

On Love

by Jiddu Krihnamurti via sadh *Friday, Apr 6 2012, 2:07pm*

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The demand to be safe in relationship inevitably breeds sorrow and fear. This seeking for security is inviting insecurity. Have you ever found security in any of your relationships? Have you? Most of us want the security of loving and being loved, but is there love when each one of us is seeking his own security, his own particular path? We are not loved because we don't know how to love.

What is love? The word is so loaded and corrupted that I hardly like to use it. Everybody talks of love - every magazine and newspaper and every missionary talks everlastingly of love. I love my country, I love my king, I love some book, I love that mountain, I love pleasure, I love my wife, I love God. Is love an idea? If it is, it can be cultivated, nourished, cherished, pushed around, twisted in any way you like. When you say you love God what does it mean? It means that you love a projection of your own imagination, a projection of yourself clothed in certain forms of respectability according to what you think is noble and holy; so to say, 'I love God', is absolute nonsense. When you worship God you are worshipping yourself - and that is not love.

Because we cannot solve this human thing called love we run away into abstractions. Love may be the ultimate solution to all man's difficulties, problems and travails, so how are we going to find out what love is? By merely defining it? The church has defined it one way, society another, and there are all sorts of deviations and perversions. Adoring someone, sleeping with someone, the emotional exchange, the companionship - is that what we mean by love? That has been the norm, the pattern, and it has become so tremendously personal, sensuous, and limited that religions have declared that love is something much more than this. In what they call human love they see there is pleasure, competition, jealousy, the desire to possess, to hold, to control and to interfere with another's thinking, and knowing the complexity of all this they say there must be another kind of love, divine, beautiful, untouched, uncorrupted.

Throughout the world, so-called holy men have maintained that to look at a woman is something totally wrong: they say you cannot come near to God if you indulge in sex, therefore they push it aside although they are eaten up with it. But by denying sexuality they put out their eyes and cut out their tongues for they deny the whole beauty of the earth. They have starved their hearts and minds; they are dehydrated human beings; they have banished beauty because beauty is associated with woman.

Can love be divided into the sacred and the profane, the human and the divine, or is there only love? Is love of the one and not of the many? If I say, 'I love you', does that exclude the love of the other? Is love personal or impersonal? Moral or immoral? Family or non-family? If you love mankind can you love the particular? Is love sentiment? Is love emotion? Is love pleasure and desire? All these questions indicate, don't they, that we have ideas about love, ideas about what it should or should not be, a pattern or a code developed by the culture in which we live.

So to go into the question of what love is we must first ideals and ideologies of what it should or should not be. To divide anything into what should be and what is, is the most deceptive way of dealing with life.

Now how am I going to find out what this flame is which we call love - not how to express it to another but what it means in itself? I will first reject what the church, what society, what my parents and friends, what every person and every book has said about it because I want to find out for myself what it is. Here is an enormous problem that involves the whole of mankind, there have been a thousand ways of defining it and I myself am caught in some pattern or other according to what I like or enjoy at the moment - so shouldn't I, in order to understand it, first free myself from my own inclinations and prejudices? I am confused, torn by my own desires, so I say to myself, 'First clear up your own confusion. Perhaps you may be able to discover what love is through what it is not.'

The government says, 'Go and kill for the love of your country'. Is that love? Religion says, 'Give up sex for the love of God'. Is that love? Is love desire? Don't say no. For most of us it is - desire with pleasure, the pleasure that is derived through the senses, through sexual attachment and fulfilment. I am not against sex, but see what is involved in it. What sex gives you momentarily is the total abandonment of yourself, then you are back again with your turmoil, so you want a repetition over and over again of that state in which there is no worry, no problem, no self. You say you love your wife. In that love is involved sexual pleasure, the pleasure of having someone in the house to look after your children, to cook. You depend on her; she has given you her body, her emotions, her encouragement, a certain feeling of security and well-being. Then she turns away from you; she gets bored or goes off with someone else, and your whole emotional balance is destroyed, and this disturbance, which you don't like, is called jealousy.

