

Growing into a Loving Person¹

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In the wake of clear knowledge of oneself, the self that is free from all forms of limitation, there is love expressed towards a related person, situation or object. The same fullness, the wholeness of the person is manifest in the form of love. Love is the prime, the basic emotion. When appropriate, it modifies into compassion. You cannot be compassionate without being loving. Love manifests in the form of sympathy, even in the form of understanding and in the form of sharing, giving, etc. If this is very spontaneous, it is a natural consequence of knowledge of the self. As an individual, to even get an insight into this reality, into the truth of oneself, one needs to be loving. Then, even if one gets that insight, in order to make it ones own, one needs to be loving.

Here, the knowledge that is involved is of myself. It is not knowledge of a given thing. And this knowledge is not knowledge that I pursue out of curiosity. It is out of a need. That I want to be happy is the common basis of all our pursuits. While that is common, what makes me that whole person, that complete person is knowledge; it is a thing to be discovered. When the problem itself is not very clear, even if the solution is available, you are not going to look for it. Nor will you recognize it. When I assume that I am basically an incomplete person, and this incompleteness I cannot accept happily, then my attempt is to become complete. What will I do? I will want to become different.

What can I do? I can dye my hair green, that's all. What else can I do to be different? When I have a sense of limitation centered on myself and my vision of myself is based upon my physical body which is limited in terms of time, its features, looks and so on, naturally I feel I am limited. If I look at myself from the standpoint of my senses or health or mind, or my intellectual accomplishments, well, I will find myself wanting. When I see myself as wanting in all these areas, I have to fix up every one of them to be not wanting. Which is just not possible.

My limitation in terms of knowledge is staggering. The more I come to know, the more I come to discover what I don't know. The more knowledge I gather, the more wanting I feel in terms of knowledge, for ignorance is bliss only if it is total. Previously I didn't know a given thing, and now that I know, in the wake of that knowledge is also born more that I do not know. Now I have a new area of ignorance. This is going to be there all the time. If the self is as good as my intellect or my intellectual accomplishments, well, I am going to be wanting. Physically I am going to be wanting. In terms of time,

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I'm a mortal after all, for the body is mortal. Not only mortal. It is not just that one day it dies away, but during its existence, it keeps changing all the time. It goes out of shape. If you look at your own picture when you were in your twenties, you become sad. You don't need to have any tragedy in your life to be sad; just look at your own picture! Therefore, from the physical body standpoint, I cannot say that I am going to be free from being a wanting person. As for money and other forms of wealth, there is no question; we are always wanting. With reference to people with whom you are related, if you look at yourself, again you find yourself wanting, because they are all wanting. When they are wanting, the problem is not just with them, it is with you too. When you are connected to a person, a related person like father, mother, spouse, child, and you find that person wanting, then you cannot live happily unless that person undergoes a change. Therefore you see yourself wanting as a husband or wife; you see yourself wanting as a father or mother; you see yourself wanting as a brother or sister, and you see yourself wanting as a daughter-in-law—because the mother-in-law is found wanting, understand.

Do you see the problem? “If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem,” someone said. That is true. Because it is all centered on you finally. Therefore there is no way I can see myself free from being wanting. Fortunately the self is already free; these are all points of view. A point of view is not a view at all. A point of view is valid only when the vision, the view is very clear to you. I saw a painting and asked the artist, “What is this?” He said, “It is a table.” It didn't look like a table. Even in terms of modern art, it didn't look like a table at all. This modern art is amazing! It has contributed something good, I tell you. It has removed the concept of common place. It eliminated the concept of ugliness in the common place. It is a great contribution—I am serious here.

When I try to understand modern art, whenever I come across it, I try to make out what is there. And sometimes, something emerges. If you go on looking at it something emerges; it is hidden. First you find some patterns of color, and then, as you keep on watching, suddenly a nose appears. Once you find the nose, you can see everything else if there is a person there. So I looked at this painting of a table, but I couldn't get anywhere. Therefore I asked the artist, what is this? He said it is a table. A table? It doesn't look like a table, how is it a table? “Swami, please look at the words down below.” And it is written there in small letters, “A perspective of a table”. A perspective is a point of view. Then I asked him, what is this perspective? He said, when he lay down on the floor and looked at the table, this is how it looked. For him there is no confusion, because he knows it is a table...

