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ASSEMBLY OF MAN

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IN MEMORIAM



SHERIFA (MRS. SARAH A. MERRELL-WOLFF)
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As we approach the end of the second year of the passing of the one who was known to us as Sherifa, it seems appropriate to review and evaluate her significance for the ASSEMBLY of MAN and, beyond that, for the community at large. We shall, therefore, outline something of that significance so that, mayhap, our memory may grow into the consciousness of an undying Presence.

Sherifa, in her total personal character, manifested a rare combination of four outstanding qualities. She was an Activist, an Intuitive, a Compassionate and a Channel. In each respect she was outstanding, manifesting the strength of each, and also, in some degree the weakness which, in this world of duality, always attaches to every function or quality. We shall briefly review and evaluate something of each of these qualities as they were manifested in her life here below.

It was characteristic that wherever Sherifa was or went something always happened. Something was stirred or changed. That which took place might be wise or unwise from the objective empiric standpoint, but, in any case inertia (tamas) was transformed into activity. There might be resentment as well as ready acceptance aroused in the milieu, but always there was a change; a static condition which even might have been tending toward soddenness, became activated in either a positive or negative direction. One who came under this influence could well become hot or cold but he could not remain lukewarm. In the psychological sense, Sherifa was not a conservative, or one who says, "if it is not necessary to change then it is necessary not to change". Thus, psychologically, not politically, she was a radical.

The value and underlying wisdom manifested by this quality consists in destroying inertia which, when left undisturbed, tends toward death, in the essential sense. Even though the milieu was not wholly capable of grateful acceptance and anger was aroused, yet, even this was better than the downward settling of inertia. Under the impact of the reactions

often excited by her presence she suffered much, yet her courage was such that she always performed her office without counting the cost.

As an Intuitive, Sherifa was outstanding. Again and again she perceived in a way that was uncanny and, from the standpoint of objective consciousness, apparently quite impossible. She spoke and wrote in the brief categorical terms that are characteristic of the Intuitive. Much invaluable insight became available to those who attended her words. But the service rendered by the Intuitive is attended by certain very real difficulties growing out of the nature of the function itself. Intuition has been likened to a lightning flash descending from the Supernal Clear Light and illuminating a restricted zone of consciousness. It does not produce an objective continuum of knowledge. A partial knowledge which comes in this way may be supplemented by further intuitive Lightning Flashes until an effect has been produced that has been called in the Upanishads "massed lightning", but this is a reflection in discrete form of the Clear Light which, in its own nature, is a continuum. It is thus, as manifested, not the perfect Knowledge of its source. Further, Intuition in its own nature is not conceptual knowledge. Formulation, therefore, is either a conscious or unconscious transcription, and more often the latter. The infallible and, therefore, categorical character of the root-source of the Intuition is not present in the conceptual transcription, yet the categorical sense remains attached to the manifested product. Now there is much reason for doubting whether any conceptual formulation can be truly categorical. There are profound students of the subject who maintain that it gives only probable knowledge. But, in any case, authentic positive categorical knowledge in the conceptual sense would be rare. Thus there arises the question of how intuitive Insight should be received by the milieu. One point is clear, it should not be affirmed dogmatically by the latter. Rather, it should be accepted in the sense of a catalytic agent tending to arouse awareness in terms of the Clear Light itself.

Sherifa was pre-eminent as a Compassionate. She viewed her students as her children with the soul-progress of whom she was vastly concerned. Often this concern was manifested through rebuke or correction which frequently was not well received. Ordinarily, the human ego does not take kindly to rebuke. None the less, she persisted, not lacking the courage to face the reaction, though here she suffered much. Often she spoke severely when in reality she felt like weeping. But she did have her compensations when one here and there overcame weaknesses and advanced on the Way.

Of all her qualities that which was most rare was the functioning as Channel for supermundane Intelligence. In this world it is not hard to find those who serve as a medium of inframundane consciousness, but Channels for supramundane Intelligence are exceedingly rare. Her greatest value to her milieu lay in this function, yet few have adequately realized its worth. Yet this function exacts a price from the individual who possesses it that is more than a little severe. It requires a mind peculiarly organized and the sacrifice of certain more common mental functions. As a consequence, such an individual stands apart from others in a rather lonely place. Yet, for the melioration and transformation of those in the milieu she was completely willing to pay this price.

It is a privilege to have known her. She was a true Aristocrat and even a Royal person, not because of any artificial external status, but this she was because of Soul stature. May the labors she put forth in this world bear undying fruit.

Yogagnani, 1-15-1961

"Endeavor not to conceal your errors by words, but to remedy them by reproof."

"It is not so difficult to err, as not to reprove him who errs."

— from The Golden Verses of Pythagoras