

Can that be true happiness which is assailable by change, decay, or death? Can that be true happiness which is exalted today and a myth tomorrow? Can that be true happiness which depends on outward things, or seasons, or persons? No; but there is a happiness declared by the Sages - known by the Sages of all times and now - which may be won back by each man from an unremembered past; a happiness unremitting, ceaseless and eternal, a happiness which *is* and which on nothing dependeth.

Even in mortal joys, there is no joy like that lost that is regained. What, then, if the whole Kingdom of Conscious Bliss is gained again? We all have possessed that kingdom. Consider, how at the end of this earth's great Day, the minds of men will have become "pellucid as crystal"; how in the seventh race of the seventh round [1] a perfected humanity - and we among it - will have found its flower. Then what? In the next Day of evolution, surely we shall again start upon the long journey immaculate; we shall take up the cross of matter once again, not for our own sakes; once more we shall sacrifice ourselves to ourselves in identifying ourselves with a new humanity that we may help it on its "weary uphill path of self-conscious existence".

It is a part of the *sacrifice* that we forget in the nature assumed the nature we have once attained, the nature of conscious godhood; and now it must again be reached through struggle in new envelopments of matter. But there are Elder Brothers always to elevate the signal whereby we may find again the sure path and true; Their clarion note is ever sounding in the world. Some hear it soon; some, late. Whoever hears it, and whenever, knows he must forsake the path he has been treading; the path of dalliance with desires, of sweet habitude of the senses. But dimly seeing ahead of him, there stretches a path of woe; on either side old joys renounced, new pain engendered. While he surrenders mortal joys, while he is feeling mortal pains, while he is being ground in the ceaseless friction of mortal strife, the fact that the vast root of his being stands waiting in unshaken happiness seems to him only an idle abstraction. Now, as a timid would-be swimmer will loosen the hold of but one foot on the sandy bottom, he dare not utterly let go his hold on mortal things; so, he cannot presently reach the inner depths of calm and peace. Strange paradox! For most of us, the *struggle* is in *letting go*.

Bravely one day we dash a cup of nectar from our lips - and we were proud we could do it, or we rebelled that it was necessary, or we pitied ourselves that this was asked of us alone. We did not "let go". Still our thought and feeling dwelt on that cup. Again the cup comes to our lips; this time, the nectar is for healing; it is to clear the brain for better work; it is to meet the insistency of family or friend. Only at the last moment do we glimpse the demon of self-indulgence riding on the rim. The trial goes on, farther and deeper into our natures, ever subtler. Whatever we give up, there is still something held, until finally we reach the place where there is no *thing* more to be given up, yet *we* are held by abject loneliness and despair and longing for all that has been surrendered.

Only then, against the great blackness, do we see there is a far calm light of happiness where surrender is complete. We remember that someone has passed our way whose trials have been so infinitely worse than ours that ours are as nothing in comparison. Yet, instead of dejection, despondency, and despair, they have shown unceasingly a radiating happiness; a never wavering enthusiasm, an ardency more than that of youth, because of youth regained and wisdom fulfilled. Then, we suspect that what we withheld from our surrender was *ourselves*. We suspect the fault is ours, and ours alone, that happiness is not our habitude.

At last, we are ready to seek the habitude of happiness. We find how all along we have lost it in trying to constrain others rather than control ourselves; in failing to trust others as well as

ourselves; in doing our own will rather than the will of the Good Law. We begin to learn the secret of the Sages; that no *thing* matters; yet all may serve, if not one way, then another. And slowly, but surely and steadily, the habitude of happiness grows.

