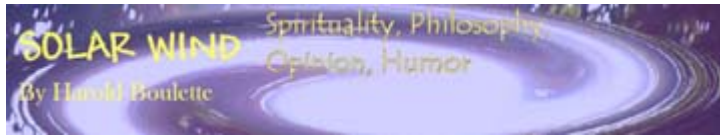


"The Importance of Symbols and Understanding Them"



"In a sense one has to pass beyond the 'symbols' used in religion to the reality that it represents. The symbols contain and convey something of the reality that they signify. The symbols are therefore to be integrated into one's spirituality as one moves toward greater realization of the truth, since they are not a 'false' reality, merely an attempt at representing the true reality. The symbols of a religion are not to be regarded as the religion itself, but to be transcended in order to discover why the religion exists."

~Dion A Forster

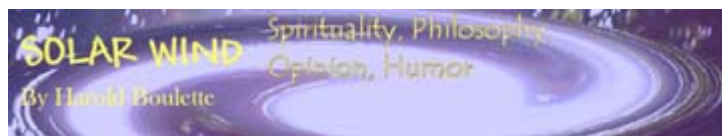
"Symbols are important in religion and spiritual schools because anyone can understand them. No matter what language people speak, no matter if they are illiterate, they can understand symbols."

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“Tools are Tools”



“Fasts and vigils, the study of Scripture, renouncing possessions and everything worldly are not in themselves perfection, as we have said; they are its tools. For perfection is not to be found in them; it is acquired through them. It is useless, therefore, to boast of our fasting, vigils, poverty and reading of Scripture when we have not achieved the love of God and our fellow man. Whoever has achieved love has God within himself and his intellect is always with God.” ~The Philokalia

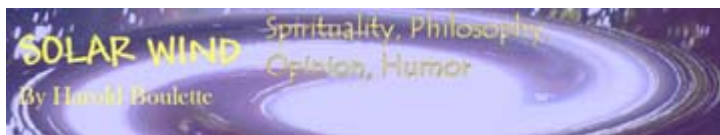
“Just as some people will treat a national flag as a thing of worship, some people who consider themselves spiritual or religious think they are being holy when they act as if the tools used for spiritual growth are themselves divine. We especially see this in many Christians who treat the Bible as if it is actually God rather than simply a book about God and his prophets. Many Muslims act the same with the Koran, even threatening death to those who deface or destroy a copy of it, a book, as if it were indeed God and therefore of more value than a human life.”

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“The Soul Owner’s Manual”



1. **Awakening**

When you arrive on the physical plane of existence, your soul is in a state that is described as inactive, comatose, egg-like, etc. It needs to be awakened before it can truly function, grow, and guide your life. Sadly, the vast majority of people never bother to do this, either because they don’t believe they have a soul, or they believe that it will awaken on its own without any effort on their part. This simply does not happen. You do have to make an effort to awaken the soul, although you cannot do it on your own. The only one who can truly awaken the soul is God, but he will not do so unless you do your part to prepare for that awakening. If you do follow the practices that only a good spiritual teachers can recommend, then God will send a special energy into the soul to awaken it and make it conscious. This is what is really meant by being reborn.

2. **Nourishing**

Once awakened, the soul and spirit need to be nourished and cared for just as the physical body and mind do. The

method is different, however, because the nature of the spirit and soul is different than the nature of the material body and the brain-mind. We feed the physical body and brain by consuming animals and/or plants. We feed the spirit and soul with spiritual Light. The feeding of the physical body is not a process that just happens on its own. We need to seek nourishment for it. The same is true of the spirit and soul. We need to seek out the spiritual frequencies of Light that nourish them. Those frequencies are found primarily in the spiritual sun, but they will simply flow through us if we do not attune to them. And this needs to be regularly, not just once or twice a year.

3. **Cleansing**

Just as the physical body and mind need to be cleaned periodically, both internally and externally, the soul and spirit need the same. This cleansing of the spirit and soul is done partly on a mental level by visualizing and imagining that negativity and all forms of evil are being cleaned out of us. Sometimes we need to stimulate this process on the physical level by fasting and other forms of self-sacrifice. And when you bathe or shower, tell yourself you are cleansing your mind and spirit as well.

