



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens

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## “AWAKE and READY”

© by the Reverend John T. Crestwell

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At the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens, GA

### Centering Thoughts

*When all the people on this earth know deep inside their precious worth;  
When every single soul is free we'll earn the name humanity.* Betsy Jo Angebrannt

### Reading

From the *Tao Te Ching*

9     Fill your bowl to the brim  
       and it will spill.  
       Keep sharpening your knife  
       and it will blunt.  
       Chase after money and security  
       and your heart will never unclench.  
       Care about people's approval  
       and you will be their prisoner.

Do your work, then step back.  
The only path to serenity.

10    Can you coax your mind from its wandering  
       and keep to the original oneness?  
       Can you let your body become  
       supple as a newborn child's?  
       Can you cleanse your inner vision  
       until you see nothing but the light?  
       Can you love people and lead them  
       without imposing your will?

Can you deal with the most vital matters  
by letting events take their course?  
Can you step back from you own mind  
and thus understand all things?

Giving birth and nourishing,  
having without possessing,  
acting with no expectations,  
leading and not trying to control:  
this is the supreme virtue.

## Sermon

Are you AWAKE and ready? Ready for what? Are you ready to know what AWAKE means? Actualize your Wisdom, Awaken to your Karma and Engage the process. In essence: learn your lesson(s).

What I've learned is that we ALL have lessons to learn. One lesson: there are no mistakes only lessons. Another: we are works in process. And another one: we are where we are supposed to be until we learn what we are supposed to learn. I've also learned: "The arc of the moral universe is long but bends toward justice." These are the words of the UU Theodore Parker. Here is the full quote that Martin Luther King, Jr. used very often:

"I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight, I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice." – *speech by T. Parker delivered in the hall of the State house, before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Convention, on Friday night, January 29, 1858*

John Wesley might agree with Parker. The founder of Methodism believed that humans were moving toward perfection through Jesus Christ.

Muslims, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others speak of an earthly paradise; Buddhists and Hindus speak of Nirvana; Jews speak of the Kingdom of God on earth. Martin King, Gandhi and others believed in the beloved community; a time when love would prevail. **There is something in all of us that needs to hope for a better time; something that tells us "it will be okay." This hope has led to transformation of many people, places and things. Believing things will get better changes outcomes.**

Cartoons like the Jetsons (a space-aged modern family); shows like Star Trek; and other sci-fi movies remind us of humanity's upward thrust. I grew up watching the Jetson's—loved the automation and electronics. The animators pretty closely predicted what we'd be using today. The microwave, video-calls, moving sidewalks, and flying cars (forthcoming) were all on the Jetson's first. I also like Star Trek too—"beam me up Scotty"—the crew traveled the universe with a diverse group of beings from many places all together with the mission "to explore strange new worlds." Many of the things in the Jetson's have become reality, and who's to say that we are not moving toward the Star Trek reality in the centuries to come? Sci-fi fantasy? I don't think so... I'm hoping to share with you today my understanding of the trajectory of the human race. Where are we/you are going?

It starts with understanding that everything is growing, expanding, evolving and resolving. Even our planet, sun and galaxy are spinning and moving onward and outward. We are it and it is us. If the universe constantly expands, we too constantly expand. Getting this is key to understanding why you and I are constantly in flux. There is no such thing as "unchanging". Every moment we are moving and changing and rearranging. This is the cosmic dance. Get this and you get life. Things are becoming, unbecoming and becoming again. That is the dance. It is eternal.

When you really get this it give you pause. There is something about life that reminds us that there is something BIGGER going on. There is something about life that shows us in the finite and infinite that we “only see through a dim mirror”; that there is more to this life. There is something about this yin/yang universe that informs us, intuitively, that if there is a visible world there can possibly be an invisible world.

Hubble Telescope reminds us of this cosmic dance. This is a telescope, the size of a school bus in space. It’ showing us some amazing pictures of the cosmos. Trillions of stars (SUNS) exist—all with a life-span. A sun is on its own cosmic dance and its planets dance with it as the moon(s) dance with the planets. There is a lot of going on and it is intelligent!

Shows like “The Cosmos” about the cosmic calendar show us that we’ve barely been on this planet. Humans are a late arriving species. We have not even begun to scratch the surface of what we are here to do or even capable of doing.

**EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE! EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE!**

So much beauty and diversity and mystery, that I am humbled. I sometimes say out loud “how great thou art!” “What wondrous love is this, Oh my soul”... Makes me want to say “Holy, holy, holy, author of creation.” I think of the poem “Invictus” that says, “I thank whatever gods may be for my unconquerable soul.” It’s humbling and mystifying—so powerful and awe-inspiring. Deep within me I must admit to you that ---Yes I do believe that humans and that “consciousness” “Awareness” is an ever-evolving thing like all things. Consciousness is matter—invisible matter that recycles and expands toward the evolution of our species. As Unitarian minister James Freeman Clarke said, we are moving “Onward and upward (or outward) forever!” There is really no such thing as up or down so Clarke is really saying that life is a constant progression with ebbs and flows. It’s like the stock market—it goes up and down, crashes sometimes, but ultimately it is going up (or out) forever.

This belief guides my work and my belief system. It allows me to see the good despite the ugliness—we are works in process—despite the anxiety and despair each of us is here on this planet to evolve, grow, and develop our inner-most selves. And that’s why people need to be free to explore; they must have their Maslow hierarchical needs; they must be able to work and get a fair wage because then they can build upon the higher teachings—the higher knowledge that is about expanding the mind/spirit.

