

My Perspective

Thoughts to Contemplate
from the Residents at Home Farm
School of the Natural Order
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In this time of rapid transition from one cycle to another, it is encouraging to hear the many voices that are speaking out about the ancient wisdom that is no longer hidden, cloaked in mystery. New teachers, new books, and new programs with new perspectives and insights that coincide with the ancient wisdom are emerging almost daily. New scientific investigations continue to expand our knowledge and link the ancient wisdom to modern understandings.

For this year's Holiday Resonance letter, we encouraged each other to write our own thoughts on our experience and perspective as students of the School of the Natural Order. Here are our offerings, in hopes that you will find something that strikes a chord in you and your own studies of the ancient Wisdom Teachings.

Lynne Hoffman - editor

Val Taylor

WITH ALL THY GETTING GET UNDERSTANDING

How many hundreds of times I've heard Vitvan admonishing us with those words. As we reflect on our perceptions of his teachings, my head is filled with so many other familiar phrases that form the foundation of my understanding of myself, my world, my Power-To-Be-Conscious.

This is an energy world; every 'thing' is a configuration of units of energy, determined by the structure (invisible lines of force) of an energy field; there is a POWER with which one is conscious; orient one's self to that Power; focus attention upon the Power which is bringing in the new and greater cycle; with what Power do you think, feel, and act?

And from all of this, and so much more, I have taken our mantra and formulated a practice which I use before my meditations, often while driving the long distances we do out here to get anywhere! When I feel uncertain, out-of-kilter, off-center, etc., I use these words to stay connected with the Power, my Self.

I am a positive energy system of radiant Light and Love. The I AM, which is my True Self, is the Power with which I am conscious of my world. The flow of the Power with which I think, feel, and act, is the ceaseless, limitless flow of the creative Power, abundant to fulfill every need appropriate to my state of consciousness. Amen, so be it.

Vitvan also reminded us that he only shared his road map with us; we must each take our own journey. Happy travels, much peace, much joy, much LOVE, val taylor

Thoughts on the Journey...

We must travel lightly

Not just knowledge to accrue

Our souls need advice

Steps to climb

And to sight beyond

Overview

Find spirit, essence in the words

A manifestation trained

Not by words

But by practice, observation

Meditation, celebration, restraint

Vitvan's collected works

A badge that is worn

When his point was living it

He rephrased ad infinitum

In language Edwardian

No person does better

Commas, colons aside

Regardless the time

Those phrases have a chorus

Over and over, deep inside

Learn what the voice is

And by it abide

The advice does not work

If the heart is not there

The answers will be different

The proofs will be bare

If living with that which

Beyond all understanding

Is not there

Intellectual, Social and Cultural Baggage

Usurps a territory

More than just physical

Without humility, just critical

Safe behind tradition

And dialectical

Misses the invisible

Climb out of the customs

See what you hold dear

Watch the hackles rise

If at some mention

Of some detail

A social more comes near

Living is the art

Beyond all understanding

What have you done

How well have you done it

How much have you finished

Of what you begun

How wide does it reach

I have no idea

I just do the land...

'Tis the Season

Yes, the sun rises every morning and sets every evening.

Do we notice how fascinating that is?

Yes, the moon waxes and wanes every month in the reflected light of the sun.

Do we notice how intriguing that is?

Yes, the quietness of winter creeps in, and then new blossoms emerge in the spring and summer.

Do we notice how inspiring that is?

Yes, death comes to loved ones and is quickly followed by rebirth.

Do we notice how wondrous that is?

We see these happenings all around us. These are the cycles of the days and months, the seasons of the year and of life. I feel very privileged to live in a temperate climate where I can see the changing seasons around me to remind me of life's cycles.

As students of the Gnosis, we can remember that the dual throngs of darkness-light, day-night, sunrise-sunset, spring-fall, summer-winter, happiness-tears, celebration-crisis, or birth-death do not exist in reality, but only in our perception. We can choose happiness or tears in any moment.

The Book of Life is all around us, if we would but perceive. It is our task to learn how to read that Book, every day in every way. May we love all the seasons that we experience. May ours be a cycle of seasons in which we grow in perception and in appreciation for this learning experience we call life.

