

LIFE

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ourselves and walk with our heads high if we do the best we can with our abilities, and if we try to be worthy of the spark of divinity each one of us possesses." This quotation means "being at least as charitable to another – our 'neighbor' – as we are to ourselves... It is charity in thought, word and deed. It is understanding and tenderness and compassion. It is service to others without thought of reward." *Spiritual Light* also describes loves that are "detrimental. The love of a miser for gold and other possessions... The love for adulation... The love for power, to the extent of abandoning principles in order to obtain or preserve it... The real glory comes to those who seek to serve others, humbly and selflessly, with no thought of glory, and with no thought of reward, material or spiritual... They are reaching, or have reached, 'the kingdom.'

I described above a few points from 150 introductory pages presenting the philosophy and background of *Spiritual Light* (deluxe version.) Readers, you will have 650 more pages to peruse and read to find the remaining treasures that await you in the rest of this book. I can assure you that I would not have recommended this book to you unless I had read and profited from reading every page. Each one of you will find important information and personal guidance within your copy of the book. Go to the website www.TheUSB.com to purchase the book. You can also sign up to become a member of the USB on the website.

Spiritual Light provides information pertinent to current problems of modern life. In my previous articles you've seen me write about issues such as wars, corporate control of the media, need for protection of wildlife and our natural environment as well as psychological problems. Although *Spiritual Light* was originally composed some years ago, these problems have been intensifying. "One factor is the decline in the caliber of those appointed to positions of authority. Another factor is the cynical betrayal of campaign platforms and promises by elected officeholders. In too many places, the 'ins' take advantage of those who placed them there... and are willing to feed the rest of the world while some of their own people starve." Politicians and others "who fail to exert every effort to keep promises freely made... may think they can 'get away with it'... incur a debt that must be paid. It is a lesson that many individuals and many nations have not yet learned, but will eventually learn... A promise made should be a promise kept." Another issue: "It is sad to see people... deliberately doing as little as possible to get as much as possible... Pleasure and excitement, which inevitably cloy, are preferred to visions and ideals of love and service to others. These character deficiencies are encouraged by many leaders... who, for the sake of votes, promise all things to all people." *Spiritual Light* also tells us that "understanding, tolerance, and compassion should accompany... the sincerest motives. Much of history's long chronicle of bloodshed, including the slaughter of entire populations, lies at the door of those who were genuinely sincere in their beliefs... They benefit humanity only when they are attended by a profound regard for the life and rights of others." Also pointed out is "Slavery to Empty Things... Examples are of the custom of immediately and blindly following every whim of 'fashion'... Behind almost every incidence of such voluntary slavery lies snobbery, and an inner sense of insecurity, immaturity, and incompleteness." A related issue: "It is too common to confuse desires with needs... The individual who strives full-time to acquire far more material possessions than he or she will ever need, frequently becomes a slave to them, instead of their master." *Spiritual Light* tells us, "it

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is surprising how many 'successful' people attribute their success to themselves alone, little aware of the individuals, usually unseen and unknown to them, who augmented their endeavors... They can best show their gratitude to God not by endless recitals of God's worth, but by befriending those in need, offering a hand when others find the road too long or the load too heavy." You will also find information about revenge and bitterness, pride, self-pity, rage, cheerfulness, sports and sporting behavior, instant fulfillment, greed, and other important topics in this second "Wordly" part of the book.

Spiritual Light brings new understanding to practices and principles thought to be moral but which actually have been misinterpreted to the detriment of humanity. I'll discuss three of these issues here. "Many of the words attributed to great teachers of the past are words they could not possibly have spoken, enlightened as they were, but words ascribed to them by others... Among such ascribed teachings are the injunctions to resist not evil but to turn the other cheek and to forgive 'until seventy times seven' the sins committed against us... If we imagine we gain in spirituality by meekly submitting to attack or repeated wrongs, we need wise counsel... We have emphasized that while we can overlook wrongs, or cease to hold them against another, it is not in our power to forgive anyone... As for not resisting evil, the record shows that evil waxes fatter and more powerful the longer it is unopposed. And if there is one lesson history teaches, it is the folly of appeasement." Another issue concerns tithing. "Tithing is a custom purely created by humans, one established mainly for the benefit of organizations that presume to speak for God, and, in their presumption, imagine they are entitled to respect and tribute. Tithing has almost always been a measure designed to secure a greater hold on the people... Tithing often places the heaviest burden on those who can least afford it... Tithing... Is frequently made with the expectation of material or spiritual return... But no one can buy a place in the sun spiritually, either for oneself or others, and vain are all gifts of any sort made with the purpose of securing spiritual blessings."

Another surprise to some is the reasoned approach to astrology and horoscopes in section 10.2 casting doubt on predictions affecting individual lives and which can be especially harmful when "used as a vehicle for prophecy" or people "abdicate their own judgment and initiative." "We ourselves are responsible for what we say, think and do; that we are the product of all that we have been; and that we are our own saviors. For ourselves, we subscribe to the words of Shakespeare's Cassius, 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.'"

I hope, not my articles by themselves, but the beautiful truth of this book will lead you to choose *Spiritual Light* to guide you in your continued choices about the type of life YOU choose to lead.

Need Advice? Send questions to BettyPhillips@BellSouth.net or 466 Eagle Point Road, Pittsboro 27312. Questions can be anonymous. Visit www.bettyphillipspsychology.com.

