



A Time for Courage

Leaves of Morya's Garden II: Illumination, 1925

Leaves of Morya's Garden II, 72. For all I enjoin courage. Even a dove should become a lion. Not We, but you are in need of your courage. With a smile arrest the destruction of the temple. Only by courage can you master a flight. All will happen in due time. Understand that one must repeat: "Courage and patience."

Leaves of Morya's Garden II, 1924

Leaves of Morya's Garden II, 255. The Blessed One said: "Truth is the sole source of courage." The truth correctly understood is the most beautiful chapter of wisdom in the book of Cosmos.

New Era Community

New Era Community, 48. Precisely in the days of grave sickness of the planet it is important to be filled with courage. By groping one does not pass, but the sword can cleave the harmful veils. Very grave is the moment, and it is necessary to intensify all courage.

Hierarchy, 1931

Hierarchy, 314. Amidst the concepts of courage, the most invincible is the courage of the flaming heart when, with full decisiveness, with full realization of achievement, the warrior knows only the path of advance. To this achievement of courage only the extreme degree of the courage of desperation is comparable. With the same speed with which the courage of the flaming heart overcomes the future, desperation flees from the past. Thus, where the courage of the flaming heart is lacking, let there be the courage of desperation. Only thus can the warrior gain victory when the offensive is great. All other aspects of courage are of no significance, because in them will be halfwayness. This quality,

next to cowardice and treason, must be avoided.

Fiery World III, 1935

Fiery World III, 94. The abyss may be conquered by different paths. Courage in the face of the unfolding abyss is attained precisely when the spirit places everything at stake. It is correct that the spirit

"Precisely in the days of grave sickness of the planet it is important to be filled with courage."

can be tempered only in life. The overcoming of life's difficulties will bring the spirit its spark. Spiritual conquests are so difficult. The physical body endures privations in self-satisfaction, but the spirit conquers difficulties. And the fiery spiritual strife can uplift to a great height.

Thus, let us aspire to spiritual difficulties. The abyss can unfold itself before the heart. Thus it seems that the path of life proceeds inexorably; but the heart which realizes the abyss is also conscious of the Light. For, when a final boundary has been manifested it is possible to unroll a Fiery Infinity. Only in complete striving can the spirit unfold its wings. On the path to the Fiery World one must be imbued with fearlessness before the abyss. The winged spirit knows this joy of attainment.

Fiery World III, 388. During the decline of an epoch first of all is observed a split amidst inner structures. When spiritual downfall overcomes the national consciousness, these signs are especially clear. Looking over a chart of the World, one can easily be convinced that dissolution precedes the renaissance which can be brought about only through regeneration of the spirit. Quests of the true renaissance lead to renewal of the spirit and of principles, and thus a new constructiveness can be affirmed. New construction cannot be approved without a veritable renewal of the spirit. The Service to Light must inspire the spirit with courage to manifest fiery constructiveness.

Inside This Issue

A Time for Courage
Page One

Networkers Letter
Page Two

Nicholas and Helena
Roerich
Page Three

Health Corner
Page Six

Thoughts on Agni
Page Seven

Conversations with
Daniel Entin
Page Eight



Welcome

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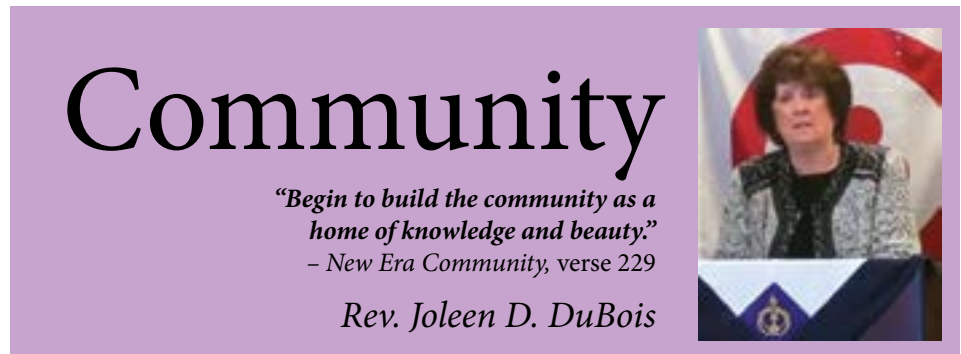
NETWORKERS LETTER

Dear Friends,

This coming October will find the WMEA celebrating its thirty-eighth anniversary with a weekend of wonderful events. First, there will be conversations and presentations about the origins of Agni Yoga, and the Agni Yoga Society and its founders, as this year marks the 100th anniversary of Agni Yoga. The first lines of Agni Yoga were written down in 1920. March 24, 1920 was the day when the first lines of the Teaching were recorded.

