

Johannesburg, S. Africa

June-July, 1949

My dear Friends:

Soon I shall be on the move again, for I am to start a tour of the S. African towns and shall not be back in Johannesburg again until October next. We have just closed a splendid Convention here. It always takes place at Easter time and was very well attended, the blessing descending being felt by all. Our National President, Mrs. Stakesby-Lewis, is soon to fly to Europe for three months. She will visit her mother in Holland, be the guest speaker at the English Convention, and attend the European Congress in Paris. S. African members seem to have been visiting all parts of the world just now. Three attended the great Convention at Adyar, another visited The Manor in Australia and then New Zealand, and yet another, as well as our National President, will be in England. Simultaneously with the Convention here, the Co-Masons held a week of special meetings, having two very distinguished Masons from England in this country, Mr. Arnold Banks and Mrs. Natalie Hammond.

You will remember that in the last Letter we were discussing Will and Desire. And I quoted H.P.B.'s words pointing out that Will is the upper pole of Desire. This is splendidly put in Mrs. Besant's book, A Study in Consciousness. This time I have found another writing of H.P.B. on much the same idea. She says: "When desire is for the purely abstract--when it has lost all trace or tinge of 'self'--then it has become pure." It is always this trace of egoism, this little self, that is the one enemy upon the Path.

What is the Path? The Voice of the Silence says: "The way to final liberation is within thy Self. That way begins and ends outside of self." Do we notice that the first self has a capital letter and the second a small letter? These represent what we call the Higher and the lower self, which H.P.B. calls the "two egos." The connection between them she calls Antahkarana, the Path. "Antahkarana is the name of the imaginary bridge, the path which lies between the Divine and the human Egos, for they are Egos during human life, to rebecome one Ego in Devachan or Nirvana... Therefore Manas is shown double, the Ego and the Mind of Man." (S.D. III, 519) The one is our Immortal Divinity, the other our ordinary, unilluminated human mind. One is impersonal, the other personal. Here is the connection between Will and Desire. H.P.B. says: "The higher Mind directs the Will; the lower turns it into selfish desire." Antahkarana, the "Path" she says, is Manas purified of personal desire.

Now, to find God, we must find Him through His representative in ourselves, our own divinity, and we cross the bridge into that diviner world when we have purged our hearts of all purely personal desire. Not of desire, but of personal desire. Impersonal desire is a force a thousand times stronger and more beautiful than the other, and is well described by Light on the Path: "Desire power ardently, desire peace fervently, desire possessions above all." Then the Venetian Master explains these sentences. "But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul, that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life which is your only true life."

How do we purify our Manas? H.P.B. tells us. "The first step towards this purity is to kill out desire for the things of matter, since these can only be enjoyed by the separated personality. The second is to cease desiring for oneself even such abstractions as power, knowledge, love, happiness or fame; for they are but selfishness after all." We can remember here the words of the Master K.H. to Krishnaji: "There are some who forsake the pursuit of earthly aims



only to gain heaven, or to attain personal liberation from rebirth. If you have forgotten self altogether, you cannot be thinking when that self should be set free or what kind of heaven it should have. Remember that all selfish desire binds, and until you have got rid of it, you are not free to devote yourself to the work of the Master."

Then H.P.B. continues: "Life itself teaches these lessons; for all such objects of desire are found Dead Sea fruit in the moment of attainment. This much we learn from experience, intuitive perception seizes on the positive truth that satisfaction is attainable only in the infinite; the will makes that conviction an actual fact of consciousness, till at last all desire is centered on the Eternal." "Seek in the impersonal for the Eternal Man," says the Voice of the Silence, and again: "Before thou standest on the threshold of the Path, before thou crossest the foremost gate, thou hast to merge the two into the one and sacrifice the personal to the Self Impersonal." As the Master M. once wrote: "We teach our chelas to sacrifice their fleeting personalities for the sake of their Immortal Egos."

That united spirit of life which is our only true life is summed up in other words of the V. of the S.: "To live to benefit mankind is the first step." I will go on quoting more of H. P. B.: "When the mind thinks only of itself, the whole which is built of units perishes, and the unit itself is destroyed. So it is throughout nature in every plane of life. This, therefore, is the first lesson to be learned. Life is built up by the sacrifice of the individual to the whole. Each cell in the living body must sacrifice itself for the perfection of the whole; when it is otherwise, disease and death enforce the lesson."

Now the evidence of the presence of the Higher Ego in each one of us is the growing feeling of responsibility. Says the S. D.: "The feeling of responsibility is inspired by the presence of the Light of the Higher Ego. As the Ego in its cycles of rebirth becomes more and more individualized, it learns more and more by suffering to recognize its own responsibility, by which it finally gains Self-consciousness, the consciousness of all the Egos of the whole Universe... We should therefore endeavour always to accentuate our responsibility... The feeling of responsibility is the beginning of Wisdom, a proof that Ahankara (egotism) is beginning to fade out, the beginning of losing the sense of separateness."

This Letter seems to be mostly quotations, but H.P.B.'s words are wiser than mine could be. Let me close with the lovely prayer of St. Ignatius:

"Teach us, Good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to seek for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will."

Always your affectionate friend

CLARA CODD

NOTE: Your secretary will be in Wheaton, Illinois, for two months, May 21st to July 21st, and will then return to Larkspur for another full year. Thank you all for your contributions sustaining this work and thank you for your many kind expressions of appreciation. I, too, feel that I am "always your affectionate friend."

M. Patterson