

The Temple Artisan

April-May-June 2016

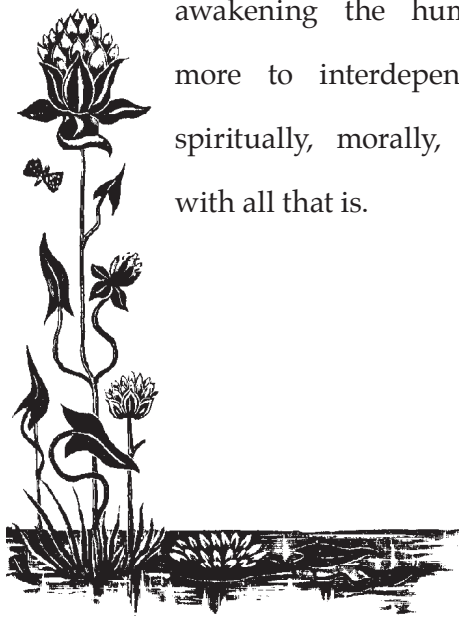
Behold, I give



unto thee a key.

ETERNALLY BEATING

Eternally beating, ever beating, the rain of spiritual influences falls ceaselessly on humanity, refreshing, quickening and awakening the human more and more to interdependent greatness, spiritually, morally, and materially, with all that is.



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EDITORIAL MIRROR

In all the sacred writings found on this planet we are surrounded by the message that The Holy Spirit, by whatever name we give him/her, is always present. All we have to do is choose to stretch out our hands and hearts and ask for unification. This is not a process of beseeching an entity outside of ourselves, but rather a process of going within. In this “within” place we are connected to every other expression of manifested life. This is the place of Divine Love. In this state of consciousness there are no strangers, only other fragments of ourselves, bathed in acceptance, understanding, and compassion.

To reach this state of consciousness is no easy task from one point of view. We are tested on our resolve to live harmoniously every step of the way. From another point of view, it is the easiest thing in the world to open our hearts to the Divine Love pouring in on us at all times. Such is the paradox of living.

— *Eleanor L. Shumway*
Guardian in Chief



Fence on the Drive. Photo by Anne R. Dunbar

STRANGERS OR NEW FRIENDS?

We have many messages from Master Hilarion filled with love, instruction, admonitions, and hope. One that especially speaks to me was given in 1931. To put this message into historical perspective, it was sent out nine years after Blue Star had passed to inner planes, and Dr. Dower had become Guardian in Chief. The Temple had been in existence thirty-three years and been headquartered in Halcyon for twenty-eight of those years. Members and friends had come and gone—or come and stayed. Think of coming to Halcyon in the first years—miles from anywhere. Imagine getting off the train in Oceano and meeting a group of people, young and old, all filled with the dream of living together in a way that expressed Unity and Harmony. These newcomers, like many of us, had come with preconceptions of how this utopian dream was to play out. The residents had their own ideas based on the experiences they had gone through. Their motives were pure but the people, newcomers and residents alike, were very human. Fifteen years before in 1914-18, the world had been wracked by a world war and had been struggling with the effects economically and socially during the ensuing time.

This was 1931, only two years into the Great Depression when the reality of paying for living expenses was becoming more and more difficult, leaving little time to put into action any yearnings on the soul level. But then, as now, people's lives continued in spite of these difficulties. Those living at the center were dependent on their gardens and their chickens for food. For us, looking back at those times, there seems to have been more time to talk to neighbors, and to move through the day. Nonetheless their days were undoubtedly very busy and full of activities.

Into these times came the words of the Master meeting the hopes and fears of all people. Even Dr. Dower had expressed fears for the future as there seemed to be no new people coming to swell Temple ranks. The Master's words are very clear: "TO MY PEOPLE: Be not afraid that I shall desert you, that old ties shall

loose, our hours of intimacy and simplicity vanish, that you shall stray from me or be lost in the maze of form and custom. IT SHALL NEVER BE.” We can look back at those times and understand and empathize with the needs for such assurance. However, if we are honest with ourselves, we can acknowledge that these words strike a chord of recognition in our own hearts and consciousness. We need to remember to hold on to that connection with the Master and therefore to All That Is. He never lets go of us as we have been known to let go of Him!