A perspective is valid only when the whole is visible. When the whole is taken for a point of view, it is not a point of view; it is a distortion. So when I am not very clear about this problem of having a sense of incompleteness, it is not because I am incomplete essentially. In spite of my completeness

alone, there is a sense of incompleteness. Therefore there is a self-disowning, a self-ignorance leading to self-confusion. First I create problem due to ignorance and then begin solving the problem. And there are different solutions offered to this problem. . . .

Finally, Vedanta says, “You are free.” . . . It is an entirely a different vision. In the vision of the *śrutī* called Vedānta, you are free, you are the whole. I can quickly give you some simple logic: If there is such a thing as wholeness, will it exclude you? Will there be a whole plus you? The whole plus you is impossible. The whole means it is a whole; it is without parts. That is exactly the truth of yourself. If that is so, then the approach is entirely different. To attempt to discover here that I am the whole that I want to be, that I am free from all my limitations is an entirely different pursuit. Even an insight into this fact is a great thing.

Once you see that the solution is yourself, because the problem is yourself, if the problem is that you cannot accept yourself, then to solve that problem, you have to accept yourself. For that the self must be acceptable. No positive thinking is going to help you here. In positive thinking you don’t see what you miss; you always see what you have. Often you hear this. If there is half a cup of milk, you can complain, “It is half is empty,” or you can be contented that “It is half full”. This is called positive thinking. There is some truth in that. But the problem is I want to have the full glass of milk! How can I not recognize the reality that half the glass is empty?

A student was doing his Ph.D. but did not complete it. He got a job with his Masters degree in the local state college. He was doing okay, was happy with his work and happily married. Until a friend of his, who was also doing his Ph.D. became the boss, the principal of the college. Naturally this reminded him of his failure and therefore he became very depressed. He went to a therapist. The therapist said to him, “You are looking at yourself wrongly. Do you know how many people there are in this world who are in wheelchairs? Are you in a wheelchair?”

“No.”

“Should you not be grateful for what you have?”

“I think I should be.”

“How many people are blind in this world?”

“Many.”

“Are you blind?”

“No, I have twenty by twenty vision.”

“Should you not be grateful?”

“Yes. I think I should be grateful.”

“How many people are deaf and dumb? Are you deaf and dumb?”

“No.”

“Should you not be grateful?”

“I think so.”

“How many people are unemployed? Not even on welfare. Don't you have a job?”

“Yes.”

“Should you not be grateful?”

“Yes.”

“How many people are not married? You are married?”

“And she still thinks that you are wonderful?”

“Yes.”

“Should you not be grateful?”

“I think so.”

“Then why do you have this complex?”

He felt better, and left the therapists office. As he was getting into his old Chevy, a shiny silver Mercedes pulled up. He saw it and thought, “When will I get a car like this? Never – no chance.”... Whatever positive thinking he had just evaporated. Again he became sad and depressed. Do you know why? He wants to have a Mercedes. What is wrong with that desire? A Mercedes is a solid car. In an accident you can be safe. It is an excellent machine, and when you sit at the wheel, you feel good because

everybody looks at you. That is another need you have. Therefore, this person is now sad because he does want to have a Mercedes, but there is no possibility of getting one. There is nothing wrong in having a desire for a Mercedes... It is a legitimate desire. So he became sad. Therefore, I always look upon this positive thinking as nothing but being blind to what you don't have, what you want to have which is not there...

We don't need positive thinking, we need right thinking. We don't need negative thinking, we don't need positive thinking, we need right thinking, just thinking which covers the reality of things. That which makes you just be alive to what is. That is what thinking is. It is not positive thinking or negative thinking, or this swinging between the two. Thinking is what is required. And therefore no positive thinking is going to fix up this problem until the person really understands the problem first. The problem is not there, really speaking. In the problem is the solution, like in a jigsaw puzzle.

