

DESIRE: CREATIVE OR DESTRUCTIVE

Greetings and blessings for all of you, my dearest friends. In order to finally discover your divine center, it is necessary to go through all the layers that separate you from it. The misconceptions, false images, negativities, illusions, pretensions, defenses, unexperienced and therefore unassimilated feelings and confused thoughts are one thick crust. This crust is the most difficult part to penetrate in the voyage to your innermost core. It contains many aspects that you have to learn to recognize, approach and accept in the right way. Once you have penetrated all the layers, you will gradually have to dissolve and assimilate the accumulated blocks. When you have learned the right approach to these aspects of yourself, which you would rather not know, then you will come upon other levels of your being that still separate you from your innermost divinity. Or, to put it differently, other tasks are waiting for you on your path to total self-awareness, which is the absolute prerequisite to unification with the central divine core.

One such task is to achieve clear perception and connection with the soul movements. You can also call them the energy streamings of your feelings and attitudes -- the positive as well as the negative ones.

Every attitude, every expression, every feeling creates an energy movement in your system -- a specific soul movement. I spoke of this a long time ago and I will now do so more specifically. We will discuss the energy movement of wanting, wishing, desiring -- its meaning, its significance in the total expression of the human personality, and its importance in the self-creating process.

Self-awareness, whether it concerns awareness of inner problems, confusions, one's faults and negativities, or the awakening of the ever-present ongoing divine voice inside you, requires the art of focusing within. You must also practice focusing to detect the presence of those soul movements even to know what you really feel and think at any given moment and which soul movements those feelings and thoughts create. Such focusing implies, of course, some ability to concentrate, but this is not too hard to learn.

Every now-moment is an expression within you and creates a specific soul movement. Observe these movements. Do you feel a tightness? Is the movement blocked and stopped completely because of the tightness, or is it absent in its expression? Is it hard-edged, pointed, disharmonious and raw? Is it a smooth, enlivening, soft flow?

When you feel good, happy, open and alive, the soul movements are very smooth and soft, yet in this very softness lies an enormous strength. When the movement is stopped, you feel dead. When the movement is hurtful, raw, edgy or pointed, you feel anxious, upset, apprehensive. Every soul movement is the result of specific feelings, thoughts and attitudes, and you must focus your attention on them, too.

Let us now deal with the soul movements of wanting, wishing or desiring. Everything that exists in human expression can harmonize with the universal forces and creative laws. Your soul movements can be healthy and therefore creative and thus further creation, or they can be distorted, sick, life-defeating, and thus cause further destruction. Desire in itself is never either right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable. It all depends on its expression. Therefore one cannot always say that having desires is a hindrance to spirituality.

Eastern philosophy expounds on desirelessness as a necessary state. This is only partly true. It is untrue in the sense that if desire is absent, it is impossible to create. You create by visualizing a new state of being. To do so, the desire must exist. How you express this desire will determine the outcome. If the desire is too strong, too tight, if it evolves out of a misconception that implies any kind of a "must," the desire is no longer a desire, but a demand, a threat, a forcing-current that says: "I must have or else I will perish, will suffer unfairly and unbearably, will be unfairly treated." This voice indicates a threat containing the message that if life does not yield the demanded result, it is bad and unfair, which you proceed to prove by the dismal results you are about to create. This can hardly be called a desire, but it often parades under the guise of being one.

Positive, real desire is a prerequisite to the self-creating process. For example, if you do not want a new and more loving state of being, you will have no motivation to attain it, no incentive to overcome the often apparently insurmountable resistance, not even a visualized possibility of such a state. To create a new state of personality, soul movements must flow forth. Like the wind they carry the creative seed.

Desire is the blueprint we act upon. To distinguish between the creative and the destructive desire currents it is very important to understand what I mentioned before. Whether the desire flows without a "must," or whether it contains the forcing current can be easily ascertained in yourself, and even in others. As it is with many other spiritual verities, the concept of desire contains an apparent paradox: The right kind of desire must become so relaxed that it does not have to be fulfilled. If you can strongly desire, without a trace of a "must," but with an attitude of "I can live without my wish being fulfilled, I can go through the pain of not having it and not be annihilated, defeated, unhappy," then the power of such a desire is truly limitless. The energy that is released through the absence of fear and of manipulation even on the subtlest of levels is enormous. In other words, your very desire must also be desireless.

