

LOVE, POWER, SERENITY AS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES AND AS DISTORTIONS

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless each one of you. Blessed be this hour.

I would like to discuss three major divine attributes: love, power, and serenity, and how they manifest in their distorted forms. In the healthy person these three principles work side by side, in perfect harmony, alternating according to the specific situation. They complement and strengthen one another. Flexibility is maintained between them so that none of these three attributes can ever contradict or interfere with another.

However, in the distorted personality they mutually exclude one another. One contradicts the other, so that they create conflict. This happens because one of these attributes is unconsciously chosen by the person to use for the solution of life's problems.

The attitudes of submissiveness, aggressiveness, and withdrawal are the distortions of love, power, and serenity. I would now like to speak in detail about how they work in the psyche, how they form a supposed solution, and how the dominant attitude creates dogmatic, rigid standards that are then incorporated in the idealized self-image.

As a child, the human being encounters disappointment, helplessness, and rejection -- both real and imagined. These feelings create insecurity and lack of self-confidence, which the person seeks to overcome, unfortunately often in the wrong way. In order to master the difficulties created, not only in childhood but also later in life as a consequence of resorting to wrong solutions, people involve themselves more and more in a vicious circle. Unaware that the very "solution" they undertake brings problems and disappointments, they try even more strenuously to pursue what they regard as the solution. The less successful they are, the more they doubt themselves. The more they doubt themselves, the more they stray into the wrong solution.

One of these pseudo-solutions is love. The feeling is, "If only I would be loved, everything would be all right." In other words, love is supposed to solve all problems. Needless to say, this is not so, especially when one considers the way this love is supposed to be given. In reality, a disturbed person who adopts such a solution is hardly able to experience love. In order to receive love, such people develop several typical personality trends and patterns of inner and outer behavior and reaction which tend to make them weaker and more helpless than they actually are. Taking on more and more self-effacing characteristics in order to gain the love and protection which alone seem to promise safety from annihilation, they comply with the real or imagined demands of others, cringing and crawling to the point of selling their souls to receive approval, sympathy, help, and love. Unconsciously such people believe that self-assertion and standing up for one's wishes and needs amounts to forfeiting the only value in life: that of being cared for as a child, not necessarily in financial matters but emotionally. So, artificially and dishonestly in the last analysis, such people

claim an imperfection, a helplessness, a submissiveness that are not genuine. They use these fake weaknesses as a weapon and a means to finally win and master life.

To avoid uncovering this falsity, these trends become incorporated into the idealized self-image. Thus people succeed in believing that all these trends are signs of their goodness, holiness, unselfishness. When they "sacrifice" in order to finally possess a strong and loving protector, they are proud of their capacity to sacrifice unselfishly, of never claiming any knowledge, accomplishment, of strength. Thereby they hope to force others to feel loving and protecting toward them. There are many, many aspects to this pseudo-solution. Painstakingly, you have to find them in the work you are doing. It is not easy to detect them since these attitudes are deeply ingrained and seem to have become a part of your nature. Moreover, they can often be rationalized away by seemingly real needs. Last, but not least, they are always thwarted by the opposite trends of other pseudo-solutions which are also always present in the soul, although perhaps not as predominant. In the same way, those whose pseudo-solutions are different, will find aspects of this submissiveness in their psyche. The extent to which this pseudo-solution is predominant varies with each individual. So does the extent it is counteracted by the other "solutions."

The person with the predominantly submissive attitude will have a somewhat harder time discovering the pride that prevails in all these attitudes. The pride in the other types is quite on the surface. The other types may even be proud of their pride; they may be proud of their aggressiveness and cynicism, but once they have seen it, it can no longer be covered up by "love," "selflessness," or any other "holy" attitude. The submissive type will have to look with very discerning eyes at these trends in order to find out how he or she idealized them. They may discover in themselves a reaction of aloof criticism and contempt for all people who assert themselves, even for healthy assertiveness and not the kind that arises out of the distortion of power. Simultaneously, the submissive type may also admire and envy the despised aggression of others, in spite of feeling superior in "spiritual development" or "ethical standards," and may wistfully think, "If only I could be like that, I would get much farther in life." In doing so, however, such a person stresses the "goodness" which prevents him or her from having what "less good" people attain. The pride of self-sacrificing martyrdom makes it difficult to discover what is beneath the surface. Only very truthful insight into the real nature of these motives will reveal the fundamental selfishness and egocentricity prevailing in this attitude, just as much as they do in the other attitudes linked to pseudo-solutions. Pride, hypocrisy, and pretense are present in all of them when incorporated in the idealized self-image. The submissive type will have a harder time finding the pride, while the aggressive type will have a harder time finding the pretense. For the second pretends an "honesty" in being ruthless, cynical, and out for his or her own advantage.

The need for protective love has a certain validity for the child, but if it is maintained into adulthood, this need is no longer valid. In the search to be loved -- apart from the craving for pleasure supreme -- there is the element of, "I must be loved, so that I can believe in my own worth. Then I may be willing to love in return." It is ultimately a self-centered, one-sided desire. The effects of this entire attitude are grave.

The need for such love and dependency actually makes you helpless. You do not cultivate in yourself the faculty of standing on your own feet. Instead, you use your entire psychic strength to live up to this ideal of yourself so as to force others to comply with your needs. In other words, you

comply in order to have others comply with you; you submit in order to dominate, although such domination must always manifest in soft, weak helplessness.

It is no wonder that a person engulfed in this attitude becomes estranged from the real self. The real self has to be denied, for to assert it seems brash and aggressive. This has to be avoided at all costs. But the indignity inflicted on the individual by such self-denial results in self-contempt and self-dislike. Since this is painful, aside from being contradictory to the idealized self-image which recommends self-effacement as supreme virtue, it has to be projected onto others. Such emotions of contempt and resentment in turn contradict the standards of the idealized self. Consequently, they have to be hidden. This double hiding causes inversion and has serious repercussions on the personality, also manifesting in physical symptoms of all sorts.

Anger, fury, shame, frustration, self-contempt, and self-hate exist for two reasons. They exist, first, for denying one's true self, for the indignity of being prevented from being who one truly is. One then believes that the world prevents self-realization and abuses and takes advantage of one's "goodness." This is projection. Second, they exist because one is incapable of living up to the dictates of one's particular idealized self, which say that one must never resent, despise, dislike, blame, find fault with others, and so on. As a result, one is not as "good" as one ought to be.

This is, briefly, the picture of a person who has chosen "love," with all its subdivisions of compassion, understanding, forgiveness, union, communication, brotherhood, sacrifice, as a rigid, one-sided solution. This is a distortion of the divine attribute of love. The idealized self-image of this type will have corresponding distortions as standards of behavior. One must always be in the background, never assert oneself, always give in, never find fault with others, love everybody, never recognize one's own true values and accomplishments, and so on. On the surface this looks, indeed, like a very holy picture, but, my friends, it is but a caricature of true love, understanding, forgiveness, or compassion. The poison of the underlying motive distorts and destroys that which could really be genuine.

In the second category is the seeker for power. This person thinks that power and independence from others will solve all problems. This type, just as the other, can present many variations and subdivisions. It can be predominant, or subordinated to one or both of the other two attitudes. Here the growing child believes that the only way it can be safe is by becoming so strong and invulnerable, so independent and emotionless, that nothing and no one can touch it. The next step is to cut off all human emotions. When, nevertheless, they come to the fore, the child feels deeply ashamed and considers any emotion as weakness, whether it is an actual weakness or an imagined one. Love and goodness are also considered as weakness and hypocrisy, not only in their distorted forms as in the submissive type, but also in their real and healthy form. Warmth, affection, communication, unselfishness: all that is despicable, and whenever an impulse of this sort is suspected, the aggressive type feels as deeply ashamed as the submissive type is ashamed of the resentment and self-assertive qualities that smolder underneath.

Power drive and aggressiveness can manifest in many ways and in many areas. It may be directed mainly toward accomplishments, to compete and try to be better than everyone else. Any competition will be felt as an injury to the exalted special position one needs to accomplish this type of private solution. Or, it may be a more general and less defined attitude toward people in general. Artificially cultivating a toughness that is no more real than the helpless softness of the submissive

person, the power type is just as dishonest and hypocritical, because such a person, too, needs human warmth and affection, and without these suffers from isolation. In not admitting the suffering, this type is as dishonest as the other two types. This particular idealized self-image dictates standards of godlike independence and power. Believing in complete self-sufficiency, such a person does not feel the need for anyone, contrary to mere human beings who do. Neither are love, friendship, or help acknowledged as important. The pride in this image is very obvious, but the dishonesty will be less easy to detect, because such a type hides under the rationalization of how hypocritical the "goody-goody" type is.

