

Brotherhood

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There is a lot of researching, writing and preaching about the psychology of brotherhood, and the Haiti earthquake should move all of us into serious reflection. The psychology of the brotherhood among human beings refers to a magnanimous, charitable, and kindly spirit toward those who suffer and are in desperate need, but also to those with whom we come into daily and immediate contact; toward those who contradict, oppose and attack us, as well as toward those who love and agree with us. There has to be some kind of mysterious connectivity between the solidarity we should express to our neighbors and to people with whom we interact on a daily basis, and the actions of support that we take while facing tragedy in a nearby country.

Until such a particular connection is practiced, the psychology of brotherhood will remain a fragile or short term condition. The brotherhood of human beings is an end, a goal and the way to cultivate civic virtue, mutuality and reciprocity. It means a sublime and far reaching consummation of love, acknowledging that such a consummation must be realized. This is what exactly happened in Puerto Rico last week as we all faced and cried for the Haitian brothers and sisters....

In reading the news last week, we experienced consternation by the tragedy of the Haitians, but turning over the pages of the newspapers we found other local news of circumstances of hate, conflict, violence and even death.

There is this passage in the Bible posing the question: *If a man loves not his brother who he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?* This is a very profound statement, but the opposite is also very significant: If a man does not love his brother or friend whom he knows (and fights with him or her all the time) how can he love men and women of all creeds and all nations whom he does not know?

So bringing the psychology of the brotherhood among human beings to life is to learn to live in peace with ourselves, with one's relations and neighbors, and daring to make the effort of returning well for evil. If this is not the case, there will be no self progress and no social prosperity.

The psychology of survival tells us too much about the real foundation of human character. The psychology of brotherhood is always a relationship between who I am and what I constantly do. The quality of this interaction will determine the degree and scope of peace, love and communion that human beings will experienced with each other. Losing this kind of focus will lead some people into depression. Life is full of surprises, contingencies, problems, and opportunities. It is this mix of contradictions and complexities that brings challenge and excitement to human life. We have to focus on connections in order to achieve real results. The purpose should always be real growth and development. Within this logic there is no room for cosmetics, hypocrisy, and superficialities.

Working to propagate the psychology of brotherhood among human beings, while at the same time fostering in our hearts some sparks of envy, spite, resentment, malice or hatred is to be self-deluded. Being all the time hindering and denying by our behaviors and words, which we eulogize by our expressions is a very problematic psychology. So weak is this kind of mind-set that until the very heights and transformation of love and wisdom are present, we are all liable at any moment to fall into it.

Cultivating brotherhood requires a lot of self-work and self examination, and sometimes this has to be done by another person in order to heal an ill-will. If the person hates, avoids, condemns others for whatever reason there is, or treat selfishly and harshly those who are near him or her, all that can be said or done in the cause of the brotherhood of human beings will be another snare to the person's feet, a weakness to his or her aspirations and an artificial bubble to the world at large. Hatred and malice are the source of complex pain.

We have to live with a clean heart, filled with good-will for those who try and test us by their immediate nearness; let us appreciate those who are fertile irritants and make us create, innovate, grow, progress and prosper.

The Haiti disaster can move us all toward strengthening our psychology of the brotherhood by practicing it in all the places where we are right now, with all the people with whom we relate, at the moments most needed.

Oh yes, I am from the sixties and I sang with the Youngbloods: Come on people now, smile on your brother, everybody gets together, try to love one another, right know...

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