

Spiritual deepening circles

February 2020– Inside/outside

Supplemental Reading from Rainer Maria Rilke

In a 1903 letter to his protégé, the 19-year-old cadet and budding poet Franz Xaver Kappus, Rainer Maria Rilke writes:

You are so young, so before all beginning, and I want to beg you, as much as I can, dear sir, to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and learn to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, evolve some distant day into the answer.

And this, six months later, in response to a letter from Franz:

What I could say about your disposition to doubt or about your inability to bring your outer and inner life into harmony, or about anything else that oppresses you: it is always what I have said before: always the wish that you endure, and single-heartedness enough to believe; that you might win increasing trust in what is difficult. And about feelings: all feelings are pure which gather you and lift you up; a feeling is impure which *takes hold of only one side of your being and so distorts you. ... Your doubt can* become a good quality if you train it. It must become aware. Ask it, whenever it wants to spoil something for you, why something is ugly, demand proofs from it, test it, and you will perhaps find it helpless and nonplussed, perhaps also aggressive. But do not give way, demand arguments and conduct yourself thus carefully and consistently every single time, and the day will dawn when doubt will become, instead of a subverter, one of your best workmen, — perhaps the cleverest of all who are building at your life.