

February - March 1963
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Camberley, Surrey, England

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My dear Friends:

We are certainly having a real snow-bound Christmas time. They say that this is the worst winter we have had since 1884. Some people are snowbound. In a way I am, for I have no snow-boots and so cannot go out yet. It is very beautiful to look at, but not so lovely to deal with. Sometimes the milkman cannot get here. However we have got along quite well. I hope you all had a lovely Christmas, and let me wish you all the best of everything for the New Year.

I have been very interested in something I read in Krishnaji's Ojai and Sarobia talks for 1940. Someone had asked him to define the difference between awareness and introspection. His answer was very illuminating. I have always been wary of his advice to watch our thoughts and feelings. I have known people develop nervous breakdowns trying to do that and I thought then that the Master's advice to C. W. Leadbeater to "forget yourself, but to remember the good of other people" was much better.

Self-absorption can be very dangerous. It imprisons a man in a very small world. I remember a great doctor, showing me over his sanatorium, telling me that the beginning of insanity was self-centredness, having oneself always in the centre of the picture. "If you are not an egotist," he said, "you will never become insane." That is why I have noticed that some people who try to follow Krishnaji get nervous breakdowns. Introspection is dangerous; awareness is just the opposite. Introspection is dangerous because the motive behind is personal. Says Krishnaji: "Introspection is a kind of self-analysis in which thought is measuring its own action and its results, according to pleasure and pain, reward and punishment, thus forming a pattern, a judgment.... that is, thought is occupied with the result. Awareness is different. For example, if I ask the question, do I believe in God? in the very process of asking I can observe, I am aware, what it is that is making me ask that question."

He says that awareness is immediate observation without any sense of praise or blame, without any sense of I or me or mine. Quite impersonal, in fact. It is personal implications that are dangerous. It seems to me that introspection is self-analysis from the personal point of view, judging or praising self; whereas awareness is getting to understand what makes us "tick," first from a superficial level, and more and more from the deeper subconscious levels with an utter absence of care for the results to self. This is borne out by all the great Scriptures. Says the Bhagavad Gita: "Thy business is with the action only, never with its results." And says 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.... A man may refuse to allow himself to think of reward. But in that very refusal is seen the fact that reward is desired.... 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." And here are the words of the Voice of the Silence: "Shun praise, O devotee: praise leads to self-delusion. Thy body is not Self, the Self is in itself without a body, and either praise or blame affects it not." The Diviner Self in us is beyond all the "pairs of opposites."

Perhaps it was the Master M. who once said to Mr. Judge: "Learn to look on yourself with the complete impersonality of an utter stranger, and do not be led into either anxiety or remorse." Anxiety and remorse are serious leakages of spiritual force. Anxiety is the flowing of force towards some imaginary event in the future; remorse is the same towards a past event. They deplete the man's courage and power to deal with the full force of his nature with the NOW. Perhaps that is why the Lord Christ said, "Let the dead bury their dead, follow Me." And the Voice of the Silence says, "Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences, look not behind or thou art lost." To have all our forces concentrated upon the present moment is the duty of the occultist, says H.P.B. This complete attention is the beginning of the power of concentration and contemplation. The Master K.H. quotes Ecclesiastes: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

So awareness means to be intelligently aware of why we are doing or thinking anything. And this awareness must be without praise or blame. To blame ourselves, to castigate ourselves, is no more praiseworthy than to castigate others. To praise or blame means personal judgments, and all personal judgments are imperfect. The Lord Christ told us not to judge, but He also said that if He judged, His judgment would be just. Now why? Because He came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. A perfect judgment can only be made by our diviner selves. "He is thyself; yet thou art but finite, and liable to error. He is eternal and is sure. He is eternal truth." Until that is possible, the Master K.H. advises us to "err on the side of mercy."

I think we should look on our three-fold self, body, emotion and thought, as a good workman looks on his tools. He does not think he is his tools, nor does he praise or blame them for their condition. If he has no time he does his best with them as they are. If he has time he sits down and sharpens them. To identify ourselves with our tools is to run the risk of self-centredness or becoming that frightful thing called a prig. Let us remember the words of H.P.B.: "He who thinks himself holier than another, he who has any pride in his own exemption from vice or folly, he who believes himself wise, or in any way superior to his fellow-men, is incapable of discipleship."

All this gears in with what Krishnaji has said about the acquirement of virtue. I have always felt that an acquired virtue is not a real one. The really virtuous man is totally unconscious that he is anything of the sort. I have in my possession an outline of meditation that H.P.B. gave her special group. One day I must write it out for you all. She got them to meditate on UNITY, the One Life, both in terms of space and time. This kind of meditation, she said, gave one the immortal courage of the true self, and also induced an attitude of mind to all existing things which was neither love, hate, nor indifference. A man was different in external activity to each because in each the capacity alters, but he was mentally the same to all. With the increasing equilibrium and constant calm there was greater ease in practising the "virtues", which are really, she said, the outcome of wisdom, for benevolence, sympathy, justice, etc. arise from the intuitive identification of the individual with others, although unknown to the personality. It also induced a perception in all embodied beings of limitation only, and therefore criticism without praise or blame. I have always felt that there is no such thing as sin, only lack of growth. I remember that Dr. Hastings in his theological dictionary says that there is no such meaning as we associate with the word "sin", anywhere in the Bible. The Hebrew word translated as "sin" in the Old Testament does not connote anything blameworthy whatever. It is as if an archer shot at a mark and through lack of skill went wide of the mark. The Greek word, translated in the New Testament as "sin", means taking a crooked step, off the true path.

When I went my first voyage, to India, long years ago, a young missionary sat at my table. He was talking to me one day about the Indian people amongst whom he worked. "I cannot get these people to have a sense of sin," he said. I think they have something better, a sense of the mystery of life. And H.P.B. also says that vanity and remorse are sins of too much egocentricity. I wish I still had an article she once wrote about interfering with life. As far as I can remember she said that we interfered with the life processes by over-doing things (you will remember the Greek "nothing too much"), by not developing evenly but lopsidedly, by attaching undue importance to many things, etc. You know good and evil, virtue and vice, are only two of the "Pairs of Opposites" under the play of which we have attained self-consciousness and power of choice. They are neither of them eternal. "God" is beyond both. To be attached to evil is to bind yourself, so says the Tibetan scripture, with chains of iron; but to be too much attached to virtue is also to bind yourself, this time with chains of gold. One will bring misery, the other happiness, but the Real Man is beyond both. Another saying of H.P.B. comes to my mind. "The eyes of wisdom," she wrote, "are like the ocean depths. There is neither joy nor sorrow in them: therefore the soul of the occultist must be stronger than joy, and greater than sorrow." She also says in that same writing that it is through the alternations of the pairs of opposites that we come to a knowledge of ourselves, and that discord, from which springs suffering, is the shadow of life whose law is harmony. That suffering she calls the "Teacher, the awakener of consciousness." Isn't that wonderful? And the poet Keats said something similar. He wrote to a friend: "Do you not see how necessary a world of pain and trouble is to school an intelligence and make it a soul?" The ancient Irish said of a man who suffered much "That man is making his soul." Well, this is a big question. We cannot all achieve such heights. But meanwhile be as happy as you can; forgive yourself and others, and remember that one day all will be well.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd