



ANTHONY
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WAKE UP TO HAPPINESS

*A practical spirituality
for the pandemic*

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Anthony de Mello, S.J.

How to Pray

Let me begin with something that people are always saying to me. They know I'm a Catholic priest and so they say to me, "Could you help us to pray?" You know, I've written a book on prayer, so let's begin with that.

What Prayer is Not

For that you might have to revise your notions on prayer somewhat radically and that's what I'm hoping to be able to do for you this evening.

Let me begin by telling you what I think prayer is not. And maybe the best way to tell you that is by telling you a story.

There's this guy who comes to see a great Sufi master and he says to the master, "Master so great is my trust in God that I haven't even tied my camel to the post outside, I have left it to the providence of God and the care of God," and the Sufi master says, "Go out and tie that camel to the post, you fool."

God cannot be bothered doing what you can do for yourself. Pretty good, huh?

That is very important to keep in mind when we talk about prayer. God cannot be bothered doing for you what you can do for yourself.

I'm reminded of the Jewish rabbi who had served God faithfully all his life, and he said one day to God, "God, I have been a devout worshiper and I have kept the law as best I could and I've been a good Jew. Now I'm old and I need some help. Let me win the lottery, it will help for my old age." Well, he prayed and he prayed and he prayed and he prayed, and one month went by, and two and three and five, and a whole year went by, and three years went by, and the man in desperation one day said, "God give me a break!" and God said, "Give me a break yourself, buy a ticket!"

Well, that will give you some idea of what prayer is not.

What Prayer Is

Let me tell you what I think prayer is. I'll tell it to you also in the form of a story.

There's this guy who invented fire and as soon as he invented the art of making fire he goes up to the north where you have these hill tribes shivering in the cold. He begins to teach them the art and he shows them the value of being able to be warm in the winter, cooking their food, and it would help with their buildings. They learned enthusiastically.

They had hardly learnt it when he went somewhere else. He didn't even give them time to thank him because he was a great man. And you know great people; they're not bothered about being remembered, they're not bothered about being thanked, they want your good. So, he disappeared and he went to another tribe and he began to teach them, too, how to make fire.

Well, the people were enthusiastic, but he began to get more and more popular and the priests feared that their own popularity would diminish. They decided to get rid of him. So, what did they do? They poisoned him. And since there was a suspicion among the people that they had done this, they were very clever. They made a portrait of the man, they put it up there on the high altar of the temple, and they got everyone to venerate the great inventor of fire. They also had the instruments for making fire placed on that altar so everybody would venerate it. They developed a whole rite and a whole liturgy for the veneration of the great inventor and the tools for making fire.

The veneration, the worship went on, decade after decade, century after century but there was no fire.

You want to know what prayer is? Fire!

Where's the fire? That's prayer!

That's Prayer

Anything you do to get the fire, that's prayer. You're praying for weeks and months and years, no fire, no prayer. Plenty of good will, but no prayer.

But the Lord says, "Why do you call me Lord and fail to do what I tell you?"

And they come to him and say, "Lord we work miracles in your name,"

And he says, "I don't know you, not interested."

Funny, he was less interested in 'Lord' than we seem to be.

He was more interested in 'Why don't you do what I tell you?'

Now be careful about that, don't think that good works are necessarily prayer. You know people will often quote the words of the Lord at the Last Judgement, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink." Well, someone else who says, "If I gave my body to be burned, and all my goods to feed the poor," and yet did not have love it is all worthless, remember?

So, the deed itself isn't what would really be valuable, because there are some good deeds that are really good, there are other good deeds that are corrupt.

Meister Eckhart, a great German mystic, puts it powerfully. He says, "You should bother less about what you ought to do and think more about what you ought to be, because if your being were good, then your works would shine forth brightly."

So, it's your being that needs to be transformed; that's the fire.

How to Transform Your Being

How would you transform your being? What would you do?

Nothing.

For your being to be transformed you need to see, to see something which will change you. You don't get changed by working on yourself.

Here in this country, you're pretty famous for fixing things and that's a great gift, but when you try to fix yourself, you're likely to run into trouble.

You don't have to do anything. You've got to see things in a new way.

The great George Fox, put it so well. When he had this tremendous experience, this tremendous enlightenment or illumination, he said, "The whole world was the same, but it looked different. It gave forth a different fragrance."

Change comes about through seeing something: the metanoia, the repentance, repent for the kingdom of God has come.

Repentance doesn't mean crying for your sins. Repentance means looking at everything in a new way: a change of mind, a change of heart.

Like that guy who says to his wife, "I changed my mind." She says, "Thank God, I hope the new one will function better."

So that's what it's all about. Literally, another mind, another way of looking at things, another way of seeing everything, that's the transformation we're talking about. When that comes, you change, your deeds change, your life changes. That's the fire.

A New Way of Looking at Things

Now what do you need in order to see things in a new way? Get ready for a big surprise.

You don't need strength, you don't need youthfulness, you don't need self-confidence, you don't need willpower, you don't need effort. What do you think you need?

You need the willingness to think the unfamiliar.

The willingness to see something new.

That's the last thing that most human beings want. They don't want to see anything different from what they've been seeing all along.

That's why when Jesus came, he had so much difficulty with his good news. People don't like to hear good things. They want to suffer, they want to be miserable, though they don't know it.

You read that book, *Games People Play*, and you'll discover how they are unconsciously wanting to produce their suffering. So, they don't like the good part of the good news, they don't like the new part of the good news.

Tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to give you something by which you can test yourself. Are you ready to look at things in another way?

But a caution in the beginning. Don't take anything that I'm saying because I'm saying it, because it wouldn't do you any good. You've probably swallowed too much from other people, so don't swallow anything from me.

I love those great words of Buddha he says, "Monks and scholars must not accept my words out of respect, but must analyze them the way a goldsmith analyzes gold; by rubbing, scraping, cutting, melting, that's the way to do it."

On the one hand, openness, receptivity, on the other hand, the willingness to question, to think for yourself. Otherwise you will lapse into gullibility, into mental laziness, we don't want that.

So here comes the first test. This might be something of a shock to some, get ready. Hold onto your chair, okay?