The WMEA's thirty-eighth anniversary celebration will also include presentations and dialogue about the Spiritual Hierarchy. About the Spiritual Hierarchy, in his book *Heroica* Nicholas Roerich wrote:

"How often humanity, entangled in its problems, attempted to deny the significance of the teacher. In epochs of decadence, it was seemingly possible to shake the basic conception of the Spiritual Hierarchy. But not for long did this darkness last. With the epochs of renaissance, again the great leadership of teaching was inevitably crystallized, and people again began to feel the ladder of ascent and the blessed hand of the Leader. Many times small minds hesitate, fearing that they may be oppressed by the personality of the Teacher. Especially those who have little to lose worry most often lest they lose something. In this regard, we now enter a very



significant epoch. In certain strata of humanity, the spirit of denial has just succeeded in evoking a protest against the Teacher. But as always happens, denial can arise only temporarily, and the creative origins of humanity will again lead the wanderers of life into the path of affirmation, of fearless search—to the path of creation and beauty. People

again remember about the Teachers. Of course, these Teachers must not pertain to a grandfather's study with all its petrified remains.

"The Teacher is He who reveals, enlightens, and encourages: He who will say, 'Blessed are the obstacles, through them we grow.' He who will recall the beautiful Golgothas of knowledge and art because therein lies creative achievement. He who is able to remind, to teach the means of achievement will not be rejected by strong spirits. He Himself will realize the value of the Hierarchy of Knowledge, and in his constant movement will create the ascending researches."¹

It is important for us to know about the Hierarchy because the Hierarchy is our future. We are going to eventually be part of the Hierarchy. Hierarchy means the maturity of the human being, the future of the human being.

continued on page 11

¹ If you would like to read more from *Heroica*, please go to the Nicholas Roerich Museum: <http://www.roerich.org/gifts-books.php>. It is available to read on their website, though the text does not contain page numbers.



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Nicholas and Helena Roerich

Messengers of the New Era of Living Ethics

Sina Fosdick

(A Talk Before the Brooklyn Theosophical Society, May 10, 1956)

My talk today deals with the present era of humanity's history—the New Era. It deals with the Teaching given for this period and with the Envoys of the White Brotherhood, who were delegated to bring the new Teaching to humanity. As we know, each century, a Messenger, or Envoys, are being sent to many countries to bring indications, counsels, warnings, and prophecies, especially and karmically destined for each century.

It is of interest to quote here H. P. Blavatsky's statement from her *Voice of the Silence*: "A Messenger is sent to enlighten the world every century, at a certain specified period of the cycle." The great Tibetan Sage, Tsong-kha-pa, proclaimed this Message of vital importance.

Humanity is never left alone, but, on the contrary, spiritual and practical help is poured constantly from the Great Source of Hierarchy upon our Earth. Literature abounds in examples testifying to the reality of this statement. People, nations, movements, groups, individuals are not abandoned. The current of ageless wisdom, applicable to everyday life and to man's self-perfectedness is flowing endlessly. If our consciousnesses are open, if our ears and vision are attuned, if the striving for Knowledge, Beauty, and Truth are present, the gates are opened. But we must knock ourselves, *and the knocking one will be admitted*, says Agni Yoga.



Helena and Nicholas Roerich

The Roerichs arrived in New York in 1921, the occasion being the exhibition of Prof. Roerich's paintings in New York. He, the great, internationally known artist, widely acclaimed in his own country, Russia, and in many other European countries, brought his paintings to America at the invitation of the Chicago Art Institute. After the opening in New York, his exhibition toured the United States for almost two years.

After settling in New York, Prof. and Mme. Roerich met a small group of earnest spiritual seekers and followers of his great art. With them, Prof. Roerich founded a school of arts, called the Master School of United Arts. Subsequently, there was founded the Nicholas Roerich

Museum, Agni Yoga Society, International Art Center, and later the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee. Thus was the cornerstone of deeper and greater appreciation of culture laid in the soil of America. This is one of the endeavors of their great mission.

At the same time, the books of the Agni Yoga Teaching were being received by them from the Great Source and transmitted to the Western world. They appeared first in the United States and later were translated into European and Asiatic languages. The consecutive order of the books was indicated, and they were published in that order. At the very same time, numerous Roerich Societies sprang up in Europe, and the

books of the Teaching were, in turn, translated into the language of those countries and published there. The books were published in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Latvian, and several Asiatic languages.

