

Diary Leaves

Human Essence

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

(Continued from a previous issue)

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The essential nature of people is fundamentally good. The first time this realization was fortified in me was during an experiment long ago with the extrusion of the subtle body.

My friend, a physician, had put to sleep a certain G, and, drawing out his subtle body, ordered him to send it into a house where he had never been before. By means of following his subtle body, the sleeper pointed out a series of characteristic details. Then he was directed to rise up to a certain floor of the house and to enter a certain door. The sleeping man outlined the details of hallway, saying that there was before him a door. Again he was directed to go further and to tell what he saw. He described the room and said that a man was seated at a table reading. Then he was directed :

"Approach and frighten him"
Silence followed.

"I direct you to go near him and
frighten him."

Again silence, and then, in a
timid voice—

"I cannot."

"Explain why you cannot".

"Impossible he has a weak heart."

"Then do not frighten him, but
as much as you can without
harm, make your influence felt.
What do you see?"

"He has turned and lit a second
lamp."

"If it is not dangerous, increase
your influence. What do you
see?"

"He jumped up and went into the
adjoining room where a woman
is sitting."

At the conclusion of the experiment,
we telephoned our acquaintance and
without telling him about the matter,
indirectly led him to relate his sensa-
tions. He said:

"To-day I had a strange experience.
A little while ago I was seated with a
book, and suddenly I felt some inex-
plicable presence. I am ashamed to
tell you that this sensation was so
sharp in its effect, that I had a desire
for more light. Nevertheless feeling
became so strong that I went to tell
my wife about it and to sit with
her."

Apart from the experiment itself, which so clearly demonstrates the causes of many of our sensations, one detail had in it for me personally an unforgettable significance. In earthly circumstances the man would not take account of whether some one had a weak heart. He would frighten, abuse, cause him evil, without considering any such thing. But the subtle body, in its essence is inclined towards good. As you see before carrying out the order to frighten there was manifested the consideration of sensing the condition of the heart. The essence of good whispered here that it would be dangerous to do harm to an already weak heart.

When, in their ignorance, people say: "Why these concentrations of thought, why these hermits withdrawing from the world? Why they are egoists and they think only of their own salvation", there is a great mistake in such a judgment. If even in the most ordinary experiment we could convince ourselves of the good and noble essence of the subtle body, if we saw that a thought of good transcended all commands, usually so unquestioned in such cases, then so needful are these thoughts of good. What simple yet touching solicitude is told in the simple reply about the weak heart. And right now there are not a few weak hearts, and who has the right to overburden them? Right now there are many mortal smitten hearts which could no longer hold up under a careless impact. And this will be murder just as precisely as

killing with a dagger, bullet or poison. Does not poison penetrate into the heart through an attack of malice? What an enormous number of murders actual, intentional, malicious in their prolongation, takes place outside the reach of any courts or penalties. To poison a man is inadmissible; this is right. But then why is it

possible to gnaw and tear the heart of a man? Surely if people would even sometimes, though briefly, reflect in the morning hours about something good, apart from their own selfish interests, this would be a great offering to the world.

Of course ignorant cynics will probably sneer, considering that in any case this thought is nothing more than a blade of grass in the wind. Any cynicism about thought, about the spirit, about intangible possibilities, will be a clear example of the grossest ignorance. When these ignorant ones, grinning maliciously say: "Whither should we, of small culture, plunge into an ocean of thoughts",—this will be said not at all in humility or timidity, but will be the expression of the ugliest arrogance.

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Often people dream in secret of encountering something, as they say in popular language, supernatural. Precisely as if in the greatness of nature there can be the natural, and as an antithesis, the supernatural. Of course this ordinary expression, found in popular usage, does not lead to a true cognition. But the root of the matter is this, that as soon as people have chanced to come in contact with even the beginning of such an unusual manifestation, they have fallen into such unrestrained heart palpitation, that the manifestation stopped short. It was suspended for the very same reason as in the case of the experiment related above. It has been clearly established that the uncultivated heart and the inexperienced consciousness cannot endure anything loftier than their trivial routine.

Very often certain inexplicable heart palpitations are spoken about. People attribute them to the category of sex or to inordinate work, or to some other excesses. But among these manifestations not a few cases would be found, when some beautiful wings have already touched someone expectant or unexpected, yet he at the first proximity to them suffered a mortal trembling. This too will so often be from the incompatible distinction between earthly language and the heavenly tongue.

So much good and compassion is contained in the simple consideration about the weak heart. If people, even in their everyday life would admit to themselves more often this humane thought about a neighbour's pain, about over-fatigue and weakness of his heart; then surely in this way they would become in many cases more humane.