The Master continues with these words: “The new is but the old endeavoring to become more manifest, more vivid, to come into greater view, and to bring itself to the individual attention of those who could not, would not find it otherwise. You would not hold the truth from any. You would not keep me from my own of other dress, design and color, because of difference from your own. Long have you had me in your own home attire.” He is asking all Templars, then and now, to know and know that we know, that all life is evolving. All Life is entitled to contact the Temple and the Master, no matter how different those others may look to us. Differences in dress, attitudes, languages, race, gender, or points of origin are not a matter for discussion as we are all part of the one whole. As he tells us: “I am the worlds. The world is mine, as you are mine indeed. All people draw I to my heart, call all to my hearth-stone. Upon you I depend to greet them with me, to give welcome with arms of soul outstretched in understanding embrace.” In the same way as people embraced newcomers in 1931, ‘41, or ‘51 so must we do today, and in the future. It isn’t simply welcoming people coming to the Temple; it is welcoming new people, new customs, new ideas into our hearts. Our fear of changing the status quo or upsetting our comfort zone blinds us to the needs of strangers as well as to our own soul needs.

The Master seldom tells us how to do something; he leaves it up to our better judgment. However, in this case He is very specific: “Endeavor to put them at ease, see that they feel at home. Speak with them in language of their own when possible to you.

Better to assume certain customs of theirs while they are becoming acquainted with you and their new surroundings than you turn them from you with lack of cordiality or appreciation." He finishes this with a very emphatic statement: "Hospitality thrusts not its peculiarities of difference upon others but reconciles the same through study and consideration." We need to think of this when next we find someone sauntering along the path by our door or by the Temple who asks us, "Hey! What's going on in this place?" By the same token, think back, how were you welcomed to this very precious place?

He then forecasts the future and our responsibilities toward that future, a future filled with seeming strangers who soon become brothers and sisters. "You shall find far more foreign types at your door, standing in your aisles than you have known before. Creeds, colors, races of all kinds are in crusade to your shrine at the present moment. Do you not rejoice? We rely upon you to open your hearts wide to give breadth and scope that the pageant may have full sweep. It is composed of your children's children of other lives, and of those who must follow you in future days, upon whom you may look for dependence." The all-too-human tendency is to close the door once we are inside because of our fear of those "others."

We are handed the awesome responsibility for the future with these words: "We rely upon you to open your hearts wide to give breadth and scope that the pageant may have full sweep." A new way of looking at strangers is introduced by the words suggesting that they are our children's children of other lives. Our ideas of separateness will melt away if we are able to resolve our differences with focus and effort.

By accepting this responsibility, we place ourselves on the side of Unity, letting the forces of All That Is flow through us. It is through this divine flow of force that we tune into these words that finish the Master's message, "So shall you keep near to Me, by so doing shall you become Me, sooner than you think. My appreciation of your loyalty and love is too deep to lose place in the

inner chamber of my heart. The sun rises on your opportunities, on the hard earned opportunity from your experiences of the black nights that have gone. A special and peculiar blessing do I bestow upon you in this Opening Hour of the New Cycle of Effort which is upon you. My protection also I give unto you. Do with it the best you know. With devotion and faith unmeasured I am, Your Father-Brother, HILARION."

William Quan Judge points out in *Letters That Have Helped Me*, "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 to 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."

Later on William Quan Judge expands on this idea of achieving balance, "We are all human, and thus weak and sinful. If, in one respect, we are better than others, then, in some other way, they are better than we are. We would be self righteous to judge others by our own standard....Why, if the Masters were to judge us exactly as They must know we are, then good-bye at once! We would all be sent packing. But Masters deal kindly with us in the face of greater knowledge of our faults and evil thoughts from which none are yet exempt. This is my view and you will please me much if you are able to turn to the same [view] and to do well by those we like; [however] it is our duty to make ourselves do and think well by those we do not like. Masters say we think in grooves, and but few have the courage to fill those up and go on other lines. Let us who are willing to make the attempt try to fill up those grooves and make new and better ones."

We can read these messages and lessons, play mind games, word games, ego games with them, but unless we can live these ideas into action on the physical plane they come to naught. We

must consciously build our lives minute by minute following the examples of the sacrifice and joy of those who have gone before us. We might be able to put names to those who welcomed us or we might not. The important thing to remember is to extend our hands and hearts to those who come to us now. We must learn to speak to them in their own language. Use what is the best at the moment. We must seek to set up a dialogue that honors our congruency rather than our differences. We must very simply become a friend.

