

My dear Friends,

I have just come back from a Summer School at Gamel Praestegaard in Denmark. I was happy to see some of my Scandinavian friends once more. We only had one fine day, but the warm atmosphere of all of us more than made up for the inclemency of the weather. Mr. John Coats tells me that there are eight Summer Schools going on in Europe this summer. So the custom seems to be growing. On Friday I am off to another in England at High Leigh in Hertfordshire. Then, in September I shall go to one more, in Switzerland. I hear that more than 300 people wish to attend this one. I have to give one of my best loved subjects: "The Secret of Sin and Suffering."

The other day I had a visit from a very old friend, Miss Wanda Dynowska. She now lives in India and has assumed the name of Umadevi. She has organised a Theosophical Group of Friends of Tibet who try to do all they can to help the Tibetan refugees in India. They organise schools for the children, so as to keep the Tibetan culture alive, "for here a whole nation is concerned, a great culture and tradition is menaced and they must at any cost be saved and preserved." So they have homes and children's villages arranged on the Pestalozzi fashion. It can save thousands of Tibetan children if it is helped, not only by the Indian Government -- as promised -- but also by well-wishers in many other countries. Three homes are already functioning and three more could now be opened if funds were available. Miss Dynowska asked me to help, and I promised her I would tell all of you about it. If you feel you can help financially, send it to "His Holiness the Dalai Lama" at the State Bank of India, Dharmasala, Punjab, India. The Nursery School of children under eight is run by the Dalai Lama's sister. When I was last in India I saw the Dalai Lama, young and smiling.

A young member in Africa asks me to say something about the "dark night of the soul." This is a term used by the famous Spanish Saint, John of the Cross. There seems to be more than one kind, a night of the senses or of the mind. When I was in Adyar sixty years ago, the atmosphere was so potent that people used to get what we called "Adyaritis." It took two forms and made one either irritable or depressed. I got the depressed kind and some one took me in to see Mrs. Besant. She was infinitely kind, and said, "It means that you are losing touch with one form of consciousness and have not yet got firmly into another. We all go through it again and again. Just sit quiet and wait for it to lift."

The saints talk about the silence of the mind. I can see what they mean. There comes a time when the mind ceases to think. And we are so used to thinking without ceasing that the silence seems queer. But in reality the "bridge" between the lower and the higher mind is forming and a new order of consciousness is about to dawn. Let me put it in Madame Blavatsky's words: "Ponder day and night over the unreality of your surroundings and of yourself. The first great basic delusion you have to get over is the identification of yourself with the physical body. Begin to think of this body as nothing better than the house you have to live in for a time.... After your first efforts you will begin to feel an indescribable vacuum and bleakness in your heart; fear not, but regard this as the soft twilight heralding the rise of the sun of Spiritual Bliss. Sadness is not an evil. Complain not; what seem to be sufferings and obstacles are often in reality the mysterious efforts of nature to help you in your work if you can manage them properly. Look upon all circumstances with the gratitude of a pupil."

My correspondent asks how long it lasts? It may last only a short time, but in the case of St. Catherine of Siena it lasted nine years. When it came to an end she asked God where He was all the time, and He replied: "Daughter, I was in thy heart." Perhaps the story of the Christ sleeping in a boat whilst the waves rocked it is just that. In the case of the little Thérèse of Lisieux it lasted nearly all of her conventual life and only lifted just before she died.

But I feel that there are other and simpler causes too. For instance my correspondent says that desire dies but so does joy. I think we have to realise and understand the place of emotion in life. The very word describes its purpose, for emotion means the "moving force." Emotion rules most of us. Its higher pole is will, steady purpose. Desire is the great moving force of the universe. But the difference between cosmic and personal desire is just that, personal or otherwise. Light on the Path tells us the difference. It counsels the aspirant to "kill out" desire for fame, comfort, life's excitements, sensation and even the hunger for growth. Then it goes on to say that we should desire only that which is within and beyond and unattainable, that is, the Eternity deep within. And to desire ardently power and peace and "possessions above all." "But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally." And so, "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 self."

I think that we should not suppress, damp down, our desire nature, but train it to desire ever higher and nobler and more impersonal ends. I am sure that we should not just suppress it. The Master K.H. himself says that he has not yet got over the feelings of deep appreciation of all things lovely and fine. Again let me quote Light on the Path: "Desire to sow no seed for your own harvesting; desire only to sow that seed the fruit of which shall feed the world.... And it is useless for the disciple to strive to learn by means of checking himself. The soul must be unfettered, the desires free. But until they are fixed only on that state wherein there is neither reward nor punishment, good nor evil, it is in vain that he endeavours."

We must act - even the Lord Sri Krishna said that unless he acted the whole universe would cease to exist - but he told Arjuna, "Thy business is with the action only, never with its results." We act because it is right and our duty, not because we are aiming at some gain to ourselves, either material or spiritual.

You know, good and evil, happiness and pain, are just the alternating pairs of opposites which are evolving in us self-consciousness and self-motivation. Reality is neither and is beyond both. It is a state beyond human imagination. So Krishnaji tells us neither to condemn nor to praise either ourselves or others, but to understand desire's working. In fact to find out what makes everyone of us "tick." H.P.B. calls pain, the "Teacher, the awakener of consciousness," and writes, "When desire is for the purely abstract - when it has lost all trace or tinge of 'self' - then it has become pure. The first step 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 from desiring for oneself even such abstractions as power, knowledge, love, happiness, or fame; for they are but selfishness after all. 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 attained only in the infinite, but the will makes that an actual fact of consciousness, till at last all desire is centred on the Eternal."

Then elsewhere she writes: "Happiness is not to be gained on earth. Here we have but the dark entrance hall alone, and only on opening the door into the real living place, into the reception room of life, shall we see the light. Let us wait patiently for the day of our real, our best birth." This is a very big subject, and I have only very superficially touched it. But I do hope it helps.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd