

Signposts from Dag Hammarskjöld

Quotes with page numbers from *Markings*

“He broke fresh ground because, and only because he had the courage to go ahead without asking whether others were following or even understood. He had no need for the divided responsibility in which others seek to be safe from ridicule, because he had been granted a faith which required no confirmation — a contact with reality, light and intense like the touch of a loved hand: a union in self-surrender without self-destruction, where his heart was lucid and his mind loving. In sun and wind, how near and how remote — how different from what the knowing ones call Mysticism.” p. 110 (1955)

“A young man, adamant in his commitment, walks the road of possibility to the end without self-pity or demand for sympathy, fulfilling the destiny he has chosen—even sacrificing affection and fellowship when the others are unwilling to follow him—into a new fellowship.” p. 69 (1951)

“I don’t know Who —or what — put the question. I don’t know when it was put. I don’t even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone — or Something — and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal... I came to a time and place where I realized that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one’s life would be reproach, and that the only elevation possible to man lies in the depths of humiliation. After that, the word “courage” lost its meaning, since nothing could be taken from me.” p. 205 (1961)

The brilliant notes of the flute
Are heard by the gods
In the Cave of Birth –

Sough of palm and beat of
wave
Joined in the anthem
From the land of snow

With a thrill of desire
His body sank, sun-drenched,
Into the salt wave.

Himalayan ice cliffs
Beyond the hills
of Vezelay at Easter...

Orgasms of bodies
On hot nights, lit by
flickers of summer lightening

Beauty. Goodness,
In the wonder’s here and now
Became suddenly real.

“Thou takest the pen — and the lines dance. Thou takest the flute — and the notes shimmer. Thou takest the brush— and the colors spring. So all things have meaning and beauty in that space beyond time where Thou art. How, then, can I hold back anything from Thee.” p. 118 (1955)

“In the faith which is ‘God’s [union] with the soul,’ you are *one* in God, and God is wholly in you, just as, for you He is wholly in all you meet. With this faith, in prayer you descend into yourself to meet the Other, in the steadfastness and light of this union, see that all things stand, like yourself, alone before God.

And that each of your acts is an act of creation, conscious, because you are a human being with human responsibilities, but governed, nevertheless, by the power beyond human consciousness which has created [humanity]. You are liberated from things, but you encounter in them an experience which has the purity and clarity of revelation. In the faith which is ‘God’s ‘marriage to the soul,’ *everything*, therefore has a meaning.

So live, then, that you may use what has been put into your hand... “ p. 165 (1958).

“To be free, to be able to stand up and leave everything behind – without looking back. To say Yes-“ p. 91 (1953)

“For all that has been – Thanks! To all that shall be – Yes!” p. 89 (1952)

“To say Yes to life is at one and the same time to say Yes to oneself. Yes – even to that element in one which is most unwilling to let itself be transformed from a temptation to a strength.” p. 92 (1953)

“You dare your Yes – and experience a meaning. You repeat your Yes – and all things acquire a meaning. When everything has a meaning, how can you live anything but a Yes.” p.125 (1956)

“In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.” p. 122 (1955)

Echoes of the Gospel of John: “...you are one in God and God is wholly in you...”

“...he lives with you and he is in you...” (Jn. 14:17); “I am in my father and you in me and me in you.” (Jn. 14:20); “He who lives in me and I in him, bears much fruit.” (Jn. 15:5).

“Not I, but God in me.” p. 90 (1953)

“*Before* Thee, Father, in righteousness and humility, *With* Thee, Brother, in self-denial, faith and courage, *In* Thee, Spirit, in stillness. *Thine* – for Thy will is my destiny. *Dedicated* – for my destiny is to be used and used up according to Thy will.” pp. 123, 137 (1955)

“Almighty... Forgive my doubt, my anger, my pride. By Thy mercy, abase me, by Thy strictness raise me up.” p. 217 (1961)

“Have mercy
Upon us.
Have mercy
Upon our efforts,
That we
Before Thee,
In love and in faith,
Righteousness and humility,
May follow Thee,
With self-discipline, steadfastness, and
courage,
And meet Thee
In the silence.

Give us
A pure heart
That we may see Thee,

A humble heart
That we may hear Thee,
A heart of love
That we may serve Thee,
A heart of faith
That we may live Thee,

Thou
Whom I do not know
But Whose I am.

Thou
Whom I do not comprehend
But who hast dedicated me
To my fate.
Thou –“ pp.214-215 (1961)

“Thou who art over us,
Thou who art one of us,
Thou who *art* –
Also within us,
May all see Thee – in me, also,
May I prepare the way for Thee,

May I thank Thee for all that shall fall to my lot,
May I also not forget the needs of others,
Keep me in Thy love
As Thou wouldest that all should be kept in
mine.

May everything in this my being be directed
to Thy glory
And may I never despair.
For I am under Thy hand,
And in Thee is all power and goodness.

Give me a pure heart – that I may see Thee,
A humble heart – that I may hear Thee,
A heart of love – that I may serve Thee,
A heart of faith – that I may abide in Thee.”
p. 100 (1954)