4. **Educating**

You know that your brain/mind needs to be educated, but your body also needs to learn. When you are a baby, your movements are awkward and uncoordinated but after a while they get better as your brain gets better at controlling our movements. Your soul needs to be educated as well, but fortunately if you follow the recommendations for nourishing, you will be educating your soul at the same time because spiritual Light contains embedded information that we call Information Factors. While reading spiritual books is helpful, the most important thing is to take in that spiritual Light with its Information Factors which are never lies and

never just opinions, but always truth.

5. **Sharing**

Once you have achieved a certain degree of enlightenment and filled your spirit with the spiritual Light, you must share that Light with others who have not yet learned to get it directly. You are also obligated to teach others so they can grow spiritually as well. If you fail to do this, you will stop growing spiritually.

< [Read the article posted online September 14, 2013 at Solar Wind.](#) >

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Moab Sunrise



Consociate Paul Schmittendorf taking in the sunrise at North Window in Arches National Park, Moab Utah PHT0: Paul Schmittendorf

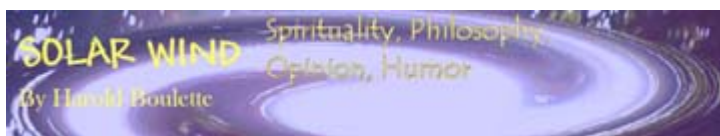
Academy Consociate Paul Schmittendorf sent us this photo from his trip on the way to Reno to attend the 2013 Convocation. The photo was taken on the morning of Saturday, September 28, 2013 at the North Window in Arches National Park, Moab Utah. Paul told us “needless to say, it was a pretty magical place to see the sun rise.”

For those of you who don't recognize Paul as the minute human being in the picture above, we are including the close up below to help you recognize him.



Paul
Schmittendorf
taking in
sunrise at
Moab (Detail)

“Self-Control for Spiritual Growth”



“A clear rule for self-control handed down by the Fathers in this: stop eating while still hungry and do not continue until you are satisfied. When the Apostle said ‘Make no provision to fulfill the desires of the flesh’, he was not forbidding us to provide for the needs of life, he was warning us against self-indulgence. ... If we avoid avarice not only by having no money,

but also by not wanting to have any, this leads us toward purity of soul. Freedom from anger, from dejection, self-esteem and pride also contributes to purity of soul in general.” ~The Philokalia

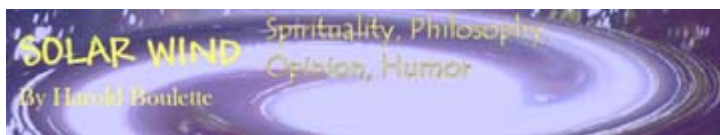
“Self-control isn’t about denying the needs of the body and mind, but rather denying the whims and desires. We all practice self-control to some degree, but if we are pursuing a spiritual path, it is important that we control our desires and whims even more.”

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“It Takes Practice”



“We have already agreed that, if we wish to grasp the real character of spiritual life, we must avoid the temptation to look at it as merely a historic subject. If it is what it

claims to be, it is a form of eternal life, as constant, as accessible to us here and now, as in any so-called age of faith: therefore of actual and present importance, or else not at all. This is why I think that the approach to it through philosophy and psychology is so much to be preferred to the approach through pure history." ~Evelyn Underhill

Of course it is useful to the spiritual student to study the history of spirituality and religion, but that alone is not enough to cause spiritual growth or lead to true enlightenment. If your goal is to become wealthy, just studying the history of wealth or reading the biographies of wealthy people will not make you wealthy. You need to do certain things to become wealthy, not just read about it. You need to practice a great deal to become an Olympic athlete, not just read about the history of the Olympics.

