

San Fernando, Calif.,  
Mar. 29, 1930.

Mr. Carl E. Gatchell.  
Des Moines, Ia.

My dear Brother:

It is a great satisfaction, indeed, to see you taking such a deep interest in the philosophy and life of the Path. Young and unattached men like yourself have special opportunities. Usually people have to go through some severe experience, perhaps when they are well on in years, to lead to the opening of consciousness to inner values, and often this turn is made only after the previous life has left scars which more or less cripples future functioning. So those who desire the Life spontaneously without having to pass through the severer experiences have a real advantage, provided they follow it up with persistent effort.

Any really vital effort in the direction of spiritualization of our race consciousness will, sooner or later, attract the attention of the unseen Enemy of such work. Then all sorts of attempts will be made to destroy it. To offset this there is also unseen protection in so far as the general Karma of the work is concerned. There remains, though, the individual weaknesses of the students growing out of their personal Karma, and these represent chinks in the armour, as it were, through which the Enemy can strike. The result is that under such conditions the negative display on the part of a given individual becomes extraordinarily accentuated. But on the positive side this principle also works so that effort put forth in the positive direction by any student will have more power than will be normally his. So long as there is a nucleus of three or more that remains unshaken, no work of this kind can be destroyed.

Looked at in the deeper way we should all feel encouragement from your recent experiences in Des Moines. The blow was a hard one. Therefore it follows that the Enemy thought the work was of sufficient importance to put forth an especial effort against it. An unimportant work never arouses much opposition. Since a very fine body of you students stood firm and did not allow your judgment to be swept aside you, and with you the rest of us, have come out victorious. Remember that it is not numbers which is of most importance, but a body of solid students who are earnestly devoted to spiritualization of themselves and the race of which they are a part, and who are able to meet the issues that face them without being fundamentally shaken. When such a body becomes firmly consolidated then work with larger numbers becomes possible.

We should all strive not to confuse the persons through whom the negative blow came with the force that played upon them. They were simply weak and thus opened the door. It is very important that we guard against resentment. Remember that all this experience affords opportunity to build discrimination.

Of course, you may call upon me for any help I can give in further spreading the study and teaching. You will find that other doors in your own consciousness will open through this work that you are doing.

There is one suggestion I should like to make, but remember that it is a suggestion and not a substitute for your own judgement. It is not in general wise to stress too much physical body preparation. This has its place but it is subordinate, and many students by giving it too large a place have neglected points of considerably more importance. The most important thing of all is building the ethical motivation, that is, the power to forget self in larger interests like serving others. Sometimes you have to get at this indirectly because some people shy at ethics, but they need it more than others. So with a beginning student we may in general say that the first step is to show that in the philosophy and practice there is that which brings a higher order of happiness. Then having shown this, show also that to secure that happiness one must destroy the sense of separateness, and one of the best ways to do this is to practice thinking and acting for the good of others. Some will follow this, then, to the extent of doing unwisely for others, such as taking away necessary problems for their growth. When that time comes then that problem should be taken up, but the first thing is to build the habit of thinking unselfishly. Later comes selflessness.

It is also of almost equal importance that the students get well grounded in the philosophy. This leads consciousness out of the concrete material to the universal or spiritual. It also gives them a basis for understanding life intelligently.

These two things are of most importance. Now part of the ethical discipline is building of self-restraint. This is where controlling the appetites comes in. But the rule of moderation is all that is required save for the cases where one is prepared for very special discipline. Alcohol and the hypnotic drugs are, however, to be carefully avoided because they have the power of awakening psychic powers negatively and thus seriously hinder the positive work. But so far as diet goes, though there are individual exceptions, the general rule is not to deviate too far from the current dietetic practice of the people who make up the environment. Where this rule has not been followed over-sensitivity has resulted, as a rule, and the result has been a too heavy negative impairment for the students to stand. It is a mistake to try to practice while living in the world those parts of the training that belong to special groups working in a carefully chosen environment in seclusion. And for most of us in this incarnation our largest field of service is in contacting other men and women where they are and thus spreading the Light. We are in a position to do what even the Masters cannot, and in the face of the present world-need it is this particular thing that we can do which is most needed. This task is a sort of standing as an Antahkarana, or Bridge, between Their Consciousness and that of the world. This may sometimes involve a certain sacrifice, in the case of the student who could go beyond the point where the outer contact remains possible. But he may love men well enough to wait for a later Day, in order that a much needed labor may be performed now.

We are looking forward to the time when we may have the pleasure of your company here in the West.

May you be victorious and find the "Soham" in "Hamsa".  
In brotherly affection,