

9-11-2016 Readings: Personal Response to Suffering

Both Francis and Clare of Assisi lost and let go of all fear of suffering; all need for power, prestige, and possessions; any need for their small self to be important; and they came out the other side knowing something essential—who they really were in God and thus who they really were. Their house was then built on “bedrock,” as Jesus says (Matthew 7:24).

Francis and Clare had an ability to really change and heal people, which is often the fruit of suffering and various forms of poverty, since the false self does not surrender without a fight to its death. If suffering is “whenever we are not in control” (my definition), then you see why some form of suffering is absolutely necessary to teach us how to live beyond the illusion of control and to give that control back to God. Then we become usable instruments because we can share our power with God’s power (Romans 8:28). Such a counterintuitive insight surely explains why these two medieval dropouts, Francis and Clare, tried to invite everyone into their happy run downward, to that place of “poverty” where all humanity finally dwells anyway. They voluntarily leapt into the very fire from which most of us are trying to escape, with total trust that Jesus’ way of the cross could not, and would not, be wrong. They trusted that Jesus’ way was the way of solidarity and communion with the larger world which is indeed passing away and dying, but always with great resistance. They turned such resistance into a proactive welcoming prayer instead. By God’s grace, they could trust the eventual passing of all things and where they are passing to. They did not wait for liberation later—after death—but grasped it here and now.

When we try to live in solidarity with the pain of the world and do not spend our lives running from necessary suffering, we will encounter various forms of “crucifixion.” Many say pain is physical discomfort, but suffering comes from our resistance, denial, and sense of injustice or wrongness about that pain. I know that is very true for me. This is the core meaning of suffering on one level or another, and we all learn it the hard way. Pain is the rent we pay for being human, some say; but suffering is usually optional. The cross was Jesus’ voluntary acceptance of undeserved pain as an act of total solidarity with all of the pain of the world. Reflection on this mystery of love can change your whole life.¹

“Crisis is prelude to all expansions of consciousness.”²

As man progresses toward Himself, he passes through three great areas of discipline and exercise... He often wonders about in these areas, never once seeing a guiding light, but the pain and the pleasure gradually lead him out of one field into another.

He wanders for long ages in the deserts of the physical plane in ignorance, blood, and pain. Then gradually passes into the emotional sea, and his great and difficult journey begins in the waves of that vast and stormy sea. This is an ocean of mirages and glamors, a sea of deep sorrow and pleasure. It is a wild and stormy which can engulf you at any moment, a sea upon which you cannot find any sign of permanent guidance, and sea upon which you lose yourself hundreds of times. There are moments when you simply give up your journey and throw yourself to the wild waves of emotions, mirages, and glamors.

Occasionally, through the mist you see some bright stars shining, but the next moment they are lost to you. You hear voices from the higher world, but the voices change into the roaring waves as they beat against the shore. You, the pilgrim, are like a piece of wood floating upon the waters.

It takes the pilgrim many ages to cross this great ocean. Gradually he builds stronger muscles, better boats and ships, and one day he steps onto the fiery land of the mental plane. The mental plane, too, has its problems, obstacles, and difficulties. Our challenge is to cross this emotional sea and make it possible for our Inner Christ to walk upon its waters without sinking. Our main task is to organize our emotional body, the boat. We cannot rid ourselves of a vehicle, nor can we control it until we organize and transmute it to the highest degree. We cannot control our physical body if it is not healthy, pure, and full of vitality. The same is true of the emotional body; we can control it and detach ourselves from it if that body is pure, calm, and developed.

¹ Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation, *Solidarity with Pain*, 9/4/2016

² William Meader quote, Spiritual Initiation workshop, 9/10/2016

It is impossible to bring the mental vehicle under full control of the Soul, the Inner Lord, if that body is not integrated, highly developed, and disciplined. We can detach ourselves and observe mental modifications or activities if we stand higher than they. This cannot be done until the mind has developed its full potential.

