



STANDING ON THE SIDE OF

LOVE

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF KERN COUNTY

UniKern 2014

April 2014—Transcendence

A Message from Our Minister

"The mortal limit of the Self was loosed, And passed into the Nameless, as a cloud

Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs

Were strange, not mine — and yet no shade of doubt,

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self

The gain of such large life as match'd with ours

Were Sun to spark — unshadowable in words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world."

— excerpt from The Ancient Sage by Alfred Lord Tennyson

In this poem, Tennyson describes a moment of transcendence that most of us may long for, but never find, or maybe have experienced only once in our lives. I have read other descriptions of such experiences and have had brief moments that passed that felt transcendent to me. I have wondered if those moments were the moments described by poets and theologians alike -- a sort of mystical experience that passes quickly. Perhaps, you too have felt moments when your limbs melted into something.

For Tennyson it was the clouds. It is as if he was lifted up into the sky. I wonder if this could be what heaven truly is -- a transcendent experience in which one feels as if rising above the earth and merging with the sky realm? But Tennyson says it is "as a cloud melts into heaven." He is using the word as to demonstrate that sense of self that is no longer immanent, and thus does not claim that he is sure. And yet he then says that there is no doubt, and it is clear, as to what he may be experiencing. He claims that through the loss of self something larger than life is gained.

In various spiritual practices, this idea of loss of self is the goal. It is a becoming more sage-like and letting go of the material world that many seek when focusing on those practices such as meditation and prayer. Something that can be hard to do as we are surrounded by temptations of acquiring more and more and experiencing less and less. I know I struggle with focusing on more experiences rather than acquiring more material items in my world.

And I have longed for the ability to explain feelings of transcendence when in states of meditation and prayer, but also when I have experienced them unexpectedly out in the world. And I have experienced doubt about what may have occurred and so had a difficult time putting pen to paper when wanting to describe the experience. So I wonder how Tennyson can be so sure that he could commit those feelings to paper?

And I, too, have longed to lose my sense of self so that I gain that which is bigger than myself. I believe I have had such experiences in a state of meditation and prayer. And perhaps such a transcendent experience is truly the experience of the divine presence. But what about those experiences that may feel transcendent as when we are in meditation or prayer, but are clearly not at a moment of solitude and reflection, and may be at a moment of sorrow or suffering or when feeling a sense of chaos? Can transcendence be felt at those times, too?

This month let us dive into our 1st source that informs our Unitarian Universalist faith:

"Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life."

Perhaps in focusing on this source we can learn more about transcendence and find that which many of us may be in search of...

May our individual and collective spirits be renewed this month. May we all experience transcendence in our lives!

Namaste and love,

Summer

"Change does not roll on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent."

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



UUFKC Sanctuary

Worship Leaders

At the UU Fellowship of Kern County we engage in shared ministry. Our minister, Summer Albayati-Krikeche, is in the pulpit two Sundays each month. On other Sundays our pulpit is filled by a guest minister, a member of the congregation, or someone from the local community. A few Sundays during the year we have intergenerational services. Every Sunday morning offers an opportunity for shared ministry through the worship leader. By their participation, worship leaders help to bring a variety of voices into our Sunday services. The Worship Leader helps to create and maintain the mood of the worship service and to keep the service flowing smoothly. They are there to provide assistance to the minister when she is in the pulpit and to provide the framework for the worship service on the Sundays that are lay led or when we have a visiting minister.

As always we are most grateful for the service provided by our worship leaders. If anyone is interested in becoming a Worship Leader please contact Pat Berthold at 589-1231 or pberthold@earthlink.net

The Worship Leaders for April, May, and the first half of June are:

April 6	Cydney Henderson
April 13	Julie Means
April 20	Irene Heath
April 27	Pat Berthold
May 4	Julie Means
May 11	Marina Oja
May 18	Elaine LeCain
May 25	Lois Watson
June 1	Andy Kendall
June 8	Julie Means

April Calendar @ a Glance:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8am

Men's Breakfast (Men's Breakfast is a social breakfast gathering of the men in the fellowship, held at a local restaurant. All are welcome.)

May 8, 10:30am-12:30pm

Seasoned Souls Women's Group (contact Wilma Goodloe 832-9582 and see the next page for details)

May 13, 6:30-8:30pm

Food for the Spirit is a monthly gathering for a potluck and great discussion. Bring a dish to share;

May 18, 12:00-1:00pm

UUFCK Annual Meeting

May 26, 6:30pm

UUFKC Board Meeting (Our Board meetings are always the fourth Monday of each month at 6:30 PM, at the café at the Doubletree Hotel. Members are welcome to attend.)

Speakers and Messages:

May 4th—Summer Albayati-Krikeche

“Blessing the Animals That Bless Us”

Based on the teachings of St Francis of Assisi, we will be doing an annual blessing of the animals at this service. You are all invited to bring in your household pets, livestock, and other endeared family members to be blessed in this service. Perhaps, you have a pet that has passed. Please bring a picture to honor their presence at our service. We welcome any size and any creature. Only you know your own family pet. Please be respectful of others and bring appropriate restraining devices (leash, kennel, bag, stroller, pillow, harness) for that particular animal so that they and others feel safe and welcome. This service will be held outdoors, so please wear sunscreen and hats and bring water to remain hydrated. Be prepared to bring your animal forward as we honor his or her presence on our earth and in our beloved community.

May 11th—Mirna Troncoso

“Food Decisions in the Central Valley”

Mirna will share findings from her dissertation, which she has conducted in the Central Valley. She is a PhD candidate with the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. She makes a link between the role of education, knowledge, dinnertime routines, schools, and the workplaces of Latinos, one of the most vulnerable populations in the Central Valley.

May 18th—Summer Albayati-Krikeche

“In Search of Transcendence”

There are moments in which we feel loved and whole and at one with the divine. Such moments of transcendence may be searched for our whole lives, only to be felt briefly and on rare occasions. How do we feel those moments even when we feel abandoned by the ground of all being, the ultimate reality, the divine presence? How do we cultivate those moments in our lives so that we feel loved and whole?

May 25th—Irene Heath

“The Cosmos and Carl Sagan”

Summer Clothing Drive for Bakersfield Homeless Center Residents

On Sunday, May 18, we will be collecting summer clothing for the women, men, boys and girls who reside at the BHC. Please bring to church clean, gently used T-shirts, tops, pants, shorts, dresses and shoes. All sizes are needed. If you won't be in attendance on that Sunday, please give me a call at 832-9582, and I'll pick up your donations. Your gifts are appreciated.

Deadline for Next Month's June Unikern:

May 28th, 2014