

HAMSA

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Friends and Companions,

It may be well for us all to ask ourselves earnestly and dispassionately where our deepest interest resides and what it is that polarizes our most characteristic thoughts, feelings and behavior, individually and in groups. In order to clarify points which are highly important and practical I offer in the following paragraphs remarks which may be food for real thinking and self-investigation.

All the things which command man's vital interest can be primarily divided into two categories: personalities and impersonalities. In the first category comes first of all oneself; then human beings who are considered personally and intrinsically as human beings; lastly all living entities or objects to which are attributed for particular reasons the character of personalities — as, for instance, pets, loved objects, etc.; and also cosmic forces or principles considered as personalities.

Most people are really interested only in themselves. It may be a very "low" form of interest involving greed, sensuality, material ambition, pride, etc.; or it may be a very "exalted" form of interest in "spiritual" self-development, self-purification or fulfillment. But, in any case, the aim is to expand, gratify or perfect oneself as an individual human being, as Mr. or Mrs. So-and-So.

As we meet other human beings we become attracted or repelled by them. In this drama or play of human relationships the most important factor for us is usually ourselves; we are interested in others for what they give us. We consider them as our possessions or as means whereby we learn the valuable lessons of experience. But here and there we find persons who are really interested in human beings *as such*, who are fundamentally altruists, acting, feeling, thinking, in terms of the other's fulfillment, pleasure and happiness, — even at the expense of their own individual growth and satisfaction. This does not mean that in a subtle way there is no self-satisfaction in giving of one's self unstintingly, but merely that the altruist is deliberately and essentially more interested in others, regardless of their relation to him, than in himself.

This truly humanitarian attitude is often described as being "impersonal," because the true interest resides in a human being as a human being, good, bad, repulsive or attractive as he or she may be. I would rather call it super-personal or spiritual, because here the interest is still on the human being as a living being, even though it does not matter what the particular characteristics of this being are. The person still deals with personalities, in spite of the fact that he does not care *how they affect him as such*.

Another extension of this category of "personalities" is found in the religious man's or mystic's interest in a personal God, or in divine Persons,

Prophets, Masters, as may be the case. The devotee has shifted his normal interest in himself to one in a superior being, who may even be considered somewhat his greater self, or spiritual Father. But the interest is still in a personality, a living being, remote or dim in outlines as he may be.

What is then left for the category of "impersonalities?" Ideas, forms, principles, institutions. There have been men whose entire lives were energized by one idea, who devoted all their interest to the building and development or preservation of an institution, of a principle. Scientists, statesmen, philosophers, inventors, creative artists — and, in general, *civilizers* — come often under this category. This does not mean, of course, that they have no personal interests in some human beings or in mankind in general (mostly as an "Idea"); but it means that they are interested in these human beings mostly (if not exclusively) in so far as they are related to the work for the idea or cause; in so far as they can be agents for the propagation and incarnation of the idea.

If you are given a difficult social job to do and you need to hire men to help you with the work, you are interested in them for their ability to perform the work — but not for their personal lives as such. The center of your interest in them is their relationship to the work, their worth and meaningfulness in terms of the work. Thus we can speak of an *impersonal* interest. Even if that might mean: how much the person may serve you or arouse inspiration in you, — still if you consider yourself fundamentally and perhaps exclusively as a servant of the idea, your relationship to whomsoever enables you to serve better this idea is, strictly speaking, an impersonal one, because in that case you become merely an intermediary and the person serving you is, through this service, serving the idea. I used the term "service" to appear clearer, but the term "vital relationship" would be better, because more general.

If, having been given a task to perform, I need to train people to cooperate with me in carrying it through, I must of course take into consideration their personal idiosyncrasies. This may involve a relationship in appearance as "personal" as any other which I enter into in my strictly private life. Yet the fact remains that my vital interest will not be in the person as a person but as a potential agent in carrying the work through. *The center of the interest remains the work.* Likewise, if a man is vitally interested, first and last, in an idea it will happen that in working out this idea he will deal with other people, perhaps intimately so. Yet his relationship to them will remain centered in and ruled by the idea. In which case his interest in the persons will be "impersonal." But one cannot have an impersonal relationship to any human being or even object unless this being's or object's usefulness is considered, essentially if not exclusively, in terms of an idea which holds one's vital interest.

What I said of ideas is true as well of institutions, like the Church, the State, the Party. They are impersonal entities, which are fundamentally the embodiments of ideas. To preserve and develop them is the vital interest of many men. Other persons find their center of interest and relationship in ideas before they become manifested in institutions and concrete forms. They are creators rather than preservers. They may be themselves *incarnations* of the idea, avatars: an idea, a principle of relationship, a philosophy become flesh. We speak of the Word become flesh; but is there not behind the Word, the Idea of which the Word is the first manifestation?