I know this to be true not because I read it or was taught it or someone told me these things, rather I believe this because I feel it in my core being, as I contemplate who and what I am—a small speck among trillions of specks.

Religious practices in Hinduism utilizing the chakras also remind us of this upward thrust. The Chakras are 7 energy centers in the body that, when open, allows us to live into our full potential. The higher the Chakra the less physical you become. In fact the highest energy is at the top of the head (the crown chakra) known as the “I am” chakra. You recognize your oneness with Source and with all things, visible and invisible. You are a creator, lover/preserver and destroyer in all of its glory. Thou art that!

When the day comes (and its coming) where humans are able to wear their crowns, metaphorically speaking; when we know that we are ALL kings and queens--worthy of love, compassion and tenderness—then humanity will move to a much higher level of awareness leading to the opening up of ideas, concepts and theories unprecedented in human history.

Think about how much time we spend fighting over resources, all the energy spent building war machines and weapons; think about the wasted money on political campaigns, the money spent on trivial STUFF to make us feel important; think about what we do in this capitalistic and hedonistic culture so we can believe we are beautiful. We are not that evolved as a species. We allow the primitive parts to prevail too often. We are still very, very animal-like in our disposition. Think about how much we overspend on material possessions so we can feel good about ourselves—so we can feel loved—too many base their whole lives on stuff that doesn't matter. All that matters is that we know that we are LOVE—“made by love for love.” That's it. Share this message. Give it away. That's your mission, to tell this good news.

All the things that the powers make us do to fit-in; all the stuff we do to make us feel better about ourselves... It's all lower-consciousness thinking. All of the arguments over same-sex marriage equality, or race, or political parties, it's all lower-being conversations. My life-coach, Dr. Cherie Carter Scott would say “this is humanity operating from an ‘outward-centered reality’, not an inward centered reality.”

She would say something like this. “When human's realize they are “beings” first then we will see a new species emerge.”

This current species operates by the brain and mind and not by its being. The brain is an organ—it is hardware. The mind is software it is a rational interpreter of information. It interprets the data given to it by the brain, but mostly it functions to protect the animal-nature in all of us. It tells us to fear, and run, and kill, and “stay in your place”, and mediocre is okay for you, and “who do you think you are?” It takes this data from many lifetimes of parents and experiences and tells us what we can and cannot do to protect us from hurt, harm or danger. It is our rational passenger.

But then there is the Being. In her book “The New Species: A Vision of the Evolution of the Human Being” Dr. Cherie writes: “The being is the seat of natural knowingness. It tells you the direction to take without fear. It comes as flashes of intuition,” She goes on to say, and I agree, that “being reminds you that you are a work in process, that you can make no mistakes—you can only learn lessons.” Being reminds us that you can love and accept love in return. Dr Cherie says “Being brings peace, and joy, and oneness.” When we are in touch with our being we are able to express our underlying feelings and needs in positive ways that lift up the worth and dignity in ourselves and others. We are emotionally literate and inter-culturally competent.

You want to be happy? Go inward not outward. Develop your being. **Happiness is being oriented, not mind oriented.** Just as worship is being-oriented not mind oriented. So don't get stuck in your head right now. Let go. I know you hear me but FEEL me. We are trying in this life to get in touch with the visible and invisible, the transcendent and transformational—that's an experience not a rational analysis. Being cannot come from interpreting data but from a guttural experience that makes you say “Halleluiah!” “Amen!” “Yes!” and “Thank you!”

We will get unstuck as a people. The glass is half-full not half-empty. “The moral arc of the universe is long but bends toward justice”, wisdom, and love.

If each of us does our part by working on that person in the mirror an evolved humanity, over the next several centuries, will emerge. Those humans will be similar but different from us. They will be human but will not be caught in our current gravitational paradigms. They will have different karma. They will not be repeating the same dream again and again. No. They will have learned the primitive lessons of sharing; taking only what they need. They will live simply and know they are great and one with all things. Current issues like race, classism, and sexual orientation will be laughable. They will say “Why did they spend so much on war when they could have revitalized the planet in one year with a concerted effort to love their fellow man and woman? They will chuckle then go back to their work of creating and exploring strange new worlds. They will meet other beings in the universe, they will travel to other planets, they will have mastered how to shrink time and distance; they will not need to do any of the things we do to self-medicate, they will have very open crown chakras, and these people will be cosmos, and universe creators and explorers. The purpose and reason of it all will come to them. They will know why we are here and the purpose of it all. Death “where then is thy sting?” Death will be accepted and not as prevalent because of scientific breakthroughs. Think about where we are, and where we could go if we believed EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE! We would get out of the MUD and see the STARS!

### **The questions for you:**

- In this incarnation, what are you going to do today to help the new species emerge?
- How can you embrace change as a part of your life?
- How can you become better at recognizing when you are not being guided by your being?
- How can you move beyond the trivial to the transformational, beyond fear to faith, beyond over-rationalization to imagination?
- How can you allow your being/soul-force/spirit to be manifest more often than not? A
- Are you AWAKE and ready?

Thank you for listening this morning. With love and gratitude I say to you, Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection or Discussion**

*See above bulleted points, and here:*

1. How did the new songs you heard resonate with you?
2. How can more UUs embrace more non-traditional music?
3. Do you believe that diversity in music selection is important in worship? Please share why.