



Master Po: "Close your eyes. What do you hear?"

Young Caine: "I hear the water, I hear the birds."

Master Po: "Do you hear your own heartbeat?"

Young Caine: "No."

Master Po: "Do you hear the grasshopper, which is at your feet?"

Young Caine: "Old man, how is it that you hear these things?"

Master Po: "Young man, how is it that you do not?"

From the 1960's TV series "Kung Fu"

Karma: The Capacity For Insight

How we can live in the capacity of generosity.

My honor is to help people expand their inner capacity...

in order to allow for a direct experience. This direct experience is in total opposition to our temporal obsession with the literal life that we firmly believe we are tethered to. Rarely am I able to help people come to the place where they are willing to drop it all and enter into an enlarged capacity that allows them to be so generous that they are free to experience that which the mind cannot. You see there is far more to this life than the mind can think. The effort is to engage the student through meditation and help them find their own direct experience of Life. But people, in general, are immutable and do not care to have anything in their lives that they cannot "think," which is a euphemism for control.

Thinking is over rated and makes us live entrenched in our habits and indentured to the ignorance that only fear can offer. But as a race, we seem to embrace all of this as the norm of living. We miss so much because we cannot "think" what we authentically are. The mind has been used in such mundane and trivial ways that we have actually trained it to become small and petty. This has been done through the assumption of knowing what is "right" and what is "wrong." This supposition then spawns the irrefutable conclusion of judgments that we make upon others and ourselves whereby we live in absolute certainty that we know what "truth" is. By living in human pride we have made ourselves impervious to living as the journey of consciousness through Love.

Once a person has reduced their lives to what I have just explained it is difficult, if not impossible, to reverse the actions in order to sustain the fluidity that would bring grace and compassion to a person's life. This is why many people are "called" to the practice but so few can "choose" to live within it. Meditation and a life lived in compassion and forgiveness require a unique sense of intelligence that most people are unwilling to cultivate. Why? Because to open up our capacity in order to have a direct experience of Life as Love within this lifetime requires a very rare kind of generosity - it is one that exceeds our misguided logic and reasoning.

What is this "generosity" that I speak of? It is a place where we build our capacity for that which the body/mind cannot accept. This is often very difficult for people to practice in the course of their lifetime. This generosity is about allowing for Life to live us through the state of Love. To do this, which most will not due to a profound sense of indifference, a person must be willing to sacrifice all personal agendas for the sake of now letting Love live through them, as fear and hate have before.

You see, authentic generosity is sacrificing the Gregory Penn "belief system" that keeps his ego afloat in order to sustain his lifestyle, as he knows it. There is this part of the psyche that we all have that is totally devoted to our emotional comforts. This part of our brain operates within the unconscious mind and sustains our lifestyle, which we use to gratify our childhood wounds. The body/mind does not like pain of any kind entering into its sphere of living. So, the unconscious has morphed a phase of our fears into a defense mechanism that will combat "pain" with pleasure. Most people build their entire life upon this mindset. In fact, it has become the entire persona of this nation and the very psyche of the collective unconscious.

Our fears in this world are in proportion to our desire for the gratification that we believe will keep us from suffering the pain of emotional humiliation. We fear this emotional humiliation more than anything during the course of a lifetime. I have seen this so often in my career. I go to the hospital to work with a person and they are so humiliated by the body and what it is going through. They just cannot believe that this could happen to them. After all they had protected themselves so well all these years through the aggrandizement of the ego.

So often have I heard someone say to me: "Greg, this should not have happened to me." Why should it not? We have a body and as the Buddha said: "...it gets ill, festers and dies" and you believe that you are immune to this? Paaaaaaalease. Buddha died as a man through the body. Why should we not?

Then there is the immense embarrassment that occurs when a person whom I am working with in session finds out that they are so filled with rationalized hate and fear that they just cannot face what they have made of themselves. Most quit because they just cannot "take it" as they tell me. The pain of their vanity and pride just remove them from the practice of Love. Typically, it is women who suffer the most from the condition of self-absorption. Clinically it is called Narcissism and it comes in many forms.