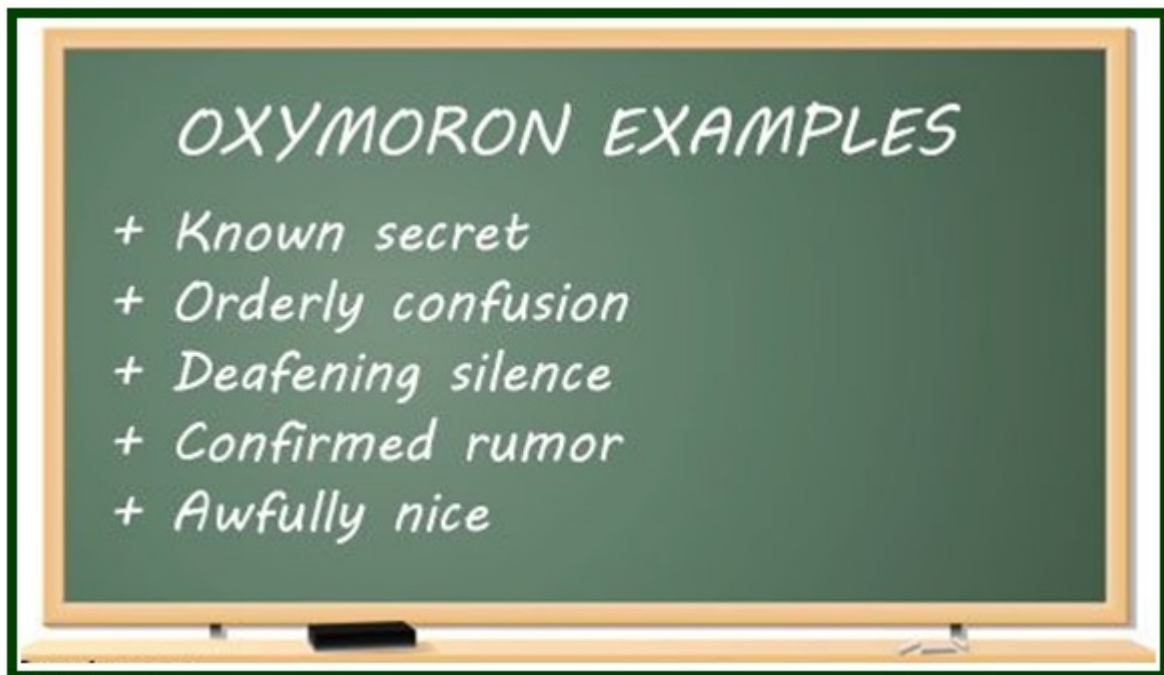
What was once as poison to us has now become the sweet waters of Life. What was once desire and passion has become compassion for those still “dead units” in the human race, beaten with life, disappointed of nature, unknowing that there is the bread that feeds the whole man, and that true happiness has its still abode in them. Safe guidance for them can only come from a place of peace; sure help from a place where trials have ceased to rend, and where the only trials are others’ woes.

NOTE:

[1] “Seventh race of the seventh round”; our humanity in a distant future, according to the long term evolution of Life described in “The Secret Doctrine”, by Helena P. Blavatsky.

[The above article was first published at the March 1922 edition of “Theosophy” magazine, Los Angeles, pp. 156-157. It had no indication as to the name of the author. An analysis of its contents, style and historical context shows the author is John Garrigues.]

Lessons That *Absurdities* Teach



Paradox and oxymoron are present in every aspect of life and partake of the teachings of theosophy. Contrast is as necessary to outer existence as unity and transcendence are central to the higher dimensions of the world.

Absurd contradictions invite us to look better and investigate facts. A paradox expands our consciousness, because it eliminates the illusion of continuous thought. It forces the observer to use higher forms of perception.

The right way to deal with puzzling dualities is not through ambiguity. Hypocrisy is also useless, and so is indecisiveness. These three factors prevent transcendence, which is necessary to see unity within diversity. Once one has a correct way to look at life, it is possible to be frank and sincere and still acknowledge and express the full complexity of the world.



While seeing the various contradictory layers of meaning in life and the potentialities of every kind that surround us, we can be able to make clear-cut decisions and persevere in them based on our best discernment.

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On Knocking at the Door



Matthew, 7:7, says:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Yes, but first examine whatever it is that you will ask or seek, and what door you are going to knock at. The goal must be noble, for the result to be worthwhile.

