

CHAPTER 13

Love!

DISCIPLINE NUMBER THIRTEEN

The noble warrior cultivates, practices, manifests, lives and dies for love.



Lesson

Love can be defined in many ways. It is the very life of everything that lives and breathes. It is the energy that lives and moves in all things. It is the motivating force for good in the spiritual warrior. It is what causes the warrior to dream of victory and peace, and a better way of life for all. It is the inspiration which moves the spiritual warrior to courageously charge into the abyss to fight the spiritual foe, and it is love which brings ultimate victory and the lasting fruits of victory. Love is a desire to serve, and a heart-felt passion to share what is one's own, on all levels, to another, to provide for the happiness of others, and to bless. Love is the very life of the noble warrior.

Spiritual warfare is not about violence or hate. It is about love. This may not be apparent to the unobservant. The master warrior develops so many qualities that one might describe as rugged and even fierce, that it may be a surprise to learn that behind the ferocity, within the rugged demeanor, there stands a loving and caring soul, reaching out to anyone who may need help. The warrior is able to kill, but lives to support life. The warrior has the power to destroy, but works to build. The warrior is able to be forceful, but reaches out with gentleness. The spiritual warrior is a lover in the highest sense--a lover of life, earth, and humanity.

One learns to cultivate love by turning away from its opposite. Through taking an inward stand in favor of love, the warrior shuns impulses that lead to hatred, resentment, revenge. The warrior on this spiritual battlefield refuses to give ground to selfish wants, the impulse to control others, and to use others for gain. In mastering the self the warrior masters the ability to love. As the warrior empties the self of that which is opposed to love, a way is opened for love to flow in from the Source of love itself. As this happens, the warrior awakens on the level of the mind and heart to the beauty of humanity and to the warrior's connection to humanity. Other people are no longer simply seen as objects, or potential servants to fulfill one's needs, or enemies to be opposed and even destroyed, but rather are discovered to be "another me" and a beautiful example of this thing we call humanity. We learn to love, as Jesus said, our neighbor as our very selves, and even sometimes more than ourselves.

But love finds its fulfillment when it is ushered into this world by conscious action. The practice of love in daily affairs is what gives love its power, to bring comfort, joy, and healing. Love is like a flame. It needs to be kindled, fueled, nurtured, given avenues for growth. This fire that does not consume but rather gives life is kindled by our desire to share it, fueled by our actions, nurtured by the response it receives from others, and spreads as others are deeply moved and affected by it, receive it as their own fire, and share that fire with others. When we practice love in action we set fires that light up and warm the world. People catch fire, in their minds and hearts. Hopes rekindle, old dreams regain new sparks of life, and love ignites into new and positive actions. The spiritual warrior doesn't simply feel love, the spiritual warrior practices love.

As a genuine spiritual warrior, can you make a stand for love? Pledge to honor love, let love flow through you, give love in acts of kindness, sacrifice for love, and live for love. This is the mark of the master, and the life of one who has mastered the art of the warrior.

Gems from the Masters

Love is something you and I must have.
We must have it because our spirit feeds upon it.
We must have it because without it we become weak and faint.
Without love our self-esteem weakens.
Without it our courage fails.
Without love we can no longer look out confidently at the world.
We turn inward and begin to feed upon our own personalities,
And little by little we destroy ourselves.
With it we are creative.
With it we march tirelessly.
With it, and with it alone,
We are able to sacrifice for others.

Chief Dan George

Love conquers all.

Virgil

The only true joy on earth
Is to escape from the prison
of our own false self,
And enter by love
into union with the Life
Who dwells and sings within the essence
of every creature
And in the core
of our own souls.

Thomas Merton

Greater love
Has no one than this,
Than to lay down one's life
For his friends.

John 15:13

Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a heaven in hell's despair.

William Blake

I give you a new commandment,
That you love one another.
Just as I have loved you,
you also should love one another.
By this everyone will know
That you are my disciples,
If you have love for one another.