Are you suffering? Do you have problems?

Could it be said of you that you're not enjoying every single minute of your life? Did you enjoy the last three hours? Every single minute of those last three hours?

If the answer is no, if the answer is you are suffering, you are disturbed, you do have problems, there's something wrong with you, seriously wrong. You're asleep, you're dead.

Suffering

Now I bet that with most of you, no one has ever told you that it is natural to have problems, it's human to suffer. I'd better explain that bit about suffering.

You know you could be in pain and suffer or you could be in pain and not suffer.

There's a great master who was asked by his disciples what did enlightenment bring you and he says, "Well, before enlightenment I used to be depressed. After enlightenment, I continued to be depressed."

But there's a big difference; suffering means to be disturbed by your depression. That's what I mean by suffering.

Okay? Because some of you are going to be asking me questions, you better get this clear now. Suffering means to be disturbed by your pain, by your depression, by your anxiety.

It's quite likely that as you embark upon this way of prayer in the beginning, the depression will continue to come, and the anxieties will continue to come. But you know in the old days these were like clouds that pass through the sky and you identified yourself with the clouds.

Now, you're the sky, you're detached from them, but they continue to come and go. Before enlightenment I used to be depressed. After enlightenment I continued to be depressed.

Well, where do you think suffering comes from? People say from life.

Life is tough, life is hard. The Chinese have a marvelous saying. They say in all the universe there is nothing so cruel as nature. There is no escape from it. And yet it isn't nature that does the damage, but the person's own heart, that's where the suffering comes from.

It isn't life that is hard on you, it is you who takes it hard.

I'm going to show you this.

Last month, somebody in New York told me that there's an African tribe, that when they sentence people to death, they don't have the gallows, they don't have the execution by axe, they don't have any electric chair. You know what they do? They banish them.

They are sent into exile and within a week the man or the woman dies. They just die.

We say you kill them, the sentence of banishment killed him. You know why? You and I would probably be banished and we might feel it a bit, but we wouldn't die for heaven's sake. What do you think killed that person?

He killed himself, his programming killed him. His way of looking at that banishment, that's what killed him, not the banishment itself.

You've heard of students everywhere in the world who take their examinations so seriously that if they fail the exam, they commit suicide. Now you and I might feel it a bit if we fail the examination, we wouldn't commit suicide. What do you think killed that person? The failure?

No! The way he or she reacted to the failure.

When you're planning a picnic and your picnic gets rained out, what's causing the negative feeling in you? The rain or your reaction?

You know this comes as a big shock to people who've been praying for decades, but never saw this. That's one of the dangers of prayer, it might prevent you from seeing the fire.

Apply this to yourself

I'm going to go slowly now, okay?

Think of something that is disturbing you right now, during these days or something that disturbed you in the recent past.

Think...

Attempt to understand that the disturbance is not coming from outside, not from the events, not from those things, not from the fact that somebody died, or that you made a mistake or that you met with an accident, or that you lost your job or your money. Uh-uh, it doesn't come from there.

It comes from the way you are reacting to the event, to the person, to the thing that is upsetting you.

If somebody else had been in your place he or she would, quite conceivably, not be disturbed. You are.

How come?

We need to do something with you, not with the reality for the time being. But most people will plunge headlong into changing reality.

A couple of weeks ago I was in Saint Louis and there was a priest there who came up to me and said he had helped a friend who was suffering from AIDS. He said a strange thing happened to this man. He said, "I only began to live when the doctor told me that I had AIDS and I was sure to die."

Would you believe that? He said, "I've helped about 30 people like this," and he said "anywhere from 12 to 15 said something similar to me."

How would it be that one person would react in one way, yet another would react in another way to the same stimulus?

It has something to do with your programming. Somebody broke his promise to you, somebody rejected you, someone abandoned you. You know something? No one has ever hurt you in the whole of your life, no one. No event has ever upset you. This was done by you.

In fact, it wasn't even done by you, because we wouldn't do this deliberately. It was done by your conditioning, by your programming, by the way you looked at things and at life. That's what needs to be changed, the change of mind.

Let me give you another test.

Think of any problem you have with any person. Do you find this person unreliable, selfish, rejecting? Do you find this person irritating, lazy, moody?

I'm reminded of the woman who goes to her psychiatrist and the psychiatrist says to her, "Did you wake up grumpy this morning?"

She says, "No he was fast asleep, so I thought I'd let him continue."

Okay, think of someone like this. Now, you know if you're having difficulties with this person, get ready for a shock, there's something wrong with you.

What do you mean there's something wrong with me?

Exactly what I said, there's something wrong with you. There are no difficulties in dealing with human beings. None that if we could change you, everything would change.

Let's see if you can grasp this, if you change, they would change. You're really seeing people not as they are, but as you are.

Let's go over that slowly. Let's suppose, you are a pain in the neck to me. All right. Now, I'm all upset, I'm disturbed. Bad sign, there's something wrong with me, I have to change. How come you have the power to upset me? How come you have the power to decide whether I will be happy or miserable? So, I don't demand that you change.

First, I won't protect you from the consequences of what you are doing.

As someone said so nicely, "In nature there are no rewards and no punishments, there are only consequences."

I'm not going to be a rescuer and prevent the consequences. Grow up and take them, including maybe being arrested and being thrown into jail.

Second, I won't let you push me around. That's for sure. I'll say no.

People are too scared to say no, they're too frightened to say no. They're too frightened to tell people to mind their own business, you'll live life as you see fit. Leave me alone to live my own life and then they complain that there's something wrong with you.

So, with these two provisos, I'm not going to protect you from the consequences and I'm not going to push you around. You can do whatever you want and take the consequences, but I'm not disturbed.

Imagine you're waiting in a line for a ticket and somebody breaks the line. Can you imagine how crazy it is that, because someone has misbehaved, you're going to punish yourself it's like taking a sledgehammer and hitting yourself on the head. You're going to get angry, you're going to let your blood pressure go up, you're going to lose your sleep.

This is crazy! And everybody says it's normal. Well they're all lunatics that's all.

