

# The Need of Suffering

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[Master was asked] how long he thought the average sermon should run, and he said about 20 minutes with leaning toward mercy. So I try to keep mine not more than 20 minutes long. I was quite encouraged, because I heard that a minister in St. John's Church of the Divine in New York City, he speaks only 15 minutes. He has a great congregation. So that suits me all right. I'll try and keep it within the 20 minute limit, I'm sure this morning.

I have another little story. I might as well get this off my chest today. A pastor, he, he saw in his pulpit one morning, a little package, and so he opened it up, and it was neatly wrapped, and there was a note inside which said, "Dear Pastor, We are herewith presenting you with a watch case, and, if you don't shorten your sermons, we're gonna give you the works." So I can't overstep that, I just got to stay within that 20 minutes this morning, 'cause I don't want the works. I have a good watch. I have another one, too.

So, I think that those little stories are in line, especially when we consider the subject this morning. You've got to feel good to attack this subject, the need for suffering – the need for suffering.

But some of man's greatest accomplishments have been accomplished, or attained, in the throes of suffering. So, if you suffer, don't feel badly, because that's a great blessing for you. Because in your suffering, you're being urged on to seek that place wherein suffering does not exist. Take St. Francis, for instance; his body was weak, he was sick, he was blind, and yet he lifted the sick, and he healed the sick, and he lifted the dead to God Consciousness, in spite of his suffering. Suffering is nothing. As Master used to say, "Pay no attention to the body. It's nothing. But God's Presence in you is reality. Know that." And in that suffering, perhaps, you will find your greatest blessing.

And so, apparently, suffering is a teacher, without whose stern discipline, we would not learn these lessons in this school of life. So don't feel bad at your suffering, but rather welcome it. And if you realize that it's there for a purpose, then you surely will welcome it.

Now “the way of the cross leads home.” If you remember nothing else from this morning’s talk, remember that, that “the way of the cross leads home.” If you have a cross, and it’s getting worse, realize, be thankful, it will lead you home to the One Eternal Father. “The way of the cross leads home.”

There’s a deep metaphysical reason why God has sent pain to us. God has sent pain for a definite reason. It is this, that the virtue of suffering is, that it makes us think. It makes us think, and want to get into that realm, to know that realm, that state of consciousness, where pain does not exist. It makes us think. It makes us take our minds away from the trivial things of life, and put them on those much greater things. It helps us take our mind from the small things of life in favor of the greater life, the Greater Life in God.

When I first met the Master, he said to me, he said, “You’ll find your life is finished.” I didn’t realize what he meant, but I found it so, by following this life of Self-Realization Fellowship, which is sent by God through the channel of the Master. You’ll find this ordinary life is gone – a greater life comes into you. You’ve given up the little things of this life for the life of greater importance with God. Understand that.

And so, we will find in that greater life, freedom from the prodding’s of pain and mental restlessness – and greatest of all – freedom from the anguish of the soul’s ignorance. If your soul is not satisfied, you may have all things in this worldly existence, but they will amount to nothing until your soul is satisfied by the Presence of God’s Consciousness in you in a real dynamic way.

So, the great metaphysical point is that suffering will make you want one thing, and one thing alone. And until you have and want that one thing, want and have that one thing, you’ll not be satisfied, and God will not come, as long as there is any mental reservation about wanting this duality of consciousness, this worldly existence – God cannot come, He will not come. But when you have reached the point where you realize there’s only one thing you need, and one thing you want, and thoroughly know it, God will surely come. But as long as there’s any reservation, He cannot come, because duality and the Unity of God’s Consciousness cannot exist together at the same time. Understand that. It’s a very important point. And so, when suffering comes, welcome it, especially if it turns your consciousness towards the Greater Light of God’s Presence within you.

We all know in this worldly history about the paradoxes. . .paradoxes, and injustices – how we turn from one thing to another. We're all guilty of that. In search of what? In search of freedom from pain. In search of freedom from suffering. And we will not find it in this worldly existence. We will not find it in this mire. We will find it in the Unity of God's Presence. And that Presence is right within each and every one of us when we turn our attention from this luring duality of consciousness to God's Love within, and know it in a dynamic way – see His Infinite Light, and hear His Cosmic Sound, feel His Love in your heart. There's no pain there. That's the only place that you're free from pain and suffering, whether it be physical, mental, or suffering of the soul – it's only in God's Consciousness that you're free from it. Understand that – realize it – and then when you hit the bottom, so to speak, when you're in the gutter, that's when you're nearest God. Don't get discouraged. If some more suffering comes, welcome it. It'll be your stepping stone to oneness with God – eternally – that's why the saying, “the way of the cross leads home” is so true. Don't be afraid of it. Welcome it. For God is right handy then – right near you.

