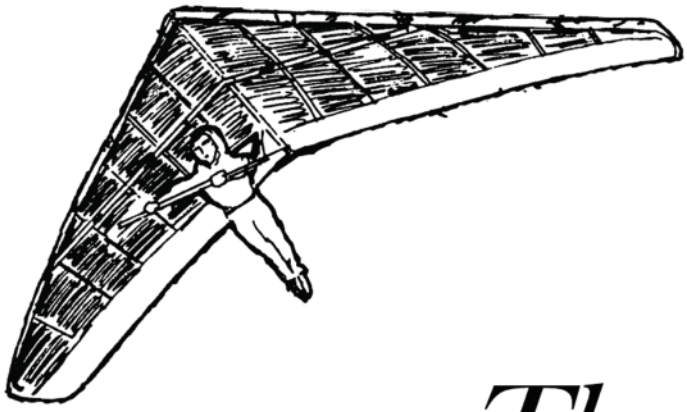


The Legend *of the* CRYSTAL WALL

by
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In astonishment, they watched him run down the slope, leap into space, and begin to sail! He began to rise effortlessly, in great circles, as they had often seen birds doing.

NO ONE HAS EVER *SEEN* THE CRYSTAL WALL

Yet, since before the dawn of recorded human history, the crystal wall has formed an invisible barrier around humankind, sealing off all but a very few from their highest possibilities. The crystal barrier has been there so long that only rarely is it even acknowledged — yet many exceptional human minds have testified to its existence. One of these, the great psychologist Abraham Maslow, believed that only about one or two percent of humanity have been able to transcend the crystal wall and begin achieving full expression of their potentials.

Perhaps the most efficient way to explain how the crystal wall confines the masses to misery and mediocrity would be to relate one of the many legends sages have told about its early existence.

I HAVE CHOSEN ONE OF THE more modern versions of this legend. As the story goes, there was once a Land of Misery, and a Land of Light and Life. The people in the Land of Misery naturally yearned to reach the Land of Light and Life. But there was a towering crystal wall around their land that prevented them from leaving. The wall was so high that only the birds could soar above the wall and achieve freedom.

One day a Great Teacher appeared. The young man claimed he came from the Land of Light and Life, and he began to instruct the people that there was a way to defeat the wall and reach serenity and freedom. He asserted that with a little help, people could learn to fly over the wall. Of course he was scoffed at. It came to pass that the teacher placed an open box of materials in the center of the town in the Land of Misery. He claimed that, with these common-place ingredients, and some daring, any man or woman could fly over the wall. Some of the elders looked over the components in the box. "*There is nothing new here,"* they said. And they left. Most of the people drifted away too.

"FOLLOW ME"

However, the teacher was a patient young man. A few people watched as he began to put together the materials in the box: pieces of sail-cloth, cords, sticks, and various fasteners. When he completed his project, he rose up and said simply: "Follow me." A few people did follow him as he took his strange apparatus to a towering slope near the top of the highest mountain in the Land of Misery. In astonishment, they watched him run down the slope, leap into space, and begin to sail! He then rose effortlessly in great circles, much as the people had often observed the birds doing.

But evil eyes were watching also. The men who ruled the Land of Misery had been observing his progress carefully. They had hatched a plan to use in case the self-assured young man got out of hand. Suddenly, from the ranks of the rulers, an arrow flew through the air. In horror the people watched as the arrow pierced the heart of the great innovator. He had, by this time, gotten very high, and had sailed over the crystal wall. But now, his body tumbled from his craft and disappeared from human eyes.

The craft continued to sail for a few moments, and then began to drop. As fortune would have it, it dropped within the crystal wall in the Land of Misery.

DISPUTES ABOUT OWNERSHIP

The craft was recovered, and energetic disputes arose as to who owned it. The Great Teacher had always said that the *design* of his craft was a gift to all of the people, but this was never fully understood. The leaders fought over the craft itself. They did not discuss using it to follow the Master, as he had suggested. That seemed far too dangerous. But nevertheless, they coveted the craft's seemingly mysterious power, and claimed ownership.

The disputing parties were generally divided into three camps. There were the scientists, the philosophers, and finally the

sages and visionaries. It was decided that a committee would determine the issue of ownership. It was formed by selecting a single representative from each faction. Naturally, each of these factions choose their most brilliant member.