We are drawn to the teachings of The Temple by our soul's recognition of the time, the place and unique opportunity for unfoldment at this time on our Path. Many others find themselves in the same place. Our hearts must be open to them in recognition. It would stand us in good stead to remember that the soul is in reality a cosmic force and is of a greatness and power beyond the imagination of our personal mind. It has been building since the world began. We tend to have the idea that each of us, with more or less trouble, drag our soul around with us throughout life. We don't seem to have any particular use for it on earth but we had better take good care of it or it tends to get "lost" somewhere. The soul comes in handy at death—you just get into it—and away you go. Well, it is not you or I who have a soul, the Soul has you and me. Perhaps there would be less drama and heartache if we had a better line of communication with our soul and therefore with each other!

*I WILL ENDEAVOR
TO REALIZE
THE PRESENCE OF THE
AVATAR
AS A LIVING POWER
IN MY LIFE.*

As we reach out to new and old friends to share our precious teachings we need to keep in mind this statement by William Quan Judge: "The greater the Master, the more humble His attitude toward knowledge and wisdom to be acquired; the more sincerely does He stand ready to receive and learn from the youngest disciple, for He knows that knowledge never ceases and that from the mouth of the Least of These may issue the Pearl of Greatest Price, but He also know that Pearl will not be forthcoming through the force of variance, insinuation, superiority or any aspect of difference whatsoever. It will be accompanied with an atmosphere of unifying force so powerful that all participating in it will feel its blending quality and know it to be Truth. This, and no other, is the test of the value of its purity." We have been charged with finding the pearl of greatest price in everyone and everything we meet.

— Eleanor L. Shumway
Guardian in Chief



Walnut Trees. Photo by Anne R. Dunbar

FOR ALL HUMANITY

Discovering Halcyon for the first time in 1974, I met many Temple members who were like living testimonies of something I was only beginning to fathom.

All I knew at the time was that these peculiar people carried a kind of force and had an outlook in life that seemed new to me. They were like an unknown dimension of life I had never known before, whether of the mind, heart or dealings in daily living.

They seemed to BE the teachings of the Temple, much like living lamps of light. It was not only about the book of Teachings, although the book was important. The book was an externalization of them as though its essence came from them. The Teachings were like an outer aid that helped them remember themselves and their work.

There is a single sentence in the opening paragraphs of the Temple Healing Noon Service that further explains the idea:

"And may the sacred fire of spiritual love touch our hearts and lips that we may speak the words of life and be fit guardians of the Truth and Wisdom bequeathed to us in trust for all humanity."

As one of the more important assignments for all Temple members, many have read and listened to that statement during the healing service over and over again, possibly for some of us thousands of times. There is a peculiar property of the brain-mind (its lower aspect) that once we think we understand something we kind of hypnotize ourselves into thinking "that's the end of that," and we go on to something else and put the former aside for a new challenge. Maybe it's a product of our modern educational system in that we learn and memorize fact one; next we go to fact two in a linear way and achieve some kind of mechanical understanding of the subject matter—then we are done with it.

It is common to think that the passage only refers to preserving intact the original form of the Truth and Wisdom embodied in the written words of the Teachings of the Temple.

This is important but it says much more as it is one of the many short statements, complete and whole in themselves, that encapsulate the entire Temple philosophy. It establishes the role of Templars in their relation to the deepest levels of consciousness in service to humanity on the outer plane of being. This statement is fundamentally both a charge and a trust that is handed down to Temple members from generation to generation.

It begins with *may*, a gentle and polite word that suggests something should occur. *May* is the month at the end of spring—the birth of life for a new year. *May* is akin to hope in this context. Hope is invisible yet changes everything, suggesting that better things are coming. Hope is something that never gives up even if it is alone and without faith or even love. Hope appears as a faint star when all seems lost. *May* is not a shall or decree just a small expectation—an aspiration—a feeling of trust in that maybe there will be just a little spark that will allow our consciousness to grasp this very deep concept of spiritual love.

