



Human Relationships in the Context of the Path

We are all human and we share the same world – or do we? In truth, there is not one objective world that we all inhabit but many overlapping worlds of souls who share a common perception – a relative meeting place in the vast landscape of creation. The more we are unconscious, conditioned and indoctrinated by the collective mind, blinkered by the narrow mentality of society, the more our world becomes constricted, dwindled by superficiality and lack of imagination. Superficiality and imitation are the main characteristics of the collective psyche because it is by its very design founded upon the basic instinct to survive and procreate. We define our existence through interrelating with members of our own species, just as our ape ancestors did. That social structure has been the core of our survival since the beginning, and as such it deeply determines our values and our perception of reality. If we look at people who live in big cities, they live in an entirely human world, disconnected from nature and based on enjoying each other's company, art, food, and numerous forms of entertainment. This artificial human world has been further reinforced by movies, books, schools, and common psychology. However, while this over-socialization carries many spiritual benefits, such as accelerating our emotional evolution, somewhere along the way it has begun to constitute a deep conflict with the journey of our soul into the actualization of her higher individuality. The main subject of this article is a contemplation of how the idea of human relationships needs to be creatively reconstituted by those who walk the inner path to self-actualization.

One of the main ideas propagated by our society is that we should look for meaning in our existence by living for others, whether it be through our family, our spouse, our children, our community, our country, or even something as abstract as humanity as a whole. But what is humanity? What constitutes humanity? Why is it so dignified to live for others? The answer is simple: the act of supporting each other as a herd is what has allowed us to survive. Society makes it look very noble, but that which underlies the ideal of living for others is actually something very primal and basic. For instance, a nation conditions its citizens with the ideas of patriotism: dying for one's country and for the higher good of others is supposed to be a great sacrifice. But what about those who are killed so that we may gain more land and wealth for ourselves? Whatever angle you look at it from, there is sheer hypocrisy, selfishness, human blindness, and lack of higher perspective behind all these so-called 'higher' ideals.

The concept of a 'relationship' is a strong example of this type of conditioning, as it is so pivotal to the human search for meaning and happiness: finding a soul-mate, finding love, becoming emotionally fulfilled through the other, getting married and living

happily ever after. But what does it really mean? The word 'love' is supposed to be the answer to everything that we long for, but its meaning is steeped in fantasy. People use this concept without any discrimination. In the animal kingdom, love is the act of caring for each other in order to ensure survival. As we have evolved, it has begun to relate to the giving and receiving of emotional nourishment. However, within this simple context, the concept of love has gradually become increasingly magical and enchanted with higher meaning. Some people imagine that they actually live to discover love, that they are living for the sake of love as if love was the ultimate solution to their despair and sadness.

While the enchanted idea of love takes on many forms, it is mostly connected to our romantic relationships. Nobody knows who they are and yet they want to love. Most often there is no distinction between real love and an imagined feeling, as if it were experienced in a dream. How many people, when they look into the eyes of another, can actually see who is there? They do not even know who is looking, so how can they see who is standing right in front of them? They live in a fantasy of experiencing all sorts of things, while the majority of it is sadly a complete delusion.

This is not to say that relationships with others or indeed love in itself has no meaning. However, unless we become real, the whole world is no more than a projection of our mind; it is all a mirage. Those who walk the path are initially just as conditioned by the collective mind as everyone else. However, it is their responsibility to discover the extent to which the model of relationships that is so deeply ingrained in the collective psyche applies to their new vision of life and its purpose. To walk the path is to walk into the realm of individuality and aloneness. Still, as long as we are alive, we simultaneously dwell within the social context. Furthermore, evolution into our soul does not dissolve our human nature, and that nature is directly connected to our emotional existence with its inherent need to share our life with others.

There are two main scenarios that need to be considered in our contemplation of the intricate connection between our relationship with our own self and with other people. 'Others' here does not refer to an abstract concept of humanity but to the concrete people that are part of our experience of life. In the first scenario, we need to understand what constitutes the correct relationship with others once we have become whole, meaning once our human self has reached completion and merged with the soul. In the second scenario, we must understand what the place of relationships is in our life while we are still incomplete – both on the human level and as a soul, given our intention is to serve our spiritual actualization.

One of the common misconceptions about self-realization is that once we arrive at spiritual freedom, we become emancipated from the realm of desire and no longer need anything or anyone. For instance, in the original Buddhism, the awakened one does not even abide upon the idea of wanting to liberate others; in his view there are no others and as such, wanting to liberate them would only indicate one's own ignorance (*The*



Diamond Sutra). Later on, in Mahayana Buddhism, the contrary idea of Bodhisatva was created, as one who is so great that he postpones his own liberation so as to live on earth and help others. According to Mahayana, the original philosophy of Buddhism was selfish, as it taught that one should only care about one's own salvation. This seems to be a contradiction, as in fact Buddha himself made great efforts to spread his teaching; he was not so selfish after all. This example shows how human morality and the ideas of love and sacrifice have infiltrated the philosophy of enlightenment. Why is that? Because even those on the path, those who are expounding the knowledge of enlightenment, are confused about their identity in the context of their relationships with others.

