

## The Art of Inner Peace

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The Art of Peace begins with you. Work on yourself and your appointed task in the Art of Peace. Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here for no other purpose than to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment. Foster peace in your own life and then apply the Art to all that you encounter. -- Morihei Ueshiba

### Inner Peace as Ecstatic Silence

One of the fundamental reasons that no enduring peace exists in the world is simply because humanity at large does not know true inner peace. The outer world is the *out-picturing* of the inner world, which in turn *in-pictures* the outer world. Although the inner and the outer worlds are always concomitant and complementary, as the inside and the outside of a sphere are invariably concomitant and complementary, the creation of enduring peace begins, and can only begin, in and from the inner world.

We can experience inner peace independently of our external environment and circumstance. We can experience inner peace even when we are in a battlefield. On the other hand, we may experience inner turmoil even when we are surrounded by the serene rhythms of nature. Nature's serenity will in time help heal our inner turmoil and restore our inner equilibrium. Yet, unless we ourselves can bring peace into the sphere of our awareness, the outer peace of nature will not resonate in harmony with our inner nature. Thus, we, and we alone, can bring inner peace into reality.

What is inner peace? Inner peace is ecstatic silence. Inner peace is the experience of life's ecstatic intensity that arises within the awareness of silence. Silence is an ever-present, universal reality; it is always present right here-and-now. To bring forth peace within therefore means to know this silence here-and-now, and to make it the centering fulcrum of our life.

Relatively few people know genuine inner peace, even though the source of it, silence, is omnipresent. Silence, for many people, seems to represent not life but death. They do not seem to know that silence is ecstatic, and that inner peace is attained at the summit of aliveness, where intelligence enlivens their being with heightened awareness. They do not seem to know that the more alive they are, the more peaceful they will be. Thus, the dread of deadly silence, which is tantamount to the fear of death, leads them away from peace, and therefore away from life and aliveness, and toward death and deadliness—the very state of being that they fear.

The fear of death is the fear of self-annihilation—the fear of self turning into nothing, as though the human being were a thing that could turn into no-thing. So long as we thus 'thingify' ourselves, so long as we thus misidentify ourselves with things, we deaden ourselves to the level of objects that are in themselves devoid of life. Life takes on myriad forms for its manifestation, but life-as-such is not the 'form'. Rather, life exists as and through its own dynamic 'in-forming' process. Life is the ever-present, dynamic process that in-forms an infinite

variety of forms, which we call "things." We are wholeness-units of that life which is always in the process of in-forming forms, but we ourselves are not forms, not the outer distinctions that we take on.

Inner peace exists not in death as deadly silence but in life as ecstatic silence, and can be sought and experienced only within the dynamic process of life. Therefore, the first condition of inner peace is to know that life is not a form or thing as which it manifests but the dynamic, formless process that in-forms a form or a thing. In order to find inner peace, we must liberate ourselves from our cognitive habit of 'thingification,' and experience our being, our self, as manifold in the dynamic, ever-flowing process of life vibrant with its ecstatic intensity.

### Forgiveness and Reconciliation

The second condition of inner peace is the achievement of complete inner reconciliation with the whole—with everyone in the world, past and present, with everything in the universe, past and present, and with the whole of existence and its source.

In the course of our lives, we tend to experience and accumulate memories of discord or conflict, accompanied by sedimentary emotional pollutants such as anger or resentment, with or without conscious awareness. When there is discord or conflict with the rest of humanity or existence, we experience a sense of inner dissonance, which is a sense of being out of integrity with the unity of humanity as a whole and of existence as such.

When we experience inner dissonance and when we suffer from sedimentary emotional pollutants, we can no longer avail ourselves of the experience of inner peace. The state of inner peace is a consequence of the disappearance of inner dissonance, which requires that we forgive and reconcile. We experience inner peace when we forgive ourselves and others, and reach reconciliation with the whole of humanity and existence, particularly with those people who, we believe, have done injustice to us, our family, our group, our community, our country, or our race.

