

My dear Friends,

I must apologise for being so late this time, but we have just closed a Convention and Summer School at "Olcott", and you can imagine that those weeks were not propitious for writing anything! We certainly had a very wonderful and pleasant time at both occasions. I believe over 300 came. That is a little surprising to me for in this vast country such enormous distances have to be covered to get here. Still there we all were, and the time passed so happily and harmoniously. Brother Sri Ram was exquisite as usual. I have never met anyone who can speak of the inner life in such a fine and penetrating manner as he does. I really think it was I who called him many years ago our Theosophical Saint, and now everyone so names him. All the time he talks I keep on being reminded of Krishnaji's sayings. I asked Sri Ram once if he understood Krishnaji, as I could not say that I did, and he replied that he thought he did. I believe him, for no one can say things so like Krishnaji, but, to us, more understandingly, than he does.

Bhagirathi talked to us too one day, about mothers and children. I thought it would be really wonderful if she could tour the world talking to mothers everywhere. I have always thought that the Eastern woman is more truly a mother than any Western one. I have stayed in Indian homes and observed that. Not very long ago I was staying in Indian homes in East Africa, and again I saw that fact. It seems to me that an Eastern wife is mostly occupied with one thought, how to make her husband happy and comfortable. They generally have many children, and I have noticed that Eastern children take part in the lives of their elders much more than ours do. Wherever I lectured in East Africa not only the fathers and mothers came to hear me, but quite often all the family too. You would be surprised at how quite often wee children sat patiently and quietly for an hour whilst I lectured! Can you imagine a Western child doing that?

And it also seemed to me that there was no "bed-time" for an Eastern child. They stayed up with the elders. They took part in the daily life of their elders much more than ours do. It is the custom in an Indian home for the men to eat first, waited upon by their faithful women folk. As mostly the women could not speak English I was always eating with the men. I noticed how sweetly and eagerly the little girls of the household would wait on us too, so expertly and neatly, however small they were.

One day, in East Africa, my hostess' little boy was coming home from two years at a boarding school in India. His mother went to meet him at the air-port, and I shall never forget her shining joy at the prospect of seeing again her little son. On the whole I have never seen Eastern children beaten or punished or considered a nuisance. I do not wonder that our soldiers sometimes marry Korean or Chinese women. They are generally real women in the best sense of the term. And I remember reading a book by the daughter of an Indian ambassador who had made a tour, all by herself, of China and the East. She found that many Eastern mothers did not wish their sons to have a Western education, because "it made them unhappy." I think we have a great deal to learn from the East.

At the Summer School we had several discussion meetings. We had one morning devoted to Lodge work in general. I was especially interested in the description of the "research groups", and one morning we all listened to the Olcott Research Group, studying especially the approach of Carl Jung to human problems, and it suddenly struck me that here was the answer to the problem of making Lodge meetings interesting. Joy Mills explained that the research groups were not necessarily so very studious, studying science for instance, but that they altogether tried to see light on all sorts of problems. The point was that they collectively explored subjects, and Mrs. Viva Emmons reminded us of the 5 points that Sri Ram put before the School of the Wisdom discussions in Adyar:



1. First of all prepare your contribution whatever the subject or book assigned to you.
2. At the meeting empty the mind of all preconceived ideas.
3. Learn to listen to others.
4. Make a contribution of some idea which is your own.
5. Never come to a final conclusion.

Isn't that splendid and also very interesting? I have long seen that if one is too definite in laying down the law about things, or in coming to conclusions about people or things, one shuts the door on any further understanding. Can we remain fluidic with an open mind? You will remember that "a pure heart, and open mind, an eager intellect" and the consequent "unveiled spiritual perception" are the first steps of the Golden Stairs that lead to the great path to Adeptship.

Another point that occurred to me was the very great help that the play of other people's minds and auras have upon one. That is really the secret of Conventions and Summer Schools. I think perhaps we do not often realise this. I remember an old pupil of Madame Blavatsky's who told me that when her group met for study and meditation she would make them always sit in the same place, for she arranged that in accordance with the play of their auras on one another. You will remember the Hindu prayer before a study meeting embodies this thought, that we may mutually enlighten each other.

We also discussed somewhat the path and the way thereto. I feel that we should never wait to be told that we are on the Path, or wait until we are "advanced" or learned enough. The way to the Path begins at the very moment that we individually and sincerely determine to tread it. We can do no otherwise than begin just exactly from where we are now, and exactly as we are, no better, no worse. In fact, in the eyes of Spirit these distinctions do not matter. The Master told Mr. Judge to desire no results which were forms of power, but to desire only to reach nearer to the center of life which is the same in the universe and in ourselves, and which will make us careless whether we are strong or weak, learned or unlearned. We are all on that great road home, and it does not matter in the least what milestone any of us have passed. The way at the beginning is dark and uncertain and yet every step has to be taken by each one of us in full faith. The Master described faith as "The soul's unlearned knowledge." It is that which we really know in our deepest heart. Therefore it is important to learn how to shut out sometimes the noises of earth and to listen in the silence to the speechless words of our own deep heart.

But although the beginning of the way is shrouded in the mists of earth, the end is lost in the light of heaven. Meanwhile in the darkness we can hold each other's hands, give our little aid "to the few strong hands that hold back the powers of darkness from obtaining complete victory." I believe in comradeship. I like that word better than brotherhood, in spite of its use by all sorts of political bodies. We are all fellow-aspirants upon that great way, "fellow-travellers" to use again a political term. The Master once told the London Lodge that we can either elect to follow the pursuit of truth by ourselves or in the company of our associates, "Greatly helped by the mutual sympathy and aspiration." This is what Light on the Path calls a "partnership of joy" as well as a partnership of great sorrow because of the darkness in which humanity struggles. So we are all on the same road, holding each other by the hand, and awaiting with patience the hour of the light dawning for one and then another of us in turn.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

She asked me to add that her time in the U.S. has been extended through the summer of 1959, and her tour will be much expanded. I hope you all get to hear her speak-- she is truly splendid! R. D.