At this time I'd like to just read a little reference from the Autobiography [of a Yogi], which points out, clearly, these several points that I have made. Master has this to say, "The good and evil of Maya must ever alternate in supremacy." Take this existence – isn't that so? One day everything's fine, “Oh, the world is wonderful.” The next day it's rotten. I understand that's an English word, so I can use it. Well, that's so. And so we oscillate. Master says, "And this must ever be so." It must ever be so. That's why the [Bhagavad] Gita says, "All men walk the earth wholly deluded." So don't expect anything different. Get out of it. It also says in the next line, "O Arjuna, get out of my delusion."

And so, going on with our reference, Master says, "If joy were ceaseless here in this world, would man ever desire another? Without suffering he scarcely cares to recall that he has forsaken his Eternal Home. Pain is the prod to remembrance. The way of escape is through wisdom. My sons are children of Light, they will not sleep forever in delusion."

Do you realize you are the Light of the Infinite? How can Light be sinful? How can Light suffer? How can pain touch you as Light? Now these are eternal truths, not imagination, and those who meditate regularly and deeply see the Infinite Light of Spirit – having that, pain cannot touch them; suffering does not dwell in the land of God's Light, His Eternal Light.

And so at this time, let us say just a word or two about suffering. To understand suffering we must realize that it presupposes pain of some nature. That is, in a physical pain in which the incoming sensations produce an unpleasant state of consciousness – that's all pain is – or in the mental state, the same unpleasant state of consciousness is produced – only in mental things, from memory. It's an unstable, unpleasant state of consciousness, is it not?

But, in soul pain, pain of soul – which comes from the ignorance of the soul – that's the worst pain, because then the soul realizes it does not have what it wants and surely must have – it does not have Oneness with its Father, or Oneness with God.

So these different types of pain are all in the same category – “an unpleasant state of consciousness,” that's all. But in meditation, in the Peace of God's Presence, there's no unpleasant state of consciousness – there's Peace and Bliss. It's just as close as that – the difference between pain, and lack of pain, or suffering. Understand these truths. And, if you can hold that state, which you feel right now, in everything you do, there'll be no pain. Pain is in duality of consciousness, in this outward existence, not in God's Great Presence within.

And, therefore, suffering simply means, or equals, the bearing, or enduring of pain, because we cannot cut off the incoming flux of sensation from bodily senses, or we cannot cut off those disturbances of the mind, and mental pain, and we cannot cut off the longings of the soul when we feel it's ignorant. That's all suffering is.

Now when we can do that; when we can cut it off at will, there'll be no pain. You can have the most excruciating pain. If you have the power to cut off that sensation, you will not feel pain. Self-Realization gives you the way and the techniques to do just those things. But you have to do them. That's why I have said, “Come Wednesday evenings.” Every hour you give to meditation with others who are feeling the Presence of God, and who love God. God Loves His devotees, and when you mix with them, He comes. That's why you feel Him Sunday nights, those who come to the Encinitas retreat. Why? Because God loves us, and we're there. We're there together, we're feeling His Love. Can pain exist? You may come in with all sorts of pains – I know some of you do, I do. But by the Grace of God, when I get out of there, the pain isn't there. Why? Because God's Great Love has superseded worldly consciousness, and the need of suffering is to make us realize that, that we need something different than this worldly existence. We have to live here, but we do not have to be attached to it.

But we must be attached, if we are attached to anything, and that's God's Great Love. In that there is no pain, there is no suffering.

And so, understand that this suffering will go on until – until what? Until you realize, and I realize, that we don't want to stay here any longer. And when we thoroughly realize that, in comes God – without any trouble. But until you realize that, you have any mental reservation, He can't get in, because Unity of Consciousness does not exist in duality. That's the metaphysical point I want to bring out. That's why it is so important to meditate regularly, daily, and come to the meetings, which have been left for your use, through the Grace of God, as He came to us through the channel of our Master.

Let me read one more reference from the Autobiography, at this time. "The land of healing lies within. . .The land of healing lies within, radiant with happiness that is blindly sought in a thousand outer directions." Isn't that so? A thousand things we run after, when we should turn our attention within, and there's the land of happiness. That's why more and more people are drawn toward meditation – more and more. They've got to come to it, if they're going to get out of this Maya and this delusion.