Of Sound, Silence and Meaning



The excess of words should be avoided, if we are to understand their meaning.

This can be done through the practice of silence. Keeping in contact with Silence is not something different or separate from using words. The absence of sounds dwells in between sentences. It contains them, it inspires them, and we need it to be able to understand whatever is said. The excess of words is a grave obstacle to dialogue. True communication results from a correct combination of sound and silence.

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Material Temples Are Profane

Russian philosopher Ivan A. Il'in wrote:

“One must not identify a *religious* state of the soul with its ‘ecclesiastical’ or ‘creedal’ state. This is clear already from the fact that a religious person may belong neither to any sort of creed nor to any church.” [1]

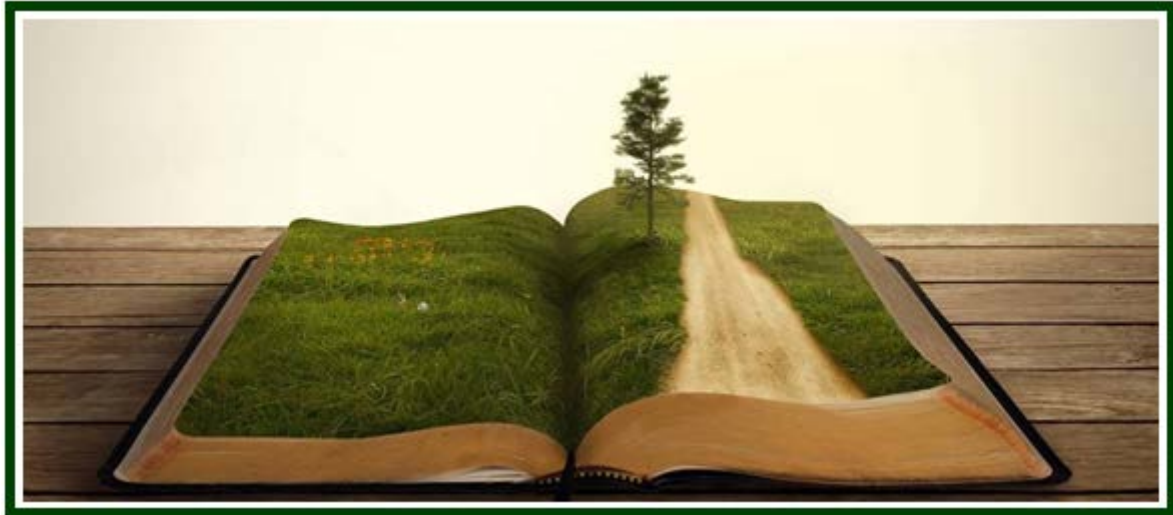
If an individual knows that he has a temple in his heart, he sees that outward churches and routine-based beliefs are often worse than useless.

NOTE:

[1] From the book “The Essence of Legal Consciousness”, Ivan A. Il'in: Wildy, Simmonds & Hill Publishing, 2014, UK, 391 pp., see p. 325.

The Sage and the Probationer

Two Faces of the Search for Wisdom



The difference between the wise man and the beginner is never in that one of them has knowledge, and the other has not.

Every beginner has knowledge already; however, much of it must be abandoned and forgotten in order for him to learn more valuable things. So the difference is not in knowing more or less, or in knowing or not knowing. It is in knowing that which is good, that which eliminates the causes of pain, and that which reveals the truth. Above all, the difference is in Knowing to Learn.

The wise individual not necessarily knows it all, but he Learns it All more quickly, perhaps. And what is the purpose of that?

His goal in learning is to help others in their way out of unnecessary pain. He wants to see in the world the peace he has in his heart. Ultimately, the wise individual is also a beginner, and this is a decisive factor as to the method of teaching.

Reading the Book of Life

The interaction between people of different degrees of knowledge and experience involves necessarily a Pedagogy - a method of learning and teaching -, which may be right, or wrong.

