

## COMMENTS ON "LIGHT ON THE PATH"

By Elias Gewurz

When does one become a Master? When one has learned all the lessons that earth has to teach. How does one learn all these lessons? By submitting to all the experiences natural to this sphere without repulsion when they are painful and without attachment when they are pleasant. Thus, taking things as they are and letting them all deliver their message, the period of schooling is shortened for the disciple, and his entrance upon the higher stages of the Path begins earlier than would have been the case had he allowed the various qualities of his constitution (called *gunas* in the East) to play havoc with his desire nature, or to otherwise detain him.

There is a saying: "When the disciple is ready the Master is ready also." When the disciple is ready means that he has arrived at a stage when he can listen to that voice which has been called "the Voice of the Silence," because we only hear it when we have passed through the silence and accustomed ourselves to live and move and have our being in it.

The first four rules of LIGHT ON THE PATH show us how to pass to the silence safely. The rule we are considering is the third: *Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters, it must have lost the power to wound.*

There is a little story of an old Rabbi, a great teacher of the KABALA, whose first few words when rising in the morning were: "Heavenly Father, may I during this day, and until I again close my eyes in sleep, not be made the instrument of judgment against any brother or sister of mine." At first sight it seems as if this is just a common prayer for help from outside, but it is not. Its scientific foundation is the same as the one underlying the precepts in the Hall of Learning which, as you know, are all truths founded in Nature. In our earlier days, when we used to pray in the old-fashioned manner, the object of our prayers appeared to be to make us good; but later on, when we learned to know the true inwardness of things and the purpose of human life, we found that many a thing which sounded as a religious threat was, in reality, a statement of fact inherent in the nature of things.

Now when the Master Hilarion caused to be written down this rule, that before we can speak in the presence of the Great Ones our voice must lose the power to wound, He did not mean to give us a good bit of advice with a promise attached to it, that if we are good the Masters will listen to us. No more did the old Rabbi mean anything of this sort. The idea both had in mind is the everlasting truth written in the very heart of the cosmic law. That law determines that on every plane units shall be used for the improvement of their species. We see this law governing the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, but it generally escapes our attention that it also holds good in the human kingdom. Nature in her vast domains uses individuals and entities to further the growth of the collective bodies of which they are the units.

Continual progress is Nature's aim, and on the human plane she achieves it by making every man his brother's keeper.

The feeling of repulsion that we experience at a wrong or careless act of a fellow human being is Nature's safeguard against the recurrence of a similar act. She put us where we are in order to eliminate the possibilities of wrongdoing. But now there are various ways and means of achieving that end. Punishment is one way, and instruction is another. On the lower mental level reaction is so quick and violent that it punishes both the wrongdoer and him who is the witness of wrongdoing, but on the higher mental level, and on the planes beyond it, where the spiritual consciousness is wide awake, reaction is of a reflective and deliberate character, and can select the *mode* of its response to any form of discordant action.

This principle was known to the sages and teachers of the past, but the cycle of evolution did not admit of its universal application. In this century, however, we find it percolating slowly into the social conscience, so that even in state prisons it is found to be better policy to make the confinement of prisoners remedial rather than vindictive.

Now we, as students of the Wisdom Religion, realize that there must be an exact correspondence of these happenings on the outer plane within the interior regions of our collective soul life, of which our social structure is but a temporary and transient expression. We see Nature using individuals as instruments to carry out her behests, and while so doing refining both instrument and materials. On the plane on which Those we call Masters work there is no room for violence, or for anything like it. Correction there is by means of loving instruction only. As the Theosophical Society is, so to say, the training-ground for future disciples, Those who watch over it find it necessary from time to time to communicate to us some of the rules governing life on those exalted planes. LIGHT ON THE PATH is such a communication, and the rule we are now considering is the one destined to regulate the relations between individuals aspiring to follow in the footsteps of those Holy Teachers who have learned all Their lessons in past eons of evolution.

Apart from the reaction to wrong which takes actual form by punishment, there is a finer and subtler mode of reaction known as criticism, or judgment. To have lost the power to wound, our capacity to criticize and judge must have undergone the same change as the social custom of punishing crime is gradually undergoing. Our very way of looking at things must change. To students of Theosophy this should be easier than to those ignorant of the Ancient Wisdom. We know that the personal life is an illusion, and that this whole existence is simply Maya created by Nature in order to evolve the true Self. We should not find it hard to see that the tendency to wound, whether it be by thought or word or deed, is one of the deceptions practiced upon us

by external Nature prior to the awakening of our true Selves. It is *she* who makes us resent wrong and repel the wrongdoer. Our true Self knows no resentment and is free from repulsion. In days to come it will be as inconceivable to criticize a spiritual failing as it is today to criticize a physical one. Even at the present time well-brought-up children would not laugh at a blind man or at a lame one, nor would they make fun of the deaf and dumb; and *yet*—does it ever occur to us that whatever the misbehavior, crime or vice of a fellow man may be, if it awakens in us any other feeling than love and pity it is because we are not yet well-brought-up children on the plane of spirit?

When the sixth root race arrives there will probably be hospitals for criminals and nursing homes for vicious people, and they will all be treated with the same loving care as we now treat those who are sick in body. It is to prepare us for this stage that LIGHT ON THE PATH has been given to us. *Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters, it must have lost its power to wound.* To realize this rule in its fullness means to be free from the tyranny of Nature and, instead of being unconscious instruments in her hands to chastise and to give pain, we become teachers and helpers and healers, and exercise mercy instead of judgment. Every time we are called upon to act we are faced by our trial, and it depends upon our attitude whether the doors to further progress *shall* be opened to us.

The first of the vestures we have to lay down at the entrance to the Temple is that innate tendency to judge and to criticize, because it is a loveless proclivity of the old Adam, and within the Temple there is no room for that which is loveless. Therefore the great Masters of the inner Wisdom warned us that before our Voice can be raised in Their presence it must lose the power to wound. So long as it wounds man cannot teach, neither can he help. Those who wish to become helpers of the race must not be instruments of judgment, and that is why the old Rabbi, the teacher of the KABALA, prayed every morning, immediately after rising, "Heavenly Father, may I during this day, and until I again close my eyes in sleep, not be made the instrument of judgment against any brother or sister of mine."