What does it mean to forgive? To forgive means to bestow the honor of being to the person whom we deem has done injustice to us or our relations, and thus we think does not deserve the distinction of being. The act of forgiveness involves the renunciation of self-righteousness concerning our position relative to past situations in which we thought some people unworthy of the honor of being because of the injustice they had committed against us or our relations. The renunciation of self-righteousness in turn involves the renunciation of sedimentary

emotional pollutants such as antipathy or animosity against people whom we deemed unworthy of the honor of being.

Forgiveness requires that we emancipate ourselves from the status of victimhood; that we free ourselves from the condition of victim-consciousness. For instance, if you suffer from anger, it means that you see yourself as a victim of a situation and feel powerless. The same emotional energy that expresses itself as love or compassion when you feel powerful within turns into anger when you feel powerless. Sedimentary emotional pollutants such as anger are a consequence of deeming yourself a victim in an undesirable situation over which you feel that you have no control. The act of forgiveness empowers you to become the master of the situation where you previously felt powerless, helpless, or victimized.

To forgive means to proclaim the authorship of the situation wherein we previously felt powerless, helpless, or victimized. At the minimum, we realize that we have the power to choose the way we respond to the situation. At the maximum, we know that we have the power to be the author of the whole situation and how it evolves. Forgiving is a special kind of giving. Forgiving is the giving-forward or fore-giving of a new context and a new actuality to that which has already taken place in facticity. Forgiving is an act of self-empowerment and a declaration of self-authority. Therefore, we forgive others not primarily for their sake but for ours. And in the act of forgiving others, we come to forgive ourselves for our having been powerless.

If a group of people try maliciously to defame your character or cast aspersions on you based on false accusations, you may experience anger against them. If a person unjustly commits crime against your relations, you may experience anger against him. However, so long as you harbor anger or resentment within, no matter how justifiable your emotion may be, it will inevitably poison your system, diminish your aliveness, and disturb your inner peace. Through the act of forgiving, you can release yourself from these sedimentary emotional conditions caused by anger or resentment by giving yourself a new context within which to hold the person's malicious or evil action, and thereby to restore your inner peace.

## **The Principle of Justice**

Forgiveness, however, is not a denial of injustice, nor is it a condoning of evil. The Principle of Justice dictates that those who commit vicious, malicious, or evil action will eventually have to pay for their action. The morally and ethically right action for you to take is not to retaliate but to let the Principle of Justice work out its way—cosmically as well as through the system of justice elected in our civil society. Let me quote from my essay, “Ethics, Politics, and Plenitude”:

The Law of Balance states: Every action is simultaneously balanced by an equal and opposite reaction, and sequentially repeated in reverse polarity. The Principle of Justice means that there is a just consequence to all of our thinking, speaking, and action in accordance with the immutable Law of Balance—that justice is always done in the whole context of human life without exception, as every action is always inexorably balanced by its reaction simultaneously and sequentially.

From the Law of Balance it follows that you will be the recipient of not only the equal sequential reaction of another human being to your thinking, speaking, and action but also of the equal,

simultaneous self-reaction to your thinking, speaking, and action. Therefore, when you love other human beings, simultaneously you self-bestow love upon yourself, while sequentially others will surely return their love to you; whereas when you hate other human beings, simultaneously you self-bestow hate upon yourself, while sequentially others will surely return their hate to you. When you love another human being, you love humanity, including yourself; whereas when you hate another human being, you hate humanity, including yourself. Thus, if and when you understand this Principle of Justice, you will naturally start practicing the Precept of Justice, which states: Think about others as you would wish them to think about you. Speak to others as you would wish them to speak to you. Act towards others as you would wish them to act towards you.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Through this immortal statement, Jesus elucidates the Principle of Justice to those who are ignorant of it, and therefore whose judgment is not in accordance with it. Jesus does not categorically deny judging, but denies only the kind of judgment made in ignorance of the Principle of Justice and in the absence of self-responsibility of thinking, self-commitment to truth, and self-awareness which is coexistent with such self-responsibility and self-commitment. Within a general ideospheric environment of such ignorance and absence, if you judge another person, the same judgment will be returned to you based on the same metric that you used to judge him, and thus you contribute to the repetition of the same errant pattern in the world. You behold a mote in the eye of another, forgetting that you have a beam in yours, while thinking that you have none. Someone else, likewise, will behold a mote in your eye, forgetting that he has a beam in his, while thinking that he has none.