“And may *the sacred fire*,” sacred being an attribute of both the inner and spiritual man, not having any preference for any particular person like a friend or relative but allowing our spirit to unfold and be of service to the whole human family without any kind of distinction or separation. The sacred fire—all kinds of fire—is one of the greatest mysteries. We do not perceive the actual fire, only the flame and by-products no matter what kind of fire it may be. Fire is invisible on the plane just interior to what we expected to see, but with any fire there is always a particular kind of emanation or light. This fire is the highest fire—the light from invisible spirit itself.

“And may the sacred fire *of spiritual love*” suggests that we are capable and ready to begin to understand what real love is and only with real love—*spiritual love*—a kind of spiritual fire that is beyond the greatest glories and the greatest depths—can we do this vital and essential work.

“And may the sacred fire of spiritual love *touch our hearts and lips*.” The *heart* is the point of contact for spirit—the holy

of holies, our *lips* being a focal point for the entire physical body expressing the totality of our nature. Our *lips* give life to words that direct and respond to all the karmic forces that we project and must endure. The instant sound is projected—karmic affects ripple everywhere—that cannot be recalled.

“And may the sacred fire of spiritual love touch our hearts and lips *that we may speak the words of life.*” It obviously directs us to use words that give life to others. But to be heard by others, we have to speak the words of life more silently through the kind of life we lead—even if we never say anything.

“And may the sacred fire of spiritual love touch our hearts and lips that we may speak the words of life *and become fit guardians of the Truth and Wisdom bequeathed to us in trust for all humanity.*” Despite how small the outer Temple seems to be, humanity will demand the truth and wisdom it needs in order to take the next step as a whole. Guardians are required that will preserve the teachings for the future—even if the masses of people don't seem to know it yet. These guardians are not finished products and have a long way to go. They are just intermediary people that are changing from the old to the new, attempting to live the teachings and holding their unique point. There are many people doing this who have never heard of the Temple and maybe would even deny it if they knew. But that does not change in the least the fact that all parts must be acted out in this drama.

In this capacity we become defenders, warriors and guardians, in consciously living a life that incorporates the teachings of the Temple, aiding the evolution of all humanity. It is the continuous sustained effort that is important, not to be overly concerned with outer results which will be fulfilled much later—for all humanity.

An old Temple member once told me that the Temple is in the fourth degree and that the world is in the fifth degree. It actually says it all in symbol form, that it is a new movement, a new way of life and living that incorporates the ideas of centralization, of a spiritual hierarchy that extends from men to gods, reincarnation, karma, the role of the number seven in all of nature, etc.

As a practical example I have never heard anyone involved in the Temple to be overly concerned about the after life—the state after death. Never have I heard anyone thinking he would ever receive a thank you or reward for any good works performed on this earthly plane or directly for the Temple. There is a lot of information concerning that state in the literature, but it is all centered around conscious, willful, purposeful living on the earth plane. Whatever state there is after death is seen simply as the result of work performed during physical existence. All true seekers are more than willing to spend endless lifetimes working for the direct cause of wandering humanity.

If we only knew how important all the little things of life are in determining the exact states of our consciousness, either before or after death, we would be most careful in choosing every thought word and deed—even the secret ones that we think no one sees. These are the implements of defense for protecting the truth and wisdom in trust for all humanity.

We are all seeking true knowledge and usefulness, but this becomes nothing if we do not seek it for others. We ourselves are in a secondary position seeking to serve others primarily. Mother Nature will not let us progress beyond a certain point until we get it through our thick heads that we must seek it for others in order to find it, for it is not for us, ourselves, alone.

What do we have to offer in this quest? Like all great truths, the answer to the question is just too obvious, simple and frequently ignored. It is ourselves—from every low and despicable quality to our highest selves. ALL that is uniquely ours must be offered on the sacrificial altar in our hearts. We cannot choose. We are not angels, but even angels cannot do the Temple work; it must be done by us, frail and evolving man. Remember this is an inner work which no other can see or fathom since its source resides in the secret recesses of the heart. No one can see this deeply into another heart, no matter how high their evolutionary state. The gods may give us opportunity for what they see and know about

our past service to this work—but even they do not know what will be. It is for each one of us alone to reveal the final glory of our own heart.

It is what we are, what we endeavor to become, and what we are doing that serves future humanity. As long as we continue in this direction, any and all so-called failures can be corrected and put underfoot. As we prove ourselves in this work, our knowledge and usefulness will proportionally increase now and in future lives, but only if it is for all humanity.

