

My dear Friends,

We have said goodbye for the time being to our friend Geoffrey Hodson, whose visit was a very great success. He promises to return to us in 1960.

I hear from Adyar that my book, "The Ageless Wisdom of Life" will be published before Christmas. Now I am beginning the next one which will be about the Inner Life. I hope to finish it by our next Convention at Easter time here.

There is one thing that again and again strikes me and no doubt many others -- the great gulf between theory and practice in most men's lives. The great psychologist, Carl Jung, says in his book, "Modern Man in Search of a Soul", that "nothing influences our conduct less than do intellectual ideas." We may be able to expound most cleverly the theory of a spiritual life, but it does not follow that we live it in any way. I have known deep students of occultism who know a vast amount theoretically, but whose secret lives are guilty of the most unwholesome vices. They truly seem to be a "divided self". St. James writes: "The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." It is so common, a human failing that there is hardly a man who does not suffer from it to some degree. A Master Himself has said that deeds are what is needed, and in another letter writes "Ask him not what he believes." It is what we do, and the motive with which we do it, that are important in the Master's eyes, not the theories we may happen to have about it.

Now why is there this huge gulf between theory and practice? Is it largely due to human egotism and laziness? All children are told not to be naughty, but few understand what being "naughty" really means. It sometimes means being a nuisance to the grown-ups! When I grew up and had to earn my own living, for some reason I fell among Roman Catholics whom I had been brought up to look upon as emissaries of the scarlet woman of Babylon. I remember living with a very sweet Catholic family whose religious life impressed me very much. Every one of them went to Mass daily before breakfast, a large portion of the money and belongings of each was set aside for the poor. I also found that they had a really exact idea of what wrong-doing was composed of. For instance, they had the "seven deadly sins" which kill the soul. I can classify those seven sins as belonging specifically to our three lower bodies.

1. Sloth - physical
2. Anger, 3. Lust, 4. Greed, -- Emotional
5. Pride, 6. Envy, 7. Covetousness -- Mental

I found that there were also Seven Virtues which were antidotes to the Seven Deadly Sins.

1. Diligence -- Physical
2. Meekness, 3. Chastity, 4. Temperance -- Emotional
5. Humility, 6. Contentment, 7. Charity -- Mental

These are somewhat paralleled by the Gunas, or qualities in nature, of Hinduism: Tamas, inertia, Rajas, activity, Sattva, balance, harmony.

The Physical Body, because of the highly resistant nature of physical matter, has a preponderance of the Tamasic Guna. Hence its tendency to "put things off", to "let things slide", to be lazy and self-indulgent. The motto for the physical body is "Do it now." Do it; don't talk about it. This calls down something of the Atma, the spiritual Will, which H.F.E. says is the same thing as Life.

The Emotional Body, because of its fluidic nature, suffers from ill-regulated and spasmodic feeling. Anger makes rents in that body like broken glass, and in excess gives power to astral entities to enter and possess a man, so that he is hardly responsible for what he does. Lust and sensuality clog the organs, shutting out the free flow of Prana. Greed coarsens the astral, and when directed to food, increases the etheric which causes extension of the physical body.

In the Mental Body, Ahankara, the sense of "I", has its seat, therefore pride is the sin of separateness which isolates us from our fellow-men. Egotism lies behind the selfish desire of envy, which breaks the mental body into bits. It is the sin more often of women. Men tend more towards covetousness, desiring to possess the power or possessions of another. Hooked filaments go out towards that which is coveted, and its result in the long run is loss of faculty, mental decay.

All these things "kill" the soul, and also the body. What then is the remedy?

Sloth, laziness, means weak will, and the more we succumb to it, the stronger it grows. Mrs. Besant once told us that we should all try to keep the faculty of effort alive in us. A variant is wasting time. Doing strengthens the will, which means calling down more of the Atma in us.

Anger and Lust: find the meaning of true Love in its consideration and service of all others.

Greed: practice doing without, asking nothing. To him who asks nothing in the universe, God comes.

Pride: Let us face facts, whatever they may be, especially in ourselves, with fear or self-satisfaction.

Envy and Covetousness: Brotherly love will kill them all and give added life and radiance to our souls.

But to return to my first thought: - a clairvoyant boy who kept a diary now published under the title "The Boy Who Saw True", records: "It is not what you believe but what you are that weighs with the Exalted Ones, for They look into the heart and not into the head to find the shining Jewel. He who has a great brain may nevertheless have an evil heart, but he who has a great heart will never have an evil brain, though it may be lacking in forcefulness."

A Master of the Wisdom wrote long ago: "Theosophy should not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical ethics, it must be made practical.... Let every Theosophist only do his duty, that which he can and ought to do, and very soon the sum of human misery within and around him will be found to be sensibly diminished." Dwight Morrow said: "There are two sorts of people in the world, those who wish to be somebody, and those who want to get something done."

But I must wind up with Bernard Shaw:--

"He who can, does --
He who cannot, teaches."

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd