

Temple Hands, Heads, and Hearts
by Guardian in Chief Richard A. London
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It's hard to believe that our 125th Convention is only two short months away. Already there are many hands, heads, and hearts involved in bringing together the annual elements that are meant to inspire, nurture, and revitalize our connections to our Higher Selves and to each other. The theme for this year's Convention is "Letting in the Light from Above," and is not only based on the Mountain Top message entitled "Lift Up Your Heads," which we heard at the beginning of this service, it is also symbolized by the light that comes from above through the Temple windows.

Ever-present on my mind has also been the Builders program, which was established in the early days of the Temple to teach our children about using our hands, heads, and hearts for the good of all. Along with preparing for Convention, we have inaugurated a monthly Temple Builders' service that takes place here in the Blue Star Memorial Temple on the last Sunday of each month at 3:00pm. This monthly meeting is open to people of all ages, with a focus on the young at heart. It combines Temple mantrams, songs, and teachings with readings and an exchange of ideas that incorporate the Ancient Wisdom found within the Fables of Aesop.

How we use our hands is most certainly connected to the thoughts in our heads and how we nourish whatever degree of Love we have accumulated in our Hearts. This remains true for all time, no matter how young or how old we may be.

In light of the above, I find the following talk rather timely as we endeavor to call attention to our Higher Intentions as we approach the coming Convention. It was given by Eleanor Shumway two Sundays after the 2015 Temple Convention, and is entitled "There Are Temple Hands."

There are Temple Hands

In *From The Mountain Top*, Vol. III we read "Temple Hands" from the Master:

To my Temple Children:

My eyes are resting today on those Temple hands which have taken up many burdens of the world as fast as they fell from other hands now visible to outer eyes only as tiny pinches of dust, and upon other hands idly clasped or selfishly engaged in ministering to the senses alone. These hands all tell me tales none other than I can read, not only tales of today but of many yesterdays.

There are lines on some of those hands which run into the lines which are graven on the Hand of God, but alas! there are lines on other hands which stop abruptly, far short of those diviner lines.

There are hands I fain would touch with my own. No beauty of form nor fineness of texture have these hands, yet the story they tell to one who listens well makes the heart beat faster.

There are hands which have girdled a world with a message of hope. There are other hands which have opened up beds for the last long sleep of comrades and friends — hands which have ploughed and watered a thirsty land that others might have food — hands which have held up the hands of the over-wearied and have lifted the Cup of the Holy Grail to thirsty lips.

Still other hands are there which have held pen or pencil to the end that others might find hope and courage to go on living, until the tired brain which quickened them gave way; hands which have fought with the demon death at the bedside of the afflicted; hands which have drawn sweet strains of music to comfort lonely hearts; and yet other hands roughened by labor in the humbler walks of life, unseen, unknown by the many, but to the world's disinherited they are brave and strong and made white as snow by the love-light shining through them.

Temple hands all are these, upon which my eyes now rest and which one day I shall clasp within my own.

This morning I would like to share lines that several of these Temple hands and hearts have written, helping to form the rich legacy that is ours today. It is our responsibility to listen intently, to add our own wisdom, and then to live it so deeply that everyone around us understands the message. On Convention Sunday opening just two weeks ago [in 2015] the Master reminded us:

“So often have I told you that in your own hands you must carry the torch lit from the light of your Father’s Life and Love to guide you on your way. He may light it for you, but He cannot carry it. You must do that for yourselves. And you must carry it so high; you must keep it burning with such steadiness; you must march together in such regularity, discipline, and unity with the whole that the lights from the individual torches shall merge, unite as one flame, one brilliant blazing sun and shield, which shall mount and sweep the skies in a Song of Glory that none can fail to see and hear.”

In 1971 Harold Forgostein shared these thoughtful words:

“Each new form of life is hopefully a greater manifestation of the timeless perfection that is the ever-existing Mind of God. It endows the various kingdoms of its nature with renewed impulse toward its own perfection.

“Every basic religion of this humanity has from its opening cycle symbolized this divine guidance by the descent of its avatars, angels, messiahs to the level of their younger brothers and sisters, our humanity, to endow them with the light and power needed to bring them closer to the Godhead. Each day’s labor by each man or woman is made possible only through the daily labor of all who have gone before them on their evolutionary path; the building toward a better life or the destruction of it; the incorporation of the Golden Rule on the material plane of existence or the rejection of it. The Golden Rule has ever been the first law or truth or principle of every Avatar.

