

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 need of a situation. They complement and strengthen one another. A flexibility is maintained 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 is a contradiction to the other, and so they create conflict. This is so because one of these attributes is unconsciously chosen to serve a major role in the solution to life and to life's problems.

You may remember that I discussed the attitudes of submissiveness, aggressiveness, and withdrawal. These are the distortions of love, power, and serenity. And now I should like to speak in greater detail as to how this works in the psyche, how this is supposed to be a solution, and how the dominating attitude creates dogmatic, rigid standards which are then incorporated in the idealized self-image.

As a child, the human being encounters disappointment, helplessness, rejection -- both real and imagined. These create an insecurity and lack of self-confidence which is sought to be overcome but, unfortunately, often in the wrong way. In order to master the difficulties created not only in childhood but also later on because of the wrong solution, the person involves himself more and more in a vicious circle. Unaware that the very "solution" he undertakes brings problems and disappointments, he tries even more strenuously to follow through with that which he regards as the solution. The less he is able to do so, the more he has doubt in himself. And the more he doubts himself, the more does he stray into the wrong solution.

One of these pseudosolutions 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 when, in reality, such a disturbed person is hardly able to experience love. In order to receive love, such a person develops several typical personality trends and patterns of inner and outer behavior and reaction, and thereby makes himself weaker and more helpless than he actually is. He takes on more and more self-effacing characteristics in order to gain love and protection, which alone would seem to save him from annihilation. He complies with the real or imagined demands of others. He cringes and craves to the point of selling his soul in order to receive approval, sympathy, help, and love. Unconsciously he believes that by asserting himself, his wishes, his needs, he would forfeit the only value he sees in life: that of being cared for as a child -- not necessarily in financial matters, but emotionally. So he artificially and (in the last analysis) dishonestly claims an imperfection, a

helplessness, a submissiveness which are not genuine. He uses them as a weapon and as a means to finally win and master life.

In order to remain unaware of this falsity, these trends become his idealized self-image, or a part of it. He succeeds in believing that all these trends are signs of his "goodness, holiness, unselfishness." When he "sacrifices" in order to finally possess a strong loving protector, he is proud of his capacity to sacrifice unselfishly. He is proud of his "modesty" in never claiming knowledge, accomplishment, strength. He thereby hopes to force the other person to feel loving and protecting towards him. There are many, many aspects to this pseudosolution. Painstakingly, they have to be found in the work you are doing. It is not easy to detect them since these attitudes are deeply ingrained. They seem to have become a part of your nature. Moreover, they can often be rationalized by seemingly real needs. Last but not least, they are always thwarted by the very opposite trends of other pseudosolutions, which, too, are always present although perhaps not as predominant. In the same way, the other types will find aspects of this submissiveness in their psyche. It varies with each individual to what extent this pseudosolution is predominant and to what extent it is counteracted by the other "solutions."

The person with the predominantly submissive attitude will have a little harder time discovering the pride that prevails in these attitudes. The pride in the other types is quite on the surface. He may be proud of his pride; he may be proud of his aggressiveness and cynicism. But once he sees it, it cannot be covered up by "love," "modesty," or any other "holy" attitude. The submissive type will have to look with very discerning eyes at these trends in order to see how he idealized them. He may discover a reaction of aloof criticism and contempt for all people who assert themselves -- not only aggressiveness out of the distortion of power, but even of healthy assertiveness. He may simultaneously also admire and envy what he still despises and over which he feels superior in "spiritual development" or "ethical standards." He may wistfully think or say, "If only I could be like that, I would get much further in life," but in doing so, he stresses his own "goodness," which prevents him from having what "less-good" people attain. So he feels proud of his self-sacrificing martyrdom, and 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 in the other attitudes. Pride, hypocrisy, and pretense are present in all those attitudes 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 he pretends an "honesty" in being ruthless, cynical, and out for his own advantage.

The need for protective love has a certain validity for the child, but if this attitude is maintained in adulthood, it is no longer valid. In this search to be loved, apart from the craving for pleasure supreme, 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. In the first place, the need for such love and dependency actually makes a person helpless. He does not cultivate in himself the faculty of standing on his own feet. Instead, he uses his entire psychic strength in order to live up to this ideal of himself so as to force others to comply with his needs. In other words, he complies in order to have others comply with him; he submits in order to dominate although such domination would always manifest in soft, weak helplessness.

It is no wonder that a person engulfed in this attitude becomes estranged from his real self. His real self has to be denied, for the assertion of it seems brash and aggressive. This has to be avoided at all costs. But the indignity inflicted on the individuality by such self-denial has its effect 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 for others, 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 firstly for denying him his true self, for the indignity of being prevented from being himself. He then believes that the world prevents him from being himself, that the world abuses him and takes advantage of his "goodness." This is projection. Secondly, they exist because he is incapable of living up to the dictates of his particular idealized self which are that he must never resent, despise, dislike, blame, find fault with others, etc. As a result, he is not as "good" as he ought to be.

