from day to day. Nothing is gained by worrying about matters and about the way people do not respond. In the first place you do not alter people, and in the second, by being anxious as to things, you put an occult obstacle in the way of what you want done. It is better to acquire a lot of what is called carelessness by the world, but is in reality a calm reliance on the law, and a doing of one's own duty, satisfied that the results must be right, no matter what they may be. Think that over, and try to make it a part of your inner mind that it is no use to worry; that things will be all right, no matter what comes, and that you are resolved to do what you see before you, and trust to Karma for all the rest.

William Q. Judge, *Letters That Have Helped Me*, pp. 77-78.

The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.

H. P. Blavatsky, *First Letter to the American Convention* (1888).

Fear, the Great Destroyer

The Great Destroyer is fear, horror, apprehension of what is going to happen to me. Fear is destructive because it is based on egoism. Think how true this is. If a man utterly forgets himself, fear vanishes because he no longer thinks of the effect that anything may have upon himself. Fear is a concentration of attention upon oneself in an expectancy of disaster happening to one. Lose track of yourself, forget yourself, and fear will vanish.

Fear is often said to be a protection, but a protection only to the weak whose second nature is to fear; it is never a protection to the strong. It is horribly destructive. Of what? Of self-composure, self-confidence. It undermines will. It often makes one cruel in one's treatment of others. Fear is crippling. It stops the life-forces: it makes one shrink and tremble, for, harboring it, one no longer has the daring, the vigor, the strength and the power to go forth. Yet the timid man is always in far greater danger than the man who has no fear. Fear actually attracts danger. Your chances of safety are infinitely greater if you have no fear. Think it over.

Who would like to live in fear of his life, fearing everything that is going to happen, always slinking around the corner and running into cellars, and trying to go up and yet afraid to go up for fear he will fall? All his life would be a continuous horror. Whereas the man who has love in his heart, who reckons not of what is going to happen to himself, how happy and joyful he is; and he is strong and affects others with his self-confidence. If fear ever comes into his soul, it is because for the time being he has forgotten.

Forget yourself, and fear will vanish. Do you know the royal way to the forgetting of the self — utterly losing track of the thought of self in your life? It is to love all things both great and small; for perfect love casteth out all fear. Do you fear the things you love? Never. You want them, you long for them, you yearn for them.

Learn therefore to love, and fear will go; and you become strong; for love is a mighty power enchained in the human breast.

Why is love so great a protection, outside of the fact that it casts out fear? Because its vibrations are infinitely harmonious; and fear is always shaken, distorted vibrations. The Divine is perfect harmony, and all beneath it can arise to that. But fear is inharmony, trembling, shattering, undermining vitality. Look at the picture of a thoroughly frightened beast or man. You say to yourself: Where is the love in that man's heart which would give him peace, strength and utter composure? He has lost it, he has forgotten it; if it were there, there would be no fear. And what is this perfect love which casteth out all fear? Why, it is simply living in that part of our own self which is universal. It is becoming allied with the Divine. Therein lies perfect peace, perfect harmony.

G. de Purucker, *The Theosophical Forum*, January 1943

You may think you're done,
but you're never through.

Natalie Merchant

Universal Brotherhood

Universal Brotherhood — the keen realization of the spiritual and natural oneness of the human kind... — is the only key to a peace that will last: a peace of conviction and sincerity.

Hundreds of examples can be found every day of the misuse of the highest principles, of the perversion of high ideals and great truths, of the planting of the seeds of dissension and the spirit of warfare among men, of the persistent endeavor of the lower forces to destroy the glorious work of Brotherhood.

Unbrotherliness is the insanity of the age. It menaces in no small degree the progress of our civilization. Its power cannot be broken or destroyed until man has had ingrained into his heart, and mind, the fact that he is divine in nature, until he realizes that he possesses the immortal potentiality of good, that true freedom exists only where the higher law holds in subjection the lower. Not until he seeks to gain the ascendancy over his lower nature can he do his highest duty to his fellowmen, or be a brother in the truest sense of the word, or live in the freedom of Freedom.

Let us hope with that grander hope of the soul, the energy of right action, that the day is not far distant when the great sweeping force of love — of true brotherliness — shall encompass humanity, when the knowledge of right living shall be in the grasp of all and shall be lived in the truest sense of the word, when children shall be conceived and educated in the atmosphere of purest thought and grander action; then, and not till then shall humanity commence to build the solid foundation of a golden age and work in the kingdom of freedom.

Katherine Tingley, *The Wine of Life*, pp. 93-4

From the Editor

Thank you to all those who have updated their email address and other contact info with me! It is very much appreciated, and shows me that you are still engaged.

