

The Self Aware Lover

Stephen Dynako

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all who seek, express, prioritize, encourage, and honor love as much as humanly possible. And if you're not sure whether this includes you, your mere interest in this book means that it does.

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2. A SERMON ON LOVE

Love requires no qualifiers. Nevertheless, one of the most popular is the word “pure,” as in “pure love.” However, this phrase is redundant, because love by its very nature is pure.

Pure is defined as being: 1) free from what weakens, or pollutes; 2) containing nothing that does not properly belong.

It has been recognized that “God is love,”¹ inherently and irrevocably life affirming. I hold that power is a gift from God granted to us for the purpose of love. Paradoxically, we’ve also been gifted by the Divine with free will, which grants us license to

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think and act across the spectrum of benevolence: To do good or to do evil.

Evil, then, is not a power per se but rather a *use* of power that separates us from love – that is, from God. Therefore, the power of God as the power of love is naturally pure. It contains “nothing that does not properly belong.”

If we place conditions on love, we weaken and pollute our intentions, in which case love ceases to exist. An intention to love that becomes conditional gets replaced by something that is not love.

Consider any polarizing issue in the news, throughout history, or even within your community or family. Each side passionately promotes its view, perhaps even claiming that God is on its side or that its actions are an expression of love for a cause. What then happens becomes most unloving, as anger, hate, and righteousness direct each side’s agenda. The tensions may escalate into violence or at the very least drive a wedge between people that appears impossible to loosen.

In the gospel of Luke, it is written: “No one may serve two masters, for he will hate one and love the

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other.”² Take this “two masters” concept and apply it to love and some form of its opposite, whether hate, contempt, or apathy³: If you are in the opposite state of mind, you deny love, but if you love – in the pure sense, redundant as it is – you can never be hateful, contemptuous, or apathetic.

If love is practiced by those involved in working through a polarizing issue, the issue will be resolved peacefully. Consider this on a personal level: We all have experienced conflict with another person, in the form of a disagreement, an argument, perhaps even as a violent confrontation. We’ve also realized various degrees of resolution or escalation in our conflicts with others.

Let’s examine each extreme: On the one hand, consider a conflict that festered. Perhaps you and the other person were too stubborn to compromise. Perhaps you felt you were right because you had to be right; otherwise, you would lose the fight, and in no way was that an option. How do you feel as time goes on? Does the memory of an unresolved conflict from long ago stir up angry feelings inside you? I believe the angry feelings we cling to become more

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heartbreaking, because the heart, as the seat of love, becomes brittle and inflexible and it truly hurts. We feel pain.

On the other hand, consider a conflict into which you practiced a loving attitude. Perhaps you made the choice to do this because intuition, prayer, reflection or some combination of these informed you that it was the better way. What happens when love governs your thoughts, words, and actions? Does the subject of the conflict seem like such a big deal anymore? Is it necessary to win the argument to satisfy your ego? Most importantly, have you preserved your relationship with the person? Have you maintained – even grown – your respect and love for each other?

The message of scripture and perhaps the purpose of life is summarized in four Bible verses:

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him by asking, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “ ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments.”⁴

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Love God and love one another; the message of God is a message of love. The message is not, “love in a vacuum,” because it’s not possible nor is it pure to express love apart from or in denial of others. Further, nobody can rightfully claim God to be exclusively on his or her side, as if God could be persuaded by human ego. It is impossible for God as love to take sides, because God is All.

God as love is the constant. We each can make a choice – and this is where the power of wisdom comes in – to express love in our lives, our relationships, and especially in our conflicts, in order to dissolve anger and hatred. It takes so much effort and heartbreak to hold a grudge, because this is not our natural state.⁵ We cannot simultaneously be at peace and in contempt. Any such attempt will drain the body of energy.

God as love is the constant, so when we withhold love we are in conflict with God. We go against the Divine design of the Universe. It would be futile to even fathom how much energy one must spend to fight God, because God’s power is infinite and human power is not.

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There is a saying, “Let go and let God.” This doesn’t mean to just give up. It might better be said, “Let go and let God IN.” It means make the choice to let love govern what we do and who we are, because we each are naturally loving and naturally good. When we are able to develop, nurture and maintain a loving consciousness, we become infinitely powerful:

You have heard that it was said, “You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you will become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and he lets rain fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Even the tax collectors do the same, don’t they? And if you greet only your brothers, what great thing are you doing? So be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.⁶

This is a provocative message that seems difficult, if not impossible: How do I love my enemies? Even if you feel inclined to regard it as delusional, set judgment aside for a moment and consider the impact of this directive on the world if we agreed to live this way. Consider all of the problems that would simply

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dissolve. Consider all of the relationships that would be healed. Consider the power of love, expressing through and *as* us, to render the concept of taking sides obsolete. Let's consider freely choosing to express ourselves as the perfect, loving beings we were designed to be, for God needs each of us to love one another in the continued co-creation of one world community.



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Notes:

1. 1 John 4:16

2. Luke 16:13

3. Buscaglia wrote in his book *Love* that he felt strongly the opposite of love is apathy, not hate. p. 25.

4. Matthew 22:35-40

5. In the Sufi tradition, it is said that the wrath of God is experienced personally as one's anger. Rumi wrote, "If we come to anger and battle, it is the reflection of His wrath." Also, Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali wrote, "John the Baptist asked Jesus what was the most difficult thing to bear. He replied, 'The Wrath of God.' 'Then,' asked John, 'what serves most to bring down God's Wrath?' 'Your own anger,' answered Jesus. 'And what brings on one's own anger?' asked John. Jesus said, 'Pride, conceit, vainglory, and arrogance.'"

Physiologically to the nervous system, holding onto a grudge (or other afflictive emotions such as anger) is akin to simultaneously pressing the accelerator and brake in a car. Eventually under such sustained emotional stress, the body will fatigue. See: "The Science Behind the emWave® and Inner Balance™ Technologies." *HeartMath*, HeartMath, LLC:
<http://www.heartmath.com/science-behind-emwave/>

6. Matthew 5:43-48

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Dynako has most recently been a pastoral counselor and he previously held various leadership and management positions in the financial, technology, and media industries. In addition to being a self-declared love evangelist, he is an advocate for eco-conscious business that focuses equally on social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and organizational conscience. He is also author of the book *His Living Teachings Support My Modern Life: Gospel Relevance in the 21st Century*.

To find out more about his work and current projects, visit dynako.com and selfawarelover.com.