

THREE ASPECTS THAT PREVENT LOVING

Greetings, my dearest, dearest friends. God bless you. Blessed is this hour.

When I offer you blessings, what do these words mean to you? Do you hear them perhaps as mere words without meaning, without reality? Blessings have a very definite reality, my friends. If you were but free, really free of all your barriers, all the layers that prevent you from feeling, from living, and from experiencing life to the fullest, these blessings would be a reality for you. You would feel the actual stream, the current of love that flows to each and every one of you from a world of light and freedom, from a world of harmony and truth, a world of love. But this stream of love is often unable to reach and penetrate you. You may not perceive and experience it because the senses that are destined for such perceptions are dulled by your fears, shame, and urgent wishes, and by your defenses, all of them are based on error, confusion, and misconception.

How often have I discussed this in our times together! But all too often you merely hear but do not truly understand and experience my words. They can become real only if and when you find their particular truth within yourself. And, my friends, this cannot be done by intellectual deductions and findings, but only when you allow yourself to feel, to live through your emotions and thereby determine the specific misconceptions you have harbored all your life. Awareness of your untruth brings you much nearer to the love current coming to you from without and to the love current within yourself.

Within each individual there exists a well of wisdom and love. It is a treasure deep within you which can come to the fore only as you become aware of all those aspects of yourself that bar access to the treasure. You are accustomed to look for truth, guidance, and solutions to your problems outside yourself -- perhaps through wise teachings, through a helping hand. But the most reliable and realistic answers come from inside yourself. In order to tap the well, outside help is necessary, but it is valuable only if it succeeds in bring you to the inner source.

Apart from this path of self-confrontation, is there an additional way to help you tap the well? Yes, there is. You must seek calmness, outside and inside. Every day, enter into a meditation to become very still so that the inner noise that covers the well of wisdom and love makes itself precisely known to you. After translating this noise into concise thoughts, such meditation will finally bring out of that well of wise guidance warm feelings of love and affection and understanding, without your own urgent needs blurring the realistic perception of others.

If you want to disregard and bypass the inner noise of fears, shames, defenses, and urgent needs and come directly to the well of calmness, you will not really reach the inner treasure. You may think so, but this does not make it real. The momentary existence of the barrier and the noise has to be acknowledged in relaxed openness and then translated into meaning. That is the way, my

friends. Such daily periods of becoming calm, so as to determine the meaning of the barrier to the calm, will help you greatly, and this practice most definitely must not be neglected.

We have discussed before how harmful barriers are. The emphasis then was on yourself and not on you in relationship to others. Yet, as you know very well, your unhappiness and confusion is always connected with the difficulty of coping with your fellow-creatures. Therefore we will now use the knowledge you have gained about yourself through your work on this path and apply it to your relationship with others.

When you calmly observe your reactions to others, you are bound to become acutely aware of an inner tension, a cramped closing up. This prevents you from meeting others freely and openly, without restrictions. Then you cannot reach out without grabbing and without urgent demands. You cannot give without fear. When you are willing to meet others with love, then, and only then, can your life be really fulfilled, no matter how worthy your various activities may be otherwise. The fear says always, "But what about all the people who take advantage of such warm, loving feelings? If I do not guard myself and allow myself to feel, I will suffer." It is true that your inner well, with its wise guidance, its reliable intuition, cannot function when it is thickly covered with layers of untruth. By covering it even more thickly when you prohibit feelings, you do not open the well of truth within. So the remedy must be sought by allowing the layers that cover up this well to be penetrated by your conscious understanding.

When such profound communication with others, based on understanding your own blocks to the well of truth, does not take place, you are isolated. You cannot possibly be happy. We have discussed many aspects which prevent deep communication with others. Let us now discuss three further aspects which need deeper understanding, because they constitute an inner "no" to loving. As you will see, this inner "no" is not only due to fear of suffering, hurt, and disappointment.