They're Lunatics

If everybody is saying something you can be pretty sure it's wrong. And what would you expect from lunatics? They think it's natural.

So, if people are bugging you, they're upsetting you, this is a glorious opportunity to understand yourself, to understand your programming, to realize that the upset is coming not from them, but from your programming.

I'm not saying don't do something about whatever, that's fine. You want to do something? That's fine. But if you're doing it to relieve your negative feelings that's awful.

Secondly, before acting, you'd better see things clearly. And if you're all upset and disturbed, you're not seeing. Any emotion, especially if it's a powerful one, will get in the way of your seeing things clearly.

So, when you're not disturbed, you can be much more effective and you're much more perceptive, and you have much more power.

Happiness is Uncaused

One last test, try this one.

Your happiness is never caused by anything. True happiness is uncaused. How about that one?

You know if somebody causes your happiness, if a new job is causing your happiness, that isn't happiness at all. That's the fulfillment of a desire.

If you desire something, go for it, get it, feel excited, feel a thrill, feel gratification, feel pleasure. But you get weary of it after a while, don't you? Or you become anxious lest you lose it, don't you? That's not happiness, that's kicks, that's thrills, the fulfillment of desire.

Sometimes I think almost everybody has been programmed to be unhappy. They cannot not be unhappy. So, they go through life suffering ups and downs like the pendulum, you see.

You're all excited, but you'll be correspondingly depressed when you lose that thing that you were excited about, or you get tired and you're looking for more. That isn't happiness.

Happiness is uncaused. When nothing can hurt you, no event, no person, no thing, you're happy.

What do you do to be happy?

Nothing!

You don't do anything, you drop something. You drop an illusion, a wrong idea.

How do you drop it? By seeing that it is wrong. Then you drop it. You know that African tribe I was talking about? Why do you think this person would die when he or she is banished? Because they have added something to reality, from their programming.

Your unhappiness is caused by something that you have added. That addition causes unhappiness.

How do you become healthy? Drop your sickness and you're healthy. You don't acquire health. Health isn't something, it's the absence of sickness.

The Chinese put it so well, "When the eye is unobstructed, the result is sight. When the ear is unobstructed, the result is hearing. When the palate is unobstructed, the result is taste. When the mind is unobstructed, the result is wisdom and happiness."

If you could drop your illusions, you would be happy.

Questions and Answers

"It sounds like you're describing a kind of stoic model of being, that this is completely above any kind of passion or excitement."

Wonderful, it seems that if I'm describing a stoic way of being which is above any hurt or any excitement, true. You know if you have sharks lashing about in the water, do you want to be down there with them?

Isn't it interesting that it's human to be like this? It's human when someone else is drowning, to be drowning with them. You know something, you're not going to be of any help if you yourself are drowning and if you're all in turmoil emotionally. Think, you lose your objectivity, you lose your power of action.

"Is it possible to love, to be compassionate, to be full of energy to help and not to be disturbed?"

That's what you've got to think, who else? Yes?

"I think of Jesus being very disturbed in the temple with the money changers for example."

Okay Jesus was disturbed with the moneylenders. We could add one more. How about the agony in the garden? Now you mustn't take those moneylenders as being literally losing his temper. I told you, you could get into action, but do you want your blood pressure to go up? You could swing into action; you'll be more effective.

You know how the surgeon swings into action? When he cuts. And if he was really disturbed in the agony, isn't it wonderful that he would also sometimes suffer from his programming as

we suffer from ours? But pretty soon he steadies himself, because we're told that he steadies himself, and pretty soon that's wonderful.

"If you take a child, or you take let's say a child that is born with a physical handicap that is not anything that they wished upon themselves, how can they train their own mind?"

Okay wonderful, we got that. So, the idea is, suppose a child is handicapped or a child is sick? You know, I know a Jesuit who was a polio victim and he's really crippled and handicapped; he's one of the happiest people I've ever met.

It all depends on how the child's society and family react to it. If they think it's a calamity and there are 'whooh' and 'ahhs' and then, of course, this is what the child is going to pick up.

I've seen people in awful health with cancer, suffering intense pain. You know something they're happy. They're happy, they're not suffering, because suffering means you're fighting. Suffering means how long is this going to last?

You know another secret? The present moment is never intolerable. What's intolerable is what's going to happen in the next four hours. To have your body here at 8 p.m. and your mind at 10:30 p.m. that's what causes the suffering. To have your body here in Dallas, and your mind in San Francisco that's what causes the suffering.

"My question is the relationship between this feeling of love and attaining it through prayer or how is what form of prayer required in order to meet this condition?"

Okay, the form of prayer that is required to meet this condition is awareness.

Not gimme gimme gimme! Go tie your camel, you fool. God cannot be bothered doing for you what you can do for yourself.

There was a man who came to a guru a master and said, "Today is your day of silence, but I can only be here for one day. Would you please write me one sentence that could guide me for my life?" The Guru nodded affably, took a pad and wrote "awareness" and gave it back to him.

"But this is too brief, could you expand on it a little?"

He took it back and wrote, "Awareness awareness awareness."

He said, "Yes but what does this mean?"

"Awareness awareness awareness, means awareness."

All right so once again what is prayer? Prayer is fire. Fire meaning transformation, that comes about from seeing one's illusions and dropping them.

How to Be Real

In the previous section, I spoke to you about prayer and what prayer was about. Let me recapitulate some of that for you. Let me show you what prayer can do for a person and what it is not. And once again let me do that in the form of a story.

Here's a good image of life that I picked up somewhere in a book once. You're sitting in a theater listening to a concert and suddenly you remember that you forgot to park your car. Oh sorry, you forgot to lock it, and you're anxious. You cannot get up now and go and lock your car and you cannot concentrate on the symphony. You're caught between two things.

I thought what a lovely image of life.

Let me give you a contrast to that. There's a great Japanese story of a guy who's running away from a tiger. He comes to a precipice and he begins to slide down the precipice. He then grabs hold of a branch of a tree that's growing on the side of the precipice. He looks up and there is this tiger looking at him and there's no way of crawling up.