“Every Great Leader comes to humanity when we need Him most, when the heart is sorest pressed, our vision the dimmest, our pain the greatest, during the symbolic severity of the winter. Year after year, age after age, wondrous Messengers from God have come from Their celestial heights of evolution to us in the long dark winter of our defiant abuse of Their Golden Rule. And They show us how to transmute and redeem every discontent itself, by endurance, sympathy, courage, into self-responsibility. Our separateness becomes unity; our war becomes peace; our earth becomes heaven. Transcendent glory is resurrected in the springtime growth of consciousness reborn in the light of the new spiritual sun. When our consciousness of change has become aware of its newly won form of greater bond with all life and God, we sing with all Nature of the glory of God’s Messengers.”

During the Social Science talks of Convention 1969, Roberta Shumway read this letter:

“Dear Expected Grandchild,

“I have drawn close to you while knitting a baby blanket in honor of your arrival. As I knit I contemplate the world into which you will be born. My human heart could be apprehensive with premonitions of conditions that are developing in humanity today, if judgment were to be made on outer conditions alone. Yet my soul thrills at the opportunities for spiritual growth that will be yours at this period of humanity’s unfoldment. By the time you reach your spiritual maturity for this incarnation, it may be assumed that there will be a leveling off from the impact of tremendous changes taking place now.

“Some of these changes are not necessarily progress. Some seem to be going nowhere. But a growing, unfolding consciousness of mankind is seeking newer and better forms through which to function. Hopefully, as we

collectively blunder and stumble through these changes, a better understanding of the Divine Plan or Purpose will emerge and some spiritual discrimination will surface to show the way to stability and continuity in the affairs of man.

"You will be a part of the responsibility to help stabilize conditions of humanity. It is to be hoped that you will learn young enough that all stability must start within yourself. You bring to your job all your strengths and all your weaknesses garnered through many lifetimes. Your effort will be to stabilize and synthesize these forces within yourself so you may become an effective instrument for channeling the constructive building forces of life to your fellow man.

"As an incarnating soul you have all the characteristic qualities, attributes, and powers that are symbolized by such abstract terms as, the twelve houses of the Zodiac, the twelve cosmic divisions, the twelve grand divisions of the great Temples, of the Pyramids and of your own body. The Temple Teachings here in Halcyon have helped us to break down these abstractions into terms that we can more easily understand and work with, more meaningfully. The twelve forces or principles are called: Love, Will, Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Hope, Truth, Justice, Loyalty, Honesty, Service, and Obedience.

"You will be relating and interrelating, acting and reacting to these forces all of your life. To the extent that you build these qualities into the fabric of your life will these, in turn, pour inner strength to you.

"As a soul you have chosen to come in at this point in humanity's evolution. Through your spiritual maturing you will find your point of responsibility toward the advancement of the Brotherhood of Man.

"And so, dear grandchild, so close to incarnation, may the protective forces of Light overshadow you and your soul endeavors, as I hope this blanket will give protection and comfort to your infant body when you make your advent in the very near future.

"With deepest love from your Grandmother."

(Note: We know that grandchild as our Halcyon neighbor, Kenneth Reed.)

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There has always been a Children's group in the Temple work. Sometimes there are many children, sometimes a few. I found that in 1918 there was only one, and I remember in the late 1950's that number was again true. But the spirit behind the idea has never been lost. In the February 1919 Artisan, the children themselves during a class asked questions about reincarnation. As adults we study this subject, sometimes using very complex Sanskrit words and involved ideas to convince ourselves that we do indeed understand the exact process. We forget that children often get right to the core of the problem through their questions. If we can think as a child, with a childlike heart, we can answer their questions and our own in understandable words. In this particular class, this was the result, and I suspect that their answers were distilled by a very discerning editor.

1. What is reincarnation?

A. Jackie says it is coming back into the world again. Jim says it is having lived many lives before. Linckie says it is living on when you die.

2. Are those right answers?

A. They are all right if you understand what they mean.

3. What do they mean by coming back into the world; by keeping on living when the body dies, or having lived many times before?