A few pieces are given to you by your eight year old son, "Dad, solve this problem, make a word out of this." He gives him twelve plastic pieces. All of them look absolutely unconnected. The father of course accepts the puzzle. You know, on Sunday morning there is nothing else to do, so you always like a challenge like this. He tried and tried and nothing happened. He calls his son, "Did you give me all the pieces?" "Yes." "Are they the right pieces?" "Yes, Dad, yes." So he goes on trying and suddenly a word formed. "Eureka!" He shouted, and his son comes running. "Dad, what happened?" "Oh, I solved it. Look!" He becomes a child. This is the child we want. Everybody has a child, which is simple, innocent, fresh, loving, uncomplicated. This child, an enlightened child, everybody has to be. Anyway, here as a child he just shares his joy of discovering the solution to this puzzle. The son knows exactly how all the pieces of the puzzle fit in their places; he knows very well, he has assimilated the whole thing and therefore, he disturbs them and then asks, "Dad, now make it again."

Three days go by, and still the father has not formed the word. Do you know why? He knows now that there is a solution. He knows that all the pieces clearly fall in their own places making a word. In the problem is the solution, he knows this very well now, because he has solved it before. When you are happy for a moment, it is exactly like this. The solution is you. You can be happy in spite of all your wants. In spite of all your desires, you can still be happy and free, loving. But then, what happens, that gets disturbed, like the puzzle pieces got disturbed. Finally, the father has to cognitively solve the puzzle. Because the solution is in the pieces, he accidentally met with the solution. But the solution is unassimilated by the father. Which pieces go where, he does not know. Until he gets the whole of it, the whole picture, he has to struggle. Days will tick by. Whereas that small boy has assimilated the solution;

he has no problem at all. He sees only the solution, that word. He knows the pieces are all there and because he has assimilated how they fit together, he has no problem whatsoever.

This is the truth about you. If this is the truth, then where is the question of my solving a problem? I'm not solving a problem, I am seeing there is no problem. I am trying to see in keeping with the vision of the teaching, the absence of a problem. Centered on you there is no problem. Thus a person has to understand, "I am the project in my life. All other projects are all meant for me alone." Technically, the *śāstra* tells us that everything is *ātma-śeṣa*. Everything is connected to me, the self; I am the project. *Ātmā* is the project. Therefore you are the project.

If you discover this, you find that your whole life gains a new glow—new meaning, new content, new profundity. In fact you are the meaning of everything that is here. You are the meaning. The discovery of you is the discovery of the meaning for the entire jagat, the entire world. Really, that is what the truth is.

When you appreciate this, there is a certainty about what you are in for, about what you are doing. It is just this discovery. Therefore, this self-knowledge that I am seeking is not out of curiosity, it is out of commitment. See the difference? It is not out of curiosity, it is out of commitment. In other words, what I want to be is what I want to know. That is not true with reference to your study of any other discipline of knowledge. When you study geology, what you want to know is geology. What you want to be is not minerals. When what you want to know is microbiology, what you want to be is not a microbe. Here, however, what you want to know, the *ātmā*, the self, the fullness, the wholeness is exactly what you want to be—free from being small, in other words, the whole. See the difference? What I want to know is what I want to be.

For this naturally, you require a certain *adhikāritvam*. This is a very interesting word, first the word is *adhikārī*, then it is modified to *adhikāritvam*. As a person, you have to have the status of being an *adhikārī*, a person who is ready, prepared for this knowledge. Who is the person who is prepared for this kind of knowledge? Knowledge is very simple. It does not wait for anything but needs only a person who has to know and the means of knowledge to know. Understand this part of it clearly.