— George Colendich



On May 20 and 21 at the Roerich Museum in New York City members of Agni Yoga's Living Ethics groups and The Temple of the People met to discuss Unity and Peace to the World in the light of their teachings. People from around the United States and Russia developed new insights and new friendships during the conference. Following is one of the keynote addresses, written by the Guardian in Chief of The Temple, Eleanor L. Shumway, and read in Russian by Temple member, Rita Moiseyeva:

UNITY AND PEACE TO THE WORLD

In a world beset with increasing unrest, fear, and war our minds and hearts crave peace. What do we mean when we ask for Peace? Our dictionaries tell us that the word comes from the Latin root *pax* or peace akin to the Latin *pacisci*: to agree. It now means 1. a state of tranquility or quiet as (a) freedom from civil disobedience (b) a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom; 2. freedom from disquieting thoughts or emotions; 3. harmony in personal relations; 4. a state or period of mutual concord between governments or a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity; 5. or to be, become or keep silent or quiet.

How do we teach or learn these things? The process can become so complex at times that it seems overwhelming. We all think we live in peace with our neighbors, especially if they are doing what we think they ought to be doing! As for the government on any level—well, the bureaucrats run it all so let's just let them do it. Right? No, but where and how do we begin this process? One step at a time, but we must do it consciously.

In *The Teachings of the Temple* and the teachings of Agni Yoga we are taught that we have the responsibility to listen silently and learn the truth of what we really want on our spiritual journey. This is simply what we are asked to learn. There is no need to learn through pain, but as we are now constituted it seems to be the only way to get our attention. If we are indeed listening silently we will know that gentle lessons are acquired joyously, and are remembered gladly. What gives us deep inner happiness we want to learn and not forget. In times of happiness we might ask ourselves the question, "What am I learning?" We often do this in desperation when things are dark. Have you ever thought to do it when things are bright?

The welfare of the world depends upon our learning. Everyone teaches, and by teaching we learn. This is a responsibility we inevitably assume the moment we accept any premise at all, and no one can organize his or her life without some thought system. Once we have developed a thought system of any kind, we live by it, and by living it we cannot help but teach it. God, Universal Love, might be said to provide us with a means of choosing what we want to teach on the basis of what we want to learn. Teaching and learning are our greatest strengths. Always remember what we believe we teach, and by the same token, what we teach is teaching us.

What we teach we strengthen in ourselves because we are sharing it. We cannot see the Light until we offer it to all our brothers and sisters. As they take it from our hands, so will we recognize it as our own. As we teach only peace by being peace, by defending peace peacefully, we learn that peace is ours and we

are peace.

I can't make you more peaceful; I can't bargain with Iraq or Iran or Afghanistan or....But I CAN change myself. That's why you and I are here in physical form to learn, to experience, and to begin finally to acknowledge and function our connectedness to every one, every thing and every creature. In acknowledging this connectedness, I must also then consciously assume the responsibility for my point, my development in that Divine Plan. The paradox is that I must mind my own business, but at the same time, help you. I must develop my own talents but not at the expense of yours. I must develop myself but become selfless.

David Spangler, points out in his essay, "The Grail of Empowerment," "Humanity is a divine strategy to develop and incarnate into matter the spirit of Divine Will. It is important that this will act as an organic part of the physical universe, that it be incarnate within it and partaking of its substance, not simply a force acting upon the world externally. However, Divine Will is not simply an energy or a force. It is a perspective, an involvement, a connectedness, a state of being.

"If we see it only as a presence telling us what to do, then our primary spiritual task is to learn to obey and this process all too often can be blind, narrowing our field of vision and making us dependent. On the other hand, if the will of God is understood as a presence telling us how to see, then the emphasis changes. I must learn to open my eyes, my mind, my heart and see the world as God sees it. This is an active, demanding process and engages us in a dynamic relationship with creation.

"It is the seeing of the world as a wholeness. It is a perspective of the interconnectedness of every part of existence with every other part."

In this active inter-relatedness we must act out our belief. Our Teachings point out the truth is that no person believes a thing until he or she can live the knowledge out or be the thing himself or herself. Talk love—BE loving. Think cooperation—BE

cooperative. Our actions speak so much louder than our words. It is in these actions that we teach each other and our children about peace. If I want you to listen to me, then I must be willing to actively listen to you. If necessary I may need to modify and change my behavior appropriately to blend our efforts for the good of both of us.