He looks down, there's a drop of about 10,000 feet and next to him there's a berry bush. The berries are ripe, so he plucks one of those berries, puts it in his mouth and it tastes so sweet.

He was able to live life one moment at a time, which is the only way to live, but it sounds like an impossible feat doesn't it?

The Treasure

Did you hear how those South African minds were discovered?

It's very interesting. There was this man sitting, a tourist or a traveler, sitting at the door of the hut of the village headman. He saw the village headman children playing with something that looked like marbles. He picked one of them up and looked at it and his heart began to race; it was a diamond.

So, he said to the village headman, "You know my children back home also play with things like this they call them marbles. Could I take a few of these back with me? I'd be ready to give you some tobacco for them."

And the village headman says, "We've got millions of these here. I mean it would be robbery to take your tobacco, but I'd be happy to take anything you give me." So, he gave him the tobacco, goes back home, sells those diamonds, comes back, buys all of that land and becomes the richest man in the world.

The point of the story is, those people were living on top of a treasure and did not know it. That is another image of life. Life is a banquet but most people are starving, they never discover the treasure.

There's a lovely story from my country of a man who sees a wandering mendicant pass by the village. The man rushes up to him and says, "Give me the stone, give me the stone, the precious stone."

And the mendicant says, "What stone are you talking about?"

"Last night the Lord Vishnu appeared to me in a dream," said the man, "and he said a wandering mendicant will be passing by the village at about 11 in the morning. If he gives you the stone he has, you will be the richest man in the world."

So, the mendicant rummages in his little sack, pulled out this diamond, and said, "Is this what you're looking for?"

It was the largest diamond in the world. "Yes," said the man, "would you give it to me?"

"Of course, take it. I found it somewhere there in my wanderings."

The man takes the diamond and he's going to go back home, but then something strikes him. He sits under a tree and he ponders all day.

Towards evening, he comes back to the mendicant and he says to him, "I don't want this diamond. Could you give me the riches that makes it possible for you to give this thing away?"

That is what prayer could do if properly practiced and properly understood. It would give you the riches that would make all of these things not matter at all. Someone said so well, "Life is something that happens to us while we're busy at something else."

We're busy trying to impress everyone, we're busy trying to look good, we're busy trying to live, to win the Olympics, we're busy trying to succeed and life passes us by.

I read the story the other day of a woman who died in New York some years ago. There she was, living on hot dogs and skimping, going around looking for shoe boxes to heat in her apartment. That's how they found her, she was almost starving to death, she was over 90. They'd taken her to the hospital and three weeks later, she died. When they cleaned out her apartment, they found nearly three hundred thousand dollars there.

Another perfect image, there is something within us that's precious.

A precious pearl, there's a treasure there.

The kingdom of God is within you. If we could only discover that.

Thomas Carlyle put it so well, he said, "The great tragedy of life lies, not in how much we suffer, but in how much we miss."

And there's another mystic who says, "Human beings are born asleep, they live asleep, and they die asleep."

But that is so true. Maybe they're not born asleep, they're born awake, but by the time they develop their brains, they fall asleep.

And they breed children in their sleep, they bring them up in their sleep, they go in for big business in their sleep, they go into government in their sleep, and they die in their sleep.

They never wake up!

That is what spirituality is all about. To wake up.

You're moving around in a drunken stupor. It's as if you were hypnotized, you're drugged and you don't know what you're missing.

How would we get out of this?

How would we awake?

How do you know that you're asleep?

I told you that, in the previous section. Are you upset and disturbed? Do you have problems? Are you not enjoying life?

Never doubt it, you're fast asleep.

The mystics tell us that when they see what they'd been looking at all along, but had never seen, they discover an overflowing joy in the heart of things. Without a single dissenting voice, they tell us that overflowing love and joy are everywhere. Even though they would have pain, and what we call suffering, there's a tremendous joy which nothing can shake or take away from them.

How do we get this? Through understanding.

I talked about those illusions of Oz. if you would see your illusions and your erroneous ideas they will drop, you will change.

It's useless saying to God, "Gimme-gimme-gimme." Remember, go and tie that camel of yours, God cannot be bothered doing for you what you can do for yourself.

Like the guy whose beard is burning and they say, "Your beard is on fire!" He says, "But can't you see me praying for rain? I'm doing something about it!"

You're saying, "Lord that I may see," and you've got your eyes tightly shut.

The Drug

Understanding, awareness, the willingness to see. I'm going to take one big illusion that almost everyone suffers from, and I'm going to talk about it. If you could get released from it, oh how you would come awake.

Let me explain it in this way. To be a kind of a meditation that you and I will do together.

Think of a little child. It's given a taste for drugs, as it grows up the whole body of that child is craving for the drug. To live without the drug brings pain and suffering so great that it seems preferable to die.

You and I as children, were given a drug. It was called approval. It was called appreciation. It was called praise, success, acceptance, popularity. Once you took the drug, society could control you. The tentacles of society got into you. You become a robot.

You want to see what kind of a robot exists as human beings live?

Listen to this, you've got the robot who comes here and I say, "My, you're looking pretty," and the robot goes right up. I press a button called appreciation and right up it goes. Then I press another button called criticism, flat on the earth. Total control. It was so affected by this.

We're so easily controlled by it. And when we're deprived of it, we become so terrified. We're so frightened to make mistakes, we're so frightened that people will laugh at us.

I saw a little kid once, three years old, she wandered into our dining room dressed in her nightie. So, we sort of applauded. She thought we were laughing at her. She ran away and her mother had to carry her in while she was struggling; she didn't want to come. She thought we had laughed at her, and I thought, she's only three years old, but already we've made a little monkey out of her.

Somebody taught her this, that when you do this, she's supposed to feel good, and when you say "boo," she's supposed to feel bad.

Once you give her that drug she's finished.

You think Jesus Christ was controlled by this kind of thing, by what people thought of Him and what they said about Him? Awaken people, break out of this drug! And when you make a mistake, or when you're rejected, you feel such a tremendous emptiness, such a loneliness. You keep crawling back, begging for that drug called encouragement, acceptance, belonging.

So, they got us nicely controlled.

How do you get out of it?

First of all, let's see some of the results. You know something? As a result of having taken this drug, you have lost your ability to love.

You know why? Because you cannot see any human being anymore, you're so conscious of whether they accept you or they don't, whether they approve of you or they don't, you're seeing them as a threat to your drug or as a support to your drug.

Think of the politician. The politician frequently doesn't see people at all. He sees votes. And if you're neither a threat nor a support to his getting votes, he doesn't even notice you. The businessman, he sees big bucks, he doesn't see people, he sees business deals.

But we're no different, if we're under the effect of this drug.

The robot, you say, "I like you."

The robot will automatically, mechanically react, "Oh he's good. He likes me."

You say, "I don't like you."

The robot reacts, "He is awful, he doesn't like me."

See?

Getting Rid of the Drug

How can you love what you do not even see? Want to get rid of the drug?

You have to tear those tentacles out of your system. They've gone to the marrow of your bones; this control that society exercises over you. Awaken by seeing what they are doing to you.

If you're able to do that, everything will be the same, but you will have dropped out. You will be in the world, but you will no longer be of the world.

But you know how terrifying this is? Initially, it's like asking someone, a drug addict who's going through withdrawal symptoms, it's like saying to him or her, "Listen, why don't you enjoy good nourishing food and clean water from the mountain stream and the nice fresh morning air? Give up your drug for that."

He cannot conceive of it. He cannot live without it. That's how terrible it is. That's how terrifying.

How do you get out of it? Well, you've got to face that terror, you've got to understand the state you're in.

What a terrible state you're in, because you cannot live without people. It brings a tremendous loneliness, but then when you're with people there's always that tension. You want to love people; you have to die for people. You have to die for your need for people. You have to understand what your drug is doing to you.

First of all, be patient with yourself.

Second, call the drug by its name, it's an artificial stimulant.

You really want to enjoy life? Enjoy the pleasures of the senses, enjoy the pleasures of the mind, enjoy your work, enjoy nature. Go up to the mountain and enjoy the trees and the stars at night, and send the crowds away, and you will be completely alone.

Because then love is born, in solitude and aloneness. You come to this land of love by passing through the land of death, and then, you will realize that your heart has brought you to this vast desert.

In the beginning it seems lonely because you're not accustomed to it. You're not accustomed to aloneness, which is not the same as loneliness.

Loneliness means missing people. Aloneness means not needing anyone. Enjoying people, but not needing them. Then at last you can see them. Then you will realize that the desert suddenly blossoms into love, and there's a song in your heart, and it is springtime forever.

Give yourself proper nourishment. Call the drug by its name and be patient, the way you would with an addict. What powerful prayer that is.

Let me give you a little meditation.

Think of someone whose approval you needed, you think you needed; whose approval you desperately want, whose appreciation you want. See if you can understand how, in front of this person, you have lost your freedom.

Try that out.

Think of someone who you think is necessary to ease the pain of your loneliness and understand how in front of this person you have lost your freedom.

You're not free. You dare not be yourself. You cannot live like a king or a queen, or a princess.

Talking about being free I'm reminded of this Irish prisoner who digs a tunnel under his prison cell and he makes it to freedom through this tunnel. He comes out in the middle of a school compound and he can't contain himself. He begins to jump up and down saying, "I'm free I'm free, I'm free."

There was a little girl watching him scornfully. She says, "That's nothing. I'm four."

What does it mean to live like an emperor and empress? You know what it means? It means you don't have to impress anyone, anymore. You're completely at ease with everyone because you don't desire anything from anyone anymore.

Well, I've got to clarify that. Of course, you desire things from others, but you know the non-fulfillment of that desire doesn't make you unhappy. See if you can get that.

Two Types of Desires

There are two types of desires. There's the desire on whose fulfillment our happiness depends. There's a desire on whose fulfillment our happiness does not depend.

I go to a restaurant, I say, "Do you have mushroom soup?"

And they say, "No, we have no mushroom soup."

"You ruin my dinner," I say, "Let's get out of this place! Let's go somewhere else."

Or...

"Do you have mushroom soup?"

"No"

"What do you have?"

"Sweet corn and chicken."

"Well that's pretty good. I'd enjoy that too. What about tomatoes, I'd enjoy that too."

See?

The fulfillment of that desire does not affect your happiness. You're happy with it or without it.

Like the guy who's waiting at the maternity ward and the nurse comes and says, "Did you want a boy or a girl?" He says, "I wanted a girl."

She says, "Well, I got bad news for you it's a boy."

He says, "That's alright, that was my second choice."

How do you get this kind of guy down, huh?

When you don't have to defend yourself anymore to anyone, you don't feel the need to apologize. Can you imagine that? You don't feel the need to explain. You don't have to impress. You're not bothered by what they say, or what they think doesn't bother you

You're unaffected.

My....

Now love will begin. Not till then, because you know something? As long as I need you, I cannot love you. As long as I need you for my happiness, I cannot love you.

Questions and Answers

"I'm trying to imagine myself as a parent treating my child without praise or affection or encouragement that sounds like when you describe it as a drug, as a bad thing to give a child. I just can't imagine myself being a good parent, a loving parent, and not giving that to a child."

Okay great, affection is fine. Did you hear me say affection wasn't all right? A parent giving affection is fine, but think of this, we're all busy telling people that they're okay.

You know why?

Because somebody told them they were not okay. You know something? You're neither okay nor not okay. You're you. And if you really were you, and you were getting nourishment from what I called the pleasures of the senses and the mind, and you were not being drugged by society, you wouldn't miss it.

There are cultures in which 'you're not okay' doesn't exist, so neither does 'you're okay' exist. Sometimes people feel they haven't been loved. I say to them, "If you've survived to this age, you've got all the love you need."

Listen to this.

A woman claims that she hasn't been loved and she needs it desperately. She goes to the movies and it's a great comedy and she's roaring with laughter and for ten minutes she's forgotten that it's necessary to be loved and she's happy. What do you know?

When she comes out of the theater with her friend, and she sees her friend go with her boyfriend, then she thinks nobody loves me; I got no boyfriend. It's like when there was no television, nobody missed it. Now that everybody's got television, they say, "Oh I don't have television!"