Energy suppressed in any vehicle becomes a center of trouble there. It gradually releases itself through nervous or other disorders if it is not expressed or sublimated [raised]. Hence, the main intention of right discipline is:

- *To organize the vehicles.*
- *To integrate the vehicles or bodies and thus establish right communication, right relationship among them.*
- *To transmute the energies of the vehicles into their corresponding higher vehicles.*

*The spoken word is closely connected with the emotional body. **One who can control his speech can also control and organize his emotional body and thus facilitate control of his mental body.***³

*“It is well to speak little; better still to say nothing, unless you are quite sure that what you wish to say is true, kind, and helpful. Before speaking, think carefully whether what you are going to say has those qualifications; if it has not, do not say it. (J. Krishnaturti, *At the Feet of the Master*)*

Evil, negative speech rends the emotional body and brings into it burning energies, resulting in toxic conditions. Negative speech inflames the state of the emotional body, causes ill health to the physical body, and obscures mental vision. By controlling your speech you gradually gain control of your emotional body, you mental body, and so your physical body. In every word you utter there are many energies involved. There are vibrations of the voice, emotional energy, and mental energy. We are conditioned by what we express. Christ said:

“It is not what goes into the mouth of a man that makes him unclean and defiled, but what comes out of the mouth; this makes a man unclean and defiles him.” (Matthew 15:11)

When we express mental, emotional, and physical energy through our speech in lies, gossip, fear, or other negative emotions and thoughts, we defile ourselves. Our expressions become living parasites in our mental and emotional atmosphere; they condition the free circulation of emotional, mental, and vital life energies; they also build and present a picture of us as we are. On the inner side we are known by what we build through our speech. We become what we speak. This is a form of identification with our emotions and thoughts. In the New Testament we find:

“For by your words you will be justified and acquitted and by your words you will be condemned and sentenced.” (Matthew 12:37)

By identifying ourselves with any emotion, we come under the domination of that emotion; by dis-identifying ourselves from ourselves from our emotions, we dominate them. The secret behind exercises and disciplines is detachment, dis-identification, transmutation, and sublimation [raising the vibration]. A major result of our work to organize and sublimate our emotional body is a gradual and natural coming forth of our innate creativity.

*“How can one be isolated from the entire cosmic creativeness when man is the creative fulfiller of the Cosmic Will! One should therefore develop in oneself consonance with the Higher Forces, for without striving to consonance there is no creativeness. . . . Each creative step is the affirmation of great battles. . . . It is correctly pointed out that love is the guiding creative principle. This means that love must be conscious, striving, and self-denying. Creativeness requires these conditions. . . . Love is the leading creative principle. (*Hierarchy*, Agni Yoga Society, publishers of the teachings of the Master Morya through Helena Roerich)*

To cultivate the seeds of creativity, choose any one of the many branches of art and try it.⁴ *It is not important whether or not you create something great; the important factor is that in your endeavor to that end,*

³ An first healing response to suffering is to carefully choose and express appropriate speech.

you will start a small stream of energy coming down from higher levels of your consciousness and expressing itself on the emotional and physical planes. When creativity begins to flow within you, you will find that gradually all your lower forces are sublimated⁵ becoming creative energies on higher levels. You will find, too, that love and compassion fill your heart.

When your emotional body is organized and purified, it turns into a bridge between your intuitional plane and your life. It is through such a purified emotional vehicle that the energy of intuition pours down, bringing with it a sense of great devotion, a sense of direction, and a sense of discrimination.

Exercise in creative expression will help to develop the divine energy of Will. Will energy is the beam of light coming down from our inner Divinity and gradually coordinating, harmonizing, integrating, and fusing our vehicles with the Plan and Purpose of our inner Divinity, thus making us the expression of the inner Reality. Throughout our vehicles, Will energy builds the bridge to lead us to what we essentially are. It is the energy of detachment and non-identification. At the same time, it is the main energy which leads us to unity with the whole.

Sometimes it happens that people are overpowered by a violent negative emotion which carries the body, the mind, and the “will” in the wrong direction and uses them for blind, devastating purposes. Under these conditions, people harm one another, kill one another, start wars, and all that should be used for good is used as fuel to feed the flames of war. When such is the case, it is too late to check the flow of negative emotions and to quiet the battle cries of opposing forces. Thus we can see the great necessity for controlling the slightest negative emotion, the smallest fire, always remembering that you have the power to control because you are the Inner Lord.

*“The Indweller of the body is never born, nor does it die. It is not true that, having no existence, it comes into being; nor having been in existence, It again ceases to be. It is the unborn, the eternal, the changeless, the Self. It cannot be killed, even if the body is slain. . . . the Dweller in the body can attain immortality when It is indifferent toward pain and pleasure, and It is not affected by them.” (*The Bhagavad Gita*, translation by T. Saraydarian).*

In these two verses is the story of evolution.⁶

*The emotional body cannot be controlled by the emotional body itself. A higher level of force must be used to control it and to do the purification work. The mental body resembles the air or the wind. In the *Bhagavad Gita* we find:*

“The mind . . . is restless, turbulent, forceful, and unyielding. To control it is as hard as to control the wind . . . but by practice and by detachment it can possibly be controlled.”

