

## THOUGHTS

### *Leaves of Morya's Garden, Book One, 1924*

*Leaves of Morya's Garden, Book One, 91.* Sharpen your arrows! If you like not the symbol of the arrow, take that of the carrier pigeon. Arrows of thought are energy, which, like electricity, must be concentrated at one point. You can easily imagine propelling an object, and you can easily imagine an electric spark. Directed energy spurs a desire to act creatively in those to whom you send it.

### *Leaves of Morya's Garden, Book Two, 1929*

*Leaves of Morya's Garden, Book Two, 157.* The best thing is to destroy the germs of base thoughts, which are more infectious than all diseases. One should be careful not so much about uttered words as about thoughts. During one word, ten thoughts are born.

### *Agni Yoga, 1929*

*Agni Yoga, 529.* It is true that the power of thought has been spoken about for ages, but nothing has changed because of this. People generally do not pay attention to their thoughts in order to determine their causes and consequences. Yet what remarkable experiments could be conducted even now, in the midst of everyday life! No special conditions are needed for such experiments. Attention and mobility of consciousness are all that is required. For instance, in experimenting with telepathic communications, one can observe the outer and inner conditions that influence the qual-

ity of the communications. Drowsiness or alertness, irritation or joy, lethargy or striving—each reacts strongly upon the quality and intensity of communications. The personal character of the participants also has its effect. Is it not important to take attentive notice of these things?

Indeed, it is known that various defects in the character of the participants are often reflected in physical flaws. Some of these may be overcome, but others, often karmic ones, are irreparable, except perhaps, in particular cases, through a special tension of the will. But of course, one's will power can only be developed by one's already-developed power of thought.

### *Supermundane, 1938*

*Supermundane, 627.* Thought is the finest energy that one can send forth, inexhaustibly, into the vault of the Universe. Thought can rise, as a pillar of light, and be united with the great Apparatus of energy. The duty of man is to share his possessions, and the best of them is the energy of his

thought. It is the energy, consciously directed, that serves as a true yoga, the link with the Higher Worlds. We have spoken many times about the significance of awareness; it alone is life-giving. Even prana must be inhaled consciously.

The Thinker said, "Each one of us, when ready for sleep, should send a beautiful thought of greeting to the forces of nature."

*"The duty of man is to share his possessions, and the best of them is the energy of his thought. It is the energy, consciously directed, that serves as a true yoga, the link with the Higher Worlds."*

### Inside This Issue

Thoughts  
Page One

Networkers Letter  
Page Two

Nicholas Roerich  
on Thought  
Page Three

The Realm of Beauty  
Page Six

Thoughts on  
Agni Yoga  
Page Eight

Conversations with  
Daniel Entin  
Page Nine

### Welcome

For discussions and posts on the Agni Yoga Teachings, please visit our "Agni Yoga – Living Ethics Community" site on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Agni.Yoga.Living.Ethics.Community/>

and WMEA on the Web:

<https://www.wmea-world.org>

## NETWORKERS LETTER

Dear Friends,

It is Sunday afternoon, one day before the exact time of the Solar Festival of Libra, and I'm listening to the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra perform Beethoven's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*. So, that is my "opening line" for this issue of *Agni Yoga Quarterly*. But let me mention that in just nineteen days the WMEA will be celebrating the thirty-sixth anniversary of its founding. As the founder of the WMEA, you can imagine all the memories I have of both the good and challenging events over the years that have brought us to this moment.

I think the first critical moment of the group's expansion of consciousness was the first time Torkom Saraydarian visited us in Florida, in 1989, after we had become a non-profit, federally tax-exempt, religious-educational organization earlier in the '80's. Torkom was an author, musician, and composer, but even more importantly, he was a Teacher trained since childhood in the Ageless Wisdom. He spent five days with us that year, giving not only lectures and holding meetings during those days and nights but spending time on the beaches of Sarasota and having meals with all of us. He also found time to give me wise counsel about group unity, group cooperation, spiritual leadership, and how to teach the Ageless Wisdom. And to top it all off, in our more quiet moments

together, he shared stories about the Great Ones that to this day I will never forget. But expansion of consciousness, individual or group, normally takes place only after a challenge or crisis. The crisis?

His explosive fiery energy, his absolute solemnity about the Teaching, and no-nonsense approach to putting the Teaching into our day-to-day life very quickly weeded out the curious and superficial seekers during those five days and after, and thus created a crisis on many levels. At least twenty folks who attended that spiritual teaching opportunity disappeared, leaving only the most dedicated and willing-to-work-on-themselves men and women to continue on. Most of us were mesmerized and in seventh heaven meeting with such a noble man, one whose field of light extended for miles. But not everyone was ready to handle the revelations that his Light exposed within each of us—our maya, glamors and illusions, vices, and more. When he returned to his home in Sedona, Arizona (U.S.A.) and the Aquarian Educational Group, our classes, studies, and meditations underwent a huge

change, becoming more condensed and focused. The result? The consciousness of the group expanded.