In a very brief outline, this is 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 attributes. The idealized self-image of this type will have corresponding standards and dictates. He must always be in the background, never assert himself, always give in, never find fault with others, love everybody, never recognize his own true values and accomplishments, and so on and so forth. On the surface, this looks indeed like a very holy picture; but, my friends, it is but a caricature of true love, understanding, forgiveness, compassion, and so on. 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 his problems. This type, just as the other, can present many variations and subdivisions. It can be predominant or subordinated by one or both of the other two attitudes. Here the growing child believes that the only way he can be safe is by becoming so strong and invulnerable, so independent and emotionless, that nothing and no one can touch him. So he proceeds to oust all human emotions. When, nevertheless, they come to the fore, he feels deeply ashamed of any emotion and considers it as weakness, whether it is an actual weakness or an imagined one. Love and goodness would also be considered as weakness and hypocrisy, not only in its distorted form as in the submissive type, but also in the real and healthy form. Warmth, affection, communication, unselfishness -- all that is despicable, and whenever an impulse of this sort is suspected in himself, he feels as deeply ashamed as the submissive type is ashamed of his resentment and self-assertive qualities that smolder underneath.

There are many ways and areas of life and personality in which this power drive and aggressiveness can manifest. It may be directed mainly at accomplishments. The person with a power drive will compete and try to be better than everyone else. Any competition is felt as an injury to the exalted special position that he needs for his private solution. Or it may be a more general and less defined attitude in all his human relationships. He artificially cultivates a toughness that is no more real than the helpless softness of the submissive person. In this, he is just as dishonest and hypocritical because he, too, needs human warmth and affection. He, too, suffers by

his isolation. In not admitting this suffering, he is as dishonest as the other types. His idealized self-image dictates standards of godlike perfection regarding independence and power. He believes that he does not need anyone, that he is entirely self-sufficient. Contrary to other, mere human beings, he does not need love, friendship, help. 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 dictates a power and independence from feelings and human emotions such as no human being can possibly have, it is constantly proven that the person cannot be his ideal self. This throws him 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 being the idealized self-image always has this effect. Also, when really and closely analyzing the dictates of any type of idealized self, omnipotence in one form or another is always contained in it. But these emotional reactions are so subtle and illusive, so hidden by rational knowledge that it takes a very painstaking look at certain feelings, at certain occasions, to gain an awareness of all this. Only the work you are doing can bring out how any of these attitudes exist in you. It is of course much easier to find if a type is very dominant in one direction. But in most cases, the attitudes are more hidden and conflicted by the other types.

A further symptom of the aggressive type, of thinking that power is the solution for him, is the artificially cultivated view of "how bad the world and people really are." For this, he will receive plenty of confirmation. But he prides himself on his "objectivity," on his lack of gullibility as the reason for not liking anyone. It is a part of his dictates that he must not love. If he does or if at times his true nature would appear, it is a crass violation of his idealized self-image, and he is ashamed of it. Conversely, the submissive type prides himself on loving everybody, in considering all other human beings as good, for this is what he needs for enabling him to follow through in his submissive attitude. In reality, he does not really care whether others are good or bad so long as they love, appreciate, approve, and protect him. All evaluation of others hinges on that, no matter how well it can be "explained." Since everyone possesses actual virtues and faults, either can be picked according to the prevailing attitude of the other person to the submitter.

The seeker for power must never fail in anything. Contrary to the submissive type who prides himself on his failure, thus proving his helplessness and thereby forcing others to love and protect him, the seeker for power prides himself on never failing in anything. (There may be certain areas of personality in which failure is allowed and permitted because there the prevailing attitude may be submissiveness, just as the submissive type may have certain areas of personality in which he resorts to power as the solution.) Both are equally rigid, unrealistic, and unrealizable. Therefore, either of these "solutions" is a constant source of pain and disillusionment regarding the self, and therefore bring on an increased lack of self-respect.

As I indicated before, there is always a mixture of all these "solutions" in a person although one may be predominant. Hence, the person cannot do justice to his own dictates. Even if it were possible never to fail or to love everyone or to be entirely independent of others, it becomes even more of an impossibility when the dictates of a person's idealized self-image simultaneously demand of him to love and be loved by everyone and to conquer them. For such a goal, he needs to be aggressive and often ruthless. An idealized self-image may simultaneously demand of a person to be always unselfish so as to gain love; to be always selfish so as to gain power; 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 a soul must be?! Whatever he does is wrong and induces guilt, shame, inadequacy and, therefore frustration and self-contempt.

