

Memorial Tribute to Sherifa

Assembly of Man Students
January 14, 1960

Peter: Today, being the 14th day of January 1960, for us students is a day to commemorate. Heretofore we have paid tribute to Sherifa by some sort of greetings personally or otherwise; but since she is not with us on this physical plane in her physical form any longer, each of us wish to record on tape some words of gratitude in her memory. Murray Gregg will now preside and call on each student for their contribution. Murray.

Murray Gregg: Thank you Peter. Well, this being Mother's birthday and commemoration of her life with us, it seems fitting that we do stop for awhile and think of her, think of her as she was, think of her as she meant to us in the times past. I am sure, even though she's not here in the body, our good thoughts, sentiments, and the love we express, at least their essence, will go to her in some place wherever she is. Mother was a great soul, greater than we can ever know, at least from this viewpoint, and her life was a great sacrifice, more too than we can ever know, because she was the builder, the transformer. And she left her mark upon the group—I mean by that the order itself, and the members of the order—that never can be erased. She's with us in our documents. She's with us in the thousand little things she has done that we remember, and also in those little mementos she gave us. And she always will be with us. And though her passing did leave a void, that void can be filled by our thoughts and our intents to make her more of a living presence, or make what she stood for more of a living presence in our lives. She earned in that a great reward, but I know that if you were to see her now, you'd find her as busy as a beaver, not enjoying the rest that she could have had, but trying to carry on the work that she started here, now afraid never completed to her satisfaction. I'd like to have the power to visit her now, wherever she is, and say hello and thank her again for what she has meant for me. Now, Maybelle, did you have a few words you might just say at this time?

Maybelle: Is the Truth here tonight? I think that if anyone could ask any member of our group that has known Mother intimately for a number of years what is the thing that you remember most about her, would it be the great love that she had, not only the love for people, but the love for animals, the love for flowers, growing things. How often have I seen her go up to a flower and speak to it and caress it, stop and tell how beautiful it was? How few people do that? And regarding her children, she loved each one; and she loved each one because each one had a different flavor for her. Each one brought something different to her. And from that contact, she got more from life, and of course the student got a great deal more. There are many incidents that I might have mentioned, but during the last few years of her life I was with her quite frequently on weekends. I have a great love for poetry. The Mother has a great love for poetry. She was handicapped and she couldn't read, but I could, and so very frequently I would spend an hour or more reading to her just, not from great poets but just these little homey poems that I had in a book I was very fond of. I brought it with me and left it at Headquarters in

an area that I could pick it up and read it whenever I wanted to. Mother enjoyed it very much. She not only enjoyed it because she liked the poems, but she enjoyed it because she liked the sound of my voice reading the poems to her. She said that she got much more from the poems because she knew that I loved them. She could tell because when I was reading it. So I think that, as I say, one of the things that most of us will remember will be the great love that she had, and tonight I want to thank Mother for the nice things she has done for me, the wider vision she has given me, the greater enjoyment of life that I have as a result of it; and wherever she is, I wish her a Happy Birthday.

Murray: Thank you Maybelle. That was nicely put. Now, Bill, do you think you'd like to say something now?

Bill: On this Mother's birthday we have the opportunity of expressing in some manner our . . . In anything we can say in the Mother's praise seems so inadequate for all the great things she has done for, I know for myself, and for all in the group, so I thought tonight I would give a little resume of how I come to be in the Order, I mean how I come to meet Sherifa and Dr. Wolff. Sometime in 1943 or '44, I was working in a defense plant and in the department over which I had supervision of a few people there was a lady who was interested in homeopathy and we seemed to talk the same language to a certain extent, only I was the one interested in what we were learning. Her and her husband knew the subject quite well and we become quite good friends. And through them I learned they had known Dr. Jervis, and Dr. Jervis knew Sherifa and Dr. Wolff, so I decided that sometime I would make a contact with the Wolffs. And I had put it off for, oh, a long, long time, months and months, maybe a year or so, and then one Saturday I phoned their home and they were there, but they were just there for a half hour period on a trip down to San Fernando to pick up a part for their tractor they had been . . . at that time on the ranch near Lone Pine. I talked to them a while, but seemed mostly the Mother. Yogi was not in the forefront of the conversation. And then Yogi came more into the conversation and Mother retired a little bit, and soon Mother spoke up, and with a smile on her face, and she said, "I think we can be of help to you." And they said that when the group classes started in the fall they would let me know; and they did by letter on November 18, 1947. And on November the twenty-third of the same month, I attended the first meetings at Headquarters. And from that time on about a year later I was initiated into the group and it's been a wonderful experience all the way through, and for which, Sherifa, I thank you for all the help. And I'm sure we will all meet again sometime. Thank you.