The emotional world is like the waters of the stormy sea, and the mind is like the atmosphere above it. They are so closely interrelated that any motion in one affects the other.

We are chiefly identified with our emotions, our emotional world. Our main task is to detach ourselves from our emotions, to observe them with indifference, and then to transmute them to their higher counterparts. The same technique is used in the mental world. We are not the mind; we use the mind. . . . Our work is to cleanse the atmosphere – our mind – of clouds, mist, haze, and violent winds so that the sun can shine in all its glory, in all its beauty and light. Thus is the inner Good released.

To radiate conscious goodness and beauty through the mental world, we must know ourselves upon the mental plane itself. Indeed, we must learn to face ourselves on every plane of existence. We must know ourselves as physical beings; we then surpass this stage and know ourselves as emotional beings; again, we

⁴ Another powerful healing response to suffering is to regularly express yourself through some form of art.

⁵ Sublimate in its original sense means to raise the vibration, yield the lower to the higher, or cultivate one quality toward another one that is better or more effective.

⁶ This reading was taken primarily from *The Science of Becoming Oneself*, T. Saradarian, Chapter 9.

move to a higher level and know ourselves as mental beings. Here, on the mental plane, we must not pause too long because the Real Man is not the mind. He is higher than the mind. Sooner or later the detachment process begins, and the man again loses his familiar, comfortable level and travels to a higher altitude. He is predestined to find himself and will not be satisfied until he finds his True Self, until he becomes his Self.

...We become unconscious to some degree when we enter into a dark emotional state called hatred. When we feel hatred for someone, some mode of activity, or a certain doctrine, we shut off the consciousness center within us and immediately register all the negative points that we so strongly dislike in that person, organization, or government. For this reason, those who hate gradually change and begin to imitate the methods, the kinds of activities, and the ideas of the one or ones for whom they feel hatred. We find, however, that they now place different labels on the methods, ideas, and activities and offer various excuses for adhering to them. Thus they build in themselves a second, mechanical nature and further complicate their lives because they have made themselves prone to blind urges and drives.

***Christ advised us not to hate but to love**⁷, to use our reason in searching for the truth because when we hate, we plant within ourselves the ugliest qualities of our enemies and close our hearts to the good in them. ...Hatred prevents a person from seeing the good in anyone or anything. It brings out all that is ugly, destructive, and harmful. If such negative things are not already there, the one who hates creates them in his imagination, and he becomes hypnotized by his own creations of ugliness. The outcome is that he is fighting against himself.*

Results are entirely different when we love, because in true love a man is conscious to the highest degree. He loves his enemy, but he does not try to copy him. Instead he tries to find the best way to change him into a friend or to lift him up toward beauty and light.

*... It is important that we clear and purify our mind and build our brain cells of higher plane substance. It will then be possible for the Inner Dweller to project a thought, an idea, and it will come down greatly enhanced by the richest content of each level through which it passes. To clear these lower layers of mind, we must **exercise observation, detachment, and transmutation**⁸ on the mental plane; we must try to keep mental silence for short periods of time. When we understand that our thoughts are different from our minds, we will eventually learn to detach ourselves from our thoughts and create new and higher level thoughts. It is our thought-forms that condition our state of being; the outer conditions of our lives are the direct result of our thoughts. Through our routine thinking, we create a chain-like process, a deep groove in which our wheels turn and spin. We must do something to change this course if we wish to travel upon a higher level.*

... When you have learned to detach yourself from your own emotional and mental worlds, you will have mastered the first important step toward controlling yourself under any condition and in any event. People sometimes resemble a lake into which muddy rivers or all kinds of influences flow. The picture changes when you learn to detach. You then resemble a beautiful, clear mountain lake, and from you hundreds of streams flow down the mountain to spread Life, Light, and Love.⁹

⁷ Another powerful healing response to suffering is to choose to love and eliminate all hate from within yourself.

⁸ Finally, by developing the skill of self-observation of feelings, thoughts, and inner motivations one can begin the important work of detachment from feelings and thoughts that produce disease responses, which further suffering in ourselves and in the world. Self-observation is a primary spiritual skill to develop and is itself a form of active meditation. Transmutation and sublimation are made possible first by developing this skill and utilizing it every situation that needs a healing response.

⁹ This reading was taken primarily from *The Science of Becoming Oneself*, T. Saraydarian, Chapter 10.