Now, how can this be? How can you come into a state in which what you want and consider desirable you can also readily give up? How can you deeply long for something and yet accept the pain of its unfulfillment? This seems a tall order, my friends. Yet all evolution of the human soul moves inexorably toward this state. The need for it is already evident on the outermost level -- the previously mentioned crust in which all the negativities reside.

One of the main reasons for the existence of this crust is the refutation of pain. Evil resists what is and thus splits itself off from itself, forever fragmenting consciousness into "smaller," or more limited, particles. They can all come together again through the great act of acceptance, or non-resistance in the right way. Such an act requires a methodical path, with help at every step of the way, for it is easy to veer off into distortions and misconceptions of truth.

If you are frightened of pain, together with its derivatives, such as frustration, disappointment, rejection, and believe that you must not experience these feelings, then you will have an overly strong desire to have no pain, or you will deny the pain. A must-current is set up in you that says, "This I must have" -- no pain -- "This I must not have" -- pain. Any such demand is a creative block. It hinders the very fulfillment you insist upon most. The tightness, the saying "no" to something -- whatever it is in the universe -- the false, cramped "no," creates a harsh, tight soul movement, a movement that is full of sharp, cutting edges which are pointed and hurtful. Both wanting and not wanting can be harmonious and soft or disharmonious and pointed.

It would be a mistake to interpret acceptance of all feelings and experiences to mean that you should not refute certain experiences or actions that people commit against you. I wish to make this clear. For instance, if you insist on not having any pain, you will be so disconnected and tense that you will not even recognize, let alone deal with, others' negativity and see when their machinations could abuse you. The very pain that this causes makes you blind to it, therefore you react blindly; you can neither feel the true pain, nor assert yourself. Conversely, if you do not fear pain, you can stand up for yourself and will not allow others to be deceitful, destructive, dishonest and abusive in their subterfuges and games. You cannot fear confrontation when you can experience pain. You will assert yourself if your pride permits you to be wrong -- if you can suffer that pain. So, you see, my friends, not only is it untrue that acceptance of pain implies a masochistic, sacrificial weakness and submission, but quite the contrary. True resilient strength and fearless self-assertion rest upon the ability to accept what is and to deal with it without manipulating facts and feelings to be what they are not.

The conviction that pain and disappointment must not exist creates a very tight and pointed "no" movement. The "no" is not a decided, harmonious, firm strength that grows out of true dignity and self-value. It is a pseudo-strength that comes from the weakness of insisting on having it your own way: "This I must have, that I must not have."

If you can proceed to the point of view that no experience on earth can come to you that you are not capable of handling, a great deal of tightness will dissipate, make room for creative movement, and also eliminate a lot of fear. The moment you decide this, the experience you are involved in begins to take on a different aspect. The very act of saying "no" with a weakness, a tightness, an unhealthiness prevents creative receptivity. By the same token, the grabbing, insisting, self-righteous "yes" equally prevents creative receptivity. Both yes and no can be healthy or sick, desirable or undesirable, good or bad. Desire is determined by the underlying attitude which, in turn, determines the nature of the soul currents.

Creative receptivity arises out of a soft, relaxed, flowing movement. The pain of taking in something undesired affords you the possibility of transcending this dark point and finding the light behind it. The pain of accepting the absence of something desired affords you the possibility of transcending the emptiness and finding the hidden fullness behind it. This is the law of life. Only when you embrace it do you set the creative movement into action. You must be careful to accept and/or renounce in a spirit of trust, however. Doing so in bitterness and hopelessness is again not the right way. Then the harsh soul movement may not be on the surface, as it is when a strong, pushy, forcing current exists, but it is still there, hidden behind the surface acceptance.

Everything seems to hinge on how you react to pain -- be it the pain of experiencing something, or experiencing the lack of it. Can you trust pain as you trust the rest of the universe, as the universe is supposed to be trusted? If you distrust pain you distrust the universe, for you cannot split off any single existing experience from the rest of creation.

Both the movement of yes and the movement of no must become open and sweet. Even if the movement is firm, it can still feel sweet. It can be an expression of your trust or it can be an expression of your fear. It can be an expression of your love or it can be an expression of your selfishness. All these possibilities determine the nature of your movement, the nature of how you desire, and the nature of how you approach painful experience. Your approach to pain immediately and directly determines either creative receptivity and positive desire or greedy, distorted desire from a fearful rejection of life's pattern.