The three aspects to be considered can be found in almost all human beings to some degree. Yet, one of these three aspects might be predominant while the other two may be of lesser importance. No matter how little you feel that they apply to you, look into yourself and closely watch your emotional reactions. When you translate them into meaning, you are bound to find that one or the other or all three of these aspects exist in you in various degrees.

The first aspect is a fear that you may be forced to do something you do not want to do if you allow yourself to feel as you naturally tend to. You fear that you have to sacrifice when you have no desire to do so or to give in when it is disadvantageous or inconvenient. You believe that the only way to safeguard yourself against the excessive, and perhaps even childish demands of others is by curbing your natural feelings, thereby cutting off the love current from within.

Conversely, you believe that if you were to allow yourself these natural feelings, you would be forced to give in. You see no other alternative. Hence, by seeing only these two alternatives, you undermine the organic process of emotional growth, manipulating your feelings in a most negative and destructive way, with grave repercussions in your psychic life and in your relationship with others. I name but two such repercussions: one is a deep-seated guilt for this deliberate prohibition to loving, and another is a subsequent lack of self-confidence and self-respect. To atone for not loving, one often does much more for others than one would ordinarily, and then as a consequence,

one is really taken advantage of. Since all you do is done without love, as a substitute for the love withheld, your actions do not remove your guilt.

This proves, once again, how you cannot help but wind up in the very situation you strive to avoid by false and unrealistic means, based on wrong conclusions. All the emotions that stem from the misconception that your real feelings will get you into trouble -- guilt, resentment for doing what you now do compulsively as a substitute for loving, lack of self-respect -- create confusion and make you incapable of coping with close relationships. You are either constantly involved in a negative way, or you withdraw and live in bitter isolation which, in turn, breeds frustration. These, then, are the barriers to your well of wisdom, love, and intuition -- the source of your true inner guidance.

How then does the situation look when viewed truthfully? It is very possible, indeed, to love without having to fulfill every demand, without having to give in. Is it not better to be selfish -- if that's what you wish to be -- in your actions, while still loving and feeling? Is it not much better and actually much less selfish than doing everything possible, but without loving? It is much easier to assert your rights and wishes, whether they are right or wrong, selfish or unselfish, if you love. When you do not love, self-assertion becomes very difficult, because your gnawing guilt either paralyzes you, or, if you manage to voice your objections, they will come out in a very hurting way. Your refusal to comply with a demand cannot really hurt another, provided you love. Therefore to disagree or refuse to comply will no longer be threatening. You can do it in a relaxed, easy, and unproblematic way. Your ability to love will make you feel more lovable and so you will be able to say "no" outwardly, because the inner "no" to loving and feeling has been removed.

All this does not mean that you should artificially try to force love where it does not naturally exist. This would be useless, as you know. Strive to detect that fine and subtle current, often at first quite covered up, in which you withdraw from your organic, natural feelings, stunting them deliberately, as it were. Once you come across this current and become more aware of it, you can let it go. The knowledge and understanding that the two alternatives of either forcing love or withdrawing from your natural feelings are not the only ones will stop the prohibition. You will gain a new freedom with the most joyful, strengthening, and liberating results.

If there are no warm, loving feelings to begin with, just see what feelings are there. You will find all the negative emotions we have discussed. These have to be acknowledged and understood, not pushed away or suppressed. When you understand them sufficiently, the warm, natural feelings of affection are bound to come out eventually. For these loving feelings are already in you. They do not have to be given to you. They are only buried under the negative emotions which do not allow the positive emotions to come to fruition because you harbor the simple misunderstanding that your natural feelings should not be experienced. Since this misunderstanding is not out in the open, it is not amenable to correction. This is why the misunderstanding has to be made known first. You have to see clearly why it is a misunderstanding. Then you can proceed. If you truly experience the flow of feelings as they come up, you will probably go through the following sequence: The misunderstanding causes the deliberate cutting off of naturally arising feelings; this in turn results in guilt, fear, uncertainty, anger, resentment, helpless rage, and confused fluctuation between giving in too much and being too severe. You have to fully experience all these feelings and confusions before you can actually feel the reality of the love in you.

