

A Short Lesson in Understanding by Moriya

Let's begin with a Sufi story:

Once upon a time there was a king who enjoyed the company of his trusted friend, a Sufi.

One day the king said: "Look, I love and trust you as much as I love and trust my soul. Please," he said, looking into the man's eyes, "I would like to give you a present, so ask whatever you wish, even to the half of my kingdom."

The Sufi replied, "My king, I do not wish for anything."

"Please, ask whatever you want and it'll be granted."

The Sufi said softly, "I thank you, but I honestly do not wish for more than I already have."

Both men stood their ground until finally the wise man turned and said: "There is a question I would like to ask?"

"But of course," replied the king.

"Imagine that you have become separated from your men and that you are lost in the desert. There is not one living soul around. High in the sky, the sun is hot on your head. There are no bushes under which to find shelter.

Your tongue feels as dry and dusty as the hair on your camel's tail. Then, an apparition appears in front of you and proffers a tumbler of cool water towards you. You reach for it but before releasing the tumbler, the apparition proposes a deal.

A tumbler of cool water for half of your kingdom. My King, would you agree to the deal?"

"Of course, I would!" exclaimed the King.

"So," continued the wise man, "why would I need something that is valued as much as a tumbler of water?"



So, what is the message of this story?

The message is that according to how much, at any given moment, we value any one aspect of anything over another, we attach an arbitrary emotional value to this aspect while failing to accept the whole.

Look at it this way: if we were in dire straits in a desert, lost and left for dead, most of us would, indeed, be willing to make a deal - any deal - with anyone holding a symbolic cool glass of water to us.

Interestingly, if lost in an arctic blizzard and about to die from hypothermia, what we would most greedily accept from a rescuer would not be a tumbler of cool water but a tumbler of brandy though, clearly, whilst in the dry desert the tumbler of brandy would fail to quench our thirst and might hasten our departure from this earth.

However, we are talking about the same tumbler of cool water - unchanged in its properties - whether it is offered in the context of the desert or the context of a frozen landscape.

Dependant on our need – be it real or imagined - the worth we attach to that tumbler of water is totally arbitrary and entirely of our choosing.

Equally, when we donate to charity clothes that we no longer want, the persons accepting these clothes will attach a value to them where, for us, there was no longer any.

Why, these men and women might even wear this shirt, that skirt, that tie, proudly on Shabbath, at the next Bar Mitzvah they attend, to their next job interview or to their next birthday party. It can be said that *one person's trash is another one's treasure*.

When we value one item over another, be it an object or a human being, we create separation – in doing so, we create disagreement and conflict because things are inseparable in their essence.

Any attempt to attach greater value to one item over another causes an *inner* friction that expresses itself through an *outer* conflict, i.e. in violent behavior, be it against others or against the self. This conflict can also express itself in the form of illness or result in an *accident*.

Every single conflict recorded in history has sprung from a value attached to worldly material goods as well as to ideas, notions, emotions and desires. In doing so, we separate them from the whole. The action/reaction of *inner conflict/outer conflict* always repeats itself simply because there can never be a firm agreement between people about the worth of any specific thing or that of any specific individual they value, and the prize they are *willing* to pay for them. Some will spend a fortune on a car. Others will spend a fortune on a painting, on a diamond, on a stamp collection, on a rug or even on another human being. Some prefer not to pay anything for these objects that they, too, value. They prefer to *steal* them while others would not give a thousand shekels to possess any such thing because, for whatever reason, they do not value such objects.

For example, when mere objects, locations and people gain religious significance, they also gain an added value – that of holiness. Attachment to symbolic holiness leads to conflicts between individuals, wars of religions and war between nations.

The real essence of life - the physicality, unity of everything – is inseparable from the whole. No single aspect of it can be altered in any way. The value we attach to anything that has ever been created - from objects to selected individuals, dead or alive - is only as arbitrary as the value attached to the tumbler of water in the opening fable. Any conflict is the proof that we, humans, are attempting to

separate what is whole and inseparable into parts, while it is the natural state of all - conceived as whole - to realign itself back into a preordained wholeness.

The stronger the attachment to any element separated from its whole - be it in the name of a god, idealism, patriotism, authoritarianism or liberty - the stronger the eventual counter-reaction will be.

It needs to be understood that all-out battles on any level are always born out of a single-minded personal inner conflict.

All events, all objects are naturally neutral – they just are.

They do not carry any intrinsic values. They are neither good nor bad. They merely exist but we, ego-personas, arbitrarily decide what is to be valued or rejected, what is good and what is bad, according to societal trends, our collective emotional insecurities and the use we make of objects, thoughts and doctrines – personal and public ones alike.