A. They mean the Knower or Thinker comes back. It always lives. The Knower never dies.

4. What is the Knower?

A. The Thinker or Knower is that part of us which makes us do things, which teaches us anything we know about life.

5. Does the Thinker make us walk and eat?

A. It does. We could do nothing with our bodies without the Thinker any more than one could move without being placed in our bodies.

6. If we come back into the world so many times why don't we remember who we were before?

A. Some people think they do know who they were in other lives but that is not important. They never seem to gain much from the knowledge to help them here. If they do really know they talk very little about it, but use all their efforts toward mastering present faults and conditions in this life.

7. Do other things besides people incarnate?

A. Yes, it is thought that they do. New life reincarnates in the plants every year. The sap goes down into the roots in the winter and flows into the branches in the spring, and summer brings new buds, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds. When the seeds are planted an entirely new tree grows.

8. But the plant doesn't die for new leaves and flowers to grow, does it?

A. No, but it reincarnates with new life each year, just as we are filled with new life during sleep and are ready for work and play in the morning.

9. What happens when we die?

A. The same thing happens to us as to the plants only in a larger way. The body becomes worn out so sleep no longer rests it. It has done all the work it can and a new body has to be formed. A fuller reincarnation has to be made than when it takes its nightly sleep.

10. Are we really alive when we die, and are we all parts of the same life as the animals and plants?

A. Yes, we are often times more alive when our bodies die than when they are moving about. The body often times hinders us from doing the things that are truest and best.

11. Does the worm reincarnate in the butterfly?

A. It does. The butterfly is a beautiful reincarnation. It is the way all incarnations should be. The last incarnation should always be the brightest, most beautiful, noblest, from something lower to something higher.

12. How can the butterfly come from such an ugly thing as the worm and how did we get started in the beginning?

A. The worm is not ugly when you think of it truly. It is fashioned to do a certain work, and its dress or body is formed so it can best accomplish that work. A pair of working clothes are beautiful on a man who is ploughing. He would look ridiculous in a dress suit. Everyone would laugh at him.

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It is difficult to answer the question, "How did we get started?" There are many ideas about it. No one can actually tell. It is too much for us to understand. It was in some way through the Knower, but it was through the Knower or Heart of God Himself who has not yet made everything clear to us. It is all right to think about, but it is also well not to try too hard to get the answer; it unfits us for our daily work, and the Knower will tell us when it is time for us to know.

Like the children, let us trust the Knower within to lead us in ways that help us to realize our highest ideals, all the while using wisdom, love, tolerance and lashings of humor to go as lightly as possible over the bumps on the Path of spiritual aspiration.

This idea is contained in the words written by Dr. George B. Little in 1930 expressing great truth in a very lighthearted way:

Temple Folks

There's blood folks, and home folks,
and town folks and such,
But nowhere is there any folks

that even start to touch
The kind of folks that Temple folks is
when you get inside
The funny, wooly queernesses
they've got on for a hide.

When a Templar falls in trouble
and the clouds look thick and black,
The Temple folks just rallies round
and pats him on the back;
And their hands and hearts come reachin'
to hold him staunch and fast,
And all their little differences
is wiped away and past.

And the bunch just stands together,
and their hearts, they beat as one,
While an atmosphere of lovin'
like a web is 'round them spun.
There's folks and folks and splendid folks,
and folks you're proud to know
But I recommend the Temple folks
as the finest folks that grow!

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Temple hands together — past, present, and future — are building the Temple; building ourselves; and helping each other in the process. We must never forget that we must carry that torch "...so high, you must keep it burning with such steadiness, you must march together in such regularity, discipline, and unity with the whole that the lights from the individual torches shall merge, unite as one flame, one brilliant blazing sun and shield, which shall mount and sweep the skies in a Song of Glory that none can fail to see and hear."

We must each ask ourselves what is it that our own Temple hands are doing?

— *Eleanor L. Shumway*
5th Guardian in Chief

From caring Hearts to thoughtful Heads to helpful Hands, harmony and well-being are the fruits to be born from the labors of authentic usefulness. As we look forward to our 125th Convention, let us acknowledge — with gratitude and joy — those of us with Temple Hands who remain young-at-Heart.

— *Richard A. London*
6th Guardian in Chief