Time wore on, and the committee could not come to an agreement. Years went by, and the representatives grew old. It became necessary to replace them, and then replace them again. Eventually hundreds of years passed, and virtually everyone lost interest.

THE CHALLENGE OF SCIENCE

The representative of the scientists finally issued a press release. His release stated that he had come to the conclusion that the craft had never been operative anyway, and the entire episode of the flight never actually happened. He pointed out that he had taken the craft apart, as so many scientists had before him. He concluded, as his predecessors had, that this was simply nothing more than common-place stuff. Superstition had created the myth of the Great Teacher. He brushed aside the idea of the mysterious, invisible, lifting force that had supposedly carried the Teacher over the crystal wall, and ignored all testimonial records of those who swore they had seen the event. The scientist flatly declared that his instruments could detect no such force.

After releasing the statement, the scientist left the committee.

Soon after, the philosopher left also. He insisted that, although the force could not be disproved, it could not be proven either. He decided that the domain of such perplexing, non-material concepts was that of the sages and visionaries. The departure of the philosopher was hardly noticed, since few people cared to ponder difficult philosophical problems anymore.

Alone now, the sages and visionaries held sway over everyone in the Land of Misery. They were now called *theologians*, since they had by now crystallized their ideas into great volumes of dogma.

THE DECLINE OF RELIGION

But their authoritative rules and restrictions were encumbering and tiresome, and with each succeeding generation the influence of the theologians had deteriorated. In the meantime, the unrestricted scientists began producing one wonderful invention after another. *"Science works!"* became the motto of the "new" science. Even so, the materialistic scientists had no clue as to how to break through the crystal wall; it remained in place. This did not disturb many people, for the wall had been there so long that it was taken for granted now. Besides, with all of these wonderful material inventions and distractions, escape from their crystal prison seemed less important to the people.

Alarmed at their declining influence, the theologians began to argue among themselves. Various religious denominations had developed, each claiming proprietary rights over the craft of the Great Teacher. After centuries of repeatedly disassembling the craft for examination, now each faction had different ideas about how to put it back together again. Eventually the religious experts elected to seal the unassembled pieces of the original craft in a sacred shrine.

NEW RELIGIOUS IDEAS

Meanwhile, each religious denomination did more and more speculating about the "Great

Teacher" — and taught less about his message and the daring way he had used his craft to escape the Land of Misery. Although he had repeatedly said: *"Follow me,"* no one had seriously attempted to do so. The method, the *way* of the craft, was neglected. Eventually, a formidable number of religionists advanced a comforting theory that asserted it was not necessary to risk flight over the wall anyway. The Great Teacher had already accomplished that for everyone. They figured that all one had to do was *believe* that the young leader had died to free the people in the Land of Misery from their bondage. If an individual believed this, after he or she died, this person would wake up in the Land of Light and Life with the Great Teacher.

There were hundreds of other theological ideas and theories *about* the teacher. A few interesting ideas even developed around various components of the craft he had built. But almost nothing was said about the original vehicle itself, and how it had been built and used. Eventually the wondrous craft of the Great Teacher became, for all practical purposes, forgotten. Like the larva of a magnificent butterfly, it silently awaits the time when some future generation of men and women will re-assemble it and dare to use it. Until recently, this was all that was known of the Legend of the Crystal Wall.

Although the story is still not complete, hold your judgment about its allegorical truth. Take the time to consider the modern hang gliders that sail in the air. Consider that human beings could have produced and flown hang gliders at least five or six thousand years ago!

For untold centuries, invisible warm air currents have spiraled skyward, and humans have watched great birds effortlessly soar upon them. Yet, the immense lifting power of these unseen air thermals was not grasped by earth-bound mortals, and for thousands of years humans were encapsulated in a crystal prison of self-limitation. It was the second half of the twentieth century before a process was designed to configure simple materials and build hang gliders that are able to capture the immeasurable energy of warm air thermals and use it for individual human flight.

Perhaps, centuries from now, people may be dumbfounded to learn that less than two percent of contemporary humanity achieve important levels of *Self-Actualization*.[1] It may surprise future generations that the masses of humanity, on the average, fulfill but 10%[2] or so of their potentials. Although science and industry would not tolerate a machine that worked at a fraction of its capacity, humankind has continued to flounder in *immaturity,* and the massive loss of human capacities is generally taken for granted.