Revival

BY PATTY COLE

Whose feet doesn't shake when honeysuckle
explodes into sweet melodies, and red bud
pushes us all toward a mountain's lime green peak.
These things make us mad for what lies outside
our front door, and we have two choices:
Sit and watch or get up and dance.

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Tree Bark

BY LEWIS LIPSITZ

I wondered about talking to the trees,
especially the ones with rough bark.
I imagined they were listening and
somehow the bark expressed their feelings.
I talked to an apple tree for about
two years when I was small and
my parents had forgotten me.
It said: "Don't wither."

A Letter to the Vietnam Memorial

(The following is my contribution to a letter writing campaign initiated by Veterans For Peace to deliver reflections to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC this coming Memorial Day, May 25. Anyone interested in sharing expressions of how the war affected them personally may submit a letter to Veterans For Peace, 409 Ferguson Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, or email them to vncom50@gmail.com.)

Dear Comrades,

October 21, 1967, my first visit to Washington DC, and my first organized protest of the American War in Vietnam. My friend Bill and I had driven all night from Ann Arbor, Michigan, and arrived at dawn to see a rosy sun rising above the monuments and monumental architecture of the Capitol. An estimated 100,000 people marched on the Pentagon that day. Bill and I, sleepless as we were, got pressed into service as marshals, walking alongside the mostly young college kids.

Later in the afternoon, I found myself on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in conversation with a pro-war Vietnam vet. I was a smart-ass, know-it-all college punk, with a monopoly on the truth. He finally tired of arguing with me. He turned his back, and left me with these words: "If you haven't been there, you don't know what you're talking about!"

His words haunted me. By March, 1968, I dropped out of college and found a ride to San Francisco in search of a berth on a merchant ship bound for Vietnam. By a stroke of luck, we stopped for gas somewhere in the middle of Indiana just in time to see President Lyndon Johnson's face on the screen of a small black and white TV in the gas station. It was March 31, and Johnson declared that he would not seek reelection as president. The Vietnam War had scuttled his presidency, and it was widely anticipated that his vice president, Hubert Humphrey, would run for the presidency as a peace candidate. The four of us on that all-night ride from Ann Arbor to Kansas City were euphoric at the prospect of ending the war.

We woke up in Las Vegas a few days later, to see the headlines that Martin Luther King Jr. had been shot down in Memphis. It was April 4, exactly a year after his historic speech "Beyond Vietnam" delivered in New York City's Riverside Church. Two months later, on June 5, Bobby Kennedy was gunned down after winning the California Democratic presidential primary. The two assassinations shattered the optimism that had followed President Johnson's speech, and we sank into a deep depression.

The SS Whittier Victory was a vintage WW II supply ship pulled out of mothballs and crewed by a motley assortment of seasoned sailors and inexperienced ordinary deck hands like myself. We made a coastwise run to take on cargo, then sailed from San Francisco. We crossed the Pacific in 21 days. I stood the 4-8 watch, which meant relieving the bow lookout at 4 a.m., standing watch until dawn, then again from dusk to 20 bells (8 p.m.). One night the lookout was changed from the bow to the flying bridge, because the entire forward deck had been freshly oiled. Sometime around dusk the ship's engines cut out. In place of the low rumble and vibration of a ship under way, there was a quiet and a sense of wallowing, bobbing like a cork, without direction. Before long our engines started and we were again on our way.

We made Qui Nhon, a port city about half way between Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) and the demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and the crew was given shore leave.

I was struck by the manor of the US soldier at the gate, brandishing his automatic weapon with a stagger or swagger of someone stoned or drunk. His slurred speech was deep south, as was the pigeon English of the Vietnamese prostitutes who populated the bars just outside the gates of the military base. The entire economy of Qui Nhon appeared to be in the service of the US military occupation. I'm reminded that of an estimated 4.5 million refugees created by the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, as many as 50,000 displaced Iraqi women and girls were forced into prostitution in order to feed their families.

One brothel nearest the post provided packs of machine rolled marijuana cigarettes.

The cruise back home was a grim and lonely affair for this 21-year-old sailor. We were 28 days steaming from Vietnam to Panama. Twenty-eight days contemplating the destruction my country was inflicting on a poor Asian nation, two days in the canal, and another five days to cross the Gulf of Mexico to New Orleans, the Whittier Victory's home port. After my flight back to Michigan, I resumed my anti-war protests with greater fervor.

In January, 1970, I refused induction into the army of Richard Nixon and became a fugitive from justice until I surrendered to the US Attorney in Detroit in January, 1975. After two years of Reconciliation Service in Michigan and North Carolina, I received a letter from the Director of Selective Service indicating that my commitment had been fulfilled and the federal indictment against me dismissed.

It has been 47 years since I set foot on Vietnamese soil, and 2015 finds me working on campaigns for an honest commemoration of the American War in Vietnam and ending the current cascade of wars launched by the US in this young century. Veterans For Peace are encouraging those affected by the Vietnam War to write a letter in memory of the names of the US KIA as well as those unnamed Vietnamese victims. Letters can be sent to 409 Ferguson Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27516 or emailed to vncom50@gmail.com, and will be collected and posted by Memorial Day, May 25, 2015. (More info at www.vietnamfulldisclosure.org.)

For those who want to work to end our current wars and prevent future ones, you can support Sam's Ride for Peace. Sam Winstead is an 89 year-old WW II Marine Corps vet and retired farmer from Person County, NC. On May 9, Sam will launch his Fourth Annual Ride for Peace from Raleigh, NC to Washington DC. See <http://igg.me/at/worldpeacechallenge> for details.

Sincerely,
John Heuer