In the lesson "The One Great Prize" in Volume II of *The Teachings of the Temple* the Master points out that "Prejudice and pride can work as much injury to the soul as deliberate crime. The one great prize for the humanity of this age to strive for is the gaining of an open mind. Of course this is hard to gain." He reminds us to hold onto the good we have gained, and allow others to do the same, even if we have doubts about the value of what others have gained. "It is not easy for men and women to understand that two diametrically opposed methods of action may both be right."

We teach and we learn Peace by appreciating we are both right, by finding common ground upon which we can unite, by ignoring points of disagreement as far as possible, and by finding ways to apply lessons taught through historical, spiritual and scientific research to the live issues of the day. Over and over, page after page we are told in our Teachings what we might do. The directions are clear, but the choice is ours. We must do the work; it cannot be done for us. For instance, one particular Lesson, "The Cross and the Crown of the New Humanity," lays out the vision, the problems, the exact working of Divine Law, the solutions if we care to use them, and the rewards. This Cross and Crown of the New Humanity consists of balanced living and thinking with a clear heart consciousness to be born out of the strife, greed, struggle, intellectualism and commercialism of today. There will result a unity of spirit, kindred feeling, tolerance, liberty, and sympathy, with recognition of the right of individuals, groups or nations, to work out their own problems and ideals, and thus establish a general basis of the unity of common brother/sisterhood.

This spirit of unity will prevail independent of race, color, nation, creed or caste of any kind. Yet selfishness is the enormous obstacle

in the way of development. In our great greed for all and everything that can be of service to us individually, we often pass by Love, Mercy and Justice, and grasp at every hope as a drowning man at a straw, regardless of what it may have cost others to extend a helping hand to us. If we perfectly realized the law of supply and demand we would be more careful, for it is exact in its action. If someone gives something of great use and benefit to us, by that giving he or she has created a demand on us which, if we do not supply to the best of our ability, nullifies the gift as far as we are concerned. Spiritual truth cannot be sold, but if we are given a great truth we should immediately set about seeing how we can supply a need in the universe which is perhaps equal to ours. This interaction produces harmonious conditions which allow us to help each other. This is an instance of pay it forward or pass it on without attachment to results.

Humanity is one and inseparable in essence. No one can live at the expense of another without creating an unbalanced condition which usually results in pain and suffering. This is the primary cause of the present unsatisfactory state of modern life, social, ethical, political and philosophical. Unless remedied by one small act of love and kindness at a time, life as we know it could end in great cataclysms, upheavals of government, nations and the very earth itself.

Each and everyone of us must realize that our next act of love and kindness could tip the scales of balance in the right direction.

These small acts of loving kindness are the tools we can use to lay aside peculiar personal opinions and unite on the one fundamental plank that is acceptable to all—common unity based on the BROTHER/SISTERHOOD OF HUMANITY AND THE FATHER/MOTHERHOOD OF GOD.

In this presentation of Universal Truth and Principles no organizational lines, creeds, fees or dues exist. Spirit alone ensouls

all things without form or obligation. Each one of us follows our own inner light, in our own particular field of endeavor, aspiration and influence. We try always to realize the Unity of All Things in the Great Father-Mother Source of all Being, through our own spiritual principles, powered by Love.

There are no two people just alike in the universe; consequently the perfect agreement on all questions is impossible. But all earnest and progressive people can agree on main issues. If we cease bickering among ourselves, there is nothing to stop the way of final success for practical realization of true Unity and Brother / Sisterhood on Earth.

Philosophically, if we were to live the one command—"Do unto others as you would that they do unto you"—we would find the spirit of truth had come to dwell among us, and the differences that now prevail would vanish like the dew before the sun. So long as we split hairs we are doomed. Or in other words, as another teacher has put it: "The solution to the whole problem, the key to universal life, lies in the one word Love—'Whoso loveth most hath most to give'—not love to any one man or woman, but Love, unselfish, trusting Love to and for the whole race of Divine fragments scattered over this and all other worlds."

There is another way of saying all this, perhaps in words easier to understand. At the risk of sounding irreverent I want to share an e-mail with you. You may chuckle perhaps, but I think we can agree that the underlying message of striving towards peace is clearly stated.