I'm reminded of something he wrote, "[A]ll separation and selfish activities in the world . . . cause pain and suffering to the incarnating human soul for thousands of years, until he realizes that the goal of life is fusion and the development of group consciousness."<sup>1</sup> He also wrote, "[W]hen the consciousness of a group is expanded, purified, and charged with spiritual fire, it absorbs a great amount of psychic energy from Nature and from space, and directs it toward the Hierarchy, and through the Hierarchy, toward still higher centers."<sup>2</sup>

Since that first critical expansion of consciousness within the WMEA, we have dedicated ourselves to the plan of Hierarchy and humanity, serving in a capacity that will bring continuous aspiration, striving, and creativity to those who are seeking a spiritual education. In addition to publishing books and magazines, such as *Agni Yoga Quarterly*, and offering weekly classes, webinars, and various internet

*continued on page 7*

# Community

*"Begin to build the community as a home of knowledge and beauty."*

– *New Era Community*, verse 229

Rev. Joleen D. DuBois



White Mountain  
Education  
Association

*Agni Yoga Quarterly*

Vol. XL No. 4

*Agni Yoga Quarterly* can be found on the Internet World Wide Web Address:

<https://www.wmea-world.org>

Email: [staff@wmea-world.org](mailto:staff@wmea-world.org)

Copyright 1982–2018

White Mountain Education

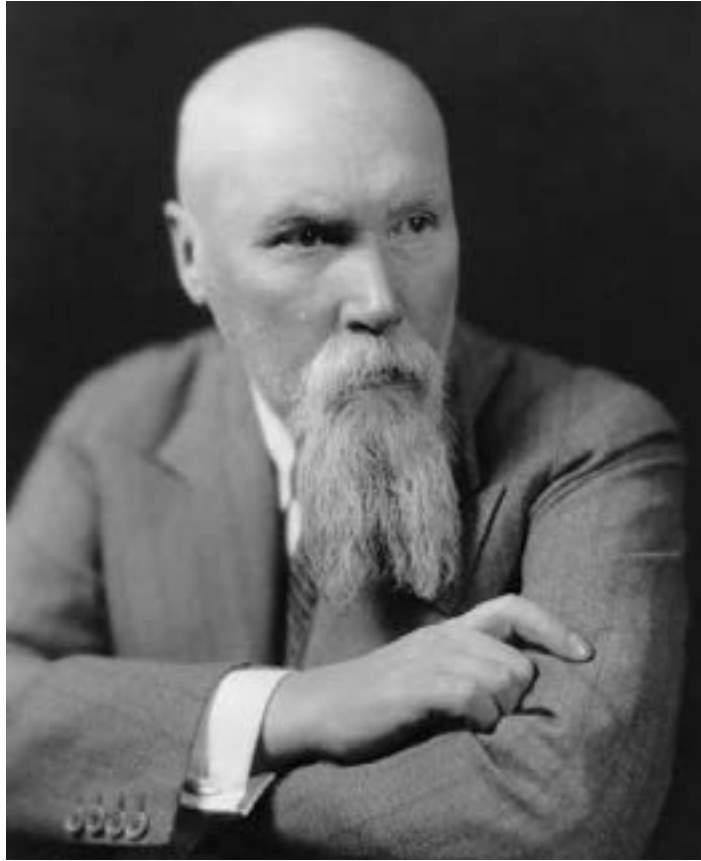
Association – All rights reserved.

Any reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

# NICHOLAS ROERICH

*An article on  
THOUGHT—1923*

So often do we repeat the word “thought” that it is very good to realize that thought is the highest motive power. But very seldom do we apply this power of thought, and very seldom do we even control ourselves, and very seldom do we direct our thoughts in the proper paths. While we think that we have one thought, perhaps we have a hundred thoughts, and they are flying through our aura like small insects; and certainly, we have an effect on these small thoughts. If we could take (and there have been taken) photographs of our auras, we could see that they are filled with small black and grayish insect-like spots. These spots are spots of ignorance. If we could realize that one great thought is unconquerable, and we have to strive to know how to produce this one thought, then we could understand how these spots would gradually disappear. In one photograph, which was taken unexpectedly, two rays of light extended from the shoulders, and then what happened at this particular moment was verified—it was found that, at this time, a beautiful and unselfish thought was generated; and because it was unselfish and creative, it was manifested at once as beautiful rays of light. Who knows, perhaps sometime before too long, we will have photographs of the candidates for election to public office so that we will have real certificates



Nicholas Roerich, 1934

rather than written ones, and then we will have the facts and only the facts; and if we know there exists only one light, we will follow that light. This is very encouraging because sometimes one goes in one direction while perhaps there are many different ways to go. We should not be discouraged because there is only one way going up and one way going down. Nothing is static. Now, take one aspect of this going up—according to the law, every going up is connected with the creative state of mind. All history proves that not one man who had a creative state of mind is forgotten. I am not speaking here

about any definite field, such as art expressed on canvas, or stone, or any other material, but in the sense of the beautiful, that is, the expression of the beauty of a whole life. Sometimes this expression is transferred to canvas or other materials, but very often it is expressed in thought; and we are beautifying space, we are connecting the planets, for in thought there is no space, nor time. It is said that a man in the moment of thought is different in weight. This is so. It can be proven that in a moment of strong creative thought, one is lighter. We hear that St. John de la Croix and St. Therese sometimes were lifted up to the ceiling, and this is not an unexplained miracle but can be proven. Perhaps you have seen scientific experiments that prove that during intense thought, we lose weight and can be lifted up—it is a physical law, a creative law.