In 1923 Prof. and Mme. Roerich, with their two highly gifted young sons, left for Europe, where they had to equip an expedition to proceed through the heart of Asia. For five years, the expedition traveled, covering India, Tibet, Little Tibet, Sikkim, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Altai, and so forth. Twice Prof. Roerich left the expedition for brief periods of time to come to this country for the most important decisions to be conveyed to his coworkers here. Plans were laid, and brought into reality, of founding an International Art Center, also combining science and related subjects. Foundations were laid for a number of museums, each dedicated to a special nation. Exchanges of exhibitions, artists, lecturers, and scientists were promoted; scholarships were given at the Master Institute of the Roerich Museum, which taught all arts under one roof.

Three international conferences dedicated to the Roerich Peace Pact and Banner, a unique plan for peace created and developed by Prof. Roerich, took place—two in Bruges, Belgium, in 1931, 1932, and one in Washington D.C., in 1933. Delegates and representatives of all nations participated in these conferences, proclaiming the undeniable and imperative need of the ratification and adoption of this plan by all nations of the world. This is an international pact for the protection of artistic and scientific institutions, historical monuments, cathedrals, libraries, and cultural treasures of man's



April–May, 1926, Urumchi, Chinese Turkestan. Front left: George Roerich; Front middle: Nicholas Roerich; Standing behind Nicholas Roerich: Helena Roerich.

genius. In April of 1935, twenty-one countries of North, Central, and South America, including the United States, ratified the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace. President Franklin D. Roosevelt made at that time an international broadcast marking the significance of the Roerich Pact and Peace Banner, and later it was officially ratified by Congress and proclaimed by the President in the name of the United States. Subsequently, several other countries, including India, also adopted the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace. A number of committees in Latin America, as well as in European countries, were organized to work for the furtherance of this noble, humanitarian peace project.

After their return in 1929 from the Central Asiatic Expedition, Prof. and Mme. Roerich chose Naggar in Kulu Valley, India, as their place of residence and as the best site for a scientific institution, which was founded by them under the name of the Urus-



Madonna Oriflamma, by Nicholas Roerich, 1932

vati Himalayan Research Institute. Under their enlightened guidance, the institute invited Tibetan and Indian scholars, learned lama-doctors, archeologists, botanists, and others for participation in its work. Important data was collected on the

medical lore of Tibet, China, India, as well as other scientific data based upon the findings that are so rich in that part of India.

A magazine, *Urusvati Journal*, and many literary publications and articles were published; contacts with leading scientists and European, American, and Asiatic universities were established.

Prof. and Mme. Roerich continued during this time with their great mission, in close contact with the Hierarchy of Light, spreading the Teaching of Agni Yoga in all corners of the world.

Beauty, which opens all gates, opens numerous hearts, as its language is understood universally—far more than are treaties, agreements, and diplomatic relations.

The acclaim of Roerich's art in the United States was enthusiastic and far-reaching. First, the artists, and then the lovers of beauty, and then the people, young and old of all classes, faiths, and molds came to see the majestic past, the great Teachers of humanity, the significant symbols and messages, depicted in pure, glowing colors, breathing joy and serenity. These paintings touched upon the innermost strings of the heart, awakened the dormant dreams and aspirations, and called to the future to the work and service for the common good of man. Great art speaks to all—Fra Angelico, Raphael, Leonardo DaVinci, and other great masters awakened spiritual values where religion and the church stood helpless and could not arouse man from his selfish and material aims.

But besides the awakening of the sense of beauty and veneration of culture, Prof. Roerich and his wife, Helena Roerich, brought another even greater gift to mankind: the



The Master Institute of United Arts building

realization that the Masters of Wisdom are real; that they do exist and do send enlightenment to men; and that through the Teaching of Agni Yoga, human beings can come closer to the Hierarchy of Light through the Blessed Masters, and thus can activate the potential energies existing within themselves.

To save our sick planet and restore the shaken and disturbed equilibrium of the world is our immediate and sacred duty. Some of you are acquainted with the Teaching of Agni Yoga from the very first book, *Leaves of Morya's Garden* (or as it is also known, *The Call*), up to the one that was just published, *Infinity*, vol. 1, in which you are told of the psychic energy that is within you and that surrounds you in the whole universe. Your awareness, your consciousness of this energy will endow you with new strength, will awaken your spirit to a greater realization of the spiritual forces within yourselves, will enrich

your lives and bring the true happiness—that of living in harmony and unity in the universe, not alone on Earth, not only with human beings!

Your inner thirst for knowledge will grow, illumination will come, the spiritual centers will open gradually, the sacred gifts given to men—clairvoyance, clairaudience, perception, and cognition of the subtle forces around you—will be revealed to you in a new light.