As your meditation practice grows in the course of your development, turn inward to detect the nature of your soul movements. Determine what they mean, what feeling and attitude they represent, what thought pattern and type of desire they express. This is a new dimension to your approach to your inner person. As you become more adept in recognizing these soul movements, such recognition will be effortless and quite natural, without deliberate focusing and concentrating.

This new emphasis doesn't imply that you are beyond your negativities, but that you are sufficiently aware of them. The very negativities that still exist will be seen in a new light and in another dynamic expression. For example, you may look into existing resistances and problems contained within your desire. How strong and firm is the desire? Does it flow smoothly or is it a tight, pushy current? If the latter, what does that mean? What does this way of manifesting your otherwise laudable desire hide? Or is the desire overtly weak and even absent? Can you feel a movement of this desire in you? How do you feel it? If the movement is right, there is always confidence and trust that it will come to pass, even if not right this minute. If there is an area in your life where a strong desire has still not been fulfilled, in spite of ardent attempts on your part, investigate how tight this current is. The very tightness may hide an important clue to what you need to know and eliminate before fulfillment can come, or the tightness of the current may reflect your lack of trust in the universal, creative process of which you are a part. Then you must deal with this attitude and see the meaning behind it.

To follow through with this important work, to be able to tune into your inner movements, you have to cultivate the ability to concentrate. This is not as difficult as some of you may think. All it needs is some goodwill and a few minutes' exercise daily. I have given concentration exercises several times over the years.

Now I want to highly recommend a new approach to dealing with your negativities after they are expressed and after you learn to take responsibility for them. I see among you, my friends, especially when you are together for protracted periods at the Center, that there is still a good deal of acting out. This must be vigorously discouraged. There is no necessity for it. Not doing so need not lead back to repression and denial. Often you admit your behavior but simultaneously engage in it as if the admission invalidated the acting out. Don't you see that acting out refutes self-responsibility as much as total denial does? You are all ready to assume responsibility for your actions and to choose the right action.

Humanity as a whole is so deeply conditioned by denial and acting out, with projecting and blaming others, that it seems at times impossible for the individual not to do that. Admitting the impulse but not acting on it requires inner prayer, commitment to the truth and the goodwill to let God within you fill you with the action and knowledge, even before the feeling can follow suit. When you act out, you must still believe that you need a scapegoat, and you are still too frightened to look fully at yourself. You are still threatened by what you may see. In the last analysis the fear is always unjustified, no matter how difficult it may first be to give up a cherished illusion about the self. No matter how ugly the traits may be that gradually ooze out of you, they are never the whole truth of who you are. You cannot fail to see objectively the temporary little ego in its ugliness without losing heart about your whole person.

You cannot fail to become receptive finally to the beautiful, eternal you, if you fully commit yourself to seeing and accepting both the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, the divine and the evil. If you wish to own up to both, you will find both -- and will come to see that the good is real and eternal, while the bad is only a temporary aberration and not the final you. You must make up your mind to take in all of yourself, for better or for worse, whatever that may mean. You must ask for guidance to do so with a constructive and realistic attitude that leaves room for many possibilities and never denies life. If you so ask, this attitude will come to you from within.

Begin to focus on both the ugliness and the beauty. See that the very fact that you own up to the ugliness comes from the beauty. For only the divine infiltration of the self makes the self capable of even wanting to be in truth, of having the courage to do so, of undertaking the wondrous journey into the inner world and learning the many difficult lessons. The very act of revealing all parts of the self deserves your greatest self-respect, which you can pay when you stop projecting the unacceptable on others or using the ugliness of others to hide your own.

I suggest that you also help each other. When you are very tempted to accuse the other person, ask yourself, "What is ugly in me and what is ugly in him or her?" And then ask, "What is beautiful in me and what is beautiful in him or her?" But really mean these questions. Leave the questions open and wait for the answers until you are receptive enough for them to reveal themselves to you. Do not merely mouth such questions while you want to condemn others and yourself and find negative pleasure in doing so. If this is where you still are, then this is what you must own up to. Admit that you do not want to see the good either in the other or in yourself. Being right is really no substitute for seeing yourself as good, you know!