Theosophical schools of thought are only reliable into the extent that they have *transparent methods of transmission* for their teachings. In the Mahatma Letters one sees that the Eastern Masters examine pedagogical issues with great care.

An effective teaching must exclude blind belief, be it voluntary or involuntary, explicit or implicit. An affinity is needed which constitutes a living, open process.

Healthy pedagogical information, given by H. P. Blavatsky about the road to divine knowledge, shows us that one's goal must not be short term happiness: the task is to put into movement the Causes that will naturally lead to an unconditional contentment that takes place

from within and encompasses all events of life, placing even pain and limitations in the broader context of bliss. The way to happiness includes direct research in the Book of Life. The theosophical movement must be a federation of researchers in classical theosophy and universal wisdom, rather than a church of believers, sustained by ritualism and blind obedience.

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See in our associated websites the articles “The Pedagogy of Theosophical Wisdom”, “The Pedagogy of Confidence”, “Original Theosophy and Creativity”, “The Key to Uprooting Hypocrisy”, and “The Art of Studying Theosophy”.

The Cure for Anti-Semitism



Anti-Semitism, the long-standing Western disease, is burning again before it gets healed.

Christianity, no doubt, is the main address and the birthplace of systematic ill-will and violence against the Jews.

It is only natural that from time to time such a self-defeating emotion gets stronger in Christian societies. Muslim hatred of Jews is often protected in a Christian atmosphere, and the disease will persist as long as the Church-inspired nations refuse to make a self-criticism.

They must place the ethics of life above sectarian interests and political power-struggle. Western culture will have to undergo significant changes before it learns to have more respect for truth, for intercultural diversity, and for the Jewish nation. Europe and the USA have quite a few lessons to learn in that department.

The situation is different and better outside the Western culture. Eastern “pagan” nations as China, Singapore and India are loyal friends and partners with Israel at various levels. The friendship with the East flourishes.

[From the article “**Challenge and Optimism in Israel**”, which is available in our websites.]

The Leverage to Change Reality



“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

George Bernard Shaw [1]

If one wants to change the world in effective ways, it is important to know that the lever of Archimedes, which can be used to change the world, is to be found within oneself.

The best fulcrum or support where the lever can pivot is in the highest source of inspiration we may have after due study of Life from the point of view of the Law of Karma or Equilibrium; the Law of Unity within Diversity; the Law of Analogy, and the Law of Affinity.

The strength to change the world is also within, just as the world itself. What one can see outside as “the world” is but the world of consequences. The world that matters, the world within, is the world of Causes; and that we can move and change at will.

NOTE:

[1] “Man and Superman”, Bernard Shaw, Penguin Plays, Penguin Books, first published in 1903, see 1977 edition, p. 260.

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There is more on *a lever to change the world* in the September 2012 edition of “**The Aquarian Theosophist**”, pp. 3-4, and in the March 2013 edition, p. 8. Readers are invited to examine in our websites the articles “**The Power to Change the World**” and “**The Center of Pascal’s Sphere**”.

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The States of the Consciousness



A direct relation interconnects the state of the planet, the state of human mind, and the state of institutions. The idea is well-documented in the Jewish Bible, the Christian Bible, the Taoist *Wen-tzu* and the classical teachings of theosophy.

In the first decades of 21st century, the factors of social decline are many and contrasting. Among them it is easy to find fake spiritual leaders, pious “theosophical” frauds, a lack of ethics in politics, spreading terrorism, bankers that act like thieves, commercial media that love money, not truth, and acute environmental destruction. At the same time most individuals ignore their true self.

All these aspects of human karma are internally interconnected, and regeneration must come from within. The purpose of every outward crisis is to provoke the rebirth of the inner connections between divine life, universal ethics and daily existence.

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“The relatively recent creation of an Esoteric School by H. P. Blavatsky in the 19th century took place in the much larger context of the occult teachings transmitted since time immemorial to those who aspire to eternal wisdom. The teaching is available not to the personalities, but to the souls of earnest students from all nations and every cultural tradition.”