At first, the love will manifest only occasionally, weakly, not dramatically. When it does, be aware of it, let it flow, and see what a wonderful effect it has on you and on those around you. For instance, their excessive demands may immediately diminish when they sense a love current coming from you. For their demands are often an unconscious, blind plea for love. Their demands are a substitute for what they really seek. Once genuine love is given, the demands are bound to diminish.

The second aspect is this: As you know from our work in the past, almost everyone has the wish to be accepted and belong to a symbolic superior world. When this seemingly superior world happens to be unfeeling, undemonstrative, or even tough, you do not dare to let yourself feel your natural feelings, for fear of being despised by the people whose approval you seek. This fear is especially strong when you have natural, warm feelings for someone you are convinced you should reject according to the imagined, or real, code of this superior world. If you do that, the damage you do to yourself has the gravest consequences.

Chances are that those people actually feel very differently from the way you think. Perhaps they would respect, like, and accept you much more if you were a kind and loving person who does not deny and betray the best in yourself in order to get approval. They may not be aware of these reactions, but since the unconscious currents are a reality, their response would prove this to be so. Only when you have the courage to be yourself can you find out the truth. For some, it takes much more courage to be their loving selves than their self-assertive, "strong" selves.

But let us suppose the superior world of your aspirations is actually the way you think it is. Does this not mean that those people are just as immature in this respect as you are? To emulate such immaturity cannot ever produce self-respect and certainty in your personality. All it can do is create self-contempt and guilt, which must rob you of the firm ground under your feet that only being yourself can provide. To simulate strength by betraying your real self, withholding love from the weaker ones whom you are supposed to reject, produces the same self-hate you feel as when you lack courage and self-assertion, when you submit in evident weakness. This pseudo-strength is, in reality and essence, just as weak as submitting. Those of you who belong in this category deny the best in you for the sake of approval. You deliberately set up a process of self-alienation by the simple act of discouraging your natural, warm feelings and artificially producing toughness.

Again, all this is not conscious. You may not be at all aware of these inner processes, but if you look closely at some of your reactions, you may well discover that what I say holds true for you. Perhaps you are aware of it already to some degree, but have never quite thought about it in these terms. To do so, to carry the significance of these reactions further, is bound to give you a more comprehensive view, and thus change these very childish attitudes. When you have the courage to be true to your real self, when you dare to love a person the "superior world" decrees you should despise, you will discover that the whole division of a "superior world" and an "inferior world" is an illusion. This discovery will set you free and give you a strength you cannot envision now.

For those of you who have not yet delved deeply into the labyrinth of your being, what I say might sound rather far-fetched, or even silly. But for some of my friends these words will help to dissolve some very crippling misunderstandings about life and people.

The third aspect of the inner "no" against loving may at first sound paradoxical. People who have this aspect predominantly have such a great need for fulfillment and love that non-fulfillment

presents a special fear and threat. Their "remedy" is a strong forcing current. Needless to say, this remedy is unproductive, even destructive. The forcing current prohibits a free giving of love. In its own devious way it causes an inner "no" to giving in a relaxed and calm way. It grabs and demands. Such a person wants to give, but does so compulsively, to have his or her demands fulfilled, not wisely and in sensitive awareness of what the other needs and wants. Therefore the giving is not free, nor is it genuine.

This type of person is often the opposite of the type I discussed before, who represses feelings. The two types often get into conflict with one another. The demands and the forcing current frighten away the other person, even if the demands parade under the guise of "giving."

Those who are starved and therefore terrified by refusal are blind to others. All they feel is their own need. They have no room for calmly looking at the other person and sensing the other's needs. The idea of being refused is devastating to them, yet they court rejection by their urgency. When it comes, all they experience is the confirmation of their worthlessness. Their distorted view prohibits a true evaluation of the situation in question, yet their defeat has nothing to do with their worthlessness. The other person's fears and problems may be as responsible for it as their own blindness when the world and others appear to them only in terms of their worth or lack of it. The subsequent powerful forcing current, employed to dispel the dreaded worthlessness, becomes then the means of confirming their worst fears.