Every act intended to ‘push’, to manipulate, in a direction predetermined by the self, always causes a blow-out at the other end before it settles back into its original wholeness.

Love, on the other hand, is a pure and beautiful emotion – but only as long as we accept our loved ones as they are without trying to mold them to suit our desires and our insecurities.

When we peacefully accept our circumstances such as they are, the spontaneous flow of *cosmic* love energy remains constant, for it replenishes itself spontaneously. The more we share love with others, the more this cosmic energy widens and spreads.

Needless to say, we are not talking here about the simplistic, feel-good Hippie flower-power and the New Age propensity for hugging

and *verbally* stating acceptance and love. Neither are we talking about convincing ourselves that we are “doing” love through the simplistic repetition of mantras.

When we demand that love, such a frail and beautiful emotion, should be expressed in any particular way in order to satisfy our ego – selfish and insecure by nature – the counter reaction from the loved one is an annoyance that over time often turns into downright hatred, which often leads to the cessation of the spontaneous flow of love, if not to physical separation.

It is this negative charge that is transmuted into a karmic ‘blow to the head’ of the perpetrator via yet another inner/outer conflict.

What is a loss, an ‘accident’, bad luck, an act of violence or an illness, if not the materialization of the negative charge?

Take for example the case of an extreme fundamentalist who turned to epicurianism. That sort of erratic imbalanced behavior would create such an energetic kink that the flow of cosmic energy would be severely constricted. This would set the stage for yet another inner/outer conflict.

The first reality is that we are souls – souls disguised in our incarnated bodies.

The second reality is that all souls are love and, as such, our true purpose in this lifetime is to love one another unconditionally.

A third reality is that the source of all conflict and enmity is always rooted in our starvation for love and in our inability to satiate it.

We, human beings, are a combination of a body and a soul. When only the body needs are sated, the lonely starvation of our soul deepens accordingly and this is where, as a civilization, we err in

thinking that satisfying the body, the persona, with more money at the bank, a promotion, more frequent and better sex, more entertainment, a more stimulating life, more exotic food - more and more of what is within material and within our reach - would solve the problem.

Instead of eventually feeling satisfied with what we have, we indulge a constant craving for more - as there is always more 'out there' that the media are trying to sell us. The more we indulge our base needs, the more our soul's loneliness and starvation deepen.

In time, the persona becomes miserable, emotionally unhealthy and ultimately physically sick.

The main problem of our civilization is that we have never understood the connecting lines that link our actions in the material world to our spiritual deficit and to our emotional stress and physical ailments.

When the world came to be, all of creation – minerals, animals, plants, human beings, stars, suns, etc. – was born from primeval matter. The 'phenomena' world in which we live is, therefore, a complete world in which nothing can be altered.

Wood cannot become iron. Fish cannot become flora. Each creation has been given to humankind in its complete form. Therefore, there is no possibility of ever changing anything in our outer physical world.

Air pollution, greenhouse gases, pollution of the rivers and the seas, the hole in the ozone layer, the melting of the polar caps and toxic waste, just as the side effects of 'enhanced' food are the result of scientific 'advancement'. Scientists take complete matter and alter its properties to invent an *improved* version of the original pattern.

The world could be seen as a huge puzzle in which all pieces are interlocking and each fulfills a function without which the puzzle cannot be whole.

So, although there is a general consensus that the contribution of an individual positioned at the bottom rung of society is minimal, this is a grave mistake.

Without such persons in our midst, the nature of the puzzle would be altered. Their absence, if removed from the equation, would cause a severe imbalance that would affect the whole of society.

It has to be understood that everyone alive here and now is a valid and integral part of our society.

Again, we are souls in disguise and the 'phenomenal' world in which we live has set us up with all the opportunities we need to reveal our true selves to ourselves by unveiling the mask of the persona - which is the only way to experience inseparability and our personal merging with the infinite wholeness.

Let's take the case of a rabbit. A rabbit cannot speak. The best she can do is growl a little because of an inborn inability to shape sounds into words. If we tried to teach a rabbit to speak, even after many years of perseverance, the rabbit's throat would still not allow her to do more than growl. The rabbit is a complete creature that is finite.

Let's now return to human beings. When we tell ourselves that we have learned 'something new', reality is that we have *not* truly learnt anything new at all. What we have succeeded in doing is *remembering* some of what we already knew.

As human beings, we are not complete, fixed creatures like the rabbit. We are able to 'learn' by internalizing something that, a minute

ago, was totally unknown to us. When we “remember”, we are accessing prior knowledge. The ability to learn and to **understand** means that it is inborn within us and that it is unlimited.