What is in my hand? A flower. Now suppose I ask you to look at my hand and not see a flower. It is my personal request to you, Swamiji's request. You can oblige me after all. So look at this object, and don't see it. Can you oblige me? Even if *bhagavān* comes and asks you, the Lord comes and asks you, what can you do? This is knowledge. The amazing reality about knowledge is this: you have no choice whether to see or not to see. Once your eyes can see and they are aligned to an object, and the

object is within the range of sight and it reflects light or is a source of light, sight will take place. You have no choice whatsoever.

Suppose I show you this flower and say, “Look at this mango. See how beautiful and big it is?” What will you think? Swamiji says so, and therefore it should be right? No. You may think, “He was making sense all this time, now suddenly something has happened. What happened?” You will sympathize with me, nothing more. Because knowledge is as true as the object. There is no choice in that. If it is a flower, it is a flower. You have no choice. If that is so, the teaching here is that you are the whole; it is a reality. The teaching is available to point out that you are the whole. That is a means of knowledge. So the means of knowledge is there, like your eyes, the ‘object’, you, are there, you are already the whole. Then the knowledge should take place as the teaching takes place, should it not? Yes. You are the whole.

You may say, “Swamiji, your *ātmā* may be the whole, but I am not the whole.” But whole means whole; it includes every *ātmā*. Therefore there is no question of my *ātmā*, your *ātmā*, his *ātmā*, her *ātmā*. There is no such thing. You are the whole and the teaching is available, therefore, knowledge should take place. But it doesn’t always take place, why? Because of this we have to say that there is a logical adjunct, *upādhi*, a clause involved here. We have to add one more clause—that is: if the person is ready.

You want to learn calculus, no problem. A professor of calculus is available, ready to teach you. But then, teaching is taking place, and nothing is happening. Why? Because you have a simple arithmetic problem. Is eight plus four fifteen or seventeen? When you have this doubt, you won’t learn calculus. I can’t say that you cannot learn calculus, you can. If that professor can begin teaching you simple addition, then subtraction, then multiplication, then slowly take you to algebra, he can slowly lever you up to a calculus student. This is called *adhikāritvam*, preparedness. For everything, you have to be prepared. For any knowledge you require preparedness. . .

The person must be ready, an *adhikāri*. Knowledge is like that, as are many other things also. Even actions are like that. Whether it is to walk, or to learn anything like calculus, or physics, the *adhikāritvam*, the readiness, the preparedness is required. For the discovery that you are the whole, what is the *adhikāritvam*? I would say it is that as a person you have grown up emotionally, and cognitively, of course, you are capable of seeing what is being said. This means you have to grow in terms of a certain relationship to the world, to be compassionate, to be loving. Really speaking, to be compassionate is to be natural. To be sympathetic is natural. To be loving is very natural; that is the prime emotion, I told you. That is in keeping with yourself. Your own wholeness comes out. If that is so, then to discover

that I am the whole, or, to put it differently, to discover absolute abiding love, well, I have to be relatively loving, an *adhikārī*.

So what is the qualification? Who is the person who is qualified for this discovery? It is the loving person, the compassionate person, the sympathetic person, the charitable person, the understanding person, the person who accommodates people. That kind of a person you have to have in your agenda—to grow to be that person. Though there is no becoming in the discovery here, in preparing for that discovery, there is some kind of a growing, if I can use the word “growing” for the time being. One has to grow into that person first. That is the project. You can have anything in terms of wealth, accomplishments, etc., but still, if you are not a lovable person to yourself, then what is the achievement? All the achievement is meant for you and if you have a self-condemning attitude, or the attitude that everybody else must change in order for you to be happy, what have you achieved?

A human being has to grow; but this growth is not like that of a cow. A cow grows to be an adult just by surviving for a certain number of years. If a calf dies away, it has an unfulfilled life. It has not grown to its potential. It has to become an adult cow or a bull, and a calf will grow to become a cow or a bull as long as it survives. The calf need not do anything else to become a cow or bull. So too, a human child will grow to become an adult as a living organism. The child has to develop into an adult, a potential father or mother. For the cow, once it has physically matured, there is no further problem. Having become an adult, it lives a cow’s life. No problems, no complexes like, “I am a white cow” “I am a black cow” “I am too white” etc. It doesn’t go to the Hawaiian beach to get a tan! It doesn’t have all those complexes; it is free!

