

The Tao and Agape Love - Bob Zuraw

The ancient sages have taught us that, "Perfect love casts out fear. He that fears is not made perfect in love." What is this perfect love? How can we express it to others? Perfect love is the Buddha Christ like love, which desires only to give and does not look for reward from anyone. When we choose love, we take the heavenly attitude. We raise our consciousness. Higher consciousness is considered "inner" and "upward." We enter into the divine purpose of our life, which leads to the highest good and the only success that is satisfying. When we choose love we cannot go wrong, nor will evil ever overcome us. Life for us becomes harmonious and free from strain. Perfect love is known as agape love. It has the nature of God or the Tao. God "sends rain on the just and the unjust alike," impartially and uncritically! The Taoist Sage, Lao-Tzu, wrote in the Tao Teh Ching: "Those who appear as good, He accepts, and those who appear as bad, He accepts, for nature accepts both. Those who appear faithful, He accepts, if unfaithful, He accepts; nature accepts both."

The wise wish good to one and all. Lao-Tzu understood that each person is growing in his or her own way according to his or her own natural bent. Agape love is free of any desire to have love returned. Old men plant trees; obviously they will not sit under them. They do this out of gratitude and joy or agape love.

Too often agape love is mistaken for co-dependency. The co-dependent gives gifts, love, complements, help, money, teaches, takes care of, pities - anything that will win love and acceptance. Agape love gives love for the joy of loving, while the co-dependent gives love or material things in order to receive the same from another. If this love is not returned, the co-dependent becomes very angry, unhappy or depressed and lashes out with criticism, anger and condemnation - they explode like a bubbling volcano.

On the other hand, the "dependent" person is excessively charming, sweet, extra polite, smiles constantly and makes themselves look attractive in order to receive love, money, material things or go on vacations etc. If they do not receive the "love" they are seeking from someone, they start acting unreliable, undependable, and untrustworthy; may even take drugs or alcohol to excess and eventually bury themselves in self-pity and depression.

Giving takes wisdom. Teaching someone how to eat, exercise or love correctly, if they do not show interest in learning, is like casting mustard seeds on hard barren ground. They will not bear a harvest. Giving wisdom to someone who will not listen only falls on deaf ears. It is useless effort to give advice to stone walls. This only leads to suffering and exhaustion on the part of the giver. Use wisdom when giving. Lao Tzu says, "Be kind to those who are kind, and be kind to those who are not kind. Therefore, everyone receives kindness."

In other words, if Lao Tzu were to say, "Hello," and be friendly to another, and they would not return a "Hello" or friendliness, he would be kind and leave the person alone. Conversely, the codependent person, in this situation, would continually try to win this person's approval or attention. This leads to frustration and anger if the other person is not ready to respond in their own way and time. Many divorces could be avoided by heeding this wise advice from the "Old Boy" Lao Tzu.

Giving kindness and complete freedom to another will eventually open them up when they are ready to respond or dialogue. Forcing any situation to change immediately, be it anger, frustration, impatience, depression, stubbornness, non-communication etc., only entrenches and slams the door even more on the situation. The solution again: Be kind, calm, give total freedom and let the storm pass without expectation or time limits. Lao Tzu says: "The man or woman of Tao gives compassion, but I notice the world wants to be tough."

The attitude prevalent today in unconscious people is that mercy, kindness, understanding and compassion in relationships, family life, work and business is a weakness. "No one is going to get the better of me," "I will be tough, mean and aggressive to everyone." These people are miserable; they lead a life of unhappiness and disharmony. Real friendship or sharing is unknown to them. A selfish, egocentric person may accumulate a lot of money and always get his or her way, but in the end, they lose friends, love and real inner peace and happiness. The scriptures say, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

Too often we think that if we are nice and kind, someone will walk all over us like a doormat. If one is kind and patient with another and the situation is still not harmonious, just relax, be patient - never become angry or anxious over a bad encounter with someone. We all reap what we sow. If we sow kindness and peace, we reap that back in like manner. If we sow hate, greed or arrogance we will also reap the consequences of these negative actions. "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." The universe-God-Tao responds to us like a mirror. What we put in front of the mirror is the exact image we get back.

