

E

1: on **Egoism**

G. Mother, I have noticed that some people, when told something that is right, resent it and reject it simply out of a negative reaction.

G.G. This is why whenever I know something – from my own personal experience – that might help someone, I present it as coming from a third party. The reason I do that is to avoid offending the egoism of the other person and so prevent his negative reaction. Let us say that I know how effective a certain medicine is in the case of so and so. If I were to suggest it as my own idea to the attending physician, his reaction might be: “Now, why her opinion and not mine?” And he might refuse the suggestion out of pride. This is why in such cases I usually say: “someone in the U.S.A. mentioned that ...” or “I read somewhere that...” Then the other one accepts it at once; what is useful is done, and the sick person benefits from it. This is what I care about – not whether it was I who said it or not ... Unfortunately, such trifles are of great importance to human egoism.

k. Do you mean that egoism is related to disobedience?

G.G. Egoism entails disobedience. This is what caused the Fall of certain Angels. Even to this day, when you meet an egoist you will see that this person will not accept an opinion, an advice, or anything else from anyone. Quite often he will act even against his own interests rather than follow someone else’s suggestion...

2: on Human **Encounter**

G.G.: In principle, every human encounter has a great significance. We must not neglect a chance meeting, because we never know what may come out of it. This is why St. Paul says, “Remember to show hospitality. There are some who, by so doing, have entertained angels without knowing it”. All encounters are very important.

3: on the **Environment** during prayer

A.: Mother, I wanted to ask if the environment plays any role in Prayer.

Yes. Up to a certain point it does. Beyond this point however, it doesn’t. As I said to that Swami up in the Himalayas (note: in Uttar Kashi), who was choosing sites with fine views etc. “Swami, why do you choose such beautiful places, since when you pray you keep your eyes shut and see nothing but God inside you? So? What are you doing? Doesn’t a blind man pray?” He remained silent for a while and then told me: “You are right!” Perhaps out of politeness.

4. on God’s **Eternal Present**¹

G.G.: I cannot reflect on what is past, because I live in the present moment... Yesterday does not exist. Tomorrow belongs to God, as yesterday did. ... So, I keep quiet. In God’s Eternal Present. Not even a thought, nothing. “Take no thought for your life” says the Lord, “for I will take thought for everything” ... I put this into practice and everybody tells me: “What? You don’t even think that this may happen? That

¹ St. Andreas, Patission, Athens, 15-3-88

they may tell you to vacate the flat where you live? Or that ...” But, who brought me here? He will take me elsewhere... You know, by living in yesterday we delay tomorrow’s march. We cannot live in the past which does not exist, and so give it an existence it does not have. Let us say, we went through a sad experience and then we go on reliving it again and again. The same is true of tomorrow. When today we are filled with the notion and Existence of God, we are not concerned about tomorrow, because it is His. He says: “Take therefore no thought for the morrow.” We shall live the present day according to His Commandments, with His love, with our love, and we shall go on. And God will create “the morrow”, which is His. Still, we shall not be neglectful. We shall make a program. But if it fails, we shall not despair. Because this failure means that our program was not in accordance with His Will. However, to have a successful program, we should not wish for one thing today and for another tomorrow and for still another the day after... First, we should know what we want, then place it humbly at His Feet and, if it is according to His Will, He will bless it. Day and night our prayer must be: “Make Thy will evident in my life”. Anyhow, Eternity is God’s Eternal Present, in which the Saints live. This is why our Church tells us: “Today the Lord is born,” Today, the Lord is risen,” Today is the Day of our Salvation.

5. on setting an **Example**²

G.G.: Setting yourself as the good example for the other person is of the utmost importance. For what the other one needs is your example and silence and love. Nothing else. This is what experience has taught me, both for children and grownups – particularly for the grownups. If you happen to express an opinion, make a comment or pass judgment on whatever the other one believes or practices, you will be hitting straight at his Ego. And the Ego will not admit, even inwardly, that what you are saying is correct. The Ego does not want to be told anything by anybody else. Unfortunately this is so. Therefore, keep your silence. Do not say anything until you are asked for your opinion. The Lord has said it clearly, “Give to every man that asketh of thee.” On all matters. Are you asked for your opinion? Then give it. That is my experience. Love and silence: with these two I am so happy, so quiet, so peaceful. I cannot describe it adequately to you. It is Heaven on Earth. I wish for nothing else.

K.: Where did you learn all that?

G.G.: I don’t know. Still, I always understood that if you let a person talk to you, while you remain silent, then this person will open his heart and you will get to know him. This is the basis of friendship. Suppose somebody comes and tells you: “I have a splitting headache! I can find no relief!” At that time you may be suffering for a worse headache. If you say, “Wait till you hear about mine”, it is the end! You can no longer have any contact with this person. It is something that I see and hear all the time. The moment a mother starts saying, “You know, my child has this problem”, the other woman answers, Wait till I tell you about mine.” There can be no conversation that way. Because people have become so self-centered that their heart no longer has any place left for someone else’s troubles.

² K. Panoutsopoulou, Athens, 1985