Instead of being bowed down by chaos, instead of being blind to the law of karma, man's entire being will strive with the fire of his heart to the Higher Worlds, of which the Blessed Masters tell us we must strive to become Their helpers and coworkers! Remember, Masters call Themselves the Elder Brothers of humanity, and They want all of us to understand the joy of Labor as a chain of endless achievements on the path of Knowledge and Beauty.

And from the moment the Teaching of Agni Yoga was transmitted by Prof. and Mme. Roerich to the earnest seekers, it became increasingly clear to their close coworkers that they, our Gurus, were fulfilling a sublime mission here on Earth.

The Envoys that are sent by the Hierarchy of Light to bring urgent advice, warnings, and council to various countries, with complete self-abnegation, always fully realize the sacrifices, impediments, obstacles, and even martyrdom that humanity will strew in their paths. It was so through all the history of humanity. Saint Germain came to ward off revolutions, upheavals, catastrophes, and he received derision, refusals to listen, and finally, the title of "charlatan."

H. P. Blavatsky brought an ocean of

Continued on page 11

“Agni Yoga approaches just in time. Without it, who could say that epidemics of influenza should be cured by psychic energy? Who would pay attention to the new kinds of mental, brain, and nervous illnesses, such as sleeping sickness? It is not leprosy, or the old forms of plague or cholera that must be dreaded; for them, preventive measures already exist. But one must ponder over the new enemies that are created by the conditions of contemporary life. One cannot apply old treatments to them; a new approach will be found through the expansion of consciousness.

“One can trace how, over the last thousand years, waves of sicknesses have swept over Earth. By these records one can compile a curious tabulation of human failings, because sicknesses clearly show the negative aspects of our existence.

“I hope that alert minds will think about this in time. It is too late to start making a pump when your house is already on fire.”¹

“Right efforts wipe away the manifestations of contagion. A person who is striving actually has very strong immune resistance. The same goes for people who are walking along the edge of an abyss. The most powerful wings are woven of aspirations and striving. It even turns out that striving is the most effective antidote. The fire born of swift, intense striving is the very best shield. The ancients explained why arrows fail to reach those who are striving. Nowadays doctors could show how a special substance develops in the course of spiritual striving. Accept this fact as vital advice and put it to work in your life. I am pointing out how the striving spirit changes its position with the swiftness of light and

Health Corner

“I speak about the preservation of magnanimity as the basis of good health.”

Fiery World I, verse 17

Note: All medical advice is given to the reader as a guideline. Please consult a medical professional before proceeding, and then proceed caerefully, with discretion and at your own risk.



becomes impossible to catch. So you should get used to striving and manifest it physically as well as spiritually. A teaching that does not instill striving is like a sack full of holes. You should embrace the essence of what is being said, because a study of the words alone will stop with the tongue. But beware of a tongue that moves rapidly while the heart stays deadly still. Let us not forget about the antidote of genuine striving.”²

“Diseases are divided as sacred, karmic, and those that are admitted. The first two concepts are easily understood, but precisely in the book *Hierarchy* one should mention the admitted ones. Who or what permits these diseases? Certainly ignorance and the horror of non-realization. It is not enough not to think about them. Children likewise do not think of them, yet become infected. One should protect oneself in consciousness and create an invulnerable armor of nerve emanations. Even severe epidemics cannot develop if people master their consciousnesses. An experiment with the substance of psychic energy would indicate what powerful antiseptics people carry within themselves. For this, two conditions are necessary: the first—realization of psychic energy; the second—realization of Hierarchy as the sole path for the increase of psychic energy. One should not look upon Hierarchy as

something abstract. One should realize firmly that it is the most powerful life-giver. We call it the primary remedy. But even a pill must be swallowed and an ointment applied. There is no effect from a remedy that is in a trunk. Likewise, the Benefaction of Hierarchy must be taken by striving. Thus, an irrevocable striving will afford a healing result.”³

“One must manifest special caution. You can see how even the morals of a nation change. Hence, ignorance reacts to the pressure of the atmosphere. One must observe that ignorance clearly affirms the foundations of darkness. One can imagine how easily an undeveloped brain deteriorates when the heart is silent. The morals of the peoples droop like a withered apple tree. Thus the danger of fiery epidemics is now great.

“The Chaldeans classified all sicknesses according to the elements; and they were not far from the truth, for the elements and luminaries chiefly condition the organism—the cosmic as well as the human.”⁴

¹ *Agni Yoga*, 1929, 6th ed. (New York, NY: Agni Yoga Society, Inc., [1928] 1997, repr. 2016), verse 492.