Since this idealized self-image demands such power and independence from feelings and human emotions as no human being can possibly have, it is constantly proven that the person cannot live up to this ideal self. Such "failure" throws the person into fits of depression and self-contempt which, again, have to be projected onto others, in order to remain unaware of the pain of such self-castigation. The inability of living up to the idealized self-image always has this effect. When one closely analyzes the demands of any idealized self-image, one finds that omnipotence is always contained in it. These emotional reactions are so subtle and elusive, however, and so covered up by rationalizations, that it takes a very painstaking, focused look to gain an awareness of all this. Only the work you are doing can bring out how any of these attitudes exist in you. They are, of course, much easier to find when one type of pseudo-solution is very dominant in the personality. In most cases, however, the attitudes are more hidden and are in conflict with each other.

A further symptom of the aggressive type, who thinks that power is the solution, is the artificially cultivated view of "how bad the world and people really are." A person who looks for proof of this negative view receives plenty of confirmation, and takes pride in being "objective" and the opposite of being gullible. This, then, will serve as an excuse for not liking anyone. The idealized image in this case dictates that one must not love. Loving, or at times showing one's true nature, is a crass violation of their idealized self-image and brings on deep shame. Conversely, the submissive type is proud of loving everybody and of considering all other human beings good. This outlook is needed to maintain the submissive attitude. In reality, this type of person does not really care whether others are good or bad as long as they love, appreciate, approve, and protect him or her. All evaluation of others hinges on that. Since everyone possesses both virtues and faults, either can be singled out depending on how the other person relates to the submitter.

Seekers for power must never fail in anything. Contrary to the submissive types who glorify failure, because it proves their helplessness and forces others to give them love and protection, the seekers for power take pride in never failing in anything. In certain combinations of the pseudo-solutions failure may be permitted because in some specific area the prevailing attitude may be submissiveness. Likewise, the submissive type may in certain cases resort to the power solution. Both "solutions" are equally rigid, unrealistic and unrealizable. Each is a constant source of pain and disillusionment regarding the self, and therefore brings on an ever greater lack of self-respect.

I indicated before that there is always a mixture of all three "solutions" in a person, although one may be predominant. Hence, the person cannot do justice even to the chosen solution's dictates. Even if it were possible never to fail, or to love everyone, or to be entirely independent of others, this becomes more and more impossible when the dictates of a person's idealized self-image simultaneously demand one to love and be loved by everyone and to conquer them. For such a goal one needs to be aggressive and often ruthless. An idealized self-image may therefore simultaneously

demand of a person on the one hand to be always unselfish, so as to gain love, and, on the other, to be always selfish so as to gain power. In addition one also has to be completely indifferent and aloof from all human emotions so as not to be disturbed. Can you picture what a conflict this is in the soul? How torn the soul must be! Whatever it does is wrong and induces guilt, shame, a feeling of inadequacy, and therefore frustration and self-contempt.

Let us now consider the third divine attribute, serenity, chosen as a solution and being thereby distorted. Originally a person may have been so torn between the first two aspects that a way out had to be found by resorting to a withdrawal from inner problems, and so from life as such. Underneath the withdrawal, or false serenity, that soul is still torn in half, but no longer aware of it. Such a strong facade of false serenity has been built that, as long as life's circumstances permit, this person is convinced of having attained true serenity. But let life's storms touch him or her, let the effects of the raging, underlying conflict finally emerge, and it will show how false this serenity was. It will be borne out that the edifice was indeed built on sand.

The withdrawn type and the seeker for power seem to have something in common: aloofness from their emotions, non-attachment to others, and a strong urge for independence. However much the underlying emotional motivations may be similar -- fear of getting hurt and disappointed, fear of being dependent on others and therefore feeling insecure -- the dictates of the idealized self-image of these two types are very different. While the seeker for power glories in hostility and in an aggressive fighting spirit, the withdrawn type is entirely unaware of such feelings, and whenever they come to the fore is shocked by them because they violate the dictates of the withdrawal solution. These dictates are, "You must look benignly and detachedly at all human beings, knowing their weaknesses and good qualities, but without being bothered or affected by either." This, if true, would indeed be serenity. But no human being is ever quite as serene. Hence such dictates are unrealistic and unrealizable. They, too, include pride and hypocrisy: pride, because this detachment seems so godlike in its justice and objectivity. In reality one's view may be just as colored by what another thinks, as is the case with the submissive type. But being too proud to admit that an exalted one can be touched by human weaknesses, such a person tries to rise above all that. This is not possible. Since this type, too, is as much dependent on others as the other two types, the dishonesty is just the same. And since the detachment is not true and cannot ever be true if it is used as a pseudo-solution, such a person must also fall short of the standards and dictates of this particular idealized self-image. This will make him or her just as self-contemptuous, guilty, and frustrated as are the other two types when they fall short of their respective standards.