There is pain in it, anxiety, hate and violence. So what you are really saying is, 'As long as you belong to me I love you but the moment you don't I begin to hate you. As long as I can rely on you to satisfy my demands, sexual and otherwise, I love you, but the moment you cease to supply what I want I don't like you.' So there is antagonism between you, there is separation, and when you feel separate from another there is no love. But if you can live with your wife without thought creating all these contradictory states, these endless quarrels in yourself, then perhaps - perhaps - you will know what love is. Then you are completely free and so is she, whereas if you depend on her for all your pleasure you are a slave to her. So when one loves there must be freedom, not only from the other person but from oneself.

This belonging to another, being psychologically nourished by another, depending on another - in all this there must always be anxiety, fear, jealousy, guilt, and so long as there is fear there is no love; a mind ridden with sorrow will never know what love is; sentimentality and emotionalism have nothing whatsoever to do with love. And so love is not to do with pleasure and desire.

Love is not the product of thought which is the past. Thought cannot possibly cultivate love. Love is not hedged about and caught in jealousy, for jealousy is of the past. Love is always active present. It is not 'I will love' or 'I have loved'. If you know love you will not follow anybody. Love does not obey. When you love there is neither respect nor disrespect.

Don't you know what it means really to love somebody - to love without hate, without jealousy, without anger, without wanting to interfere with what he is doing or thinking, without condemning, without comparing - don't you know what it means? Where there is love is there comparison? When you love someone with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your body, with your entire being, is there comparison? When you totally abandon yourself to that love there is not the other.

Does love have responsibility and duty, and will it use those words? When you do something out of duty is there any love in it? In duty there is no love. The structure of duty in which the human being is caught is destroying him. So long as you are compelled to do something because it is your duty you don't love what you are doing. When there is love there is no duty and no responsibility.

Most parents unfortunately think they are responsible for their children and their sense of responsibility takes the form of telling them what they should do and what they should not do, what they should become and what they should not become. The parents want their children to have a secure position in society. What they call responsibility is part of that respectability they worship; and it seems to me that where there is respectability there is no order; they are concerned only with becoming a perfect bourgeois. When they prepare their children to fit into society they are perpetuating war, conflict and brutality. Do you call that care and love?

Really to care is to care as you would for a tree or a plant, watering it, studying its needs, the best soil for it, looking after it with gentleness and tenderness - but when you prepare your children to fit into society you are preparing them to be killed. If you loved your children you would have no war.

When you lose someone you love you shed tears - are your tears for yourself or for the one who is dead? Are you crying for yourself or for another? Have you ever cried for another? Have you ever cried for your son who is killed on the battlefield? You have cried, but do those tears come out of self-pity or have you cried because a human being has been killed? If you cry out of self-pity your tears have no meaning because you are concerned about yourself. If you are crying because you are bereft of one in whom you have invested a great deal of affection, it was not really affection. When you cry for your brother who dies cry for him. It is very easy to cry for yourself because he is gone. Apparently you are crying because your heart is touched, but it is not touched for him, it is only touched by self-pity and self-pity makes you hard, encloses you, makes you dull and stupid.

When you cry for yourself, is it love - crying because you are lonely, because you have been left, because you are no longer powerful - complaining of your lot, your environment - always you in tears? If you understand this, which means to come in contact with it as directly as you would touch a tree or a pillar or a hand, then you will see that sorrow is self-created, sorrow is created by thought, sorrow is the outcome of time. I had my brother three years ago, now he is dead, now I am lonely, aching, there is no one to whom I can look for comfort or companionship, and it brings tears to my eyes.

You can see all this happening inside yourself if you watch it. You can see it fully, completely, in one glance, not take analytical time over it. You can see in a moment the whole structure and nature of this shoddy little thing called 'me', my tears, my family, my nation, my belief, my religion - all that ugliness, it is all inside you. When you see it with your heart, not with your mind, when you see it from the very bottom of your heart, then you have the key that will end sorrow. Sorrow and love cannot go together, but in the Christian world they have idealized suffering, put it on a cross and worshipped it, implying that you can never escape from suffering except through that one particular door, and this is the whole structure of an exploiting religious society.