(From the article “A 3,000 Years Esoteric School”, which can be seen in our associated websites.)

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The Causes of a Collapse



Creative thinking is the result of individual responsibility.

If you want to attain a goal on your own merit, you must use your brains in new ways to see the best method to get there. Your intelligence expands.

On the other hand, if someone adheres to a system of thought in the hope of being benefited by it, out of mere adherence and belief, there is no sense of responsibility. The consequences are that creative thought is not a practical need, and intelligence will not expand. The “believer” does not like to think: mental laziness is his religion.

Because of the “spiritual” rejection of self-responsibility and creative thought, many good-willing mystical associations make their followers become less self-responsible and less intelligent, as time passes. Not to mention “progressive” political parties.

Such structures have imploded from an ethical point of view. They are innerly dead, even if they may seem alive on the realm of pure appearance.

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A few theosophists may experience a pleasant feeling of intellectual and spiritual superiority as they think of the “New Age” movement. “Theosophy”, they think, “is far above all these groups”. They are wrong. Theosophy is at the very heart of the New Age idea. The authentic teachings of esoteric philosophy constitute the source and center of the New Age movement.

(From the article “**Visualizing the Future of Mankind**”, easy to find in our websites.)

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Carpe Diem, Seize the Day



Horace

Horace's classical axiom "Carpe Diem", usually translated as "Seize the Day", seems to be more widely known than really understood.

Many are those who avoid examining what one is supposed to do, after all, in order to "take the opportunity" and seize the day.

There are opportunities for all kinds of things in life. Ignorant people who consider themselves clever don't hesitate to "seize the opportunity" to steal; to lie; to commit embezzlement while in public office; to deceive others and so on.

Honesty, on the other hand, is a form of wisdom.

Sincere people will "seize the day" to resist the temptation of making or repeating mistakes they have already identified as such.

They will "take the opportunity" to benefit different forms of life; to learn about the roots of unnecessary suffering; and expand their contact with their spiritual souls.

Horace's classical sentence therefore would have a definite meaning if it said:

"Examine the goal of your present lifetime. Check and see whether it is truly worthwhile. Having confirmed that - seize the day."

The Atmosphere of Inner Noiselessness

Or Reducing the Distance Between Ideal and Practice



One of the main challenges for anyone studying theosophy is to act in accordance with the adopted ideal.

We need renunciation and detachment in order to be able to correct our mistakes.

Even before that, discernment is needed to see the difference between right and wrong. Yet discernment is rarely the first thing we acquire.

Once we obtained a right view of things, the muscle of our moral will needs to be strongly exercised against “consensus”, “public opinion”, “collective comfort” and subtle emotional blackmailing.

The student’s discernment and wisdom will fail in many a specific situation, and yet he must follow them anyway, for this is the only path to learning. Of course, in various occasions his good discernment will tell him that the best thing to do is to follow some advice.

An effective way to reduce the distance between ideal and practice consists in allowing oneself enough moments of silence along the day.

The atmosphere of inner noiselessness is special and slowly brings more closely together our thoughts, feelings, words, insights and actions.

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Regarding the Need of Peace in the Middle East, we invite our friends and readers to see the theosophical blog at the online paper “**The Times of Israel**”: <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/author/carlos-cardoso-aveline/> .

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Thoughts Along the Road

Observing the Sacredness of Daily Life



* **T**he law of symmetry expresses the law of karma. It is due to its unfailing action that any step ahead in inner learning can only be taken when one has a willingness to make the corresponding degree of sacrifice. Although sacrifices are often painful, they are but the unpleasant aspects of detachment, which in itself is a source of contentment and freedom from suffering. Less is more: voluntary simplicity paves the way to wisdom and bliss.

* Each new day comes to us with its own sort of tidal energy. One must learn to adapt to it, in order to give it a desirable form. The will to shape one's life in the way one considers correct must be combined with an ability to be flexible regarding circumstances. Detachment and renunciation are inseparable from having a clear goal and an adamant will.