I have outlined these three major types very briefly, in a very general way. Needless to say, many variations exist. According to the strength, intensity, and distribution of these "solutions" will the tyranny of the idealized self-image manifest. All this has to be found in your individual work. Do not forget that such attitudes born of the idealized self can hardly ever apply to the total person. The distorted attitude may be present to a stronger degree in certain areas of your life and to a lesser degree in others; in still other facets of life it does not appear at all. The most important part of this work is to feel these emotions, to truly experience them. It is impossible to get rid of the life-prohibiting idealized self-image if you merely observe what is in you in a detached way, with your intellect. You have to become acutely aware of all these often contradictory trends, and this will be painful.

The pain that was always in you but was hidden, against which you "protected" yourself by unloading it on others, on life, and on fate, will become a conscious experience you absolutely need. At first sight, this will appear as a relapse. You will believe you are even worse than before you started with this work. But this is not so. It is your very progress that made it possible for all these hitherto hidden emotions to become conscious, so that you can really use them for analysis. Otherwise you could not possibly dissolve the superstructure of your tyrant, your idealized self-image with all the unnecessary harm it does you. You are so conditioned by the emotional reactions you have become accustomed to, you are so involved in them, that you cannot see what is right before your eyes. You look past the seemingly unimportant emotional reactions to certain situations simply because they have become a part of you, while you watch for new and hidden recognitions. But it is these actual emotional reactions that will furnish the clue, once your attention is focused on them. This would be impossible if you were not disturbed. Therefore, the disturbance is bound to come into the open and this is the moment when you can come to terms with it.

So, my friends, begin to see your emotions in this light. You will then find what impossible demands your idealized self-image makes on you. You will see that it is your idealized self-image, and not God, not life, not other people, who demand all that. You will also begin to see that, because of these demands of the self, you need other people to help you cope with these demands. Unconsciously, you put pressure on others to give you what they are incapable of giving. You are then much more dependent than you need be, in spite of all your striving toward a distorted independence of either the aggressive or the withdrawn type.

You also have to find the cause and effect of these conditions. You will see your life, and your past and present difficulties, with a new outlook. You will understand that you have created many, if not all, of these difficulties, just because of your "solution."

It does not suffice to comprehend intellectually that the more you are involved in your pseudo-solutions, the less of your real self can manifest. You also need to experience this. Such experience must happen if you allow your emotions to come to the fore and work with them. Then, and then only, will you begin to sense the intrinsic value of your real self. Only then will it become possible to let go of the false value of your idealized self. It is a mutual process: by allowing yourself to see the false values, however painful this may be, your real values will gradually emerge so that you no longer need the false ones.

Since the idealized self alienates you from your real self, you are utterly unaware of your real values. Throughout your life you concentrate unconsciously on false values: either on values you lack but think you should have, while you pretend to yourself and others that you do have them, or you concentrate on values which are potentially there, but have not yet been developed to the extent that they can be rightfully called yours. Since your idealized self does not admit that these values still need development, you do not develop them and yet you claim them as though they were already fully ripe. Because you use all your efforts in concentrating on these false or unripe values, you do not see the real values. Because you cannot see them, you are frightened to let go of the false ones fearing that then you will have nothing. Thus your real values do not count. You do not feel they exist, either because they contradict the demands of your idealized self, or because everything that comes naturally and without effort does not appear real. You are so conditioned to strain for the impossible that it does not occur to you that there is nothing to strain for, because what is actually valuable is already there. But as you do not utilize these values, they often lie fallow. This is a great

pity, my friends, because after all, you established the idealized self-image, as I indicated in the previous lecture, because you did not believe in your real worth. Because you build the idealized self and try to be it, you cannot see what in you is actually worth accepting and appreciating.