So, once more, we see that these constructive laws you are expressing are coming nearer to the eternal laws. You are expressing the highest form of thought; you are in cooperation with the supreme consciousness. Is it not wonderful to have in your creative mind this beautiful thought that you are in cooperation with the beautiful? This shows your strength because, during this moment of direct cooperation with the Supreme, you are producing something for the next evolution, for the next life. It is the eternal

goal of going up to this life. It is a beautiful law, and nobody can tell you which way your art can be applied because it is for some purpose. You cannot mention anything without sense, form, or purpose; perhaps everything has purpose. But remember that this purpose should be beautiful. Often we have complaints about unsolvable problems in the life of families and households. If you should fill your life and the lives of your nearest relatives and friends with this sense of the beautiful so that everything ugly will gradually fade away, then you are left in this constant enthusiasm of the beautiful. This is for everybody, not for the few. When we can say that even prisons can be beautified, then we will have no more prisons. And here, we do not mean only material prisons but prisons of the spirit, and then we can dream about a united, constructive life.

When we speak about applied art, often that hideous word “commercial art” is used. This is a hideous expression and should not be permitted. What is art? We can have something beautiful and something ugly, and if we have a beautiful household object of Benvenuto Cellini, that is a work of art. On the other hand, sometimes we see something that is ugly in itself, regardless of its use, and then this can rightly be called commercial art. So in art, we must use this principle of the beautiful. But we must remember to apply art to everyday life. Even floors can be washed beautifully, for there is no small art and no great art. In constantly repeating the beautiful, the beautiful, the beautiful, you are beginning to be constructive. There is ugly negation—that is the symbol of ignorance, and this ignorance will emanate, and we should not be afraid to put before ourselves this constant thought. The beginner is often perplexed about how to be creative. His thought is first, that he must study the law when studying colors, and then in the future create. But one must create



*Blessed Soul (Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna)* by Nicholas Roerich, 1924

from the beginning. Children must be taught to create. The student should state the eternal law of construction not only for the abstract idea but for the eternal thought so that the laws will be in the mind and not merely in the hands. How many paintings can you create from the point of view of the laws? They are perfect from this point of view, and still, if you ask the painter if he uses these laws, he would say no—it shows that the law is not the whole, and he knows this. So while we advocate that you study the law, it is this law that will help you express yourself because we are confident that you are born artists, and the law will help you express yourselves. But very often we are not prepared to pay attention to every detail in our life. Put before yourself a simple object—look at it; close your eyes and imagine it. Tell me how sincere, how clear, and how sharp will be this impression, even though sometimes we do not remember the definite color and the definite line. But it is advisable to practice this experiment every day: when you have a few minutes, put before yourself some

article, something simple, and later try to imagine this object and try to get this impression in the third eye. You will see that there is nothing supernatural in this, and you will finally notice that it is clear and sharp and simple for you. Everybody has heard of St. Germaine, who warned France before the French Revolution. Study his biography. It is told as a historical fact that he could conduct three conversations and write two different letters, one with each hand. This was not supernatural but only proof that his consciousness was very refined, very well developed. In the case of a piano player, two hands are being used and each is conducting a different theme, and still, he is able to conduct a conversation at the same time. So if one learns to fix one's consciousness on certain things, one is able to produce so-called miracles. Some people say this is impossible, but try to explain the miracle of a piano player conducting a conversation, perhaps two, while he plays. Here we have the approach to a “miracle,” and we have to realize how many things reported as phenomena, as something

supernatural, are in reality very near to us, and they could and should be manifested. When we learn to direct our consciousness, then we can fix our mind on something quite definite. We are preparing for the next evolution, and I think that everyone has to think about this next evolution, the life of the next generation. You are responsible for the next generation, and you cannot avoid this. We can also get great happiness from a beautiful thought. Some of you are reading Agni Yoga. Perhaps you have some questions. Let each one view his own life, and I am sure that with sincere and honest attention each one can find something unusual in his own life. Recently I addressed a group of young people, and when I asked them to relate something unusual in their lives, they said that there was nothing unusual, saying that their life was quite routine. They told me that I was going to the mountains where beautiful things occurred, but that they could find nothing unusual in the turmoil of the city. I insisted that they think a while and that surely something would come to their minds. Then from one, I heard that from the moment her aunt died, they heard a strange bell ringing, and then they saw something like a cloud passing over their heads. Then in half an hour, many others had remembered wonderful manifestations and facts, and everyone was uplifted; and within the next three weeks, each member of the group told me of some beautiful and interesting and amazing facts in his life. So we have only to collect all the beautiful facts and to relate them directly and honestly. Everybody intends to be honest, but it is seldom that the facts are given honestly, even in the case of scientists, who have to deal with facts; so many of them do not take the facts honestly, without superstition. If somebody begins to see wonderful lights, sparks, stars, then he is told to

