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**OUR FRIENDS AND ENEMIES**

Take then as much as merit hath in store for thee, O thou of patient heart. Be of good cheer and rest content with fate. Such is thy Karma, the Karma of the cycle of thy births, the destiny of those who, in their pain and sorrow, are born along with thee, rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions.

*—The Voice of the Silence*

HOW rarely do we think that we, in the past, have “chained” our enemy to ourself! He cannot avoid taking birth at the same time as we do and coming into contact with us once again, if not in the next life then in a succeeding one. Therefore, Mr. Judge asks us to make friends, not enemies, for future births.

How shall we win over our enemies and turn them into friends? First, by dwelling upon the thought that there are *no* enemies; no one can be our enemy. Even in the fight in life between the good and the evil, virtues can be gained and courage developed. Humility, compassion, unselfishness and the like often arise out of suffering and sorrow, and we grow in stature. Therefore we see, quite simply and logically, that enemies, trials and rebuffs are our teachers. A kind, too kind, mother who spoils her child with “kindness” is more an enemy of the child than one who trains the child in right living, right habits, right discipline, even though all this might appear galling to the child at his stage. So, our so-called friend is often in reality our enemy, and the reverse is equally true.

We have to learn that the first thought that springs to our mind with regard to the one who brings us trouble should be one of gratitude. The second thought should be one of regret that we have made it possible for him to be “an agent of evil.” Next, we must automatically ask how we can repay our debt to him. We have “chained” him to ourself through past actions; we must now begin to “chain” him by developing in ourselves the “truer realization of the SELF.” For that SELF is in him as it is in us. We have to search for

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it in him, seek out what is good in him and strengthen it. If we find this impossible then let us strongly refuse to engage in any and every *emotion* regarding him, and concentrate on what we can learn through what he has done to us. If even this is not possible to us at present, then we must *resolutely put him out of our mind*, which means that we must refuse to let any thought or picture of him or his actions enter the mind. Mr. Judge says we must put no one out of our *heart*. Emphatically true, but there is a stage when we must not let our *thought* dwell on such an one. We can think of him again later when our emotions are less involved.

All of us are a mixture of good and evil. The evil will go in the course of evolution, but the good will remain. We have therefore to try to find the good points in the evil man and strengthen them if we can.

But, whatever the evil done by him, *we* created the channel between him and ourselves. *We* gave him the opportunity to err.

Continue the same line of thinking and see that others give *us* the opportunity to err in a similar manner. They are tempters, linked to us by a certain degree of consubstantiality. If there were no consubstantiality between two persons, they would not clash.

There is no hope for us unless we look upon life, and the smallest as the greatest happening, as of our own making, and see that those through whom good or bad comes to us are *agents* only.

Our own vices must become our teachers; our own virtues need to be watched carefully lest they become our enemies. Pride and humility are opposites. Who am I to vent my anger on another, or reproach him!

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NOBODY has things just as he would like them. The thing to do is to make a success with what material I have. It is a sheer waste of time and soul-power to imagine what I would do if things were different. They are not different.

—DR. FRANK CRANE