² *Heart*, 1932, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Agni Yoga Society, Inc., [1934] 2013, repr. 2016), verse 216.

³ *Hierarchy*, 1931, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Agni Yoga Society, Inc., [1933] 1997, repr. 2016), verse 418.

⁴ *Fiery World*, 1933, Vol. I, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Agni Yoga Society, Inc., [1943] 1969, repr. 2016, updated August 2019), verse 6.

Instructions to Disciples by the Gr. L.

Instructions given by the Gr. L. to the disciples before the departure of the Teachers from New York in 1923:

February 3, 1923

- I. If you hear the name of the Lord of the World, harken!
- II. If you hear blasphemy against the Messiah, do not be terrified, but say, "This is madness."
- III. Revere the Principle. In all brotherhoods, greater or lesser, all actions are transmitted through the Elders. There may be Teachings, there may be words of inspiration: Their source is One.
- IV. Do not await gifts; the treasures must be gathered by you. I could allot you all the pearls of the world, but how would you use this treasure? You would find an iron-bound place for them, cold and dead, and the gift would perish. But it would be quite otherwise if, under My Hand, you yourself strung your own lives as pearls and took measure of their size and value.
- V. Read the miracles in your own life. One disciple responds to Urusvati, another is filled with the Principle of Fuyama. Not in a book but in life is the page of karma revealed.
- VI. Look for the new ones. They are chosen and directed; do not reject their knocking.
- VII. Keep sharp your swords by day and by night, for they are wielded in My Name.
- VIII. The most imperative is never to act in anger but only in indignation of the spirit. The fire of anger

Thoughts on Agni Yoga

We invite our readers to send us their thoughts on a quote from the Agni Yoga Teachings



sears the web of the world. If you act with indignation of spirit, protecting the Name of the Lord and the strength of your Teacher, even blows are justified. In all things discriminate between the fire of anger and the purifying flame of indignation of the spirit.

“Do not await gifts; the treasures must be gathered by you. I could allot you all the pearls of the world, but how would you use this treasure? You would find an iron-bound place for them, cold and dead, and the gift would perish.”

- IX. If you do not find a solution for something, leave your efforts for another day, when the heavenly bodies will purify your communion with Truth.
- X. If you do not wish to begin, do not.
- XI. If you do not wish to see, do not.
- XII. I will speak to you when your soul longs desperately for knowledge.
- XIII. Do not overburden the old ones

with tasks.

- XIV. Learn to recognize friends—they are approaching.
 - XV. How should you take measure of your own deeds? If the deeds are of benefit to the world, the measure is good.
 - XVI. How should you evaluate the quality of your deeds? If the deeds are of benefit to humanity, their essence is good.
 - XVII. Learn to understand the meaning of rest between actions; this rest is an accumulation of strength.
 - XVIII. Do not fear; whatever is well-conceived will endure.
 - XIX. Know how to keep your understanding of the entire scope of your mission.
 - XX. Do not criticize and do not curse; the hail of curses will rebound upon the heads of those who utter them.
 - XXI. Know how to protect My Name and My Deeds from the traitors; many opportunities will be found to stop blasphemy and slander.
- If, in labor and in joy, you implement these three-times-seven rules and keep them in your mind, My Abode will flourish, and there will be walls upon which the signs of My Deeds may be fastened. Now is the time for action. Our trust is with you.*