wear glasses, in this way closing out the light. But we have to be ready for everything honest. So often people complain about their near ones spoiling their lives. If their consciousness is growing, they will realize that their relatives and friends are still human beings and they should try to open their hearts—sometimes this is easy, sometimes difficult. But if your key does not work, be assured it is not beautiful. But every human being has a heart; and still, heart

*“I hope next year I shall find you here again, a step more advanced in creative power, and I will feel in your consciousness the manifestations of your work. I hope to feel that you are constantly growing and creating.”*

is heart. So if we are not able to open this heart, probably our key does not fit this sacred casket, and certainly such a key is not beautiful enough. We often hear that in some homes art cannot be introduced, that the people there think art is unnecessary. In these cases, how can they be shown that the beautiful has value? How during revolutions, when property and money were destroyed, were objects of art preserved, and for long periods the country was able to exist on the income from the artistic objects. Keep this fact in mind, and, at some time, you may be able to prove

to somebody how much the value of these objects increases in times of war and revolution. Ask him to give the exact value of a share—it is impossible to give this. So much depends up the demand. To one man, it will mean one thing; to another, something else. So often an object that seems to have little value proves to be of great worth and is practically priceless. Often bankers and businessmen have been wiped out during a revolution, while artists and art collectors have survived. Thus, creative production survives, scientific invention survives, and thought survives. So let us learn to direct all of our thoughts in the direction of the beautiful.

I hope that next year I will find you here again, a step more advanced in creative power, and I will feel in your consciousness the manifestations of your work. I hope to feel that you are constantly growing and creating.

Here Professor Roerich asked the class if there were any questions. One student asked the following: “How can one apply Agni Yoga to everyday life?” Answer: “The question in everything in life is how to apply the principles. First, we must realize that this psychic power exists and is within ourselves, and then we must learn to release it. In all fairy tales we hear about closed doors, hidden treasures, to be opened only by a magic key. Within ourselves, the poisons of anger and irritation collect and are closed, and to overcome the power of these, we must release them.

In the same way, cancer is formed, holding and gathering poisons that destroy us if they are not released. There have been cases of cancer being cured by psychic power. Learn to release all poisonous thoughts. See the sparks and lights, and study these lights, and then you will create something for the future of humanity that is really unusual.

Over two thousand years ago, Plato gave us this beautiful message: "From beautiful images we shall go to beautiful thoughts, from beautiful thoughts to a beautiful life, and from a beautiful life to absolute beauty."

## MY SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

by Svetoslav Roerich  
March 7, 1980

Above the gray, insipid smog of our everyday life, there are beautiful moments of inspiration and fulfillment when we reach out toward something more perfect, something more beautiful to inspire and guide us toward a richer and better tomorrow.

Inspiration is a very difficult concept to define. It can be on so many planes and embody so many complex facets of our existence. From day to day our outlook and attitude change. We change, and our entire attitude or reaction to certain conditions changes with us. That which had a profound influence upon us in the past fails to evoke in us the same emotions and feelings that seemed so stable and paramount. In some cases, there is a complete reassessment of values, as we emerge into a new cycle of life, and that which we often overlooked before suddenly acquires great significance and purpose. This transformation comes sometimes quite suddenly, as if we were reborn into a different world. Yet there are many experiences that remain with us throughout our entire life unchanged and even grow in importance and clarity as time passes.

As I have said, there are so many aspects and facts to the very concept of inspiration that it would be difficult to generalize and classify some of the sudden flashes of inspiration and try to

## The Realm of Beauty

*"Through Beauty We Conquer."*

N. Roerich

*We invite our readers to submit their poems, photos, and short essays for this section.*



Svetoslav Roerich, Kalimpong, 1950–1951

analyze and explain them. It is a subject that has so many venues of approach—a subject that could be treated at great length—but as I have been specifically asked to say something about my own sources of inspiration, I shall try to give you a short outline of my experiences, the sources of my inspiration.

Looking back over many years, I can see a definite central thread passing through and uniting all the highlights of my inspiration and striving.

From my early years I was surrounded by people who were deeply concerned with the search of spiritual values, whose

aim in life were the higher values, with all the wonderful vistas that these values unfold. It is the study of philosophy, the study of the Teachings of such great personalities as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo that constantly provided a living source of inspiration and fulfillment. Comparative philosophies lighting up the great paths of human striving and achievement filled my life with new understanding and approaches. These searches, in turn, brought me in contact with men who have traveled this glorious path long before me, and through them I have seen the hidden corridors of our evolution and life.

