Welcome to the Perennial Philosophy

The purpose of this website is to explore the perennial philosophy and the hero’s journey of exile and return. Here’s a brief description:

The world is illusory;
Brahman alone is real;
Brahman is the world.

There are really only two options in life. If you are having fun – option 1 – go away. There is no sane reason to flounder around on this website. Just keep having fun, for God’s sake.

If you’re not having fun, the other option is to ask the big questions: “Who am I, what the hell is really going on, and why am I here?” The ageless answer to these questions is called the perennial philosophy and the way of learning the answer is called the hero’s journey of exile and return. The philosophy is very simple, but not easy. The journey is a bloody one of self-annihilation, only acceptable to those who can no longer tolerate the superficial idolatries that are passed off as fun. After the annihilation comes the realization that the you that you take to be you is not you, that nothing is really going on, and that the reason you’re here is, well, to have fun.

What’s the most fun thing anyone can do? It turns out to be the hero’s journey which, paradoxically, is also the most appalling thing anyone can do. Here’s a fun fact: the journey is so appalling that it can only be completed when the hero is driven by the second most powerful force in the universe – by really, really not having fun. And if you chose option 1 – having fun – but you haven’t completed the hero’s journey, you’re probably not having that much fun after all. Having fun
yet?

If you find yourself deeply unsatisfied by organized religion, secular humanism, political life, and the natural world; if the love of people and things has become untenable; if the pursuit of happiness and success is unutterably wearisome; if the many temptations and distractions advertised as antidotes to your heart-sickness leave you heart-sick, then the perennial philosophy may be for you. Its basic claims are these:

- That the world is an illusion.
- That within and beyond the illusion is nothing but truth, pointed to by many imperfect words – like “truth,” for instance, or the goofy word “Brahman.” Truth appears as a void or emptiness.
- That truth is the world.
- That the final end and purpose of life is to achieve knowledge of the true and to realize you are none other than truth itself.
- That the way of truth realization is the hero’s journey of exile and return.

The perennial philosophy is not a matter of changing the world, but a relentless internal investigation of the self, only to find that nothing is there. This is liberating. Liberation means non-identification with form, including the form of self. It also means non-identification with the formless, which is only another form of illusion. To be liberated does not require doing or being something, but to become aware of illusion, which is thus dissolved. What is left is Reality.

Wake up! Get free! Then have fun.

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Expressions of the Perennial Philosophy:

The Cloud of Unknowing
See that you are no way within yourself. And I do not want you to be outside yourself, or above, or behind, or on one side, or on the other.

The Tao Te Ching
The truth that can be spoken is not true.
The truth that can be written is not true.
Truth is the source of all illusion.
Illusion is the mother of all things.
Free of illusion, truth is revealed.
Trapped in illusion, the world is revealed.
These are not-one, not-two.
Not-one, not-two appears as emptiness.
Emptiness without emptiness.
The doorway of truth.

The Cloud of Unknowing
Leave aside this everywhere and this everything, in exchange for this nowhere and this nothing.... A man’s affection is remarkably changed in the spiritual experience of this nothing when it is achieved nowhere.... It seems to him, sometimes, in this labor, that to look upon it is to look into hell.

John 8:32
And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Luke 17:21
Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! For, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.

The Chandogya Upanishad
There is a subtle essence that is the source and substance of all things. It is the Reality of all that is, and the Foundation of all that is. That Essence is all. That Essence is the Real. And thou, thou art That.
Ultimate transformation is not a matter of new knowledge, but of the death of the one who knows.