* The constant change of tides of various levels in the ocean of life must be taken into consideration in theosophy. Self-discipline should be therefore mainly internal and independent from the changing outward circumstances, so that it keeps transcendent and cannot be easily broken.

* No two mornings are the same. Each springtime is different from the others. Everyone familiar with any particular river knows that it changes from day to day in the turbidity of the water, the quality of the wind, the behaviour of birds and other animals. Therefore one should pay a limitless attention to life and take nothing for granted. The whole universe is moving, and it enlightens every blade of grass.

* The true knowledge of life is inseparable from an impulse to improve it. Actual philosophy is a friendly way of looking at the world and must include a constant attempt to be of help. In other words, real knowledge is that knowledge that includes selfless good will. All great thinkers have been philanthropists and friends of mankind who often make strenuous efforts to help altruistic projects.

* Ill-informed individuals rejoice in wrong actions as long as karma has not ripened yet, only to live a lasting unhappiness after that. Those who have proper information about life dedicate themselves to act in a way that eliminates ignorance and blindness.

* Every student of esoteric traditions can daily sow the seeds of contentment, within the limits of his creative free will.

* In order to improve life, the effort must be made starting from within. As long as we put in movement the Causes of self-improvement and keep them going in an effective way, time and Karma are our friends. Vigilance will help avoid getting trapped in small things and short term time. There is nothing wrong about short term events in themselves: one must be aware of the different scales of time and not get attached to anyone of them, but live mainly in the larger ones.

* Joy and sadness are two poles of emotional life, and they alternate in one's efforts just as victory and defeat. Contentment transcends the lower polarity of emotional life because it does not depend on external events: its roots are in one's conscience, and in the perception that we have done, in the right direction, that which was within our reach to do. Devachan and Nirvana do not result from obtaining great personal victories. The way to them is paved by doing one's best and resting content with it.

* There is no reason to think that a child cannot learn the basic concepts of theosophy. The law of Karma and the idea of reincarnation, for instance, can be grasped by people of every age. The same occurs with the universal principle of having respect for all beings. And however old one may be, he should be as willing to learn as a child - if not more.

* In materialistic societies, to choose to have wise friends is sometimes tantamount to choosing solitude, in the short term: by the power to stand alone, one can follow his conscience. In due time, the law of affinity will bring about the end of the apparent solitude. Brotherhood and brotherliness are the law of life. And they are omnipresent for those who transcend the territory of attachment and rejection.

* The degree of ethics among professional politicians and spiritual leaders is directly linked to the average presence of ethics in the general population. The two factors feed each other. In any human activity, people must strive to take dishonest and insincere individuals out of leadership positions. It is equally necessary for people to look at themselves and accept a basic fact: that each citizen has the duty to act so that, if everyone else would follow his example, the world community would be ethical and fair enough.

* The hallmark of a superficial mind is the want of novelties. An individual who loves superficial events will see as tiresome any form of persistence. For a deeper mind, though, the boredom of the search for novelties is unsurmountable.