A case in point: A lady hated her job. Hated the thought of getting out of bed and going to work. She said, "If I get into a car accident, I won't have to go to work for awhile." Within a couple of hours of her statement, a truck smashed into the back end of her car. The car is totaled. She had to be pulled out of the drivers' seat by a tow truck. Luckily, she wasn't injured, just shook up. This shows the power

of words in bringing about an event in our lives. Even joking about getting into accidents or mishaps can bring it out into physical manifestation. Guard your words. Your word is your bond. We live in a reality-based existence - life is not a Hollywood fantasy movie. We create our reality, destiny and fate by how we think, act, talk, emote and relate to others.

When we get mad, resentful, impatient or irritable, we move out of the natural flow of life - or out of the Tao - away from God or goodness. If we become quiet and flow like water, as the Taoists say, life straightens itself out without effort. Lao Tzu says: "The man or woman of the Tao put themselves below others, but I notice others want to be the best."

We hear about extremist groups and much talk about being equal, yet the spiritual person places others above themselves. Toughness and one-upmanship seems to be the norm. Whenever we meet a person who is humble, we cannot help but love them. Yielding and giving into a situation is strength, not a weakness. Yin is a feminine quality. Yang is a masculine quality. Women also live longer than men. Yin (softness) always overcomes Yang (hardness). Water (yin) wears away rocks, metal and mountains (yang).

The late Zina Potter, a member of the Theosophical Society, was a prime example of the yielding feminine quality. Wherever Zina went, she spread love, kindness and encouragement, like the ever-shining sun. Her humble radiating personality is so much needed in our world today.

On the other hand, never mistake low self-esteem with true humility or humbleness. A person with low self esteem may look like they are humble or kind, but they generally act out of fear of not being accepted or try to impress others with their apparent goodness. In order to achieve this outward love and compassion, one must become centered, balanced and grounded. Life is a unity of two aspects - inner and outer, yin and yang hot and cold sun and moon, night and day, right and left, positive and negative, acid and alkaline, etc. One part is also outward in time and space (yang), and the other is inward or within (yin), and is lived in the Tao or God. It is an inner spiritual feeling. We can learn to get in touch with the Tao or God within.

Master Eckhart (the man from whom God hid nothing) states that "the soul has two faces, one looks at time and space, the other into heaven." There is a centered point in consciousness when we reach the Tao. The Hindu religion refers to it as "action in inaction," when our restless mind is brought under control and we become still in (God-Tao), and our vain strivings and activities are surrendered - the silent action of the Tao takes place. The crooked places of life become straight. The answers to the problems of life become easily solved when we withdraw from external things and become perfectly quiet in the Tao. When in meditation, we reach that peace that passes understanding, then we have reached the presence of the Tao.

Here is a very beautiful healing and calming meditation for peace and harmony.

1. Sit quietly in a chair or floor with a straight posture and relax your muscles for a couple minutes.
2. Meditate on your liver (upper right rib cage); visualize the color green for one minute.
3. Meditate on the heart and visualize the color red for a minute
4. Meditate on the stomach (upper left rib cage) and visualize the color yellow.
5. Meditate on your lungs and visualize the color white for one minute
6. Meditate on your kidneys and visualize the color dark blue for a minute.

Practice this meditation until you feel the peace of God or the Tao flowing through you. Meditate when you have good energy and feel rested. Perform morning or night or when you feel upset, angry, fearful, anxious or out-of-balance. Go inside to find inner peace, then go out into the world with agape love. Learn to do things for the joy of doing them. Sing for the joy of singing, dance for the joy of dancing, work for the joy of working, serve for the joy of serving, without thinking of a reward. Above all, see the beautiful in life and be thankful for what you have. The love of God-Tao will shower blessings upon you beyond your wildest expectations! So be it.