Normally men are interested mostly in personalities and perhaps, to some slight extent, in impersonalities. But even when there is an apparently vital interest in an institution or an idea, the man considers them in terms of his own development or needs rather than *in themselves*. He is loyal to his Church or his company as if they were extensions of his personality. Whereas the true "Civilizer" considers his own being and personality as agents or embodiments of the idea; which is just the reverse.

It is true that a human life usually contains a little of both types of vital interest. Perhaps this should be so in order to constitute a balanced life. But what counts is where the emphasis lies. It is also to be remarked that few women can ever be predominantly interested in impersonalities. They may devote their lives to the man who is a servant or incarnation of an idea. But rarely do they consider their relationships to men, or women, in terms of the idea itself. They see the idea through a personality rather than personalities through an idea. They may become utterly devoted to the idea, but the first motivation, at least, came to them through a personality.

It is for this reason, above all, that the life of occultism proper has been largely reserved for men. For the true occultist, in opposition to the devotee, deals with impersonalities, with ideas and principles first and last. He is the man of a work. He sees personalities which he encounters through the realities of this work. This does not mean lack of compassion or kindness. But it means a crystalline quality of being, a gem-like quality, that radiates light more than ordinary "human" warmth. And, of course, it may also mean cold fanaticism and heartlessness on the shadow side of the picture.

Here again we may think of the perfect human being as man-woman. But in such a being the 'woman' is devoted to the 'man' who is an embodiment of the idea. The woman-element brings "warmth of heart," but the man-element is the crystal-form which is the manifestation of the idea. The 'man' is the Destiny. The 'woman' makes it glow. But the glow is subservient to the Destiny; the energy pours through the form, instead of the form being wrecked or tossed about by the energy gushing forth as torrential emotion,— the most mystical form of love included.

This relationship man-woman, when manifested in two individual beings, is the basis of the ideal conjugal state — a normal state for normal people at this time of human evolution; but one which will necessarily decrease in significance as women's lives begin to emphasize a truly vital interest for impersonalities, a *direct* interest and not one *via* a particular personality. At present this "impersonal" attitude is most of the time a self-delusion, the result of which is the chaotic condition of most conjugal relationships.

As the true "impersonal" attitude becomes generalized among women a new technique of human relationships will have to be evolved. The essence of the woman-element will have to manifest in the lives of men without being called out entirely by the feminine beloved in a bodily form. The "beloved" will have to be found within — as the Sufi mystics well knew, and the essence of the woman-element will be known as creative power, the power to bear forms of beauty and significance radiant with the glow of the Idea. For the glow that is womanhood is born of beauty and motherhood.

D. R.

Reconsecration

*Thou singing All, Thou all-embracing arm
Which sowed the marching stars in crystal space
As earthly sowers fling the golden grain,
And now the heavens watch as tenderly
As they the earth —*

*Thou whose sacraments at morn and eve
Are chants of moving light across the hills,
Whose benediction is the rain on forest floors —
Thou who purifies a wounded world
With cauterizing crashes of white light,
And yet can grieve when any sparrow falls —
Thou who sleeps among the very stones
And wakes within the wood-thing's startled eyes
To act at last in radiant human guise
Self-cognizant of self and self-contained:
String now my harp, to sing Thyself to Thee.
For I have found Thee in another world
Outside my own.*

*There is thy universe, and mine, and hers;
For all thy children build but from their own
As Thou givest them resource.
So there are worlds to each.
How shall I sing her world?*

*See Thou the fleet shy mind
Which runs the rarest courses of Thy cosmic maze
To laugh unharmed upon Thy open heart.
Caress with light the sweet patrician head
Where curling tendrils dance so formally;
And around the fragile petals of her flesh,
Set Thou, where e'er she walks,
Thy unseen guards.
Inform with steel the slim remorseless hands
Which yet can lift to Thee another's heart
Bowed down by all the evil of the world.*

*And now, a last and lightest boon,
Though everlong withheld from this, thy son:
When to the evening sky I lift my head
In adoration of the life which does not die,
When in the even-smoke of little fires among the hills
My prayers also rise,
Send Thou remembrance of her grave sweet face.
And when at last this curious race is run,
This half-enchanted battle whose red hue
Is not our own,
May I discern among the final mists of thought
A hand whose touch beat one note with my own.*

MICHEL BERNARD.