Soul speaks to us through symbols. Understanding these symbols is a must. When we see the world through our eyes, we see pictures formed by a myriad of symbols which our brain analyzes through words.

As long as we stay within the picture's framework, we experience living in peaceful harmony with our selves and with each other. However, the moment we interpret what we see with words, always attributing a higher or a lesser value to one aspect or another, we create separation. Separation fosters friction and friction leads to another conflict.

Soul is Love, Truth and Faith. It is therefore in her nature to desire a merging with infinite and eternal wholeness. The ego-persona, a mere tool, is a mechanical system intended to serve the soul by being a channel between her and the body, so that our soul can look at the world through eyes that see union and unconditional Love.

Each one of us is always dealt the cards we need in order to succeed in this difficult mission but all our difficulties in life spring from our refusal to accept our soul as our master and from our resistance to amend what needs to be amended. They are compounded by our doggedness to flow in a direction that is opposite to that of Life's flow – the unilateral direction of separation.

When a soul is reincarnated as a newborn within a specific family, it is the signal for the parents that the time has come for them to overcome all petty personal conflicts to clear the channel between

their persona and their inner self - not to be hypnotized by their own persona's needs and fears - not react mechanically to every one of life's prickly moments.

The arrival of a newborn soul in their lives is the signal that the time has come for these adults to learn about their true selves by observing their own reactions while refraining from interfering.

The arrival of a newborn is the signal to surrender to what-is, to accept holistically and to give unconditionally. The more the parents will be able to give, particularly when things become messy and difficult, the more their acceptance will grow, the more their energy will be renewed and the more they will evolve and rise up the ladder of spirituality.

The world is the stage on which actors perform our play – the play we have written – the play we are directing - the play in which we are the main *as well as* the supporting actors. We reflect our lack of awareness by projecting the roles we play onto others and blaming them for it.

When we give someone a major role in our play, we complain that s/he is taking over our life; and when we give a minor role to someone, we complain that s/he has no interest in our life or that s/he has little time for us. Yet, all the time the problem is ours. By separating, accepting/rejecting people according to our perception of the role they play, we are so absorbed by our selves, so controlled by the past, that we block them. We exclude them from sharing our personal experiences. We, then, complain that no one loves us; that no one cares about us, while in reality we are the ones who have separated ourselves from the whole.

Every time we struggle with any of our past experiences, we are not 'here' – we are not present in 'this' moment. However, it is only in the moment that there exists the possibility to participate fully, harmoniously, in our own play, because that moment contains every other moment that ever was and all those that will ever be – it is eternity.

The spiritual Path is not a way of seclusion or disconnection from the outward world. It is the Path of harmony within daily life. Within this context, harmony means being passive. It means *not* 'Doing,' but doing only what needs to be done at any given moment and nothing more. It means neither falling back on the past nor leaning heavily on the anticipation of a rose-tinted future that will never come.

Everything that distracts our mind from the present moment reels us back again to the past or to an imagined future. Either way, we are not living at all the moment. In actual fact, Life is reduced to the present moment alone – it is not linked to the moment that preceded it, and it is not linked to the moment that is yet to come.

To be in the moment is an almost unbearable, a Sisyphean task, but it is a task that yields its own rewards. *Flowing* means being an inseparable part of the cosmic energy that surrounds us. This energy is that of unconditional, infinite LOVE.

This energy ebbs and flows with each harmonious act of giving and accepting. In this manner, things are accomplished as if on their own volition. They happen at the right time and in the right way. They fall into place within the best possible circumstances that can possibly exist in any given moment.

The sea that leads its waves to the shore again and again without stopping even for a moment, symbolizes the ego within our daily activities. The incessant roar, the spray, the sparkle that glints on the water – all of them create the illusion of an infinite, hectic movement, while in reality all this activity only serves to hide the real essence at the bottom of the sea where life exists away from the seeing eye. For us, as for the sea, all our activities are visible on the surface.

Daily activities done mechanically blind our inner sight, and lead to the delusion that the real world is the material one we observe through the eyes of our persona. Our insatiable hunger for love remains intact and no achievement, however great - no victory, however hard-fought - no object, regardless of its value – will ever fill the formidable void created within us.

Dependence on the many crutches we lean on, such as our work, our money, our social status, our fame, our achievements, as well as alcohol, entertainment, sex, shopping etc., cannot lift the person beyond the boundaries of the limited ego.

Our hunger for a union with our infinite, limitless Self only make us more reliant on these crutches, thus foregoing all hope of ever being liberated and standing freely.