After the Winter Solstice issue (next one) this circular will be sent only by email, which will include a link to the website below as a reminder of new issues. If you received a paper copy of this circular, please send me your email address to continue receiving notices. (You can always view them on the website below.)

If you have a special situation, do not have an email, or cannot access the internet to read this circular, **let me know** and I will make provisions for you to continue to receive a paper copy.

Fraternally,
Scott J. Osterhage

And just as fear, in an animal, causes physical contraction, an automatic preparation for fight or flight, so the fear, in man, of a supposedly hostile universe, causes a spiritual contraction, a density, which makes it almost impossible for his own inner light to shine through.

Linda Barlow, *The Theosophical Forum*, February 1939

Do Well the Smallest Duty

Robert Treat

Into everyone's life come periods of stress and often inner struggle... If we believe the causes of stress lie in outward circumstances, we are taking a very superficial view. It is true that outer problems are most real and need constant attention, otherwise they may accumulate to the point where they will overwhelm us; but it is actually our inner attitude that colours them with oppressive overtones. There is an old adage which says, "The power another person has to annoy me I gave him." This is true all along the line.

When we become involved in our emotional reactions to our environment, we surround ourselves with a veil and cannot see that environment clearly. We begin to ascribe our own worry and intensity to our surroundings and read meanings that are not there. We may start imagining that people and even things are deliberately inimical. At such times we appreciate the value of a true friend who will stand by, giving support, shedding a more wholesome perspective, helping us liberate ourselves from unreal pictures that often have little existence outside our own mind. There his responsibility ends, however, for otherwise he might try to do for us what we should be doing for ourselves, even if we make mistakes.

These intervals are uncomfortable, but if we cannot rise above this mere fact, we shall miss the import of the entire experience and sink back into the same grooves of thinking and conduct that prevailed before and which actually produced the aggravated situation. Surely this is the key, for despite appearances we are being prodded into greater effort along the precise lines of our inner need and aspiration. Positive values are often brought to the surface in the midst of trial, the opportunity given to discover and bring out hidden resources of strength and understanding. In the process we may become aware that there are others around us shouldering burdens many times heavier than our own.

Opportunity is the jewel hidden in the darkness of inner stress. Opportunities may range from a simple flexing of the patience muscles to a profound shake-up of the entire nature. No one of them is small, for important issues often hinge on apparently insignificant decisions. Each hidden thought, or weakness indulged in, has its effect upon our character, hence our destiny. On the positive side, every effort towards self-conquest, every noble aspiration or altruistic impulse, profoundly alters the inner and eventually the outer nature. A time of difficulty can thus be variously interpreted and used.

Life is the great initiator and brings us exactly those things we need in our journey from darkness to light. We do not often recognize them as such, for we are usually too involved in the experience of pleasure and pain to understand what these may be pointing to in ourselves. This is a strange attitude, because when we feel physical discomfort, for instance, we set out immediately to see what the cause and cure may be. But when we are psychologically upset, we begin to thrash about, often blaming other people or 'conditions' for something in ourselves that needs attention. The outside situation may indeed be difficult and need changing, but the upset is in us and should be read for what it is. As evolution urges us forward, it seems that life pushes against those parts of us that need enlarging or straightening out.

We are usually hurt through our attachments. Those who insist on getting their own way in all things, or who lean on others for advice, praise or attention – are bound to have trouble. We may be counting on the "fruits of action" and be disappointed when things take another turn. These and a thousand other attachments bring on most of the psychological ups and downs of daily life, but how many of us tackle the underlying causes?

We may be wedded in a completely automatic and unthinking manner to our beliefs, to our outlook upon others or upon ourselves. This is actually a form of egotism we all experience in varying degrees. It is as though we were so in love with ourselves that we resent it if any upsetting person, idea or influence intrudes itself upon our neat little inner cosmos. And when life brings pressure to bear upon some of our cherished modes of thinking and feeling, or upon our unexamined motives, then our suffering can be acute, for this is the very chamber of our day-to-day consciousness.

For this reason it is sometimes difficult to get through to those who may turn to us for help when they are in the midst of some inner turmoil. As with disease, it appears that the fever must often run its course until the nature is purified and the individual once again receptive to what is going on around him. It is not the moment for lengthy explanations when we are wrapped in a cocoon of intense pressure; yet there are a number of time-tested principles that can come to our assistance. One such is the right performance of daily tasks. This advice sounds so trivial, yet as Katherine Tingley said so beautifully: "Do well the smallest duty, and when the day is done, there will be no regrets, no time wasted. Then joy will come." Fulfilling our everyday responsibilities in the right spirit takes our mind off oneself and places our concern with others. We soon discover that our own problems are by no means insurmountable, but only appear so to our agitated mind. By following the moment-by-moment path of duty, honestly and directly, we are able to bring ourselves by imperceptible degrees to the place where we can consider our own plight more dispassionately.