So when you ask what love is, you may be too frightened to see the answer. It may mean complete upheaval; it may break up the family; you may discover that you do not love your wife or husband or children - do you? - you may have to shatter the house you have built, you may never go back to the temple.

But if you still want to find out, you will see that fear is not love, dependence is not love, jealousy is not love, possessiveness and domination are not love, responsibility and duty are not love, self-pity is not love, the agony of not being loved is not love, love is not the opposite of hate any more than humility is the opposite of vanity. So if you can eliminate all these, not by forcing them but by washing them away as the rain washes the dust of many days from a leaf, then perhaps you will come upon this strange flower which man always hungers after.

If you have not got love - not just in little drops but in abundance - if you are not filled with it - the world will go to disaster. You know intellectually that the unity of mankind is essential and that love is the only way, but who is going to teach you how to love? Will any authority, any method, any system, tell you how to love? If anyone tells you, it is not love. Can you say, 'I will practise love. I will sit down day after day and think about it. I will practise being kind and gentle and force myself to pay attention to others?' Do you mean to say that you can discipline yourself to love, exercise the will to love? When you exercise discipline and will to love, love goes out of the window. By practising some method or system of loving you may become extraordinarily clever or more kindly or get into a state of non-violence, but that has nothing whatsoever to do with love.

In this torn desert world there is no love because pleasure and desire play the greatest roles, yet without love your daily life has no meaning. And you cannot have love if there is no beauty. Beauty is not something you see - not a beautiful tree, a beautiful picture, a beautiful building or a beautiful woman. There is beauty only when your heart and mind know what love is. Without love and that sense of beauty there is no virtue, and you know very well that, do what you will, improve society, feed the poor, you will only be creating more mischief, for without love there is only ugliness and poverty in your own heart and mind. But when there is love and beauty, whatever you do is right, whatever you do is in order. If you know how to love, then you can do what you like because it will solve all other problems.

So we reach the point: can the mind come upon love without discipline, without thought, without enforcement, without any book, any teacher or leader - come upon it as one comes upon a lovely sunset?

It seems to me that one thing is absolutely necessary and that is passion without motive - passion that is not the result of some commitment or attachment, passion that is not lust. A man who does not know what passion is will never know love because love can come into being only when there is total self-abandonment.

A mind that is seeking is not a passionate mind and to come upon love without seeking it is the only way to find it - to come upon it unknowingly and not as the result of any effort or experience. Such a love, you will find, is not of time; such a love is both personal and impersonal, is both the one and the many. Like a flower that has perfume you can smell it or pass it by. That flower is for everybody and for the one who takes trouble to breathe it deeply and look at it with delight. Whether one is very near in the garden, or very far away, it is the same to the flower because it is full of that perfume and therefore it is sharing with everybody.

Love is something that is new, fresh, alive. It has no yesterday and no tomorrow. It is beyond the turmoil of thought. It is only the innocent mind which knows what love is, and the innocent mind can live in the world which is not innocent. To find this extraordinary thing which man has sought endlessly through sacrifice, through worship, through relationship, through sex, through every form of pleasure and pain, is only possible when thought comes to understand itself and comes naturally to an end. Then love has no opposite, then love has no conflict.

You may ask, 'If I find such a love, what happens to my wife, my children, my family? They must have security.' When you put such a question you have never been outside the field of thought, the field of consciousness. When once you have been outside that field you will never ask such a question because then you will know what love is in which there is no thought and therefore no time. You may read this mesmerized and enchanted, but actually to go beyond thought and time - which means going beyond sorrow - is to be aware that there is a different dimension called love.

But you don't know how to come to this extraordinary fount - so what do you do? If you don't know what to do, you do nothing, don't you? Absolutely nothing. Then inwardly you are completely silent. Do you understand what that means? It means that you are not seeking, not wanting, not pursuing; there is no centre at all. Then there is love.

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