The more we attempt to control moments and events, the more they enslave us – the more they hang around our neck like an iron weight. It is for a good reason that in the Talmud it is written "win a slave, win a master."

Our insatiable hunger causes us to mistake its source and we place the stress on the physical side: the expansion of personal property distorts reality and, instead of letting our soul guide us, the reins are held by the persona who can never be satisfied because, as a limited tool, for her own survival she is dependent on energies exterior to her self. The persona sucks in this energy from all around and positions

herself by using willpower or desire – the persona's most powerful tools.

The more materialistic the persona, the greater need she will have to absorb more of this energy in order to stay alive until, finally, desires out of control will lead her to self-destruct.

Gross matter tends to behave according to the Law of Attraction of Earth, and it weighs down whoever is inclined toward gross lower physical desires while forgetting their divine origin, as in an ancient story about the Sons of God who descended into Earth. It is said that they fell in love with the daughters of Men. They became so absorbed with lustful desires and lower energies that they had become unable to use their wings.

The moral of this story is that we, pure souls, are imprisoned within a body that exists only to satiate its base desires. The 'desired body' – our willpower - is no different than 'a loose canon' and, systematically, it leads us to fail our soul as we fail others.

Our soul is an inseparable part of God. As such, our soul is attached to all other souls in an eternal tie. All souls belong to a higher dimension – one in which energies are much more delicate and mightier than that of earth-bound personas – thus souls are stronger and mightier than anything imaginable.

The term 'higher dimension' does not mean that worlds exist one above the other, the higher one stacked on top of the lower one. In reality, worlds exist one *within* the other like Russian nesting dolls, and the highest worlds are the most inner ones. They are the ones who give the essence, the content and the energy to the lower, grosser worlds. This works exactly like an engine that sets in motion the entire vehicle, although it is hidden from the observer's eyes. The

higher is one's personal spiritual elevation, the stronger is one's energetic power and, therefore, the greater is one's ability to control the lower levels of one's persona.

Faith means security. To have faith in our soul means we rely on energies that break through all levels and, consequently, events manifest themselves with the speed of light. The person needs only to ask – and the request is granted immediately. When all the blockages are removed, all is delivered to us on time, and there is no need to exert pressure on any aspect of our lives. All flows around us exactly like the breeze.

Wind is the symbol of life of Earth. Without it there would be no life on our planet. When the wind blows gently, it inspires softness, tenderness and evokes the feeling of a loving, comforting caress. Even the leaf won't fall off its tree. But when the wind blows hard, it uproots trees and destroys homes. It brings along dark clouds that release heavy rains that flood the ground, as if all of Nature's forces were united into one entity aiming to cleanse earth from some of the filth that has stuck to her from time immemorial.

Walking the spiritual Path is difficult because the persona needs to change her mechanical behavior by letting go and by surrendering to Soul.

From childhood onwards, modern society teaches us that being competitive, a high achiever, one who controls her own destiny by intervening in all its aspects, is good practice. However, these behaviors lead to violence against the self and violence against others – in one form or another.

There is no competition on The Path. If you won't give your brother a helping hand, in the fullness of time he will drag you backwards. The

spiritual Path is a path of sacrifice, of infinite giving, of being always available to others. It is the path of the open heart.

Our constant desire to 'achieve' and 'win' over others is merely symptomatic of our infinite hunger for love. This modern-day form of beggary will never be the key to opening our heart - not even after we have achieved all that is achievable. Not even if all the medals that can be won have been won.

All that is alive on Earth – plants, animals and human beings – is reacting to the voice of the heart. Soul will never be content with a love that is conditional.

In our culture, the wealthy are as much beggars as the poor. Their compulsion to hoard objects, property and money has its roots in the same inner hunger for love.

It can be said that every single masterpiece is but an imitation of Life and Nature. The fact that, today, works of art are praised mostly according to their financial value, says it all.

Thousands of charitable organizations collect donations to deliver money that is not theirs. Their line of business brings them accolades, appreciation and love. Be that as it may, confusion between the aim and the means is the reason why such organizations are failing in their mission to lift the poor out of starvation and institutionalized dependence.

These organizations only create a disablement on both sides - a mutual dependence on emotional crutches. Money is a neutral matter like every other matter. In itself, money is neither good nor bad, but the energy around money, which is used only as a commodity

instead of being a channel for love between welfare organizations and their beneficiaries, gets soiled.

Because the persona is a limited system, she needs a constant renewal of energy from outside of herself and she sucks from others, mostly by controlling them. Soul, on the other hand, is an inseparable part of the cosmic energy and as such she replenishes herself - the more she gives, the fuller she becomes. Such is the magic of the soul and such is the secret of the soul.