Subject: E-mail from God

Date: Eternity

From: GOD To: My Children On Earth

Re: Idiotic Religious Rivalries

My Dear Children (and believe me, that's all of you),

I consider myself a pretty patient Guy. I mean, look at the Grand Canyon. It took millions of years to get it right. And how

about evolution?

Boy, nothing is slower than designing that whole Darwinian thing to take place, cell by cell and gene by gene. I've even been patient through your fashions, civilizations, wars and schemes, and the countless ways you take Me for granted until you get yourselves into big trouble again and again. But today I want to let you know about some things that are starting to tick Me off.

First of all, your religious rivalries are driving Me up a wall. Enough already! Let's get one thing straight: These are your religions, not Mine. I'm the Whole Enchilada; I'm beyond them all. Every one of your religions claims there's only one of Me. But in the very next breath, each religion claims it's My favorite one. And each claims its bible was written personally by me, and that all the other bibles are man-made. Oh, Me. How do I even begin to put a stop to such complicated nonsense?

Okay, listen up now: I'm your Father and Mother, and I don't play favorites among My Children. Also, I hate to break it to you, but I didn't write that stuff. I've always been more of a "doer" anyway. So all your books, including the bibles, were written by men and women. They were inspired, remarkable people, but they also made mistakes here and there. I made sure of that, so that you would never trust a written word more than your own living Heart.

You see, one Human Being to me—even a bum on the street—is worth more than all the holy books in the world. That's just the kind of Guy I Am. My Spirit is not an historical thing. It's alive right here, right now, as fresh as your next breath. Holy books and religious rites are sacred and powerful, but not more so than the least of you. They were only meant to steer you in the right direction, not to keep you arguing with each other, and certainly not to keep you from trusting your own personal connection with Me.

Which brings Me to My next point about your nonsense: You act like I need you and your religions to stick up for Me or "win

souls" for My Sake. Please, don't do Me any favors. I can stand quite well on my own, thank you. I don't need you to defend Me, and I don't need constant credit. I just want you to be good to each other.

The thing is, I want you to stop thinking of religion as some sort of loyalty pledge to Me. The true purpose of your religions is so that you can become more aware of Me, not the other way around. Believe Me, I know you already. I know what's in each of your hearts, and I love you with no strings attached. Lighten up and enjoy Me. That's what religion is best for.

What you seem to forget is how mysterious I Am. You look at the petty little differences in your scriptures and say, "Well, if this is the Truth, then that can't be!" But instead of trying to figure out My Paradoxes and Unfathomable Nature—which, by the way, you never will—why not open your hearts to the simple common threads in every religion?

You know what I'm talking about: a) Love and respect everyone. b) Be kind. Even when life is scary or confusing, take courage and be of good cheer, for I Am always with you. c) Learn how to be quiet, so you can hear My Still, Small Voice (I don't like to shout). d) Leave the world a better place by living your life with dignity and gracefulness, for you are My Own Child. e) Hold back nothing from life, for the parts of you that can die will surely die, and the parts that can't, won't. f) So don't worry, be happy (I stole that last line from Bobby McFerrin, but he stole it from Meher Baba in the first place.)

Simple stuff. Why do you keep making it so complicated? It's like you're always looking for an excuse to be upset. And I'm very tired of being your main excuse. Do you think I care whether you call me Yahweh, Jehovah, Allah, Wakantonka, Brahma, Father, Mother, or even The Void or Nirvana? Do you think I care which of My Special Children you feel closest to—Moses, Jesus, Mary, Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed or any of the others? You can call Me and My Special Ones any name you choose, if only you would

go about My business of loving one another as I love you. How can you keep neglecting something so simple?

I'm not telling you to abandon your religions. Enjoy your religions, honor them, learn from them, just as you should enjoy, honor, and learn from your parents. But do you walk around telling everyone that your parents are better than theirs? Your religion, like your parents, may always have the most special place in your heart; I don't mind that at all. And I don't want you to combine all the Great Traditions into One Big Mess. Each religion is unique for a reason. Each has a unique style so that people can find the best path for themselves.

But My Special Children, the ones your religions revolve around, all live in the same place (My Heart) and they get along perfectly, I assure you. The clergy must stop creating a myth of sibling rivalry where there is none.