Let us now consider the third attribute, serenity, chosen as a solution and being thereby distorted. Originally a person may have been so torn between the first two aspects that he seeks a way out by resorting to a withdrawal from his inner problems and thereby from life as such. That is, underneath his withdrawal or false serenity, he is still torn in half, only he is not aware of it. He has built such a strong facade of false serenity that as long as life's circumstances permit him, he believes himself truly serene. But let life's storms touch him, 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 it was indeed built on sand.

The withdrawn type and the seeker for power seem to have something in common, and that is aloofness from feelings and emotions, nonattachment to others, 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 thereby feeling insecure -- the dictates of the idealized self-image of these two types are very different. The seeker for power is proud of his hostility and aggressive fighting spirit. The withdrawn type is entirely unaware of such existing feelings, and whenever they come to the fore, he is shocked by them because they violate his dictates. These dictates are that he looks 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 that far, hence such dictates are just as unrealistic and unrealizable. They too include pride and hypocrisy -- pride because he is not so godlike in his detachment, justice, and objectivity. In reality, his view may be just as colored by what the other person thinks of him as, for instance, the submissive type. But he is too proud to admit that he, the exalted one, can be touched by such human weaknesses. He considers himself above all that. And since this is not true at all, since he is as much dependent on others as the other two types, he is just as dishonest. And since it is not true and cannot ever be true as long as he is human, he must fall short of the standards and dictates of his idealized self-image, which makes him just as self-contemptuous, guilty, and frustrated as when the other two types fall short of their respective standards.

These three major types are outlined 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 the individual work. It must never be forgotten that such an attitude can hardly ever be complete in a person. In other words, it may be present to a stronger degree in certain areas or facets of life and personality, and to a lesser degree in others, and in still other facets of life not 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 this life-prohibiting idealized self-image if you merely look on and observe in a detached way, with your intellect, what is in you. You have to become acutely aware of all these often contradictory trends, and this will be painful. The pain that always was in you, but hidden and "protected" against by being unloaded onto others, onto life, and onto fate, that pain will become a conscious experience you absolutely need to work with. At first sight, this will appear as a relapse. You will believe you are worse than before you even started with this work. But this is not so. Your very progress made it possible that all these hitherto hidden emotions become conscious so that you can really use them for analysis.

Otherwise, you could not possibly dissolve the superstructure of your tyranny, of 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 these actual emotional reactions 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 requests of you. You will see that it is your idealized self-image, not God, not life, not other people demanding all that. You will also begin to see that because of these demands of the self, you need other people to help you put through these demands. Therefore, you unconsciously demand of others what they are incapable of giving. Thus you are much more dependent than you need be, in spite of all your striving towards a distorted independence of either the aggressive or the withdrawn type.

You also have to find 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 intellectually comprehend that the more you are involved in your pseudosolutions, the less can your real self manifest. You need also to experience this. This must happen if you allow your emotions to come to the fore and to work with them. Then and then only will you begin to sense the intrinsic value of your real self. And only then will it become possible to let go of the false value of your idealized self. So it is a mutual process. By allowing yourself to see the false values, painful as this may be, your real values will emerge gradually so that you no longer need the false ones. Since the idealized self estranges you from your real self, you are utterly unaware of your real values. You concentrate (unconsciously) throughout your life on these false values -- either on values you lack but think you should have and which you pretend to yourself and others that you do have, or else you concentrate on values which are potentially there but have not yet been developed so that they could be rightfully called values. Since your idealized self does not admit that these values still need development, you do not develop them and claim them as though they were already fully ripe. Because you use all your efforts in concentrating on these false values, you do not see the real values. And because you cannot see them, you are frightened to let go of the false ones because then you seem to have nothing. Thus your real values do not count. They do not exist. This may be either because they contradict the demands of your idealized self; or it may be because everything that comes naturally and without effort does not appear as something real. You are so conditioned into straining for the impossible that it does not occur to you that what is actually valuable and already there does not need straining. But 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 last time, because you do not believe in your real worth and value. And because you build the idealized self and try to be it, you cannot see what is actually worthy of accepting and believing in yourself. To unroll this entire process is painful at first because the emotions of anxiety, frustration, guilt, shame, etc., 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 your real self for the very first time. You will see its 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 see values you have never truly seen or been aware of. And a feeling of strength and self-confidence in a very different way will make you see life and yourself. Gradually, little by little, this process will take place. It will strengthen true independence, not the false kind, in that being appreciated by others will no longer be the yardstick for your own sense of value. So far, the evaluation by others is so important only because you do not evaluate yourself, so that it becomes a substitute. But 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 in pride and pretense. You will no longer rely on an idealized self, which really cannot be relied on and which 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 by the 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 in a process of inner and natural growth. Then will your individuality become stronger and stronger. Your intuitive nature will manifest without inhibition and with all the natural and reliable spontaneity. This will make the best of your life. Not faultlessly so, not being free of any failure, not excluding the possibility of making mistakes, but failures and mistakes will be made in a very different way than before. More and more, you will combine the divine attitude of love, power, and serenity in the healthy way, as opposed to the 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. So, your own capacity to love will combine power and serenity. Or to put it differently, you will communicate in love and understanding in healthy independence, but being truly independent because love, power, and serenity will not take the place of furnishing your missing self-respect. Genuine, not self-centered love will then no longer interfere with healthy power, not power out of pride and defiance, not 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 being able to have mastery here or there will not represent the threat it does while in the distortion. It will not diminish your worth in your own eyes, and therefore nothing has to be proven to others. Thus you will truly grow with each life experience. You will learn and accomplish. Hence, you will have real power, not the kind that is false. 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, but by the two previous healthy attitudes, you will not be so involved with yourself so that, as a result, you will truly become more objective. That is true serenity -- not avoiding experience and emotions which may be painful at the moment but yield an important key when the courage is taken to go through with them and find what is behind them.