All these great Teachings were my greatest inspiration as they provided a powerful and unified direction that remained with me all of my life. Our inner striving toward something more perfect, more beautiful, is that great inner force that will transform us and transform our lives as well. Without that inner flame, one cannot awaken our hidden energies and one cannot rise to a higher plane of realization and experience. This inner striving culminates in the development and activation of certain nerves that are the conductors of subtle energies.

My father and mother, Prof. Nicholas Roerich and Mme. Helena Roerich, were my constant guides, and through them I learned the great values of life

*Continued on page 7*

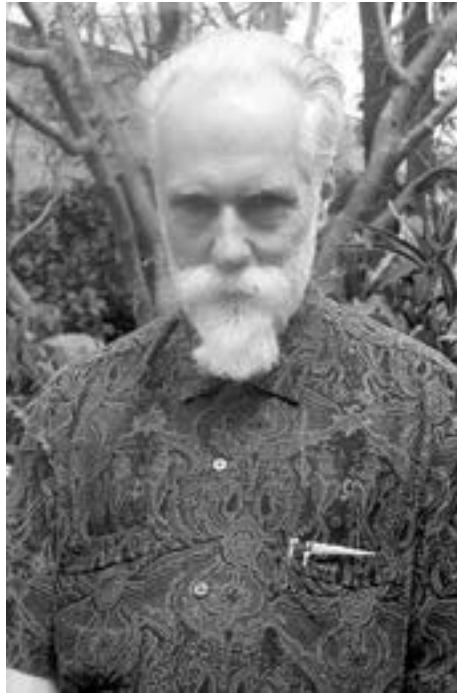
and, through them, made contacts with personages who had advanced far along the great and royal path of self-emancipation.

Among the many experiences as sources of inspiration, I vividly remember a most moving experience when I was a boy of fourteen. It was the memorial service in the underground crypt of two great Russian Saints, conducted by all the recluses and anchorites who came from their retreats on that day. Here in this crypt, around the granite sarcophagi, in their solemn garments of recluses, stood the Elders who have renounced

*“Our inner striving towards something more perfect, more beautiful, is that great inner force which will transform us and transform our lives as well.”*

the world and came out to pray in a most beautiful service to mark the day of the two great saints. Their emaciated, stern, and yet kind faces were hidden under the hoods of the anchorites’ attire, and only their grey beards could be seen, while their thin fingers held long wax candles. What greater experience than to stand with men who have attained sainthood and join them in their prayers during the divine service.

Speaking of art, Rabindranath Tagore said, “In art the person in us sends his question to the Supreme Creator, Who reveals Himself to us in a world of infinite



Svetoslav Roerich, 1980s

beauty across the lifeless world of facts.”

Have you ever experienced the wonderful feeling that fills you when you stand before a great work of art, and when you partake of the wonderful emanations that flow from a great masterpiece? Rembrandt, the great Dutch master, told Leibnitz that the emotions of the artist stay captured in the surface of the painting and flow out upon the onlooker and influence him as a participant of the artist’s creative experience.

And today, as I speak to you, my memory projects before my inner self, the beautiful images and scenes I have seen, the words and music I have heard; and again I live through the same emotions and feelings that have inspired me and have lived within my heart all these years as great experi-

## Networkers Letter

*(continued from page 2)*

sites about the Teaching including the WMEA website: <https://www.wmea-world.org>, perhaps one of our greatest service projects is providing one-on-one education to the prison system throughout the United States.

In closing, Torkom wrote, “The ancients often spoke of rebirth and about a new consciousness. One wonders if rebirth is possible, or if one can really achieve a new consciousness.”<sup>3</sup> It is toward that end that the White Mountain Education Association offers extensive spiritual opportunities to change our own and others’ level of consciousness, and to incorporate new values and interests that will take us into higher levels of beingness, finding us with illumination and an ever-expanding lighted consciousness.

Happy Anniversary, WMEA.

With love,

Joleen Dianne DuBois

President and founder  
White Mountain Education Association, Inc.

<sup>1</sup> *The Subconscious Mind and the Chalice*, 306. Torkom Saraydarian. West Hills, CA: TSG Publishing Foundation, Inc., 1993.

<sup>2</sup> *Consciousness, Vol. 1*. Torkom Saraydarian, 390. Cave Creek, AZ: TSG Publishing Foundation, Inc., 2013

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

Please visit the WMEA website to learn more about our upcoming anniversary and its schedule.

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

Fall classes are currently in session.