To unroll this entire process is painful at first, because the emotions of anxiety, frustration, guilt, shame, and so on, have to be acutely experienced. But as you courageously proceed, you will gain a very different outlook on everything. Last, but certainly not least, you will begin to see yourself as you really are for the very first time. You will see your limitations. At the beginning it will be a shock to have to accept these limitations which are such a far cry from the idealized self. But as you learn to do so, you will begin to sense values in yourself you have never truly been aware of. Then a feeling of strength and self-confidence will make you see life and yourself in a very different way. Gradually the process of growing into the real self will take place. It will strengthen your true independence, so that being appreciated by others will no longer be the yardstick for your self-value. Validation by others assumes such great importance only because you do not evaluate yourself honestly. Thus validation by others becomes a substitute. As you begin to trust and like your own self, what other people think about you will not matter half as much. You will rest secure within, and you will no longer need to build false values with pride and pretense. You will no longer rely on an idealized self, which cannot really be trusted, and therefore weakens you. The freedom of shedding this burden cannot be described in words.

But, my friends, this is a slow process. It does not come overnight. It comes from steady self-search and analysis of your problems, your attitudes, and your emotions. As you proceed in this way, the real you with its real values and capacities will evolve through a process of inner and natural growth. Your individuality will then become stronger and stronger. Your intuitive nature will manifest without inhibition, with a natural and reliable spontaneity. This is how you will make the best of your life -- not faultlessly, not by being free of all failure, not excluding the possibility of making mistakes. But your attitude to your failures and mistakes will be very different. More and more you will combine the divine attitudes of love, power, and serenity in a healthy way, as opposed to a distorted way.

Love will not be a means to an end. It will not be a need that saves you from annihilation. It will, therefore, cease being self-centered. Your own capacity to love will combine power and serenity. Or, to put it differently, you will communicate in love and understanding while being truly independent. Love, power, and serenity will not be used to furnish you with your missing self-respect. Genuine, not self-centered love will then no longer interfere with healthy power, which is not the power of pride and defiance, neither the power to triumph over others, but the power to master yourself and your difficulties without proving anything to anyone. When you seek mastery by distorting the attribute of power, you do so for the sake of proving your superiority. When you gain mastery by healthy power you do so for the sake of growing. Not to have the mastery occasionally will not present a threat as it did while you were in distortion. It will not diminish your worth in your own eyes. Thus you will truly grow with each life experience. You will learn, accomplish and gain real power, not the false kind. There will not be any distorted ambitiousness, compulsion, and haste.

Serenity in the healthy way will not cause you to hide from emotions, experience, life, and your own conflicts; love and power in their healthy forms will give you a healthy detachment when looking at yourself so that you will truly become more objective. True serenity is not avoiding

experience and emotions which may be painful at the moment but might yield an important key when the courage is there to go through them and find what is behind them.

Love, power, and serenity can go hand in hand. In fact, when each is healthy, they complement one another. But they can cause the greatest war within yourself if distorted.

Now my friends, are there any questions?

QUESTION: When a child forces love through a temper tantrum and as an adult later repeats this pattern -- not necessarily outwardly but with inner tantrums -- would that come out of the "solution" of power?

ANSWER: You cannot pinpoint the cause so easily. Generalizations may be misleading. Each case is different. In one instance, it may indeed be so. The power drive is frustrated because the person's idealized self requires to always get his will. But it may also exist in the submissive type who needs love as a solution for all problems. This one is so convinced that love will be the solution, and is so dependent on it, that when others do not obey this demand, the person is outraged. The fury and self-contempt are so strong that they have to be externalized and are then projected on the other person. This, in turn, creates guilt because it offends the edicts of the idealized self that one should never be angry with others.

There may also be a combination here of the search for power and love. These two attitudes are constantly at war with one another. On the one hand, the need to be loved is very strong. But on the other side stands the superiority of the power type, who feels particularly humiliated and exposed by this dependency on love, who strives to appear invulnerable just as much as he craves to be loved.

So the temper tantrum may be a combination. Each person has to find which pseudo-solution applies to his or her own person separately and individually, not only with respect to the childhood situation when these "solutions" were unconsciously instituted, but also in the present predicaments and problems of life. You must find out how one trend may be more predominant in one situation and another trend in different circumstances.

QUESTION: You have shown us how the distortion of these attributes manifests. You have also shown us how these attributes work hand in hand in the healthy way. But in addition, I feel that not only can they go hand in hand in the divine way, but actually they are byproducts of each other: love in the form of strength, and strength coming through love, and both together producing serenity. Now my question is: Is there a distortion of this unification itself where one believes one can combine them, but do it in a distorted way?