But when we have grown to physical maturity, we have all sorts of complexes. That means we have to grow further—to be free from complexes. There is one thing that is important to understand here. Growing is not obliging anybody, not a religion, nor a god, nor anybody. It is your own growth. The only problem here is this growth does not happen naturally. It is unlike your physical adulthood which will happen whether you like it or not. Stay around for a few years; every time you go to school make sure you come home; you will become an adult...

You don’t do anything to become an adult. That is natural. This is called *prakṛiti*, nature. Being self-conscious, the adult human being has self-judgement, confusion, complexes, etc., in spite of being the whole—because this is not known. Now the whole growth of a person in terms of being free of these complexes is dependent on one’s own initiative, because one is a free person. The growth is centered on your self, which you are conscious of, as an individual. Therefore, to free myself from all these

complexes is to discover a love for myself as a person, a loving person. That is my own growth, otherwise I am still a child.

A seventy-five year old man complains to me, “Swamiji, I feel very sad and lonely.” I asked him why. “Because my children don’t care for me.” I asked him, “How do you know? That is an interpretation. How do you know that they don’t care for you?”

“Because, Swamiji, they don’t write to me at all. Even if I write, they don’t write to me.”

This interpretation is the problem. You interpret because there is no self-love. You always interpret wrongly and suffer, dealing with a problem that does not exist, because there is no self-love. Therefore, discovering self-love, self-sufficiency is the growth that has to take place and it is in your own hands. Unless you take this initiative, you remain childish, like this seventy-five year old man.

Our forefathers gave us a very clean plan for growth, and at the end of it is *sannyāsa*, the best retirement plan. Everybody has to become a *sannyāsi* at the end. Either he takes the clothes or he doesn’t, but he has to be a *sannyāsi*. To be a *sannyāsi* means to be mature, to be centered on yourself, to just be under the sky and the stars, to relax in the present. The morrow is not a problem anymore. That takes a plan for your own maturity, your own growth. That is an entirely different plan. And it is the greatest retirement plan that humanity can be offered by any thinking person. To grow to the point that you don’t need any thing, you don’t require any emotional props is growth. You have done your duty. Your children are okay; they are taking care of themselves. Therefore you should free yourself, you should feel good about yourself, and grateful that you have so much time. If they don’t care for you it means you have more time. You should enjoy that time.

To enjoy is to just love yourself. You have to discover that love for yourself; only then are you enjoying. And that means you have to grow a lot. What is the use of making money, settling your children and still feeling lonely all the time at the age of seventy-five?

Once there was a big sitting protest against cow slaughter, *go hatti*, before the parliament house. Haridwar and Rishikesh are some peculiar places, full of *sādhus*. Nowhere in the world have you got a colony of seekers like that. Hundreds of *sādhus* were there, they were recruited and taken to Delhi and asked to sit (in protest). And they were immediately rounded up and thrown into prison. After one week, they were released. These *sādhus* came back to Haridwar and Rishikesh and again were to have another sitting protest, for which they began canvassing. What they said was very interesting. As I was standing in the queue for *bhikṣā* one of these *sādhus* told me, “Swamiji, it is wonderful there. Nobody disturbs

you there, you get *bhikṣā*, food there. And the food is not merely *rotī* and *dāl* for lunch and *dāl* and *rotī* for dinner, like it is here. There they have rice, vegetables, it is wonderful, come to Delhi.”

A lot of *sādhus* went and they were ready to go to jail. Why? Because a *sādhu* has nothing else to do; he has his *Gītā* book and just sits there. Wonderful! How can you imprison that fellow? Four walls make no prison. That is *satyam*, that is true. That is the growth of a person. To throw off your own lack, drop all the crutches, emotional crutches, etc., and just be happy with yourself is growth. You have to grow out of all these crutches. You can enjoy love and affection and care for all your loved ones. All these are not a problem really. But we have to grow, and this growth is in our initiative.