

Running Commentary Following Gertrude's Death

Part 18 of 53

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A second parenthesis.

Yesterday and this morning I have been in a process of reflection concerning my present incarnation—a sort of reviewing of it. It seems to divide primarily into two aspects and these are the domain of thought which occupied this incarnation and the domain which we might call life. These seem to be the two divisions of it.

Thought broke out about the age of 13 and has never ceased since. This has been a uniformly rich experience or imperience. The rewards of it have been positive and they brought to me the greatest thing of all, namely, the Realizations of 1936. I approached the problem of Realization in the very spirit that one would apply to the investigation of a particularly difficult mathematical problem, and it may be said that I spent 22 years seeking a definition and that when I found a definition, it took about five minutes to solve the problem and that the result of that resolution was the richest imperience of this whole lifetime. Concerning this domain of thought, I look back with no regrets. To be sure, the conclusions of thought may be pessimistic with respect to the processes in this world. But that is not a pessimism that touches the thought itself; it is a pessimism concerning that belongs to the side of life.

On the other hand, as I look back on the other side which may be called the side of life, it too has brought me substantial richness; but there is a difference, it is not a uniform richness as in the case of thought. The price which thought exacted was work, and often the work was delightful in itself, but there never has been exacted from me the price of pain for the fruits of thought. But it is not so with respect to the side of life. The defeats in one's effort in production of the means of life are part of the pain of life, but more than that, life has expressed itself in the domain of the affections—the affections particularly for representatives of the other sex. And from this there has come a great deal of richness to be sure, but also, repeatedly, the pain of loss. I may say concerning that which belongs to the side of life that the price exacted is suffering. And one wonders sometimes whether in the end the delights of life cost too much. The delights of thought have cost very little, only work, not suffering; but the delights of life, as I found it, have cost much suffering.

Those whom I have loved dearly are now all gone away from this domain. To be sure there is a deep metaphysical sense in which we may say we are never separated, but this is tenuous, more or less theoretical, and not immediately felt. The separations, the breaking off of a life relationship, is pain so far as the experience of this domain is considered. And this has led me to reflect of late upon whether the cost of the values of life is not too high. The cost of thought is miniscule. The richness of its wealth is great at little cost. The richness of life is paid for by profound cost.

So I've wondered whether the choice of Shankara, the born ascetic, and of Kant, the greatest thinker in the West who lived essentially a bachelor life separate from all contact with the feminine side but rich in profound thought, is not their lives perhaps the happiest in the end? I don't know the answer here. This is a query that has been passing through my mind. I rather suspect that one must reserve his judgment until he realizes that which belongs to the other side of life, that which comes after the event which men call death. What may be in *kamaloka* and *devachan* when the two sides are added up, it may be that it comes out with a rich result. But if what we experience on this side were all that there was, then one might well doubt whether dipping into life here is worth what it costs.

The end of the parenthesis.