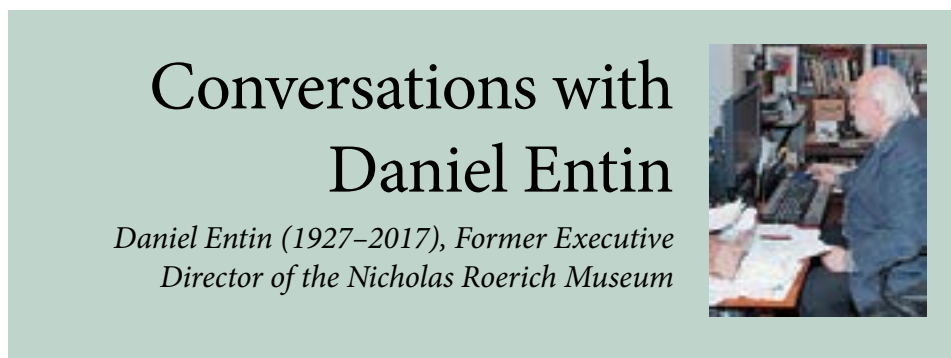
August 10, 1999

Symbolism

Dear —,

All over Russia, and most especially in Moscow, there are Roerich-oriented conferences timed to be near his birthday, October 9th. The tone of the conferences can vary, but they all involve many people making long speeches on one topic or another connected with Roerich's life and work. The conference that I am going to will be very heavy with academics, scholars, and researchers. The first day of the conference even takes place in the Academy of Sciences. All that is a bit strange to Westerners, who are not used to such large activities relating to Roerich, and who don't try very hard to fit Roerich, Agni Yoga, or any other spiritual pursuit into a scientific mold. But in Russia, everything is looked at from every angle, and everything is researched thoroughly. This particular conference has a title that touches me—"the relevance of the Roerich heritage to humanity"—and that is why I agreed to attend. Most of the conferences are very nationalistic in tone, trying to hold Roerich in a kind of vise that confines him to Russian points of view. I tend to use the conferences as an opportunity to "stretch" the viewpoints, to see Roerich as a planetary figure, an individual of universal interest and concerns, and that gets me into trouble sometimes.

Whether we like the term "New Age" or not, we in America are for the most part quite influenced by decades of New Age thinking, which is inclusive rather than exclusive, which embraces rather than rejects, which reaches out rather than withdraws. A lot of that makes Russians uncomfortable. So many of them still



Conversations with Daniel Entin

*Daniel Entin (1927–2017), Former Executive
Director of the Nicholas Roerich Museum*

"Whether we like the term 'New Age' or not, we in America are for the most part quite influenced by decades of New Age thinking, which is inclusive rather than exclusive, which embraces rather than rejects, which reaches out rather than withdraws."

feel that outside influences are threatening. Even their word for "foreign" resonates with that feeling: "beyond the borders."

The wonderful thing for me in attending the conferences is, I must confess, not so much to listen to the speeches, but to be able to meet many people whom I have come to know and care about, and to love, over the years. Many of them have histories of suffering for the Teaching, something that we can hardly imagine. I went to my first Roerich conference in 1984, when Agni Yoga was not even mentioned aloud, and Helena Roerich's name was whispered into my ear as a kind of code by those who wanted me to know that they knew. For an American like me, that time was very strange indeed, and sad.

But three years later, President Gorbachev declared his appreciation of Roerich and said he would support the establishing of a Roerich study center in Moscow, and that opened the doors everywhere. Everyone began writing, publishing, broadcasting, propagandizing—and that level of feverish activity continues. It is quite understandable, considering the pressure cooker that all the Roerichites had been in before.

Daniel

August 31, 1999

Opinions

Dear —,

Thank you for the thoughtful little essay. Most people do "stand behind" their opinions. But to me, that is a kind of inflexibility. I distrust my own opinions, precisely because opinions are a solidification of thinking. We must, I think, be always open and flexible, and willing at every moment to change our opinions when better ways are pointed out to us. Opinions hold us back, in a way.

Another difficulty is that (this is the result of a lot of agonizing over the question) opinions have a right to be called that only when they are based on knowledge and accurate information. Otherwise they fall more on the side of prejudice. When people claim,

“I have a right to my opinion!” they usually are defending their prejudices.

I truly appreciate this airing of a very difficult and incendiary subject. Thanks.

Daniel

September 23, 1999

Thoughts of the Day

Dear —,

If these are Agni Yoga thoughts, their original place in the Teaching must be given. If you are quoting from the Teaching, you must let us know. If you are making your own statements, you must let us know too. We cannot have personal opinions masquerading as Agni Yoga. If you are making your own statements, you cannot call them Agni Yoga thoughts.

I am sure you agree. Please clarify.

Daniel

October 29, 1999

How to Study Agni Yoga

Dear —,

From my own experience, I believe that because we all read the Teaching at different times of the day or night, we know that we feel differently at different times, and that affects our reading. Certainly, in the morning, after a good night's sleep that we assume included forays into the subtle realms, we have a “tuning” that is different. Add that to the positive, energetic feelings that we have at the beginning of a new day, and we can read with a clarity that is special.

In the evening, it is not just the day that is winding down, we are too, and the mind is less open to the distractions of daytime and more open to the mellowness of intuitive reading.

I find that when I read in the evening, I am less analytical and logical, and tend to absorb what I read in a more direct way. In the morning, I tend to filter what I read through my reason. I do think that it is a higher form of reason, not just ordinary logical thinking, especially because of where I believe I have been only an hour or two before. There is much Teaching flying around the planet in the early morning hours—I am sure of it—and we cannot but be affected by it.

Taken together, a more rounded understanding occurs. At least, I feel that for myself. Of course, I cannot describe the experience of others in this. It would be good to hear different views and experiences.

Daniel

November 07, 1999

Nationalism

Dear —,

I am responding to your plea, because I have had painful firsthand experience with the question of nationalism, and the “nationalism” of Agni Yoga, in Russia.