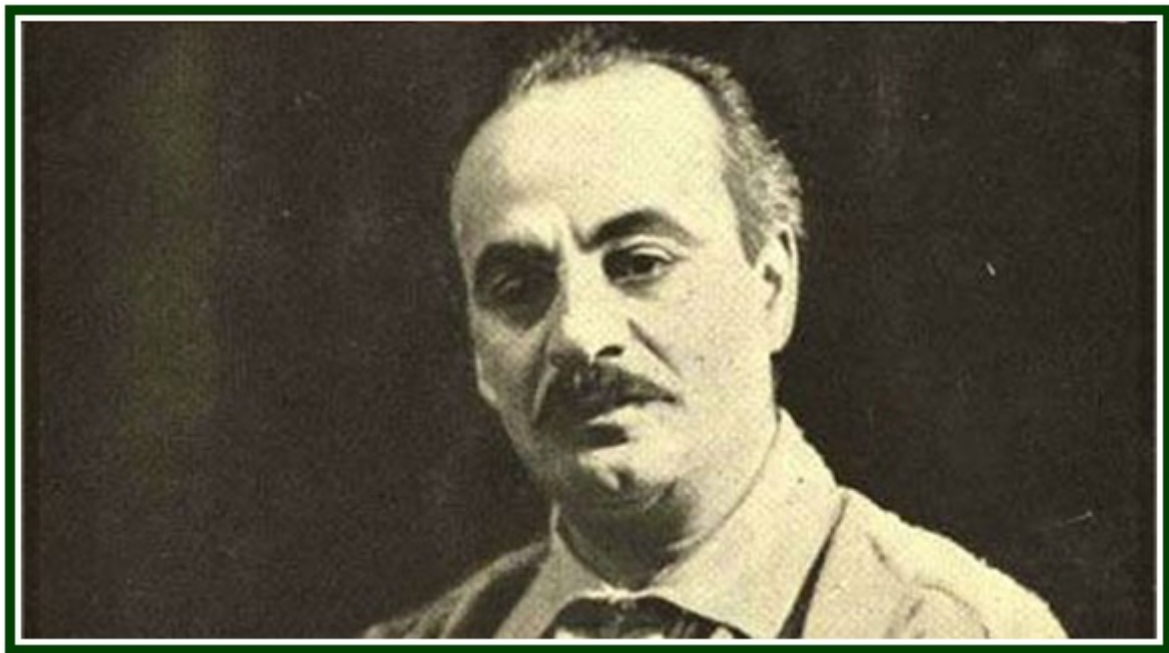
* In the alchemy of self-improvement, the various positive qualities work as a team. To him who looks for something of real importance, perseverance becomes natural. However, a strong determination may develop into mere stubbornness, unless it is protected by the right degree of detachment; and detachment makes discernment possible. One's actions should be open to examination. An intense effort whose long-enduring motive is right and noble will help expand our ability to see right and wrong.

* One must try his best at every moment, and at the same time observe it as if from above, in a much broader context. An awareness of boundless time and infinite space will grant us both detachment and good will.

* Many an individual gets attached to the appearance of spirituality and imitates it in his daily practices. His vain hope is that spirituality will migrate from the superficial levels of consciousness to the deeper ones. The results obtained by such individuals are as superficial as their efforts.

* Instead of concentrating in the short term and visible aspects of reality, the correct attitude focuses on insights. Our innermost views of Life should be rationally expanded and get as deep as we possibly can. The combination of active study with the search for silent insights has to unfold together with altruistic action. Now, altruistic action is not limited to smiling at people in the streets. It is probationary. It includes abandoning and exposing organized ignorance.

The Universality of Kahlil Gibran



Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)

Life recycles itself in unpredictable ways, and all beings are brothers of different ages and epochs.

Gibran wrote:

“I love you, my brother, whoever you are - whether you worship in your church, kneel in your temple, or pray in your mosque. You and I are all children of one faith, for the divers paths of religion are fingers of the loving hand of one Supreme Being, a hand extended to all, offering completeness of spirit to all, eager to receive all.” [1]

The supreme being can be rightfully seen as the One Law.

While there is no doubt that the Law of the Universe has always been kind enough to all beings, it will be wise of us to decide to do our best at all times, and to deserve, before desiring. By promoting interreligious peace and defeating terror, the Middle East will both deserve and pave the way to a more real and balanced connection to the divine realm, which is only possible when cultural diversity is combined with mutual respect.

NOTE:

[1] “A Third Treasury of Kahlil Gibran”, edited and with an introduction by Andrew Dib Sherfan, The Citadel Press, Secaucus, New Jersey, USA, 434 pp., copyright 1975, p. 102.

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The above paragraphs are reproduced from the article “[Kahlil Gibran on the Middle East](#)”, by C.C. Aveline, published at a theosophical blog in “The Times of Israel”.

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