[1] Self-Actualization is the never-ending process of unfolding one's *potential* abilities, skills, and talents, and using them productively and creatively . . . the process of making the potentials of self into realities.

[2] This percentage is an estimate that is consistent with the finding of many of the Self-Actualizing pioneers, including: Abraham Maslow, Gardner Murphy, Margaret Meade, Gordon W. Allport, Carl R. Rodgers, Eric Fromm.

NEW INFORMATION IS DISCOVERED ABOUT THE CRYSTAL WALL

Because the mystery of human potential has never been solved, great interest was aroused when new facts about the crystal wall and the Land of Misery became available.

It seems that, a few decades ago, there was suddenly discovered in the Land of Misery a mysterious Blue Book that contained an expanded version of the original *Legend of the Crystal Wall.* This type of discovery had been made several times over the centuries, but the material proved to be inconsistent and disappointing. In the recent case, however, the Blue Book contained a philosophically consistent (though rather extravagant) set of hypotheses. Most startling to modern minds was the information that the Great Teacher actually did come from the Land of Light and Life. Of further interest, he had returned in spirit. What was known as the *True Spirit* was now said to be an omnipresent and living (though invisible) reality in the Land of Misery. There were many other equally complex ideas in the Blue Book, and almost no one completely understood it.

> "It was an unwritten rule that any discussion or implication of an attempt at mass migration over the Crystal Wall was forbidden."

The book was enormously complex and difficult to read. Moreover, no one really knows for sure where the strange tome came from, who wrote it, nor how it materialized. For these reasons, few people in the Land of Misery ever read it. In addition, those who originally claimed to have found the Blue Book were a rather closed, conservative lot. They seemed fearful of attracting too much attention, else they be persecuted. They believed the book to be too advanced for current generations. These central controllers of the book were known as the *Retardists.* Not everyone agreed with their ideas.

THE CULTS OF THE "BLUE BOOK"

A great number of factions developed in opposition to the Retardists. ***Yet neither these groups nor the Retardists wanted to actually attempt the flight over the Crystal Wall.*** This, in spite of the fact that the Blue Book provided detailed, seemingly accurate information about the original design of the Great Teacher's craft.

These factions preferred to talk about the design of the craft, or about the Blue Book in general. ***There developed an unwritten rule that any discussion — or even implication — of an attempt at mass migration over the Crystal Wall by the people was forbidden.***

Even so, those who loved the book were very sincere in their varied beliefs.. In addition to the Retardists, (who printed the book, but at various times had made it generally difficult for people to buy it), there were the *Bookists.* The Bookists believed in producing millions and

millions of copies of the book in all languages so that ***other people*** could read it and do whatever it was the Blue Book was trying to communicate that mortals should do. There were also the *Buriests,* who believed the safest way to handle the Blue Book was to preserve it for other generations in perfect condition by burying it. There were also the *Channelists* who claimed they were getting special information from invisible beings from the Land of Light and Life and were enlarging upon the contents of the Blue Book by adding new, "inspired" material. There were the *Studygroupists,* who studied and studied the Blue Book until they knew what words were on every page, (although some people claimed they knew nothing of the meaning of the Blue Book.) There were also the *Supremists*, who claimed the Blue Book was not primarily about the Crystal Wall at all, nor even about the Great Teacher, but rather primarily about an invisible, experiential Deity of which we are all part. There were also the *UFOists*, the *Elijahists,* the *Jonbaptists,* the *Memorizists,* the *Musicists* (who set the Book to music,) and many more. None of these groups attracted much serious attention. But then an alarming situation developed. **A dangerous new faction began to emerge that defied tradition and aspired to conquer the Crystal Wall to escape *in mass.***

> "The Retardists were so alarmed at this prospect that they began taking legal action against many of the Evangels."

THE EVANGELS OF PROGRESS

These folks seemed to mean well. But, to many, the *Evangels of Progress* had some very radical ideas. For example, some of these Evangels believed the Blue Book was actually a ***plan of action.*** They thought the Great Teacher had begun the great task of freeing *all the people* from the Land of Misery. The Blue Book seemed to clearly state that those who believed in this Teacher had the responsibility to help complete this task. This was considered a very extreme position, although the Blue Book itself seemed to support the daring doctrine of the Evangels of Progress.