Three years ago, I attended a conference in Moscow dedicated to Roerich, and I listened to speech after speech about the superior spirituality of the

Russian people, about Russia's destiny to sacrifice itself over and over again to save the world, about the Teaching being specifically received by a Russian for the “soul” of the Russian people.

After enduring all that, I tore up my speech and wrote an anti-nationalism speech. From that moment on, I have been vilified by many in Russia. So many of my friends in Russia are infected by this disease, as you call it. They cannot see that nationalism is the cause of most of the miseries in the world today, the terrible, destructive, national wars everywhere, even though some of those conflicts take place in Russia itself.

To me, there are semantic problems that must be dealt with first, before discussing the problem. What is patriotism? Is it good or bad? What is nationalism? Is it good or bad? What is chauvinism? When precisely does one stage become another?

I have a few thoughts about this. The Teaching tells us that we should love our country and serve its evolution, that we are born in a particular place for a reason. That idea leads Russian Agni Yoga students, and most Russians, to condemn emigrants as traitors. But it is hard to simplify such an idea. Some people who left Russia in this century have served it best by leaving. They have spread awareness of Russian culture throughout the world. Rostropovich is perhaps a good example. In our country, a good argument could be made that all those young

Summer classes are ongoing through June and July. To register or for more information, email us at: staff@wmea-world.org

For our calendar of events and more about the WMEA, visit <https://www.wmea-world.org>

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people who left the U.S. during the Vietnam war were doing more for the country than against it.

Patriotism, to my mind, is love of country. No one can criticize that. But when love of country becomes “my country is better than all others,” love of country has moved further, into nationalism. For a spiritual student, nationalism closes the door to the growth of knowledge about humanity and human culture, and to the development of tolerance and respect—even love—for all of humanity. We see what that does in so many places in the world. In the United States, it takes a different form, because no one group has its own location, and the bigotry focuses on differences of race, color, language, culture, nationality, sex, and perhaps more.

The way to judge and understand whether any way of thinking is good or bad is, I was taught a few years ago by someone I love and respect very much, quite simple. There are essentially two kinds of thinking—inclusive and exclusive. The one is based on love and moves humanity forward. The other is separative, without love, and keeps humanity mired in the same tragic circumstances that have caused so much grief ever since Cain killed Abel.

I don't know what Russians will be like in the next generation, whether they will learn to

trust the world around them and realize that they have much to learn from that world. Their distrust causes them to read the Teaching in a way that is uniquely theirs, one that does not let them embrace all that exists, so that we can all rise together to the Heights. I wait and hope because I want to go back to open arms, not clenched fists.

Daniel

July 26, 1999

Ego, Illumination, and Beauty

Dear —,

I, like everyone, appreciate compliments, and thank you for them. But some are undeserved. In any case, I may have overstated my case to make the point, and if I offended anyone, I apologize. It is just that, as Director of the Nicholas Roerich Museum, I see so many people come through the door who are either aging New Agers or spiritual students, serious or casual. Almost all of them project a quality of certainty, of having already achieved, that I have begun to think of it as a kind of disease. Certainty is the lock that seals the door to growth.

Many years ago when I was studying with a great Sufi teacher, I was so overwhelmed by the feeling that I had been illumined, as if I had jumped from the bottom rung to the top, in one leap. I asked the teacher for an interview and told him that I felt a strong need to teach, to share what I had learned with everyone. He laughed, kindly, but told me that I had not yet learned much, and that I should go to the Sufi ashram for a few years, to meditate and serve. (Later he explained that this feeling and urge happens to so many people on the bottom rungs, that what they are learning and experiencing is so overwhelming to them that they really think they have found The Great Knowledge, and they want to go out to save the multitudes.)

Well, I didn't follow his advice. Instead, I came to the Agni Yoga Society and offered myself as a volunteer. I had learned the lesson and didn't let that ego-flower blossom again. Anyway, if Sina Fosdick, the director here and one of the Roerichs' first disciples, ever saw even a glimmer of that kind of ego ballooning, she'd shoot it down, fast. Here, it

was all work and service, and developing the humility to know how little we know.

The same Sufi teacher taught us that every time we go onto a bus or the subway, we should look at each passenger, and no matter how superficially ugly or offensive a person may seem, to peer beneath the surface and find the eternal beauty that exists in everyone. The Teaching tells us that the Master himself may come to one's door in the guise of a filthy beggar, and that we must learn to recognize Him by seeing beyond the disguise, and by ignoring the surface appearance.