One of the major causes of human suffering is the misuse of the will. As with every energy, it is colourless until intelligence or passion turns it in one direction or another. When it is used to further selfish or unwise ends, suffering is bound to ensue, because the seeds being sown will sprout sooner or later into growths that are unlovely, to say the least. Often we make personal use of the will to push through some project or pet idea, when a careful feeling out of the whole situation would show us the time is not right for it, or that the idea itself needs further thought. Either the project falls flat or runs into so many obstacles that eventually it has to be abandoned. The events, situations and duties in our lives have a way of unfolding in the most natural manner for all concerned when not overly 'managed.' This unfolding pattern is an expression of what might be termed the Divine Will. The secret of true happiness is to allow the personal will to serve the Divine Will, so that in deciding the course of our lives from moment to moment and from day to day, we shall be working with nature and not against her. Jesus is reported to have said, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

True happiness is thus not dependent upon avoiding pain and experiencing only pleasure, otherwise we could purchase it with massive doses of self-indulgence. We all know what would happen if we shielded our children from every discomfort and pampered their every whim, yet is this not what we adults do with our lives for the most part? How we run after money, comforts, ease, sometimes sacrificing our good name for them, ignoring all the

while what this is doing to ourselves. Then nature takes a firm hand and gives us a jolt or two, and we cry out in indignation.

True happiness can only come from living up to the best that is in us, letting the chips fall where they may insofar as our own personal condition is concerned. What hurts, we shall find, is the selfishness and egotism in us, all the small qualities that prevent us from becoming larger individuals. I am therefore suspicious of disciplines which have happiness as their primary goal, or peace of mind, or even the attainment of spiritual union. These seem to be starting off on the wrong foot. There is something in them that smacks of selfishness. The only happiness that can be depended upon, it seems to me, is the kind that comes as a by-product of placing the welfare of others above that of our own.

There is joy in the purity of each fresh moment. It has never existed before, and we can make of it something grand along the lines of our highest aspirations, no matter how the past may be clouded with mistakes and weakness. Therefore we are enjoined never to waste time in regretting, but to use well each instant as it comes to us. There is no use worrying about things over which we have no control; instead we should concern ourselves with those matters over which we do have control. Upon these we can use our creative will and lift ourselves up to higher levels of being and doing – not for our own benefit or happiness, but because the Divine working within us urges us to do so.

(Excerpted from *Sunrise* magazine, December 1973)

Setting Out on the Journey

B I S M A L L A H

*When you are guided to this pathway of the heart,
take a moment to breathe, and begin what you are
about to do wholeheartedly.*

When we begin anything new, much is unknown. We have plans, but will they work out? Can we be fully ourselves and still connect deeply with others? Is it possible to keep changing and growing, yet still maintain friendships and relationships over time? Each decision to love, to pursue something passionately, means a step into the unknown.

When we take time to meditate, or breathe momentarily in silence at the beginning of each day or year, each new job or relationship, we confront the unknown. This requires courage and heart. The Sufis often begin something new by breathing the Arabic word *bismallah*, which can be translated poetically:

*We begin by remembering
The sound and feeling of the One Being,
The wellspring of love.
We affirm that the next thing we experience
Shimmers with the light of the whole universe.*

If we look at the world this way, then the reason we exist – and the reason to begin any journey – is to bring out our full humanity, the unique flavor that we alone can offer to the universe's still-cooking stew. According to the twelfth-century Sufi poet Saadi:

*Every being is born for a certain purpose,
And the light of that purpose is kindled in its soul.*

Neil Douglas-Klotz, *The Sufi Book of Life*, p. 1

Human Family by Maya Angelou

I note the obvious differences
in the human family.
Some of us are serious,
some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived
as true profundity,
and others claim they really live
the real reality.

The variety of our skin tones
can confuse, bemuse, delight,
brown and pink and beige and purple,
tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seven seas
and stopped in every land,
I've seen the wonders of the world
not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women
called Jane and Mary Jane,
but I've not seen any two
who really were the same.

Mirror twins are different
although their features jibe,
and lovers think quite different thoughts
while lying side by side.

We love and lose in China,
we weep on England's moors,
and laugh and moan in Guinea,
and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland,
are born and die in Maine.
In minor ways we differ,
in major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences
between each sort and type,
but we are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.

I am nature.

Jackson Pollock

Let the Silence within Speak...

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