Agni Yoga Society International Headquarters:

Agni Yoga Society, Inc.  
319 W 107th St.  
New York, NY 10025  
[www.agniyoga.org](http://www.agniyoga.org)

## FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

“With your entire spirit strive to the light of the future. Psychic energy, which carries us into the supermundane spheres, is accumulated here on Earth, and its best awakener and teacher is the joyous striving into the future, full of illumined labors—as on Earth, so also in the Subtle World. If people could understand that for a pure and aspiring man the very crossing into the Subtle World is the highest joy, the highest exaltation, and a full joining in the beloved labor, then many would strive to attain this joyous and broadened state through a worthy life on Earth.” *Letters of Helena Roerich, Vol. II, 15 March 1938*

“Leave behind all regrets about the past; let us not make the path to the future difficult for ourselves. The very mistakes of the past must not fix attention upon themselves. Striving into the future must be so strong that the light will not grow dim in eyes which are not directed backwards. Let us forsake the past for the sake of the future. One can strive so strongly into the future that in all conditions this blessed eagerness will forever remain. Each striving toward the future is striving toward Brotherhood.” *Brotherhood, verse 487*

“Leave all the past to Us and think only of the future. Let us not take anything useless from the past; let us not burden our consciousness by anything. I, Myself, will put away and will remember all that is valuable! Events propel one into the future. Therefore Hierarchy must be understood as a life belt; so, also, the sign of the Mother of the World may be understood. Do not be disturbed, for I will turn all to usefulness. We shall shout into the ears of the faint-hearted—Hierarchy!!! The Teaching is given at the imperative hour, and one must have the ears of an

## Thoughts on Agni Yoga

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



ass not to hear the thunder. It is useful to rejoice before the victory. Let us rejoice, and thus unite ourselves with the joy of the Lord.” *Hierarchy, verse 348*

“New circumstances will reveal the path to the future. Truth is always the same, but combinations are different, as they depend on the consciousness. So much that is beautiful ends up being destroyed due to ignorance of the temple

*“The Epoch of Maitreya is the Age of the Heart! Only with the heart can you fathom the value of Maitreya’s treasures!”*

of the heart. But let us adamantly strive to be aware of heartfelt warmth, and let us start feeling ourselves to be bearers of this temple. That is how we can cross over the threshold into the New World. How inconsequential are the people who imagine that the New World is not for them. Bodies may differ, but the spirit cannot evade the New World.” *Heart, verse 5*

“The power of the heart overcomes absolutely anything. The heart is able to know the meaning of events that happen far away. The heart is able to soar, thereby strengthening the necessary connections. The heart is able to partake of the distant

worlds. Try this simply by transmission of the will of the brain, and you will perceive what is different about the will of the heart. The Epoch of Maitreya is the Age of the Heart! Only with the heart can you fathom the value of Maitreya’s treasures! Only with the heart can you understand how greatly all accumulations and all straight-knowledge are needed for the future.” *Heart, verse 74*

“It is difficult to wipe away an evil act. You would have to build on so many extra stories and towers to muffle the howling of a vicious prisoner who tries again and again to get through any door that is not shut all the way. Ask people about how they are relentlessly pursued not only by their evil thoughts and deeds but also by their unsuccessful ones. The path of life is covered with the marks of actions that manifest as indelible spots; that is why it is wise to strive into the future. In flight to the future there is no time to get spots on the white wings.” *Heart, verse 82*

“Strive into the future. People should look upon the present time as a bridge across a raging current. There is no need to tether the consciousness to all sorts of conditions full of twists and turns—such stipulations are no more than twigs and stones on the bridge. Human misfortunes are usually just due to delays caused by attention being paid to momentary jolts, which ought to be avoided. Every leader strives to avoid being delayed.” *Heart, verse 385*



## TRANSLATIONS

JANUARY 29, 2001

Dear —,

When the Roerichs formed their first real study group in New York, some of the members of the group were Russian-born speakers, and others were native English speakers. The Roerichs were receiving the material and writing it down in Russian, so immediately there must have been on-the-spot translations going on. The first book, *The Call*, comprises actual material received during the sessions of the first group. Max says the books were edited selections from Helena Roerich's notebooks, and that is correct. When it was decided to publish the books in English translation for global use (it was considered that the Russian would be for Russians), Helena Roerich was personally involved in supervising and approving the work. She made many suggestions and changes, but the basic translation work was done by at least two members of the group. One, Frances Grant, was an accomplished journalist and a poet, and she was given the task of taking the translated text, and, as she used to say, she was instructed to make it beautiful. So I'd say that what you are responding to is to a great extent Frances's sometimes inspired wording. She was told to feel free enough to express the thoughts without being slavish to the precise translation of every word. (This is not written down anywhere, as far as I know, but she did tell me these things.) The beauty of the text was to carry the meaning into the hearts of the readers far more effectively than would a literal translation. But Helena Roerich kept an eye on the process, so Frances could not have been

allowed to go too far afield. In addition, Helena Roerich made changes: she took out things and added things from the notebooks, things that would be appropriate and relevant to the intended international (but mainly Western) reader.

Sorry to be so long-winded about it, but I hope it helps.