Coming back to the subject, to be self-realized, which is to embody our higher self, does not mean that on the human level we cease to feel and experience certain essential desires, whether they be physical or emotional in nature. Rather, when the human has surrendered and become transformed and purified through the light of the soul, these desires lose their original intensity and become gentle and transparent. One arrives at the condition of minimum desires, and those remaining desires are no longer in conflict with surrender to one's pure nature. As far as the need to relate to others is concerned, this desire also is minimized and becomes considerably more selective. A soul wants to relate to others on the level of the soul, not on the level of personality. A soul experiences the presence of personality as something negative, fundamentally unpleasant, or even dark. She wants to connect from the depth of I am in order to reach into the soul of the other.

In regards to the second scenario, a seeker who has yet to reach completion needs to contemplate and discover the true meaning of relationships and to strive to understand *who* is relating and *to whom*. Personality craves to find meaning in its existence through its connection with other people because it has no other meaning; on its own it is nothing. One should not forget that it is personality that created the concept of relationships in our world. It is personality that has made all those movies, written all those books, poems, patriotic songs, and social propaganda. When we seek the correct perception of relationships, we simultaneously seek freedom from that false and superficial self that has created the philosophy of life upon which the majority of people on this earth abide. Relationships do not constitute the meaning of our existence. That is not to say that they have no meaning, but rather that their meaning can only be divulged when we begin to relate to them from the right place and as the right self.

While on the surface it appears as if the spiritual path takes us away from participation in the world – to hide in caves, ashrams, and monasteries – its real intention should be to find the true and awakened relationship with our own self as the very foundation of our relationship with the world. Those who enter the path are in-between the world of personality and the world of the soul – they are in transit between realms. Therefore, they cannot renounce their need for relationships because of the strength of their physical and emotional desires. Rather, their intention should be to minimize



unconscious interactions and become more selective in choosing their company. This was the original meaning of sangha: a community of spiritual friends that support each other on the path and enable each other to receive emotional nourishment. Even if we relate to those who are not on the path, some people can be more conscious and supportive than others. In addition, from the very start we must learn how to connect to others from a deeper place, which in turn helps us to gain a deeper relationship with our own self. We learn sensitivity, discrimination, and wisdom through contemplating our relationships with others. As we become more real, we seek to meet the real in others, and if this is not possible, we move away.

As far as romantic relationships are concerned, they can greatly assist us to evolve emotionally, to open up to intimacy, and to balance our feminine-masculine energies. We often seek in the opposite sex what we lack inside, and this meeting of opposites can bring us closer to becoming whole. A woman can teach a man how to get in touch with his femininity, and a man can teach a woman how to find masculine energy inside her own being. Unfortunately, there are so many projections and ridiculous expectations connected to romantic relationships that the essence of their true meaning is rarely met. It is an area of human life that is deeply irrational and unconscious, including the issue of sexuality and sexual expression. Those who walk the path must strive to illuminate this area with consciousness and go beyond any irrational or negative tendencies attached to it.

When one is in a romantic relationship, one should never forget that one is first of all in relationship with oneself and only then with the other. One must find the correct balance between aloneness and togetherness, where the natural existential weight is on aloneness. It is spiritually unhealthy to constantly be in the company of someone else. There is a vast difference between helping to nourish and complete each other, and creating the illusion of wholeness by living in the paradigm of a 'couple'. A couple is a kind of organism created by two people. While at times this can be a positive experience, as a perpetual situation it causes the dissipation of one's own natural boundaries. This over-mixing of energy and consciousness between two people can easily disturb the realization of one's higher individuality. What seems like heaven for personality is a veritable hell for the soul. People who do not desire aloneness are basically insensitive and unconscious. The soul rejuvenates in aloneness and only from that place expresses her being and love into the world. Aloneness is her divine mother, the nurturing womb of existence.

The more we establish our roots in our true self and become whole and existentially relaxed on the human level, the more we can begin to relate to another from the place that is real and true. We no longer relate based on our past, memories, habits, sense of obligation, dependency, or attempt to please others – we relate from the true now, which is the intelligence and love of our soul. The soul sees the other in a very different way than personality does; in fact, they have nothing in common. The soul seeks to express her truth and light, and looks for the same in the other. She gives by being; she



loves by being; she is in a natural state of unity with creation. She does not see the other as outside of her innermost existence. On the human level she can still discriminate, be wise and selective, because she has embraced the realm of duality as an indivisible part of reality as a whole. But even on the human level she is not touched by personality: she expresses her human self from the depth of her pure nature, dwelling uninterruptedly in the state of transparency, purity, and love. She is alone, she is no one, and she is the heart of each being.

To conclude, the issue of relationships has become so important in our society because of the emptiness of the human soul and the lack of even a basic connection to who we are. Those who are on the path must strive to free themselves from being enslaved by the collective mirage of relationships so that they can find the true meaning of relating to others from their pure nature, based on the wisdom of the soul. We do not live to be in a relationship. A relationship, and in particular a romantic relationship, is just a small portion of our experience of life. Being on the path, one must clearly perceive one's aloneness as the foundation and one's relationships as a gentle extension of that foundation. We are born alone, we die alone, and above all we live alone. That aloneness is sacred, divine, and godly. It is because we are alone in our nature that we can know what love is, and what actually constitutes a true relationship to the other and to the whole of creation.

Blessings,

Anadi

For a glossary of the terminology used in this teaching and for further resources, you may visit our website www.anaditeaching.com