Murray: Thank you Bill. Now, Peter started us off. What he said was short and to the point. I'm sure Peggy will speak at much greater length . . .

Peggy: . . . rather short. Today I believe Mother would have been 84 years old. A year ago at this time she was still in the physical form on this plane. Now she has passed through that mysterious door. We can conjecture, wonder, reason, dream of what the other side is like but we who are here must live and work mainly with what we know. If we live as wisely and lovingly as we know how, we feel sure that the other side will be illumined for us. Mother has done much in showing and teaching us how so to live. We students are gathered here tonight to express some of our thoughts and feelings in commemoration of our spiritual Mother, Sherifa. It is obvious that we would not be together now if we had not known and loved her. She it was who founded The Assembly of Man and particularly gave as her gift to the Assembly the Second Degree work. We all

know that Mother stressed Truth as one of her great facets. Consciousness was another of her passwords. She often would say, “Consciousness, I want to be conscious.” I feel certain she is aware of our gathering here to pay special tribute to her. Of compassion and courage she was a living symbol—a victorious life in every sense of the word.

Murray: Thank you Peggy. We heard some beautiful thoughts expressed, some heartfelt thoughts, and I am sure, as you said, that Mother is here tonight looking at the flame, love and aspiration in each heart, perhaps being elated, perhaps not, but I’m sure she was here. Thank you.

Peggy: Doesn’t Peter have something more to say?

Peter: Well, yes. I wanted to say that unfortunately the other two members of our group, Harry and Fay Newman, are under the weather due to perhaps this little epidemic that has spread through the city of Los Angeles. Perhaps at a later date they too can add to this tape some of their thoughts even though they wouldn’t be on the same day, but even though we commemorate this because it was her birthday on this physical earth, every day is a birthday and every day it a day of initiation. No question that what she left with us is so great that we’ll never, never forget. It’s something that one cannot forget. So, I, too, say to you Mother, where ever you are, Happy Birthday!

Students: [Singing Happy Birthday.]

Peggy: That was good.

Murray: You’re up now.

Fay: Tonight I was thinking about the first time that I met Mother. We’d come from Chicago and we met Yogi and Sherifa just at the bottom of the hill as we were going up to the ashram. And I remember that Mother put out her arm and she said, “My darling, I’m so happy to see you.” And it was such a beautiful experience. I hadn’t—the only contact I’d had before that with Mother was just in letters and it seemed as if I had known her all my life and for many lives before that. But the thing that I most remember Mother for was her ability to teach, the way she was able to point out things in life that we should do in such a loving way that we just felt as if it weren’t at all being taught to us but as if it were the thing that we should have known all along; and this is a quality which I feel is very lacking now because in most of us we try to live a good life but the ability to express your life to some one else and have that person realize the value of a spiritual life is very lacking in our lives today. And I had prepared something that I wanted Mother to hear it and tonight I felt that—I thought of her as we were sitting here during the meeting and I think that perhaps it might not be a birthday celebration tonight but she might be with us. Mother once wrote in a book that some of her favorite words from the Bible was, “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable unto thee, Oh Lord.” And I’ve set these words to music and I would like to sing it tonight.

Fay: [Singing and playing the piano.] May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable unto thee, OH LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

Murray: Now, that was Fay Newman that played that beautiful piece that Mother requested preceded by her talk. Harry Newman, now, will say a few words.

Harry: It's odd that Fay started her discussion with the time that she first met Mother because I, too, felt that I would like to say something about the time that I first met Mother. Before we were to meet Mother and Yogi for the first time, we had been told how strict she was, how demanding she was, how closely she supervised the students she came in contact with, and I'm sorry to admit that there was a little bit of fear attached to my anticipation of our meeting. However, at the time that we did meet, the one thing that impressed me more than anything else was the deep love and sincerity that Mother manifested and seemed to give to all of those who were near her. During the years that I have been associated with the Assembly, I never failed to feel this love even when Mother was not around. Whenever there was need for any type of solace or any type of help, Mother seemed to manifest something that was so strong and so loving that it filled the entire atmosphere. When Fay and I felt our deepest need for help at the time of stress Mother gave forth a power that was surrounded with love, that came to us with love, and we have never failed to feel a very strong sense of gratitude that we have had this association and though Mother is not with us in a physical sense now, I feel that we both can honestly say that love and strength has not stopped and is perhaps stronger than it ever was before.