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

And now, my dear ones, I am ready for your questions.

QUESTION: When a child forces love through a temper tantrum and the 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 it like this. As usual, all 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 him to always get his will. But it may also exist in the submissive type who needs love as a solution for all his problems. He is so convinced that this will be the solution and is so dependent on it that when others do not obey this command, he is outraged. The fury and self-contempt is so strong that it has to externalize and is then projected onto 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.

It may also be a combination of the search for power and love. These two attitudes constantly 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, who craves for a show of invulnerability as much as he craves for being loved.

So it may be a combination. Each person has to find it separately and individually. It has to be applied to his own person, not only as far as the childhood situation is concerned when these "solutions" were unconsciously instituted, but also in the present predicaments and problems of life. He must find out how one trend may be more predominant in one situation and the other trend in different circumstances.

QUESTION: You have shown us how the distortion of these attributes manifests. And 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 be hand in hand in the divine way, but actually they are by-products 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 in a distorted way?

ANSWER: Again, a very contradictory attitude exists. On the one hand, the person may at times believe this can be combined. And you will find in this work that offhand a person may say, "but why not? Why can I not have this, and at the same time that?" Only upon closer analysis will it show that this is mutually exclusive, just because it is distorted. So of course a person is somehow inwardly convinced it can be combined. And he would be right if it were in the healthy way, but in the unhealthy way it cannot be done. Yet it has to show in the work exactly why and how two trends oppose one another through seeing cause and effect of each.

It is also true that a person, because all this is unconscious, often simultaneously is convinced that it cannot be combined. Therefore when he is submissive, he hates himself because on the other hand he should be proud, aloof, independent. He does not see that he could be giving in while at the same time asserting himself in a healthy independence. Thus it works both ways. On the one hand, he despises himself for not combining it, and on the other, he despairs because he unconsciously believes he should make a decision for one side and he cannot do so.

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 combatted?

ANSWER: The only way to combat them is by going into this work and finding the underlying reasons. There must be a very personal, particular reason which has to be found. If the attempt is made to force it 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 these compulsions may exist again cannot be generalized. But as much as it can be generalized, I may say this, any compulsion comes from an unconscious conclusion that something must be had, attained, gotten. But by the time this reaches the outer personality, the goal may have been shifted to a substitute. For instance, the idealized self-image dictates to live up to something or to gain something, and the person is unable to do so. He is then compelled to seek other outlets. He is so frustrated about his own inability to live up to what he believes he should and could achieve that he must substitute this. A compulsion to buying things, when analyzed as to symbolic meaning, will show that it represents an acquisitiveness. This may come from a distortion of 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 also be a substitute for the frustration of not being able to receive the pleasure one yearns for. This wanted pleasure exists due to the existence of the wrong attempts to solve life. When the effects of these attempts and distorted attitudes are sufficiently analyzed, it will be found that they prohibited the very things one wants 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 it by himself and perhaps first experience this finding as though it were entirely 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. Again each case may be different. All I can say here is that life becomes so difficult to cope with, not because life is so difficult, but because of the inner problems tearing the person in half, 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 measures of further deliberate escape, 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 exists. The more one is estranged from the real self, the less pleasure is possible, and therefore the greater the longing for it becomes. Then a short cut substitute is looked for in such addiction.

QUESTION: We are surrounded by thought-forms of different quality and strength, etc. 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 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 in 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 towards 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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