See? Loneliness is not cured by human contact, by contact with human beings. It is cured by contact with reality. Then you don't miss people. You enjoy them and you don't miss them.

There's a great educationist who says, a man called Neil, some of you are probably familiar with him from his book *Summerhill*. He says, "The healthy child is always interested in persons. It's always the unhealthy child clinging to its mother's skirts. The healthy child has no need for a person, they're busy exploring the world."

"You spoke briefly about spirituality. Could you give us a definition of spirituality?"

Spirituality is to be awake, to drop your illusions. Spirituality is never to be at the mercy of any event, thing, or person. Spirituality is to have discovered those diamond mines inside of you.

Religion is meant to lead you to this. Alas, if you look at the world it frequently doesn't.

The meditation centers around a lovely gospel text of what use is it to you to gain the world and lose your soul.

I'll go a bit slowly. Think of what you feel when you're looking at a sunset or you're in touch with nature and compare that to the feeling you have when you're appreciated, you're praised, you're applauded.

The first kind of feeling I call a soul feeling.

The second type I call a world feeling.

Think of the feeling you have when you win a race or an argument. When you make it to the top, when you're successful. World feeling.

Contrast it with the feeling you get when you're doing work that you love when you're immersed in a hobby, when you're reading a book that you thoroughly enjoy or watching a movie that you enjoy. Soul feeling.

Think of the time when you've got power, when you're the boss, when everyone is looking up to you and the kind of feeling that creates. World feeling,

Contrast that with the joy of intimacy, with the company of friends you enjoy them without clinging to them, with laughter and merriment. Soul feeling,

Let's take a look at those 'world feelings.' They're not natural. They were invented by your society and mind to control you. They do not lead to happiness, only to excitement and thrills and anxiety and emptiness.

Think of your own life. Is there a single day when you're not consciously or unconsciously attuned to what others think, what others feel, and what they will say about you? In other words, controlled by them marching to the beat of their drum.

Look around you and see if you find anyone who is freed from these feelings. World feelings.

Everywhere you will find people immersed in these world feelings, because they live soulless, empty lives. They gained the world, but they lost their soul. When they come to die, they die without ever having lived.

And here is a parable of life. A group of tourists sitting in a bus that is moving through gorgeous countryside, but the shades of the windows are drawn down and they don't see a thing. They're all quarreling among themselves as to who will have the seat of honor: who will be appreciated, who's the best, who's the best-looking, who's the most talented. And so it goes, right to journey's end.

If you can understand this, my dear friends, the understanding will melt the addiction and you will be free. You will understand the loveliness of what prayer is.

Then you will discover what reality is. What God is. Because you will have dropped one of our biggest illusions; the illusion that we need to be appreciated, to be popular, to succeed, to have prestige and honor and power and popularity. There's only one need and that need is to be real, that need is to love.

When one discovers that, one is transformed, one's life becomes prayer.

How to Love

Let me begin by telling you one of my favorite stories, a story of the camel.

There was this camel owner that was travelling across the desert and pitched tent for the night. The slaves came in to report that they had 20 camels and only 19 pegs to tie them to. What do they do?

So, the master said to them, "You know these camels are stupid creatures. Just go through the motions of driving a peg in the ground and tying this last camel to it and it will stay put for the whole night," which is exactly what happened.

The next morning when they lifted their tent and were moving on, the slaves came to report that this camel wouldn't budge.

"Ah," said the master, "you probably forgot to go through the motions of untying him."

So, they untied him, and the stupid animal went ahead, went with the others.

How like human beings, who are so thrilled by things that are not real, illusory. So terrified by things, which are illusory: success, failure, criticism, the good opinion of others.

The other day I was traveling from the US to Canada. As we crossed the Canadian border on the US frontier, the pilot said, "Well we're up at the US border right now," he looked down through the window, "it's funny you can't see it, you know?"

Have you realized that it only exists in your mind? That in nature there is no border? That being an American is only in your head? That there are no American trees or American mountains? This is the convention that people are ready to die for. That's how real it looks to them.

Has it ever struck you that Christmas Day doesn't exist except in your mind?

In nature there's no Christmas Day, but you got Christmassy feelings. Or there's no New Year's Day and there's no illegitimate child. Tell someone he or she is an illegitimate child, turmoil. But in nature, there is no illegitimate child. In legitimacy is a human convention.

Tell a kid that he or she is adopted and you run into trouble sometimes. It is in the head. There are cultures where almost everyone is adopted, so nobody bothers.

We're reacting to words; we're reacting to ideas in our head. We live on ideas, we feed on them, on words, words, words.

I'm reminded of the guy, a farmer who was living on the Finnish-Russian border. They were drawing up the frontier, and he had to make up his mind whether he wanted his farm to be in Finland or in Russia. He chose Finland. The Russian officials descended upon him and demanded to know why he didn't want to be in Russia, and he said, "Look, all my life I have

always wanted to live in Mother Russia. But you know at this age, I simply wouldn't be able to take another Russian winter."

Or your Mark Twain who says, "Cold. If the thermometer had been half an inch longer, we would have frozen to death."

What Love is Not

I want to deal with the illusions connected with love. To talk of prayer, is to talk of love. For God is love. Love is divine. But what generally goes under the name of love has nothing to do with love at all. Nothing.

So, let me begin by telling you what love is not and then indicating however vaguely, what love is.

Love is not attraction. "I love you more than I love anyone else," translates, "I'm more attracted to you than to others."

How's that sound? You draw me more than others. You fit the programming in my head better than other people do. Not very flattering to you, because if my programming had been different, I wouldn't be with you.

Remember how people say, "What does he find in her, what does he see in her?" They say love is blind. Attraction is blind, not love. There is nothing so clear sighted as love.

This whole process of "I'm attracted to you," you know where the love comes from? Comes from you, not from me. It doesn't spring from me, you draw me. The day you cease to be attractive what happens? Well, I'll hold onto you out of guilt, out of loyalty, out of an ideal.

But love, in your sense of the word, has died. If for you love means attraction, it's gone.