'Tis the season

There aren't many towns in the Great Basin, or many roads, either. When I drive from one place to another, I almost always drive on roads that I have travelled many times before.

And yet these familiar routes and scenes afford wonderful surprises that show me the world around me in new and often breath-taking ways.

Perhaps it is the glow in the sky that precedes the moon as it prepares to rise above the mountains across the valley. And late winter afternoons can bring a special light which turns sun-bleached haystacks into a vibrant gold and transforms snow-covered mountains to an otherworldly pink.

Sometimes the newness of what I am seeing causes me to stop the car and marvel at what I see before me.

Since I have retired from teaching, my life has a fairly uneventful routine. Not much exciting or new seems to happen from day to day. Nonetheless, events occur and conversations take place that bathe my familiar 'landscape' in unexpected colors and renewed clarity.

This might be something as small as watching a toddler succeed in stacking four blocks on top of each other and beam with joy, or as momentous as a dear friend saying near the end of her life, "I have never stopped living even though I have cancer."

Marvelous, unexpected, and meaningful, these moments appear. I feel such gratitude for the daily privilege of drawing breath and experiencing life.

CHRISTMAS PRESENCE

If you are, as I am, still so tied into the race psyche that you are now in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the holidays that you need to take a break, please stop right now. Pour yourself a cup of whatever gives you comfort and joy—coffee? a cup of herbal tea? and join me in the kind of self-indulgence I use to remember who I really am. No longer a practicing Christian, I am an aspiring student of the wisdom teachings in need of reminding myself of the real reason why I am here on earth. Yes, I meditate regularly, I try to remember to utilize all of the semantic tricks I know to keep my private world from getting into unnecessary turmoil, and in my better moments I remember to practice living in the here-now (Vitvan's terminology for mindfulness). In this holiday season when the race psyche seems to lighten just a little it is good to remind myself of what Christmas really means for me. So with libation in hand, let us sit here together and I will share with you my version of Vitvan's description of what the various aspects of the Christmas allegory symbolize.

It was a dark night (which surely we are in today, with all the strife around the world). *Shepherds were tending their flocks* (the love nature that holds families and communities together is still functioning despite the war and strife that persists). *Suddenly, there was a heavenly host singing, "Peace on earth, goodwill among men."* (Ah, like those wonderful moments when in the middle of doing-what-needs-to-be-done the sound currents come into our awareness and distract us from other concerns). *Three wise men saw a star in the east and bearing gifts, followed it to where the Christ child was born.* (Some of us become students of the wisdom teachings and recognize the need to follow a light that has come into our lives).

Now we come to the part of the story I like best. Who are these wise men? According to Vitvan, *the first one represents thought.* (Oh, yes, I need to think in a new way, to remember that life is really about seeking understanding and turning toward the inner light that has dawned in my consciousness.) *The second wise man represents desire.* (More and more as my thoughts turn toward becoming a more 'spiritual' person I am able to put aside former desires and really desire more light and understanding.) *The third wise man represents action.* (This means making the effort to actually take time to make the journey—to read, study and meditate, and make time to focus on self-development instead of continually being distracted by chores and entertainments.) The gifts the wise men bring to the Christ child symbolize the talents and faculties with which we make the world a better place and earn our daily bread.

So, especially in this season, I try to fill my psyche with the awareness of the need to turn my thoughts, desires and actions into wise men that follow the Light. I have to fortify my intentions and actions on a regular basis, and the Christmas season provides a wonderful opportunity for a renewal of those endeavors. I remind myself that the Light has humble beginnings, that it originates "in the manger" where I have always fed my lesser appetites. As I strive to become more self-aware, I can use any ordinary moment of any ordinary day to focus my consciousness on that Light and enlist my "wise men" to guide me toward fulfilling my true purpose.

So as our visit ends and we drain our cups we head back into the aristotelian world, but we can remain less integrated in its demands and more in tune with our own *journey across the burning sands* (living in the mundane world) into the wonderful world of Reality for which we are destined, if we but persevere. May we each spend more time in the coming year fulfilling our true purpose and becoming more and more aware of the Light within. It's been nice visiting with you. Have a happy holiday season.