Daniel

JANUARY 30, 2001

Dear —,

You answered my unwritten question: What are the different English words used? As a translator, I sometimes find it so difficult to choose the "right" word, and we here have come to a rather solid principle, to determine what the Russian sentence means and is trying to impart, and then to put that in clear English. Of course, if a statement is deep and therefore obscure, one has to avoid making it shallow and clear.

Lest discussions like this cause uncertainty in the minds of those who study the English-language books (and that would be almost everyone here, except for those few who participate in both the English and Russian sections), it would be good if some bilingual readers reassure them that they are studying valid texts. For myself, I believe that this group can more profitably

## Conversations with Daniel Entin

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



devote energy to the discussion of meaning and ideas.

JANUARY 30, 2001

Dear —,

I do know from the experience we have in our own (physical) discussion group that whenever a Russian member objects to a word in English and turns the discussion from one of meaning into one of textual analysis, the others in the group tend to get nervous. They sometimes feel that the discussion has been pulled off track, by one objector, and onto a tangential path. But also, they want to study the books with some trust that what they are working with is dependable and authoritative, and such discussions, though interesting to the more scholarly, simply cause uneasiness in them. That would be normal. Generally speaking, the members of our group are not scholars, they are spiritual aspirants.

Having confidence in the books does not mean the books cannot be improved. (There are many around the world who disagree with even that; they believe that the first editions in the English, as in the Russian, were "approved" from the Highest Source, and therefore neither jot nor tittle can be changed.) All I need do, to gain some sense of

*Continued on page 10*

perspective about that, is to go to the nearest large bookshop and lay my eyes on the dozens, even hundreds, of Bible variants. But I've seen many people at those Bible shelves throw up their hands, unable to decide on a trustworthy text. Of course, at their core the texts are all trustworthy if they were produced by individuals or committees of high skill and high purpose. But also, of course, if the Bibles are all dependable, even in their variety, then there is no point in haggling over the differences between them.

So, yes, anyone can make changes, or suggest other ways of expressing things, and can even produce competing editions. Some people applaud us when we produce a new edition, and others condemn us. So whether those other ways make them better is always arguable. No one can ever claim to have found the "best" word, the "best" translation, the "best" way to express an idea. What I think is better on a Tuesday may look utterly useless to me on a Thursday. When going through more and more drafts of a new translation, a halt must be declared because one never reaches a proofreading that looks just right.

There is another aspect to consider. After so many years of working on translations, I am convinced that it takes two to do really good work—a native speaker in the source language and a native speaker in the language of the translation. There are many nuances that can never, unless one is a Nabokov, be grasped by a non-native speaker, nuances that do not appear in dictionaries. Maybe some here will disagree with that, but decades of dealing with texts have persuaded me that it is the best way to work.

I cannot say that I agree that the notebooks that you have in hand are the definitive texts. People who lived with Helena Roerich in Kalimpong have tes-

tified that she copied and recopied her notebooks, adding things, removing things, changing things. So you may have a notebook that is not identical to one held by someone else, at the Roerich Centre in Moscow, for example. And there they have not only the notebooks but the less meticulously written notebooks that preceded those, and even the many scraps of paper that were the very first jottings. So what you have is perhaps two generations removed from the first notes. And those different generations do not nec-

*"No one can ever claim to have found the 'best' word, the 'best' translation, the 'best' way to express an idea. What I think is better on a Tuesday may look utterly useless to me on a Thursday."*

essarily match, textually. Knowing that gives one pause and makes it hard to have definitive ideas about all this.

One more thing, since I seem to be sleepless and flowing along this stream of thought: I fail to see why an earlier variant is more authoritative than a later one. Musicologists and literary scholars argue all the time about whether the first idea or the last variant of a work is the definitive one. We know that Helena Roerich read the early editions of the books in both Russian and in English. In Moscow, they have her own copies of the books, and I have

seen (they also have published facsimiles) the many pages in the books whose margins are filled with corrections and changes, additions and deletions. Are those more authoritative? They are perhaps her final thoughts about those paragraphs.

All that I am pointing out simply confirms to me my feeling that this can never be a formulaic process. All the variants are valuable. If any of us is capable of being helped to enlightenment by these books, then any edition will do the job. If any one of us is not capable of growing, no volume, no matter how authoritative, will be of use.

Sorry to be so long-winded. That's a sign of age, for me. Wordiness, and being more blunt. I realize that I have been offending more people lately, whereas years ago I put much effort into never offending anyone. Age means less time ahead, and bluntness clears away a lot of underbrush. I know that in the last couple of weeks I have offended at least one person in this group, and for that I apologize.

JANUARY 31, 2001

Dear —,

God bless you for your sane, balanced, and rational reply. Oil on troubled waters. Actually, I agree with all you say. If the manifoldness of existence is praised in every page of the Teaching, we must value it in all aspects of our lives too—including the ways in which we contribute to these discussions.