I was told of an old couple, grandpa and grandma. They were celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary. They were tired after all the celebrations sitting in the verandah, and grandpa felt moved, and he said, "Grandma I'm proud of you."

"What was that grandpa?" she says, "You better speak louder. You know I cannot hear you without my hearing aid."

He said, "I'm proud of you!"

She says, "That's alright, I'm tired of you too."

You know that's where attraction always ends up. You're attracted. If you give into that attraction, gratification follows and after the gratification wanes, you are weary. Or if it persists, anxiety. I hope I can keep this. I hope somebody else doesn't get it. Possessiveness, jealousy, fear of loss, that isn't love.

Another thing that love is not. It is not dependency.

Now you know it's very good to depend on people. We depend on one another or else we wouldn't have society, interdependence. Wonderful.

We depend on the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker. We depend on the pilot, on the cab driver, on all sorts of people. But to depend on another for happiness, that is the evil, that someone would have the power to decide whether you would be happy or not.

If you have that, if you have ever given somebody this power, you will be fearful, you will manipulate. You cannot leave that person free, because, don't forget, your happiness depends on this person. You're a burden.

Sometimes you see two empty people depending on one another to complete themselves. Incomplete people depending and leaning on one another. Two dominoes, one moves the other falls. Is that love?

Love is not the assuaging of our loneliness. People feel empty inside and they rush to fill the emptiness with someone. That isn't love.

Incidentally, that emptiness, that loneliness, that so many people are running away from, they run into all kinds of activity, even social activity. They run into work, they run into other people's arms to assuage that emptiness, that loneliness.

Contact with Reality

The only cure for that loneliness, as I said to you previously, is not contact with human beings, but contact with reality.

What does that mean?

If you would face the loneliness you might discover that it isn't there. There is no emptiness. If you would face the illusion that you were programmed into by your society, that you need others, you'd realize loneliness isn't there.

You're watching a movie enjoying yourself immensely. Suddenly at that moment you don't need anybody.

This is an illusion that has been created in our heads. And here's something else you may want to remember for the future; both what you're running away from, and what you're searching for, is inside of you.

It's all there.

If you would face what's going on inside of you, what you're running away from would disappear, and what you're searching for would emerge.

So, love is not the assuaging, the soothing of our loneliness. Mostly when people talk about love, you know what they're talking about? They're talking about a thing of the market, it's a

bargain. You be good to me; I'll be good to you. You'll be nice to me; I'll be nice to you. You're not nice to me? Funny, those nice feelings I had towards you turn sour. Is that love?

You could bargain with money, you could strike a deal with money, you could strike a deal with all kinds of things. You're striking a deal with your emotions and that's supposed to be love?

Here's another surprise, love is not desire. I desire you with all my heart, you know in as much as I love you, I do not desire you. I enjoy you thoroughly, but I'm too full to need you. It's like when you come, you're so enjoyable, and when you leave, I'm not at all miserable.

I'll enjoy the next thing and the next and the next person and the next. I'm full and if you are full too, how marvelous that is.

Centuries ago, Buddha had these marvelous words to say, "The world is full of sorrow."

The origin of sorrow, the root of sorrow is desire. The uprooting of sorrow is desirelessness

Let's translate that better because by desire, he meant, a desire on whose fulfillment of my happiness depends on. Our societies and cultures are the whole time encouraging us to add to these desires. So, we're more and more programmed to unhappiness and to non-love.

The world is full of sorrow, the root of sorrow is craving. The uprooting of sorrow is cravinglessness. I desire all kinds of things, but I don't desperately need anything. If that desire is not fulfilled, I'll be quite happy.

Sometimes people say, "if you had no desire, would you ever achieve something?"

If you had no ambition like that guy who stands up on a platform and says, "I was born an Englishman, I will live in Englishman, and I shall die in Englishman."

An Irishman in the crowd shouts, "Man, have you got no ambition?"

Ambition. That's one of the things we were brainwashed into when they told us, "if you don't have ambition, you won't do anything." They forgot that there's so much energy, and so much delight, in working, whereas the ambition brings tension.

Listen to these marvelous words of the great Chinese sage Zhuang Zhou. They're so good, I took the trouble to learn them by heart. Let's see if they come out well, and if they don't, we won't be upset by the failure, will we?

"Now when an archer shoots for nothing, he says, he has all his skill. When he shoots for a brass buckle, he is already nervous. When he shoots for a prize of gold, he goes blind, he is out of his mind, he sees two targets. His skill has not changed, but the prize divides him. He cares. He thinks more of winning than of shooting and the need to win drains him of power."

Isn't that marvelous? It was your ambition that drained you of power, you were driving with your brakes on. You were tense.

Attachment

So, the world is full of sorrow, the root of sorrow is craving. Marriages that are built on craving are so fragile; so ready to fall apart

"I have expectations of you. You'd better live up to them or else."

"You have expectations of me. I'd better live up to them or else."

See, you need me, I need you. I need to find my happiness in you. You need to find your happiness in me. That's where the struggle begins, that's where the possessiveness begins.

And you know something?

Wherever there is desire in this sense of the word, there's a threat. And where there's a threat, there's fear. And where there is fear, there is no love, because we always hate what we fear and perfect love casts out fear.

Wherever there's desire of the type that I described, it always goes attended by fear. So, love is not desire. Love is not attachment.

Falling in love is the exact opposite of love and it's canonized everywhere. It's a disease, everybody's trying to give it to you. You find it in your movies, in your love songs, these are need songs.

I saw a movie the other day this girl says to this boy, "Who's going home, Boy? I love you. I cannot live without you."

I cannot live without you? Love? That's hunger!

So, you know something, when I fall in love with you, I cease to see you. I don't see you anymore. Whenever there's a powerful emotion, whether it's positive or negative, I cannot see you. The emotion gets in the way. I'm projecting my own needs onto you. Falling in love is blind. Attachment.

What Love Is

I told you what love is not. You know something? I cannot tell you what love is; it cannot be said. I cannot tell you what happiness is; it cannot be said. When you drop your fears and your attachments and your illusions, you will know.