The true remedy for those who belong predominantly in this category is threefold. First they need to face their lack of belief in themselves and find out the real reasons for it, such as their lack of loving which is often disguised by an over-eagerness to give for the purpose of receiving love as a child wants to be loved. Second, they have to find the distorted concepts and understand why they are distorted. Third, they must allow themselves to experience all the feelings as they come up in the process of their self-search.

Chances are that underneath the conscious urgent need, they will find a reason for prohibiting their real feelings for affection and loving. This may be so hidden that, offhand, they may deny it utterly. All they feel is their need to be loved which they confuse with genuine feelings of affection for others. The latter are much less urgent, much calmer emotions, not at all self-centered, the way the need is. These mature feelings exist, but they have been prohibited from developing and this must be made conscious. Repeated unfulfillment hurts so much more than it needs to because of a childish inability to stand frustration. Before fulfillment can come, the various steps I have outlined need to be followed through.

All this takes time. More disappointments may come, but now they can be utilized for the work and serve as wonderful means for discovering more about the self. In the meantime, what one can learn, in full awareness, is to swim with the tide, not to resist it by a wild struggle of your soul's forces. Maturity will come as you teach your soul to be able to stand frustration without repression or anger. This has the healing effect of bringing the pendulum into a more balanced position. Out of the overactivity of the forcing current, the wild struggling, a serenity is generated which brings the person closer to the state of being.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough that all the frustrated emotions, causing the urgency and the starvation, have to be allowed to simmer on the surface, and have to be translated into concise

meaningful words. In individuals of the "love-starved" variety another reaction exists that also has to be brought to awareness and faced. Sometimes, when the needs are fulfilled, the "love" wears off. This should furnish proof that what they thought was love is not love, but a starving need -- certainly a great difference! These people are as incapable of fulfilling other people's needs as those belonging to the other two types. They feel infringed upon by others and back away from them. Recognition of this fact is of primary importance. In this hidden countercurrent, they are just as afraid to let down their guard as are the repressive and the "superior" types, only their fear is covered up by the manifest need. All they can see is what they want, or what they fear will happen to them, nothing else. They are torn between these two alternatives, interpreting every outer happening in terms of either needing or fearing. In neither alternative do they see the reality.

Now, my friends, this is food for thought and material for further work, for each and every one of you. I venture to say that with most people a combination of all these three aspects exists in some way, but with many one aspect is quite obvious and not difficult to verify. There is no one who is here, or who is reading these words, for whom one of these aspects is not immediately applicable. If you work with these aspects, you cannot help but register further results. These lectures are directed to those levels of your being where such irrational attitudes exist. They are not addressed to your rational thinking.

And now, my friends, let us turn to your questions.

QUESTION: Can you elaborate on the difference between pity and compassion? As one gets older and sees so many of one's friends suffer, what is the proper attitude?

ANSWER: I will be glad to give additional help on this question, if I can, although this topic has been repeatedly discussed in the past. However, if I were to say what the right feeling should be in theory, it would not help you at all. All you would then do would be to further manipulate your feelings and superimpose attitudes that are not genuinely yours. You know that this cannot possibly be a healthy procedure. It is important for you to acknowledge what you really feel, whether right or wrong.

In addition to what I said about the difference between pity and compassion, I now want to present an explanation indicating why one feels pity instead of the much more productive feeling of compassion. Whenever you are crushed by the devastating emotion of pity, which inhibits your strength and the help you can give, you can be quite sure that you are somewhere negatively involved. For instance, pity may be a projection of your fear that the fate the other suffers may come to you. Or you may feel guilty about something you are not aware of.