When we here at the museum are asked by people who are translating into other languages (there are now about fifteen into which the Teaching has been, or is being, translated), I always encourage them to keep the Russian and English side by side, if possible. But it has always been

*Continued on page 11*

### Conversations with Daniel Entin

(continued from page 10)

the practice to give deference to the English at those times when it is clear that things have been taken out or added, because only EI ever had the right to do that. The many references to Russia and Russians were for the Russian people, apparently, and the English was intended to be for everyone else. In the book *Infinity*, so much was added, and it was not to be done stealthily; so there are many horizontal lines separating what was older and what was new.

These days, some of the Russian editions have added in Russian what was previously added in English, plus even more, without removing what was taken out by EI for the English. So the Russian may be more complete in those editions, but perhaps not as intended by EI for either language.

Some of the greatest writers and translators have been in despair about the inadequacies of whatever language they were translating to. I remember Nabokov's illuminating discussion of the many words that existed for the ways in which upper-class Russian women in the nineteenth century used various movements of their eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows to express things that they were not permitted—as the well-bred, subordinate sex—to utter in polite company. Tolstoy used all these words, richly, in *War and Peace*. And in this country, where women could more readily speak out, even in those days, such ocular diversions were not needed, and thus there were no words for them. Thus, *War and Peace* was, in that small way, the poorer.

I'm sure it works in the other direction, too. Shakespeare created words, used words, in ways that no Russian

translator could emulate, and the greatest of Russian translators had to use their own creativity and imagination to come up with expressions of equivalent quality. But it's not Shakespeare, either.

Those problems will never go away. Nor should they. That is why we at the museum have settled on a principle of translation that we believe works for the task, one that liberates us from

*“If we take each statement in the Russian, try to understand it as fully as possible, then express it in the best English we can, we have fulfilled our duty to the text.”*

the excessive confinement of a slavish attention to each word. If we take each statement in the Russian, try to understand it as fully as possible, then express it in the best English we can, we have fulfilled our duty to the text. Others who prefer more literal approaches will howl in anger at this. That, too, is a battle that has gone on forever, in all literary circles.

Now, regarding the specific passage that has been pulled about here, as I wrote to — privately, I agree that “affirmation” is often an inadequate word, and often overused in the English, even without taking the Russian into account. But “establishment” does not work right either. If the Russian word *utverzheniye* has different flavors of meaning, different words

can be used to express it. But the word, or phrase, chosen in each case must be true to the intended meaning in that context, and it will sometimes have to go somewhat afield from the narrower definitions of the word itself. That can be necessary if understandability and clarity demand it.

The Teaching in English is filled with ambiguities. The word “affirmation” is one of those. Though its base comes from “to strengthen,” “to make firm,” the word does not mean that. Roots can go quite a distance from their origins in English, maybe more than in Russian, where the root of a word tells us a lot. The word “affirmation” can mean a declaration of faith or belief, or a confirmation (same root) or assertion of the truth of something. What is firm is the declaration itself. If the Russian in some case does not imply a declaration but rather an acceptance, an embracing, an assimilating, as suggested, then “affirmation” is not the best word, and something else must be chosen.

Now I am succumbing to the pleasure of discussing these things. Whether the time and energy put into it produces a commensurate result is debatable. Academics have their own pleasures. Time for bed.

#### SUNDAY WEBINAR REGISTRATION

<https://wmea-world.org/live.html>

#### WHITE MOUNTAIN WEBSITE

<https://wmea-world.org>

#### SUNDAY LECTURES

<https://youtube.com/wmeaworld/videos>

#### JOLEEN'S BLOG

<https://www.wmea-world.org/blog>

#### AGNI YOGA LIVING ETHICS COMMUNITY

<https://facebook.com/groups/Agni.Yoga.Living.Ethics.Community/>

#### ZODIAC NEWSLETTER

[https://www.wmea-world.org/zodiac\\_newsletter.html](https://www.wmea-world.org/zodiac_newsletter.html)

## S U B S C R I P T I O N   F O R M

New Subscription/  
Annual subscription donation: \$17

Subscription renewal  
(Effective each December)

Donation  
(other) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete form and mail to:**

White Mountain Education Association  
P.O. Box 11975  
Prescott, AZ 86304

Change of Address

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

- - - - - PLEASE CLIP AND MAIL - - - - -

The White Mountain Education Association  
is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization.  
Contributions to help support the  
publishing and printing of  
*Agni Yoga Quarterly*  
are tax exempt.

White Mountain Education Association  
is now publishing  
*Agni Yoga Quarterly*  
on the Internet.  
Look for it on the World Wide Web  
<https://www.wmea-world.org>

If you are in the following areas, you are welcome to call for information about the  
local White Mountain Study Group:

In Sarasota, Florida  
(941) 925-0549

In Longmont, Colorado  
(303) 651-1908

In Puerto Rico  
(787) 649-3817

In Marysville, Ohio  
(937) 642-5910

**White Mountain Education Association**  
**P.O. Box 11975**  
**Prescott, Arizona 86304**