When the Teaching uses the triad—Love, Beauty, and Action (or Motion)—that is the kind of Beauty that is meant. There can be no positive motion in the universe without the impelling power and sustaining power of Love and Beauty.

Just a few ideas to flesh out my too-cryptic message.

Love to all,

Daniel

¹ “Mstislav Rostropovich, (Russian musician, March 27, 1927–April 29, 2007) the renowned cellist, conductor and human rights champion, was buried on Sunday (April 29) 2007 in Moscow. Mourners flocked to pay tribute at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, which was destroyed by the Communists and which Rostropovich helped to reconstruct after the establishment of the Russian Federation.” <https://www.playbill.com/article/the-world-bids-farewell-to-rostopovich-quotes-of-tribute-from-musicians-and-political-figures>

² Not knowing, nor ever heard of this renowned musician until talking with Daniel, I wanted to learn more and began searching the internet; as a musician I wanted to learn more. When I found this quote, I became an admirer: “Every man must have the right fearlessly to think independently and express his opinion about what he knows, what he has personally thought about and experienced, and not merely to express with slightly different variations the opinion which has been inculcated in him.”
— Editor

Nicholas and Helena Roerich*(continued from page 5)*

wisdom—the great doctrines of Eastern philosophy—to Western minds, and she was hounded, vilified, and slandered, not only by strangers and enemies but even by those very close to her. The Roerichs also did not escape this destiny. And yet, in all these examples there remains the fact of invincible achievements—the transmitted Teaching remains, gains more adherents, brings expansion of consciousness to greater and greater numbers of people, and kindles new hearts with love, compassion, tolerance, and the desire to serve, to help and uplift the spirit of our fellow beings.

Starting with the simple formulae, and leading into the awesomeness of the Infinite, to the cognition of Highest Reason and of the workings of the Cosmic Magnet, into the mysteries of the atom, Agni Yoga brings to you finally the realization of the element of Fire, the Fire of Space. Realization of the ineffable beauty and grandeur of the cosmic processes evolving in Space raises your own possibilities, bringing you closer to the far-off worlds. And if and when the consciousness absorbs the understanding of becoming a participant in the life of the far-off worlds, then one may say that our life on Earth takes on a new meaning. Co-measurement of the small and the great, the usual and the urgent, verily leaps before our senses. Perception, vigilance, resourcefulness, flexibility—all these qualities become enhanced. The daily activities lose monotony, new interests spring up, and the self-imposed discipline of the spirit brings ever-greater possibilities of advancement. These are not mere words of enthusiastic acclaim—these are the steps of discipleship. From the first call, followed by spirit illumination, to the reverence of community, cooperation and its principles, and up to the great

luminaries—the far-off worlds—we are led by the Teaching of Agni Yoga, under the guidance of the Hierarchy of Light.

We are living in the epoch of Maïtreya, in the era of the Mother of the World. And Helena Roerich—she who was proclaimed by the Hierarchy of Light as the Mother of Agni Yoga—brought the supreme sacrifice while being in the physical body and participating in the cosmic work of the Hierarchy. She and her noble life companion, Prof. Roerich, brought new Light and Knowledge to mankind.

New responsibilities of womanhood in the elevating of the human spirit are to be brought about in this era. Love and Beauty cannot any longer remain mere slogans; they must be taught in schools so that the children may understand higher planes of existence. Science, religion, art, should form one unified realm; their unity must bring new aspirations to humanity. This evolution will bring the lofty understanding of Infinity.

The Teaching tells us that man does not die, but changes. Fear of death thus becomes extinct; instead, there is manifested the joy of an endless chain of existences, which will bring eventually the awareness of many lives. And all this is given with clarity and the power of wisdom to those who seek, to those who have faith and live for the future.

Our beloved Teachers and Leaders, Nicholas and Helena Roerich, were the chosen instruments to bring this Teaching to mankind at this period—he, through the medium of his great art, his synthesis achieved in numerous lives; she, through the supreme achievements here on Earth as the Mother of Agni Yoga. The blending of these two great spirits in this life was in itself a supreme karmic union.

Networkers Letter*(continued from page 2)*

The Teaching reminds us there is a Group of Great Men and Women who have long traveled the road of life and, in so doing, have perfected Themselves. Great Ones have committed Themselves to continue to inspire all humanity even to the sacrifice of Their own continuing advancement. This They have done so we can graduate from repeated Earthly incarnations. They are a Group of Great Men and Women who comprise what is called the Spiritual Hierarchy. Their commitment to the world is the hope of the planet.

*To learn more about the upcoming
thirty-eighth anniversary celebration of
the WMEA please go to
<https://wmea-world.org/wmea/>*

With love,



Joleen Dianne DuBois

President and founder

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