A universal attitude is that of feeling a certain satisfaction at another's misfortune, not only about not having to bear that same fate, but also about the other being punished and having difficulties. This is, of course, entirely irrational, but the attitude contains considerations such as this: "If others have hardship too, I am not so bad, I am not the only one who suffers, therefore I am glad that others suffer too." This reaction often produces such shock and guilt that it is entirely repressed and overcompensated by a weakening, unproductive pity. The pity, then, makes you feel absolved because in pitying you suffer with the other person, though in a destructive way.

If you can discover and experience your genuine reactions, recognizing that you are a human being with many unpurified emotions, with many childish, selfish, and shortsighted attitudes -- and learn to accept them without condemning, condoning, or justifying yourself -- then you can understand what misconceptions are behind these unreasonable attitudes. Then they will gradually dissolve, to the degree you truly understand them. Pity will transform into compassion, and to give constructive help to suffering people will be possible, whether through action, or just by communicating your true feelings.

QUESTION: In the past you discussed the close connection between cause and effect. Are we then to believe that we are living in a world of causality where identical effects stem from identical causes?

ANSWER: Of course this is a world of causality. As for the identical causes producing identical effects, that depends on what exactly you mean by identical. What may appear identical causes may, in reality, not be identical at all. The act may be the same, but the individuals are different. Let us take a crass example, like murder. Let us assume that two people commit murder, even for the same motive. Yet, their backgrounds that led to these feelings, that led to this action, as well as their overall development, their personality and character traits may be different. Their reactions after the act may not be identical. Consequently the effect -- not necessarily the outer effect, but the effect upon the two individuals in question -- may not be at all identical.

But if you mean that this law of cause and effect is to the finest detail an organic, infinitely just and harmonious process, a balancing factor in the entire universe, so exact in its workings that error or injustice is utterly impossible, in that sense identical causes stem from identical effects.

Why it should be so hard for human beings to accept that they live in a world of causality is not easy to understand. When you really look at the world and the events in it, you are constantly confronted with the living reality of cause and effect. In the smallest daily issues cause and effect operate, but you are so used to it, it is so much part of your daily life that you take it for granted. You have lost the ability to see the operation of cause and effect with the newness that is necessary in order to derive deeper understanding.

Were humans able to see what happens constantly, it would not be so difficult for them to realize that the same law must exist also in a wider context. They would not assume that a different law operates merely because in one case cause and effect are close together, while in other cases they are separated by time. Time has no bearing on it; it only discloses the cause or the effect to you. Sometimes human beings can see both. Sometimes they can see only one or the other. If people were to follow through logically and see the ultimate consequences of this phenomenon, they would realize that their inability to see either cause or effect does not change the fact that cause and effect are interdependent.

When you uncover cause and effect sufficiently in your own personal life, then what is called faith, but what in reality is an experience of a truth, comes into being. Then it is no longer a question of superimposing doctrines or postulates. Various happenings and results have puzzled you when you saw no cause for them. By getting to know yourself better, you discover causes for many effects. You discover the connections as indisputable facts. This gives you not only freedom and strength, but also shows you causality in its true light. You then know that the same law of

causality must hold true also where you cannot know the causes whether in your own life, or in the lives of others, or in the world, or in creation generally.

My dearest friends, may these words fall on fruitful soil. May you all come a tiny little step closer to seeing your own barriers that shut out truth, love, and reality. For that is the most constructive step toward removing them. The human error is always that you want to deny the barrier's existence and push against it, which only strengthens the block. You want to remove it without seeing what that obstacle really is. Once you become aware and understand what it is made of, you realize that it cannot be pushed away by force. It can dissolve only gradually, depending entirely on the degree to which this barrier is understood.

Again a warm stream and current of love is reaching toward each one of you. Make yourselves inwardly calm. Detect your fears, your guards, your shames, your embarrassment, your resistance against feelings. As you do so, this stream will be able to reach you much better. It will send some aspect of its force into your hearts where it will fill you with a light, a strength, a hope. Be in peace, be in God!

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