The Principle of Justice implies that we cannot fake the character of a human being and his action as we cannot fake the nature of the universe and its phenomenon, and that we must judge the character of a human being and his action in accordance with the Principle of Justice as we judge the nature of the universe and its phenomenon in accordance with the Law of Balance and other laws of Nature—with the responsibility of thinking and commitment to truth that are essential to and integrant of our search for knowledge. Human consciousness is volitional. Human action is volitional. At every moment of our waking hours, we are faced with the responsibility of making a choice. And as volitional beings, we must judge people and situations in order to make choices in life. The question is not “to judge or not to judge?” which is not even a valid question, but “on what is our judgment based?” The Principle of Justice states that our judgment of people and situations must be based on the knowledge of the immutable Law of Balance, and its subset, the Principle of Justice itself—and therefore on the ethical principles of Thinking and Knowing, of the responsibility of thinking and commitment to truth—and of Love that is the Law of Balance being manifest in the act of giving and regiving.

No human being is infallible. All of us from time to time err in our judgment. However, that should not be the reason for forfeiting our responsibility, as conscious beings, to think and know or to judge and evaluate. By the very fact of being conscious, not only are we qualified but also we are required to judge and evaluate the characters of other people and their actions as well as, more importantly, the characters of ourselves and our actions. Therefore, the precept of non-judgment is fundamentally against human nature, and therefore unethical. A precept that we need instead is the Precept of Justice aforementioned, which is based on a sound judgment of ourselves and others in accordance with the Principle of Justice: Think about others as you would wish them to think about you. Speak to others as you would wish them to speak to you. Act towards others as you would wish them to act towards you.

The question may arise: What about malicious people? How are we to think about, speak to, and act towards them? The answer is: Exactly how they should be thought about, spoken to, and acted towards in accordance with the Principle of Justice but with compassion. Malicious thought should be judged as malicious; malicious speech should be judged as malicious; malicious action should be judged as malicious—but with compassion. People who perpetrate malicious thought, speech, or action are *ipso facto* held responsible and treated accordingly by the Law of Balance—by the Principle of Justice. Our conscious judgment of and volitional action towards them must adhere to the Principle of Justice but with compassion. An intrinsic suffering exists in a malicious thought, speech, or action that is suffered by the perpetrator. Compassion means to suffer together (*com*, together + *passion*, to suffer) with love. By judging the perpetrator in accordance with the Principle of Justice, where-by holding him accountable and treating him accordingly but with compassion, we give the perpetrator and humanity through the perpetrator a chance to end a karmic repetition of the vicious circle that characterizes a world that has gone astray. This giving of a chance to end a karmic repetition is a part of what it means to forgive.

Forgiveness leads to reconciliation, which is the recognition of the unity and the restoration of the integrity of humanity as a whole and existence as such. When we become reconciled with the whole of humanity and of existence, we experience being embraced by a universe of love. A profound, cosmic sense of gratitude arises within, which gratitude fills our heart and soul with silent ecstasy—with universal peace. Then, we are in peace, for we are at peace with the whole universe.

## Destinal Resolve

The greatest hindrance to forgiveness is obstinate self-righteousness. Forgiveness requires that we renounce our self-righteousness even if we think or know that we are right or innocent. What we witness in the world, instead, is a pandemic of self-righteousness even if or when people are obviously wrong or guilty. A conspicuous example is groups of international terrorists and those behind the scene who fund their terrorist activities, who do not see any wrong in their violent and destructive action. So far as they are concerned, their massacre of thousands of innocent people is completely justified or is even 'holy.' Another, less conspicuous but more prevalent example is the ordinary person who refuses to admit that he has made an error or has been wrong in a situation. We have all met that ordinary person in our lives. We may even have been that ordinary person ourselves. In fact, it is the exception, not the norm, that a person readily admits that he has been wrong in a

situation. Instead, people normally cling to their self-righteousness, as though it were as serious as a matter of life and death.