But if you have worked your way through the mazes of your crust to where you can already genuinely want to know both sides, then you will soon witness the unitive principle unfold in you. You will discover what you now know in theory but still cannot practice, as is evident in your everyday acting out, when you get involved with others negatively. What I see happening is that even if you no longer blame others and exonerate yourself, even if you admit your own negativity, you often do so because this is how it is supposed to be now, but you do not emotionally experience this. Emotionally you still have a stake in blaming others and exonerating yourself. This always means that inwardly you totally blame yourself, but do not wish to see this self-blaming behavior. The more you blame yourself, the more you are hooked on blaming, and the greater your investment in doing so must be. In that battle it is always either the other person or you who is right.

As you ask to recognize the good and the bad in you and in the other person, and open your heart to desiring that you see both the good and the bad in you and in the other, you will truly experience the unitive principle. You will understand how the negativities of both you and the other interact and how you both have beauty and goodness, as well as those negative, destructive traits. This acknowledgement will eliminate hate, either for yourself or for others.

In spite of the great progress you have made so strikingly and often so visibly in the various life manifestations -- in the changing of your life inwardly and outwardly, the changing of your personality -- the acting out, the desire to blame, still exists quite strongly.

Let us apply what I said in this lecture about right or wrong desire to the topic of blaming. You desire to blame because you do not desire to see yourself. Such unhealthy, distorted desire, contrary to the truth of being, creates a constant threat that the untruthful, the unrealistic will sooner or later be exposed. Therefore a protective, defensive tightness is put into both desires, which influences the soul current. Approach the current of these desires, feel it. As you feel the tight, strenuous current of the need to blame, experience and observe this drama truly as an observer. You will then become intensely aware of the soul movement that is created by your desire to blame.

As you take full responsibility for the desire to blame, open your heart in a relaxed, new way to welcome the desire not to blame. In doing so, you can see truth in you and in the other. Seeing truth never leads to blame. When you blame, you are never in truth, even if what you see is partially true. The others may actually do and be all the negative things you attribute to them but they cannot be totally bad, for if they were, you would not blame. The same applies to you. Seeing truth does not mean that either you or the other will be totally exonerated of all negativity. But a truthful understanding of the negativity is possible only when you are totally engaged in and committed to seeing yourself truthfully. The moment you do so all guilt, self-rejection and self-blame disappear. You know this, for you have all experienced this miracle. The same applies to the other person. The truth you fail to see may not be something terrible at all, but because you unconsciously believe that it is, you do not risk even wanting to see it.

Seeing truthfully may elicit anger, but never blame -- and that is very different. Become attuned to this very special difference. Also, when you truly desire truth, you can wait for the truth to reveal itself. You can wait in a state of flexible desire, in a stream of soft trustful waiting, for the truth to reveal itself as a gift from your innermost being. For when it comes, it will feel like a gift. It is so revealing, so conciliating, it sets you free in all ways. You may experience pain, but the nature of the pain is very different from the pain that comes from the cramped space within you.

Once you enter into this process, your desire can make room for the visualization and creation of a new state. Desire and receptivity, totally free from any "must," do not refer to an expectation of external forces. Rather I am referring to an inner creative process of suddenly seeing reality in a new and sharper light. This sharp light is the grace of truth and love that is freeing and yet safe.

So, I say, my dearest friends, create a new desire for a new inner state in which you let go of all "musts." You can easily feel every "must" as a very definitive movement in you. And every "must" defeats healthy desire, therefore not allowing fulfillment. For a short period under certain circumstances, the "must" may appear to yield results. This is the temptation. However, the results

are not only short-lived, but usually lead to a crash, to a severe disappointment whose origin cannot be pinpointed -- which is the worst part about it.

The ability to tune in to the soul currents of desire, right and wrong, healthy and distorted, relaxed and creative or tight and uncreative, is a focus you need to concentrate on very specifically to expand into new states of consciousness and experience. As you learn to do so, the rewards will be like flowers blossoming within you.

The love of the universe is in every cell of your being, in every particle of your psychic processes. Try to know and feel this. Try to tune in to this.

As you grow on this path, my dearest ones, you will increasingly learn to concentrate and use energy in certain directions. This will come out of the organic process of your purification and will not be a superimposed attempt to direct energy willfully. You can entrust yourself to this organic process from the core of your being. Listen to it, become receptive to it. You are all blessed and loved.

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