I could give you comparisons. Listen to this; to love means at least clarity of perception, accuracy of response. I see you clearly as you are, that's the least like a demand in love.

How could I love you if I don't see you?

Now get ready for a surprise

Generally, when I see you, or you see me, we generally don't see one another, we're seeing an image.

Does a husband relate to his wife, or to his image of his wife? Is the wife relating to her husband, or to her image of her husband?

How is this image formed? Watch this. If you think you've been shocked till now, get ready for this one.

I have an experience of you. That experience is stored in my memory, I make a judgment on the basis of that experience. I'm carrying this along with me and I'm acting or reacting to you on the basis of this, not on the basis of what you are right now.

There's a picture on my window. As I look through it at you, I'm looking through that picture. No clarity of perception.

There's a lovely sentence in the New Testament where Paul, speaking of love, says, "Love keeps no record of wrongs, and I say to people, sometimes you're going to be very sorry when you get up there and you find they don't have any books."

There's a lovely story of this woman who's supposed to be getting visions of God. So, the Bishop sends for her and he says, "Listen, you're creating a great sensation. I suppose you realize that, being bishop of the diocese, it is up to me to decide whether those visions are true or false."

She says, "Yes, your excellency."

"And this is my responsibility and duty."

"Yes, your excellency."

"So, you're going to have to do what I tell you."

"I will, your excellency."

He says, "Now look, the next time God appears to you, or whoever it is that appears to you, you're going to put him to this test by which I'll know whether he's really God or not."

She says, "Very well, your excellency, what is the test?"

"The test is going to be this. You're going to say to God, please tell me the private and personal sins of the bishop." And then he says, "After God has revealed that to you, if he is God, then you come and tell me, and no one else, okay?"

And she said, "Very well, your excellency."

After a month, she came back and the bishop said, "Did God appear to you again?"

She says, "I think so, your excellency."

"Did you ask him that question?"

She said, "I certainly did."

"And what did God say?"

God said, "Go tell the bishop I forgot his sins."

How about that one? No record! You know something? Love keeps no records of rights either. No right, no wrong, no good, no bad.

I see you in present moment, freshness, and I react to what's here. Shall I react to a memory or to you? A memory good or bad that cuts both ways, you know? We had a quarrel and you come up to me and say, "You know, sorry about that quarrel. I remember it, but there's no emotion attached to it, it's over."

That's what the Mystics are talking about when they talk about the purification of memory. They're not saying forget everything, drain it of emotion, sanitized. You say, "Remember how much we were in love two years ago?"

You want me to react to that, or react to you as you are now? You want to carry over this capital and get dividends from it? You know, if you come to think of it, it's terrifying. Most people are doing the opposite of this which means they don't know what love is.

Love is like listening to a symphony. Life is a symphony and to love means to be sensitive to the whole of that symphony. It means to have a sensitive heart to everyone and to everything.

Can you imagine someone who's listening to a symphony and only hears the drums, or gives so much value to the drums that the other instruments are almost drowned out? A good musician who loves music will listen to every one of those instruments. He may have his favorite instrument, he may have his preferences, but he listens to them all.

When you fall in love, when you have an infatuation, an attachment, an addiction, an obsession with a human being, you know what you're doing? That person stands out and the others are drowned out. Your heart is no longer sensitive.

Love is not a relationship. Love is a state of being, Love exists before there's any human being around. Before you come around, love already exists. Namely, the sensitive heart exists, always. You don't draw that heart. That heart is sensitive to you and responds accurately to you. But then to drown out to the drums, that's just as bad, because you're hardening your heart again

This is what love is; to listen to the whole of the symphony, to be sensitive to it all.

I told you when the eye is unobstructed the result is sight.

You cannot do anything to get love. If you would understand your desires, attachments, attractions, obsessions, addictions, and they would drop, love would emerge.

When the eye is unobstructed the result is sight.

When the heart is unobstructed the result is love.

In my country, the poets and the Mystics put it so beautifully. They say, "Is it possible for a rose to say 'I will give my fragrance to good people and withhold it from bad people?' The rose, by its very nature, cannot but love all."

Is it possible for a lamp lit in the night to say, "I will give my light to the good people in this room, and withhold it from the bad?"

Is it possible for a tree to say, "I will give my shade to the good people who sit under me, but withhold it from the bad?" It cannot. The poet Kabir Das will say, "The tree will give its shade even to the man who is striking it down, and if it is a sweet-smelling tree, it will leave its scent on the axe."

What merit is it of yours if you only greet those who greet you? And if you only love those who love you? You must be all loving as your heavenly father is all loving, for he makes his sun to shine on good and bad alike and on saints and sinners alike.

Questions and Answers

"Could you explain what you mean by responding accurately in a little more detail?"

All right. When you perceive clearly, you really cannot but respond accurately, because clarity of perception means, you've dropped whatever obstacles there are to seeing. That seeing is love, you will spontaneously give to each thing the response it deserves.

So that's what it really means.

"You've referred off-and-on to prayer, that a response is prayer, various things are prayer. Where does the answer to the prayer or God's side of this prayer come in?"

Right. What I've been referring to is not so much the Lord, but do what I tell you. This is the prayer I've been talking about.

See?

The two types of Prayer; there's the Lord, that's pretty good, and there's something much better.

Do what I tell you.

You know something? There are people who do what he tells them without ever saying Lord, or even having heard of the Lord. Does that make sense to you? Does it? Yes?

Wonderful. And there are people who are full of Lord, but mighty little else. So, it's like people saying, "Lord, we want miracles in your name, we pray to you day and night."

"I do not know you. So, do what I tell you."

That is love of God to be transformed into love. That is love of God, then you will know what God is, then you will know what reality is.

All right, let me sum up for you what I was saying.

I talked about a major illusion that we have, the illusion concerning love.

Previously, I dealt with other illusions.

Prayer, love, spirituality, religion, means drop your illusions. In as much as religion helps you to do this, it's fine. In as much as it distracts you from it and takes you away from it, it's a disease, it's a plague, it must be avoided.

Once these illusions drop, the heart will be unobstructed, then there will be love, then there will be happiness, then there will be transformation, and only then will you know what God is.