

## The Color of His Skin

Excerpt from [Changing the Feeling of 'I'](#).

Now, let me tell you a story. A few years ago in this city I was giving a series of lectures down near that lake - I can't even recall the name of the lake but it was some Parkview Manor was the place where I spoke, and in that audience was a gentleman who sought an audience before the meeting. And we went across the street into the little park there, and he said to me that he had an insoluble problem. I said, "There is no such thing as an insoluble problem." "But", he said, "you do not know my problem. It's not a state of health, I assure you; look at the skin that I wear". I said, "What's wrong with it; it

looks lovely to me". He said, "Look at the pigment of my skin. I, by the accident of birth, am now discriminated against. The opportunities for progress in this world are denied me just because of the accident of birth, that I was born a colored man. Opportunities for advancement in every field, neighborhoods that I would like to live in and raise a family I couldn't move in, where I would like to open up a business I couldn't move into that area."

Then I told him my own personal experience, that I came to this country. Well, I didn't have that problem but I was a foreigner in the midst of all Americans. I didn't find it difficult. "Yet", as he reminded me, "but that's not my problem, Neville. Others have come here speaking with an

accent, but they haven't my skin, and I was born an American" . Then I told him an experience of mine in New York City. If I were called upon to name a man that I would consider my teacher, I would name Abdullah. I studied with that gentleman for five years. He had the same color skin, the same pigment as this gentleman. He would never allow anyone to refer to him as a colored man. He was very proud of being a negro didn't want any modification of what God had made him. He turned to me and he said, "Have you ever seen a picture of the Sphinx?" I said, "Yes". He said, "It embodies the four fixed quarters of the universe. You have the lion, the eagle the bull and man. And here is man that is the head. The crown of that creature called the Sphinx, which still

defies man's knowledge to unriddle it, was crowned with a human head. And look carefully at the head, Neville, and you will see whoever modeled that head must have been a negro. Whoever modeled it had the face of a negro and if that still defies man's ability to unravel it, I am very proud that I am a negro." I have seen scientists, doctors, lawyers, bankers, from every walk of life seek an audience with old Abdullah, and everyone who came thought themselves honored to be admitted to his home and to receive an interview. If he was ever invited out, and he was, he was always the honored guest. He said, "Neville, you must first start with self. Find self, don't be ashamed ever of the being you are. Discover it and start the changing of that self".

Well, I told this gentleman exactly what Abdullah had taught me, that there was no cause outside of the arrangement of his own mind. If he was discriminated against, it was not because of the pigment of his skin, though he showed me signs as large as all outdoors denying him access to a certain area. The sign is there only because in the minds of some men such patterns are formed and they draw unto themselves what now they would condemn; that there is no power outside the mind of man to do anything to man, and he by the arrangement of his own mind, by consenting to these restrictions in his cradle and being conditioned slowly through his youth, waking into manhood believing himself set upon would have to

be set upon, but "no man cometh unto me save I call him". So then someone comes to condemn or to praise. They couldn't come unless I call them. Not a man called Neville, but that secret being that is not called Neville. The secret being that is the sum total of all of my beliefs , all of the things that I consent to, that form a pattern of structure, that secret being draws unto itself things in harmony with itself. Well, that man went away and wrestled with himself. He couldn't believe everything I told him, not that night, but last Sunday morning in the lobby, he came forward and we renewed the friendship. He took me next door to show me the fruit of this teaching.

He said, "Neville, it took me almost three

years to really overcome that fixed idea that I, by the accident of birth, would be a secondary citizen, but I overcame it. Now here is my office on Wilshire Boulevard. I picked this one not because it was the only one offered; four equally wonderful spots were offered me. I took this one because it had greater telephone facilities, but the others were equally good. Now here is my office. Now you couldn't judge my income from this office, lovely as it is. Everything is nice about it, but, Neville, this year I will net a quarter of a million dollars". Well in America that is still a fabulous sum of money. It would be staggering in any other part of the world, but even in fabulous America a man to net a quarter of a million is really up in the very highest of brackets. And that was the man that a few years ago

told me the whole vast world was against him by reason of the accident of birth. He knows now he is what he is by virtue of the state of consciousness with which he is identified, and the choice is his to go back to the restrictions of his childhood when he believed the story or to continue in the freedom that he has found.

So you and I can be anything in this world we desire to be if we will clearly define our aim in life and constantly occupy that aim. It must be habitual. The concept we hold of self that is noble must not be put on just for a moment and taken off when we leave this church. We feel free here; we feel that we have something in common, that's why we are here, but are we going to wear the noble concept we now hold of self when

we go through the door and enter that bus, or are we going to return to the restrictions that were ours prior to coming here? The choice is ours and the hardest lesson to learn is that there is no one in this world that can be drawn into your world unless you, and you alone, call him.