John 13:34-35

Love should not be viewed
As a detached effect of the soul,
or an organ, or a faculty, or a function.
Love involves the whole body
Of conscious thought--
intention, purpose, endeavor, motives,
And impulses--often suppressed,
But always latent,
Ready at any moment
to embody itself in act.
It take on face, hands, and feet
through the faculties and organs;
It works and talks,
And will not be checked
by external circumstances
Once it begins
to move toward an objective.
Love, the all-important doctrine,
Is not a vague, aimless emotion,
But a desire for good united with wisdom
And fulfilled in right action.

Helen Keller

I think for most of us,
Love is the greatest risk of all.
As warriors,
We are willing to expose our hearts
Even knowing that there are no guarantees,
Simply because we love.
We know that in loving another
We surrender,
We give up our control,
And risk the possibility
Of loss and pain.
We also know that love
Gives our lives meaning,
Connects us to each other,
And ultimately
Connects us to the Divine.

Dawn Callan

Love is the life of humanity.

Swedenborg



Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion

How do you define love? What is a working definition of love in your life?

What feels better to you, being loved or loving? Why?

What are the barriers in your life that prevent you from loving others?



Meditation

Let yourself rest peacefully and comfortably. Shake out any tension and close your eyes. Be still. Imagine a warm crimson light shining gently on your face, especially on your forehead. This light fills you with a sense of peace and of love. Feel the crimson light fill your head and face with this peaceful love. Notice how the thousands of muscles in your face relax. Allow that light to quiet your thoughts. Sense the crimson light moving down your neck and shoulders, relaxing them and filling your upper body with a sense of ease. Notice the light moving down your arms, into your hands, fingertips and beyond. The light moves down your chest and torso, into your stomach, chasing the butterflies away, and bringing a sense of wholeness. As it moves through your pelvis, into your legs, feet, toes, and beyond, you sense a deep warmth and relaxation. The light now inhabits your entire body and brings peace and warmth to your entire being. Now sense this light as it collects in your heart. Place your hands on your heart. Feel the heat it creates all around your heart, the heat of love. This is the divine love, which can flow through you, and into the world. Sense how it keeps your heart strong, and pumps life into your body every moment of the day. Notice that this light flows into your heart. It's source is unending and inexhaustible. It will never run out, and it can be given to others and in so doing it will not only be replenished but will grow. Share this crimson light with others. Call to mind your loved ones, family, friends. One by one send this light out to them. See them encompassed with light. . . . Now, share this light with your entire town, see the light encompassing the town, and surrounding and entering into all people in town from old to young. . . . Now, share this light with your country. See it cover all the land, streets, homes, buildings, highways and waterways. See it fill every person everywhere in the country with love. See the smiling faces, the peace, and contentment. . . . Now, send this light into the entire world, to every country, to every person of every color. See it surround them, enter into them, and give them joy. See the people of the world united in love and joy as they smile with gratitude and humility. Now, finally, send this light into the universe, to all planets, solar systems, and beyond. And notice that all is now encompassed in this light. Realize that this light does shine on all in the universe. It is what gives us life, and makes us one. See the light inside yourself. Say thanks for the light, and know that it is always available to you.

Process

For individuals: make a list of those for whom you have a special love. Beside each name, think of something you can do for them which will help show this love. Perhaps it will be a favor, or the giving of a gift, perhaps a conversation long overdue. Follow through with what is written beside those names, and do something for those you love. Notice what difference this makes in their lives. Notice what difference it makes in your own.

For a group: This will be your closing exercise. You will need some olive oil. Any fragrant oil of ritual is preferred, but the finest olive oil you can find will suffice. Olive oil has special qualities and is an ancient symbol of love. Pour a small amount of the oil in a cup and place it in the center of the circle. Each person should take a few moments to think about what kind of love he or she needs to feel from the Divine. Perhaps comfort, or encouragement, or forgiveness or something else. When any individual is ready, that person can approach the cup of oil and dipping two fingers into the oil, can place that oil on the forehead as a symbol of receiving that love from the Divine. The person can then return to the circle. When everyone has had an opportunity to do this, participants are then invited to take more oil on the finger tips, and in silence, anoint each other by placing the fingertips filled with oil on another person's forehead. Look at the face of the other, smile as you apply the oil, but say nothing. Let your eyes and your actions speak. It is a way of giving thanks and appreciation for the time you have spent together and the things that you have shared. It is a way of showing love.



What are your closing thoughts about the subject of Love?

End this lesson with a prayer.