Beyond the Freudian “will to pleasure” or the Adlerian “will to power,” there exists in the consciousness of the human being what Viktor Frankl termed the Will to Meaning. We human beings are spiritual and intelligent beings that seek meaning within the whole scheme of existence. Because of our conceptual and symbolic consciousness, we are existentially thrown to seek and attain meaning through the life-drama which we compose from our life-as-lived. Our drama is the meaning-rich context with which we make sense out of our life and attain meaning in life. The ‘I’ or the egological self that is the hero in our drama functions as the nexus of meaning within the matrix of meaning, which is the whole of existence written-in as the subtext for our life-drama.

That one is right means that one is validated as the nexus of meaning in the whole scheme of existence; and that one is validated in the whole scheme of existence means that one's life has a valid meaning, and therefore is worthy of existence in the universe. One's egological self thus existentially and psychologically requires that it be right within the whole context of one's life-drama. If one's ego-self is proven to be wrong, the whole edifice of one's life will lose its meaning and value. One will feel that one's life is crumbling or even collapsing. One will feel that one is perishing spiritually. This is the fundamental psycho-existential reason that people cling to their self-righteousness. Therefore, the issue of whether or not one is right is indeed a matter of life and death, because human life as such requires that it be meaningful within the whole context of existence.

We all develop our life-drama, and we all develop our egological selves. The problem is not primarily that we have our ego or our drama, but that we are often unwilling, unequipped, or unable to upgrade our ego and revise our drama. Obstinate self-righteousness is the attempt to stubbornly keep repeating the same old drama and the same old ego-self in spite of the new, expanded reality disclosed through the new situation in life. When we are obstinately self-righteous, we become oblivious to the fact that we are the author-playwright of our life-drama and our ego-self, being helplessly bound to the same old drama and the same old ego of our own making.

The edifice of meaning that we build through the construction of our life-drama is very precarious, and we feel its precariousness. The reason that people tend to cling to their old drama and old egos is because they feel deep down that their meaning of life is a fabrication, woven by the threads of illusory material. The true nexus of meaning is not the ego-self that is written into the drama but the author-playwright of the drama itself. The true matrix of meaning is not the life-as-told that we as the author-playwright write but the life-as-lived that we as the author-playwright live-through in actuality. As we as the author-playwright revise our life-drama and upgrade our egological self in accordance with the new facets of reality disclosed to us, we come to realize that we as author-playwrights are but myriad projections of the cosmic author-playwright whose production is the universe itself.

When we thus realize our cosmic authorship, our life-long search for meaning comes to the end. For, we now know the meaning of our life. We now know that we are cosmic nexuses of meaning, and that we are the bestowers of meaning. With this

knowledge, the destinal resolve arises within us to express and manifest our singular cosmic destinies as their author-playwrights as well as actors. In the arising of our destinal resolve, deep and abiding inner peace begins to enliven our whole being with its silent but ecstatic intensity. Therefore, the attainment of our destinal resolve in which to abide and with which to live is the third condition of inner peace.

When we fulfill the triune condition of inner peace expounded above, inner peace will become our natural, abiding state of being. The first condition of inner peace is to know that life is not a form or thing as which it manifests but a dynamic, formless process that in-forms a form or a thing. The second condition of inner peace is to achieve complete reconciliation

with the whole of humanity and existence through forgiveness. The third condition of inner peace is to attain, abide in, and live from our destinal resolve.

The *sine qua non* of inner peace is attainable by any person who so desires. If we are really serious about world peace, we must know that if we ourselves do not have commitment to inner peace, we are not qualified to partake in the act of creating world peace.