ANSWER: Again, a very contradictory attitude exists. The person may believe that love and strength can be combined, that he or she is both loving and strong. And this would be true if these qualities were healthy but in the distorted form they cannot be combined. Closer analysis will show that they are mutually exclusive, because of the distortion. Every person has to find in their work exactly why and how two trends oppose one another through seeing the cause and effect of each.

At the same time a person may unconsciously be convinced that these attributes cannot be combined. Therefore, when submissive, such people feel self-hate, because they think they should be proud, aloof, and independent, not seeing that one could yield sometimes, while still asserting a healthy independence.

QUESTION: I wonder, could a distorted attempt at unification masquerade under the belief that one is flexible and always has the right judgment?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, it very often does.

QUESTION: Could you give us some insight into the reasons for compulsive acts? In particular, what is the general emotional basis for compulsive buying and eating? And how can these two particular acts be combated?

ANSWER: The only way to combat them is by doing this work and finding the underlying reasons. There must be a very personal, particular reason which needs to be found. If the attempt is made to force the compulsive behavior away by discipline, the best you can hope to achieve is to force the symptom away, while other symptoms will develop instead, and produce an even greater anxiety.

Why people have these compulsions again cannot be generalized. I may just say that any compulsion comes from an unconscious conclusion that something must be had, attained, acquired. But by the time this reaches the outer personality, the goal may have been shifted to a substitute. For instance, the idealized self-image may dictate to live up to something, or gain something, and the person is unable to do so. Then other outlets are sought compulsively. One is so frustrated about one's own inability to live up to the shoulds and the coulds of achievement that a substitute must be found. A compulsion to buy things, when analyzed as to its symbolic meaning, will show that it represents an acquisitiveness. This may come from a distortion of the power to have and to possess. It may come from a distortion of love: "If I cannot have love, I want to have things instead." The compulsion to eat may have similar roots. It may be a substitute for the frustration of not being able to receive the pleasure one yearns for. Lack of pleasure is a sign that the person has made wrong attempts to solve his or her life. When the effects of these attempts and distorted attitudes are sufficiently analyzed, it will be found that they prohibited the very things one wanted to attain. Once this is seen, the substitute with its compelling nature will lessen to the degree one understands inner cause and effect.

Even if the general explanation and examples I cite here should happen to apply to a person, it will not really help. The person has to find the cause of the addiction by experiencing it as his or her own recognition as though it were entirely new, and different from the explanation given. Then, and only then, will it be beneficial.

QUESTION: What is the psychological explanation for a person becoming a dope addict?

ANSWER: Again I cannot go beyond a very general explanation. Each case may be different. All I can say here is that life becomes so difficult to cope with -- not because life is in fact so difficult, but because of inner problems tearing the person apart -- that self-estrangement increases

steadily, and therefore reality becomes not only more ugly, but also more remote. The pain of the illusion becomes unbearable. All this produces further deliberate escapes, such as drug addiction, or alcoholism, or psychosis, or other measures. Addictions are often also motivated by the strong craving for love, pleasure, and ecstasy. So another one of these vicious circles comes into existence. The more one is estranged from the real self, the less pleasure is possible and therefore the greater the longing for it. Then a shortcut substitute is looked for in such substances.

QUESTION: We are surrounded by thought forms of different quality and strength. In what way do they interplay with our different selves?

ANSWER: The negative or distorted thought and feeling forms emanating from others will affect the corresponding levels in you which also harbor distortions. The thought and feeling forms, emanating from the real self, will affect the real self of the other person. Under no circumstances are you a prey to distorted forms of others because, if you truly search within yourself, such effects will help you to bring out your own distortions, so that you can become aware of them and learn to cope with them by solving the underlying problems.

As to the effect of your own thought and feeling forms on yourself, it would be misleading to say that they cause hardship for you. They are the product of your own conflicts and the false solutions you seek. That these conflicts and wrong solutions produce corresponding forms is an incidental matter. You must not think it is the thought forms which interfere. They exist, but the actual interference comes from the wrong attitude. Your own or other people's distorted thought forms can only bring out your underlying problems -- and this is good.

I bless each one of you. May these words again give you food, not only for further thought, but for insight and understanding. May you thus gain a further step toward light and freedom: the light and freedom which can be yours, if the tyranny and pride in your idealized self-image are weakened by this work. Proceed on this path of happiness. Gain more and more strength, and let our blessings and love help and invigorate you. Be blessed, my dear ones. Be in peace. Be in God!

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