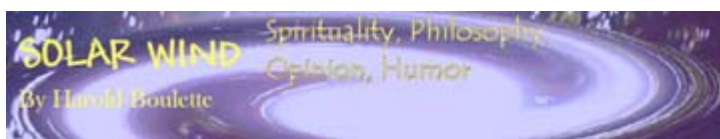
This is even truer with spiritual studies than with other disciplines for the simple reason that only the basic spiritual studies and techniques are ever written into books. The more advanced teachings are not written down, or are hidden in cryptic language that requires knowledge of the interpretation key to understand much like an encrypted file on a modern computer cannot be read unless you have the decryption key that will unscramble it. So much of the advance spiritual training must come verbally from a spiritual teacher who has that knowledge.

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“Connecting With the Divine”



“Samadhi, in the Yoga tradition, is the supreme state of enlightenment, or God realization. Living in samadhi is a choice, but it is a mutually reciprocated choice. When we choose the Divine above all else, the Divine returns the gesture. All the great mystics have demonstrated this level of connectedness, ...

I was given a powerful experience of the Divine, almost a revelation. And yet, in the end, I chose not to live full time in Samadhi. There were many reasons for this choice, and the circumstances surrounding it were complex, but ultimately I made the choice because, as I can see in retrospect, I lacked the maturity to handle it. I desired the experience and was granted it, but, in Hindu terms, karmic impressions of previously crystallized ego structures remained to be worked through.” ~Russill Paul

“The supreme state of enlightenment or God realization in the Yoga tradition? But isn’t Yoga an exercise system? No, it isn’t. That is just a small part of what real yoga is and by

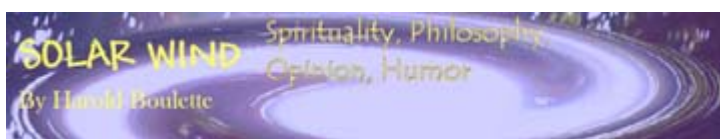
itself is about as useful and meaningful as a car with one wheel.”

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“More on Matter and Spirit”



“The ideas of some of our schoolmen about matter are, from the kabalistic standing-point, in many ways erroneous. Hartmann calls their views ‘an instinctual prejudice.’ ... The visible effects of matter are but the effects of force. He concludes thereby, that that which is now called matter is nothing but the aggregation of atomic forces... That they [scientists] know nothing whatever of matter, they deify it. Every new phenomena which they find themselves unable to explain, is triturated,

compounded into incense, and burned on the altar of the goddess who patronizes modern scientists.” ~H. P. Blavatsky

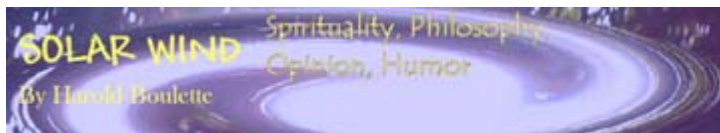
“Some of what Blavatsky wrote here several decades ago is no longer completely true, but it still remains a valid complaint. Most scientists, with the exception of the quantum physicists, don’t understand matter anywhere near as much as they think they do.”

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“The Future of Christianity”



“A Christian of the future will be a mystic or he or she will not exist at all.” ~Karl Rahner, a Catholic Theologian

“This statement serves as a poignant reminder that doctrinal

accuracy alone (ie., believing the 'right things') will never secure the survival of the Christian faith. The truth that Rahner summed up so succinctly is of course that there can be no expression of the mystery of God if there is no experience of the mysterious God. However, there is one further point that needs to be made, that is that there can be no experience of God if there is no mystical approach to the mystery of God." ~Dion A. Forster

"In other words, reading about God does not bring about enlightenment anymore than reading financial books makes you wealthy or reading diet books makes you lose weight. Yet we have many Christians today who worship the Bible as if it were God rather than a book about God."

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a small poem



PH0T0: Matthew Madonna

Waves of goodness
Know your truth
Feel grateful
In your youth

Strength not power
Brave and bold
From this day
Until you're old

Just say yes
Witness wow
Love yourself
The time is now

Now's the time
Vibration raising
You are special
Plus amazing

That's not all
You're precious too
Literally awesome
Because you're you

Say your prayers

With intention
Take deep breaths
Release your tension

If you believe
It's all good
It likely is
So you likely should

by Matthew Madonna