

2 July 1912

*Which minds are nearest to me and what is my ideal work among them?*

Always, in one way or another, life puts in our path those who for some reason are near to us. Each individual creates his own environment according to what he is himself.

And, if such is our dominant preoccupation, all those whom we thus meet on our way are the very ones to whom we can be most useful.

For one who lives constantly in the spiritual consciousness, everything that happens to him takes on a special value and all is conducive to his progressive evolution. It will always be beneficial for him to observe his encounters, to investigate both the apparent and the deeper reasons for them, and, in accordance with his altruistic aspirations, he will ask himself what good he can do in each different case. And according to his own degree of spirituality, his action will always have a greater or lesser spiritualising effect.

If we observe at all attentively the causes which bring us closer to our kind, we see that these contacts occur at various levels of depth in our being, depending on our own special mode of conscious activity.

We can classify these relationships into four main categories corresponding to our four principal modes of activity: physical, vital, psychic and mental. They may have their play in one or several of these categories, simultaneously or successively, according to the quality and type of the manifestation of our activity.

Physical contact is compulsory, so to say, since it depends on the fact that we have a physical body. It inevitably occurs with those who have provided us with this body and with all

## Words of Long Ago

those who are materially dependent on them. These are the relations of kinship. There are also relationships of proximity: neighbourhood in houses, in the various means of transport, in the street. (I may remark here — and this remark also applies to the other three categories — that this relationship is not necessarily exclusive: this is in fact rare, since we are seldom active on only one plane of our being; what I mean is that the physical relationship is dominant over the other three.)

Vital contact occurs between impulses and desires which are identical or liable to combine in order to complement and heighten one another.

Psychic contact occurs between converging spiritual aspirations.

Mental contact comes from similar or complementary mental capacities and affinities.

Normally, if the predominance of one category is not clearly established — and this can only happen when there is enough order in our being to organise it in all its depth and complexity — we can and should give material help to those who are near to us for physical reasons.

With certain exceptions, material help is the best assistance we can give to the members of our family or to those whom we chance to meet in the street, in trains, in ships, in buses, etc.: pecuniary help, aid in case of illness or danger.

We should assist the sensitivity of those who are attracted to us because they have identical tastes, artistic or otherwise, by rectifying, balancing or canalising their sense-energies.

We can help those who by a common aspiration for progress have been brought into contact with us, through our example, by showing them the path, and through our love, by smoothing the way for them.

Finally, we must allow the light of our intelligence to shine for those who come close to us as a result of mental affinity, so that, if possible, we may widen their field of thought and enlighten their ideal.

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These various affinities express themselves outwardly in slight and sometimes subtle variations in the conditions of our encounters, and because our insight is seldom alert enough, these slight variations often elude us.

But to direct our action in the right way and reduce as far as possible the causes of our wrong attitudes towards our fellowmen, we should always investigate with the greatest care the numerous reasons for our contacts and find the category of affinities which binds us to them.

A few rare beings are close to us in all four modes of existence at the same time. These are friends in the deepest sense of the word. It is on them that our actions can have their most integral, their most perfectly helpful and beneficial effect.

We should never forget that the duration of a contact between two human lives depends on the number and depth of the states of being in which the affinities that bind them have their play.

Only those who commune with the eternal essence within themselves and in all things can be eternally united.

Only those are friends forever who have been close or distant friends from all time in this or other worlds.

And whether or not we meet these friends depends on the encounter we must first experience within ourselves, in the unknown depths of our being.

Moreover, when this meeting occurs, our whole attitude is transformed.

When we become one with the inner Godhead, we become one in depth with all, and it is through Her and by Her that we must come into contact with all beings. Then, free from all attraction and repulsion, all likes and dislikes, we are close to what is close to Her and far from what is far from Her.

Thus we learn that in the midst of others we should become always more and more a divine example of integral activity both intellectual and spiritual, an opportunity which is offered to them to understand and enter upon the path of divine life.