And finally, Lord Shankara, the Great Vedantist, has written this. He says, "Ultrasensual Bliss is thus extremely easy of attainment, and is far superior to sense delights, which always end in disgust." These Ultrasensual Sensations, or Bliss, is the Presence of God, that's all. Understand that. Lord Shankara, he's the one who said, "I am He, I am He, Blessed Spirit I am He." He found and realized "Thou art an eternal verity," the Presence of God. He wanted that. He got it. Why can't you? Why can't I? We can, because we're made in the Image of God, and we have sufficient power to overcome this delusion of outward consciousness, this restlessness of the mind, and this ignorance of the soul. We can supersede it by the Presence of God within.

So, what do we need? We need God. Suffering awakens within us a Divine need. So don't be discouraged when suffering comes, of any sort. Mental suffering is worse than physical suffering. Suffering of the soul is extreme suffering. Don't be discouraged. Welcome it, because it will awaken within you a Divine need. You'll realize, "I need something, and that something is God."

And so the wise man, he learns the lesson of suffering after not too many disappointments in his life. It's those who are not wise, who hang on to this worldly existence, who hate to give up. Like the Master used to speak of the

bird. . .you open the cage, and he won't go out. He hangs on to his attachment. And so, but the wise man, he soon wakes up, and so he doesn't suffer too much. He learns his lessons without too many disappointments.

Now Kriya Yoga, meditation, and Kriya Yoga, will help you. The great Kriya Yoga, which Lahiri Mahasaya has given to us, will help you break all the illusions of matter. It will help you see the relativity of matter as the cause and end of all your troubles, your pain, and all things. This is duality, this relativity of consciousness. Kriya Yoga will break that idea of relativity within, and will give you the Unity of Consciousness of God's Presence. Meditation and Kriya Yoga are so important. Those of you who have not had Kriya Yoga, keep at it until finally you get it. It's the fastest accelerator known. Why? Because it helps you break the idea of relativity – this and that – follow this, follow that, run after this, run after that. That's nothing but a relative consciousness, a relative state of consciousness. What you want is one thing – to get away from this oscillation – you want God, and God Alone. Isn't that so? Meditation and Kriya Yoga will help you do that, given by the Great Lahiri Mahasaya, one of the greatest saints that ever lived.

And so, if you can follow your meditation and your Kriya Yoga until you are fixed in God contact, then you're all right – then. But you must get that contact with God. Otherwise, you oscillate, until finally you are stayed in God's Consciousness, and you will feel one with His Great Presence – you have established God contact, having that, nobody can disturb you, then suffering or lack of suffering is the same thing. Master used to say, "When God's song. . . when Thy song flows through me, then life is sweet, and death is sweet." There's no difference.

You know in your deep meditations when you feel the Presence of God, and you feel that Peace pass over your soul, there's no difference between suffering or lack of suffering. There's only One Consciousness, that's the Peace and Presence of God. That's what we want. That's why the Master came here, that you, too, would acquire the incentive to fulfill the Divine need, which you feel within you. And that Divine need is Oneness with God.

I want to close by one of Lahiri Mahasaya's references, his own words, which are so wonderful. Listen, and remember these words. From the Autobiography, "Remember that you belong to no one, and no one belongs to you." Don't be sidetracked by attachments. Even to those whom we love. Now don't misunderstand me. If you realize this, you will love those to whom you are

attached in a greater way, because then you'll realize that they belong to God just like you do.

And so he says, "Remember that you belong to no one, and no one belongs to you. Reflect that some day you will suddenly have to leave everything in this world." So he says, Lahiri Mahasaya says, "Make the acquaintance of God now." Isn't that wonderful? "Make the acquaintance of God now." We've got to go. We came alone. If we have Him, there'll be no lonesomeness.

Then he says, "Prepare yourself for the coming astral journey. . .the coming astral journey of death by riding daily the balloon of Divine Perception." That's simply meditation. When you meditate sincerely with your heart bursting to know God, you'll have the Divine Perception of His Presence. If you do it daily, there'll be no change when you step over.

Finally, he says, "Though delusion. . .through delusion you are perceiving yourself as a bundle of flesh and bones, which at best is a nest of trouble. Meditate unceasingly, that you quickly behold yourself as the Infinite Essence, free from every form of misery. Cease being a prisoner of the body, using the secret key of Kriya, learn to escape into Spirit." Know yourself as Eternal Light. Know yourself as that Presence of God, which cannot be touched, which cannot suffer pain, but which is Eternal Bliss, All-Pervading, All-Encompassing, All-Satisfying. In that there is no suffering.