Another radical aspect of the Evangels' plan was that they actually wanted to tell other people about the information in the Blue Book, and offer them the revolutionary, expanded religious concepts of the Great Teacher.

THE LITIGATION TACTIC

The Retardists were so alarmed at this defiance of their established dogmas that they began taking legal action against many of the Evangels. Although successful at first, the tactic of secular litigation became less and less an effective way to keep the Evangels and their new religion under control. The Evangels were increasing in numbers and influence, and began to organize into a new kind of *personal* religion. *[A religion of the people, without*

hierarchies and priests.] It was the new religious ideas of the Evangels that seemed to be the most repugnant and threatening to the Retardists.

Yet even the Evangels had to admit that they were also baffled by the crystal wall. A mass escape seemed impossible.

Their numbers were actually reaching critical mass by the time the Evangels gathered in an immense conclave at the foot of the crystal wall to decide what to do. It was on this day that a great miracle occurred.

THE DAY OF THE MIRACLE

It should be clearly stated that no one can be sure it was a miracle at all. But the facts point in that direction. Anyway, when untold numbers of these Evangels met at the crystal wall, the love they held for one another, and all of humankind, seemed to saturate the air of the Land of Misery. One of the Evangels pointed out to the crowd that, though the Evangels had earnestly discussed the problem of the crystal wall over the years, they had become so engaged in loving service and helping their brothers and sisters that they actually were forgetting about the wall.

"Their numbers were actually reaching critical mass by the time they gathered in an immense conclave at the foot of the crystal wall to decide what to do. It was on this day that a great miracle occurred."

It was then that a child wandered off toward the crystal wall. She was spotted as she began to chase a butterfly and race toward the wall. But it was too late to stop her! Many people began running toward her, yelling warnings that she was about to collide headlong into the imprisoning crystal barrier.

Imagine the astonishment of the people when she simply ran right through the wall!

When the adults caught up with her, they discovered that they, too, could penetrate the wall. In fact, they discovered the wall no longer existed! It was gone!

Later, some sages would claim that the wall never existed in physical reality. It was only imagined by the limiting human minds. Perhaps. We may never know.

Yet, there can be no question that the Land of Misery itself had been somehow transformed. Over the years, the work of the Evangels and all others who sought to do service for humankind had changed the Land of Misery. The good that they did simply overwhelmed the indifference and evil that had once dominated the land.

Some came to believe that this transformation was what the Great Teacher had intended all along. They asserted that he never intended for humankind to *escape* from the Land of Misery at all. Those who believed this also claimed that the Great Teacher had returned as a True Spirit [as he had promised] to assist all who followed his loving ways.

The most unchallengable fact remains: the contrasts between the Land of Misery and the Land of Light and Life had virtually vanished. Misery had been overcome. The Great Gospel of Benevolence now reigned supreme.

To those who still are tormented in the Land of Misery, we send our message. We wonder if you cannot find your freedom by means of the immense power of Benevolence. We urge you to try, and to recall the words of the Great Teacher. He may have been referring to the crystal wall when he said:

> "Forewarn all believers regarding the fringe of conflict which must be traversed by all who pass from the life as it is lived in the flesh to the higher life as it is lived in the spirit. To those who live quite wholly within either realm, there is little conflict or confusion, but all are doomed to experience more or less uncertainty during the times of transition between the two levels of living. In entering the kingdom, you cannot escape its responsibilities or avoid its obligations, but remember: The gospel yoke is easy and the burden of truth is light."

The Blue Book also assures us that the Great Teacher promised his followers and believers that he would actually be near and available in Spirit, ready and waiting to respond to our calls for help and assistance at all times:

> "I have shown you the way; go forth to do your duty and be not weary in well doing. To you and to all who shall follow in your steps down through the ages, let me say:
>
> **"*I always stand near, and my invitation-call is, and ever shall be, Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am true and loyal, and you shall find spiritual rest for your souls."***
>
> "And they found the Master's words to be true when they put his promises to the test. And since that day countless thousands also have tested and proved the surety of these same promises."

NOTE: The above quoted passages of the Great Teacher are from the Urantia Papers, Pages 1766 and 1808.