Life is an incessant flow within the infinite, and Nature is its reflection. Within this infinite flow, human beings have created a cocoon within which they have established governments, culture, religions, malls and also all kinds of rules. From generation to generation, they have taught their children to find happiness within the artificial construct of this society – a pursuit equal to that of swimming against the tide.

It's enough to see what happens in America when a cyclone sweeps through, removing every blockage on its way - be it a building, a tree, a car or a train.

The accusing finger always pointed at Nature's forces unleashed reflects our inability to understand that creating artificial blocks where the flow will not be restrained will naturally lead to various explosive behaviors. Therefore people use unnecessary power and energy just to survive inside this artificial cocoon. That barely repressed power expresses itself through inward and outward violence. It also expresses itself in the compulsion to build greater buildings and giant malls, as if building bigger blockages could ever stop the flow of life.

Even the greatest dam of the world will not withstand the pressure of flowing water that floods whatever stands in its way. Our mighty

armies, equipped with weapons of mass destruction, attest to our ignorance and to our blindness.

The most repressive police system in the world only fosters more criminals and more gratuitous violence.

Cause and effect are interconnected and inseparable. The mere existence of massive armies creates political tensions and international conflicts because the inner drive imprinted within them eventually bursts into outward expression.

Huge buildings cause imbalance by distorting the flow of energy around and through them. The higher up and away from vegetation and the ground's energy we live, the thinner the oxygen we breathe. The Law of Attraction is not strong enough to prevent neurological and physical symptoms such as loss of balance, dizziness, headaches and other symptoms of unease.

Mother Nature has provided us with all that we need to live healthily: air, water and food; material for clothing and shelter as well as life-sustaining energy. The closer we can get back to her – the better our communities will fare.

When, for example, we look at a tree, what do we see? What do we feel? Are we grateful to the tree for granting us shade under the hot sun? For the paper we use daily? For the furniture that furnishes our houses? For the house in which we live? For the beauty that it emits all around, and without which the world would be a scorched desert?

When we consider all of Nature's treasures - including the fauna and flora within it - purely from a selfish utilitarianist perspective, our lack of insight shrinks the world around us to the dimension of our needs. What ensues are needs evermore restrictive, designed to serve the

persona's immediate desires which, if not satiated, will again erupt in one form of violence or another.

Attempting to see the world through the eyes of the limited persona reduces and trivializes all that we do, because the whole is again separated into tiny parts that are unable to absorb and reflect back the whole picture.

When soul sends a message such as "Know unconditional love," the persona understands it as 'Have sex now.' This blind ignorance is what leads men to a prostitute from whom they can 'buy love.' Both the prostitute and her clients are struck by an illness that has, as its source, the same insatiable hunger for love.

Once again, the money exchanged is the commodity that connects them. But when the heart is blocked, money is valueless and it loses its true purpose as a channel that connects people. Symbolically, money represents the high values of love, compassion, acceptance and giving. As money passes from hand to hand, it provides us with the golden opportunity to open our heart and to deliver these high values through its channel.

The best investment of money is done by keeping it in a state of constant flow. Otherwise, it become moldy and rancid like food stored too long. The more we give from *an open heart*, the more the value of money grows - both spiritually and physically.

Let's say that a person asks for help and, after having obtained that help, s/he offers to pay in lieu of a thankyou. Should the person accept the money, the exchange of "give and get" will cancel out the original intention.

The exchange that began as a gesture of goodwill is then reduced to a mere business transaction and no real change can occur for anyone. The circle of love cannot spread outwards.

However, if the helper says, "No, I don't want money. If you want to pay me back in any way, be nice to someone else for free, without any strings attached, without even expecting a thankyou. And maybe this person will also do a favor to someone else for free, etc." Then and only then will the world become a better place.

Only then will energy begin to flow from one person to another – without being blocked at every turn. When someone barterers their kindness for money, their action becomes afflicted with the disease of covetousness which defeats the original purpose.

The spiritual powers imprinted within us are intended to lift us back to the rank of the angels we were at the time of our creation. The beauty we experience around us reflects the inner beauty of our infinite soul. When the heart is open, the eyes see union, love, faith and truth; for under the various colors of our skin, our ideas and emotions, we are all identical. The blood that flows in our veins is red; our lungs breathe oxygen and our body consumes food in which we have all shared from production to consumption.

Spiritual enlightenment means that we understand that – while within the artificial environment people have created and from which they fight each other for a piece of bread, of land, a sum of money, a better position, a new mode of controlling each other this way or that way – in the real dimension things remained unchanged, exactly like the tumbler of water. They are as harmonious and perfect as ever.