My Blessed Children of Earth, the world has grown too small for your pervasive religious bigotry and confusion. The whole planet is connected by air travel, satellite dishes, telephones, fax machines, rock concerts, diseases, and mutual needs and concerns. Get with the program! If you really want to help Me celebrate life, commit yourselves to figuring out how to feed your hungry, clothe your naked, protect your abused, and shelter your poor. And just as importantly, make your own everyday life a shining example of kindness and good humor. I've given you all the resources you need, if only you abandon your fear of each other and begin living, loving, and laughing together.

Finally, I'm not really ticked off; I just wanted to grab your attention because I hate to see you suffer. But I gave you Free Will, so what can I do now other than try to influence you through reason, persuasion, and a little old-fashioned guilt and manipulation? After all, I Am the original Jewish Mother. I just want you to be happy, and I'll sit in The Dark. I really Am, indeed I swear, with you always. Always! Trust In Me.

Your One and Only You Know Who

We say, "I want the peace of God," or "I want peace and unity on earth for all humanity." To say these words is meaningless, but to live these words is everything. The mind and heart that truly believe in peace will join with other minds and hearts, as that is how peace and unity are obtained. The only way to have peace is to be peace. As we do this, we receive peace, we give peace and we ARE peace, thereby achieving Unity with All That Is.

— *Eleanor L. Shumway*
Guardian in Chief



A PRAYER

FATHER-MOTHER-SON,
 FROM OUR INMOST HEARTS WE PLEAD
 FOR POWER TO LOVE UNSELFISHLY;
 FOR WISDOM TO PERCEIVE ARIGHT;
 FOR PERCEPTION OF RIGHTEOUS COURSE;
 FOR DETERMINATION OF PURPOSE;
 FOR POWER OF ACTION ACCORDING TO THY WILL.

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ABOUT TOWN

We enjoyed a visit with our friends and members from London. Janine, Sheila, Mary Elizabeth, and Celia toured the Central Coast for a week. When the other three left to return home, Sheila stayed for an additional week, adding to the wonderful memories of visits past and present!

Perry's mom Frances turned 100 years old in May! Her family and friends gathered here for a birthday celebration at the home of Rod and Shirley. Frances is certainly showing us all how to age with spirit and beauty!

In June, Lisa, Stacey, Ben, Lacey, and two-year-old Jackson came to stay for five days while they attend the high school graduation of Ben's son Elijah in nearby Arroyo Grande. They stayed in the Temple guest house, the Open Gate. This house was Lisa's first home when she arrived as a newborn baby many years ago!



Walnuts Coming. Photo by Anne R. Dunbar

TEMPLE ACTIVITIES AND NOTICES

Temple Groups: There are Temple groups in New York City; London, England; and in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia; as well as several locations in Germany. Anyone wishing more information about these groups can call the Temple office in Halcyon.

The William Quan Judge Library serves Temple members, residents of Halcyon, and friends with an interest in Theosophy or who are doing research involving some of our special collections. Our library is staffed by volunteers. Hours are 9:30-11:30am on Tuesdays. Other hours are by appointment through the Temple office.

The University Center Gallery is now showing the inspiring *American Indian paintings of Harold Forgostein*. Call the Temple office at 805.489.2822 for information.

The Temple Healing Service is held at Noon each day in the Temple. All are welcome to attend.

Sunday Services are held at 10:30am in the Temple. The *Feast of Fulfillment*, the Communion Service of the Temple, is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. *Enter the Silence*, a prayer and meditation meeting, is held the last Sunday of the month. Speakers present programs on other Sundays. The public is cordially invited to all services.

Study Classes under the auspices of Temple Officers and various Temple Orders are held regularly at 5:30pm in the Temple on Tuesdays and Fridays. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Speakers in the Sunday Services were: April 10, Eleanor L. Shumway: *The Building of The Temple*; April 17, George Colendich: *For All Humanity*; May 8, Eleanor L. Shumway: *Strangers or New Friends?*; May 15, Margaret Thyrring: reading the address of the GinC to be delivered to the Agni Yoga/Temple of the People conference in New York on May 20, *Unity and Peace to the World*; May 22, Paul Ivey: *Historical Statement of Significance*; June 12, Eleanor L. Shumway: *Pre-Convention 2016*; June 19, Barbara Reed: reading Elmer Hedin's *Common Sense*.

The Temple of the People

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