—Marj Coffman, 2012

Christella's Smile

Life changing experiences can come in so many forms. I went to Haiti for 12 days in July with a group called Friends of the Children of Haiti. They are a charitable organization that provides free medical care in Haiti. I worked at their clinic that operates six times each year near Jacmel, on the southeastern side of the country.

This was my first trip to Haiti with FOTCOH and while I was very excited about going I was also unsure what to expect. I knew that I would be doing triage of patients but had many questions about the logistics of what was expected of me in terms of assessment and questioning and what types of things I would be seeing.

After seeing so many patients each day (the clinic saw just over 2000 patients in 8 days), many began to run together but each day there were standouts that truly drove home what we were doing at the clinic. For me, many of the standouts were the children.

One of the patients that touched me the most was a little girl named Christella. She came in with her aunt to the clinic. Christella had a similar complaint to what many of the children here have, diarrhea. As soon as she came up to my station with her aunt, Christella was holding my hand or touching my arm as I did vitals on her aunt and she had the sweetest smile. The aunt told me that Christella's parents had died 6 months before of cholera and that the aunt, who already had 5 children of her own, adopted Christella and her 3 other siblings. I gave Christella a sucker and was rewarded with her smile again, a big hug, and shy kiss on my cheek. I spoke with Ann, another volunteer, later in the day and Ann also commented on the sweetness of Christella's smile and the hug that she gave Ann.

Another day I had a little boy that had come with his mother. She was coming in to follow up on her hypertension and the little boy had no complaints and didn't need to be seen. As I was taking his mother's blood pressure, he had his hand on my knee or on my arm and was very seriously watching the dial on the blood pressure cuff move. He was smiling each time I looked at him and was so curious about what I was doing. He mimicked many of my motions - he put his fingers on his mother's wrist after I took her pulse and was squeezing the ball on the blood pressure cuff. After finishing with his mother I had my interpreter ask him if he wanted to have his blood pressure checked. He gave me the biggest grin in return and held out his arm. While I didn't think it was possible, his grin got even larger as I pumped up the cuff.

I was exhausted by the end of each day but I could not wait for the next day to begin and to see what new stories and experiences awaited me. The amazing smiles that I got from our patients, including the babies, children, and adults were so uplifting. I truly felt that I made a difference in someone's life each day that I was there and I cannot wait for the chance to go to Haiti with FOTCOH again.

I am so thankful that I was able to have this experience and to really make a difference in so many people's lives. Being in Haiti opened my eyes to a level of poverty that, while I knew in the abstract existed, I had not realized existed so close to home nor to such an extreme. I have never had my perspective expanded in so many ways in so short a time. While I saw so many kinds of hardship in Haiti, I also saw such amazing and strong people that are still able to smile and find joy in their lives.

Consider the Light

Consider the light, the light we usually take for granted, the light we seldom acknowledge or appreciate. The light and radiation from our sun incubated life on earth. We sought protection from the unknown dangers of the darkness by that light. Along with most of the other animals, we developed two eyes, our windows to the world, to register that light around us. They provide binocular vision to help us grasp that fruit and hurl that rock to hit the mark. Beyond the senses of touch and hearing, almost everything we know about the world around us comes by way of registering that light. And now today, with the help of telescopes and spectrosopes by analyzing the light from stars and unbelievably distant galaxies, we have learned more about the universe we live in than could have been imagined only a few decades ago.

Then there is the light that we shine upon the world from our inner consciousness. Items from some of the earliest human living sites and bone carvings, are indications of artistic expression. It seems that as man's knowledge of his world increased, so did his appreciation of it. However, it also seems that man's history has been a struggle between his darker side and his brighter side. Bit by bit, alongside the terrible struggles to just survive and the brutality of tribal conflict, came song and dance and costumes, pictures and poetry, decorations and architecture, religion and introspection.

In today's era of instant information it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the terrible things we see men doing to each other in many parts of the world. There are no polls to weigh the balance between the darkness and the light. But efforts are being made by some enlightened world leaders to quell the global strife. If we focus our consciousness on compassion, tolerance and loving kindness perhaps we can help make a difference.

Keep in mind one of Vitvan's benedictions: "In the Name of the Father, in the Name of the Mother, in the Name of the Son, may the Blessed Ones lead us from darkness into Light."