All of this reminds me of a story. A story my Master told us in a Discourse where he was trying to share with us the total futility of trying to avoid the circumstance of the ego thinking that it can protect itself from the envitable. It takes great

generosity to care for the body as it moves through its process of impermanence. Here is the story that was given to us. May it serve you well...dear one.

A certain emperor once built himself a palace for his safety and protection. Emperors certainly live in greater fear than others as they have such great material wealth and there are many threats against their lives. They have riches, power, authority...it may be stolen at any time and their fear is in proportion to their wealth. So, in the palace that the emperor built, there was only one gate.

There were no windows, no doors...there was no way for an enemy to gain entry.

The king of a nearby kingdom came especially to view the palace. He was very impressed - it was so safe and so well guarded that no enemy could possibly get in. There was only one door and it was guarded by a carefully selected group of guards who had been especially chosen in order of seniority. After all, can a guard really be trusted? One might be tempted to kill the emperor in the night.

So, they had been handpicked according to seniority and each guard had to keep a keen eye on his junior. The other monarch was so impressed he said, "I shall also have such a palace built."

A beggar sitting by the side of the road overheard the two rulers talking and began to laugh loudly. Shocked, they turned to him.

The beggar said, "Pardon me, but there is just one thing you have overlooked. I have been sitting here begging and I have watched this palace being built. There is only one flaw, but it might prove costly one day. If you take my advice you will go inside and stay there; then you will remove this one door and replace it with a wall instead. Then there will be no flaw, and no danger whatsoever."

The emperor said, "You idiot! I understand what you are saying, but I would be as good as dead inside there. The palace would be my tomb."

The beggar replied, "It has already become a tomb. The grave is always the last door to remain open."

You see this story is a metaphor for what we do with our whole life. We build a prison for ourselves thinking that it is a nirvana that is protecting us. By the time we catch on...it is too late and we have to move into another lifetime of the same 'ol stuff. Generosity is letting go of all of this and feeling the vulnerability our emotions have to their own impermanence. When a person senses that they are vulnerable it typically brings them to fear. But in truth, it is a time of great value and spiritual beauty. For if we have the generosity to just feel the pain and sorrow of a life lived in emotional futility—we come out the other side as wise and deeply loving.

But to shed our emotional fears and the mechanism that operates all of this is no easy task. For by the time we "get" what has happened to us, we are so entrenched in emotional guilt and shame that most people typically just succumb to the consequence of their earthly arrogance through Karma.

This is a painful way of living. Most people do not recognize how they are really living and just go on assuming that they are doing well. The *proof in the pudding* to most people is the availability of “comforts” as a lifestyle along with something they believe in and have risked their whole life for, “security,” which does not exist. The many decisions that we made years ago, like who we married, our careers and the amount of possessions we had to have, not to mention the number of children we so unconsciously called into this world, all have a way of bringing their “gifts” to us. These gifts are all leading to one insight; **NOTHING IN THIS WORLD HAS THE CAPACITY TO BRING THE INNER JOY WE TRULY SEEK. JOY MUST COME FROM WITHIN.**

For most of us, the life we are living is more a Karmic accumulation of very selfish desires. These yearnings were manifested into our life Karma in this world through a split second of human impulse influenced by the DNA of our bodies, which hold willful intent to have what we so tenaciously pursued as “good” or righteous. These “life decisions” were translated by the emotional state of our hidden doubts about our abilities to survive and be happy in this world.

So, through a lifetime of unbridled gratification that never takes into account the havoc that it renders on those around us, namely our “loved ones,” as well as our own life, we say and do things that bring nothing but eventual misery and sorrow—even suffering into our living. We make many decisions about the quality of our lifetime based on what is often referred to as “low self-esteem” and how to get its revolting taste out of our mouth through seeking to fulfill lavish desires that may not be in our spiritual interests.

Living generously means that we are willing to sacrifice our deep yearnings for supremacy and self-importance for the sake of the insight that would help us to become aware of our own Karma in this lifetime. Not many people in this world are much interested in this. Everything we touch and do in this blessed world is there to help us come to the place where we can realize the bigger picture of our Karma in this lifetime and not to denounce it through the aggrandizement of the ego, which simply wants to pay tribute to itself through pride and arrogance calling it an “accomplished life.”

Jesus said: ***“The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.”*** He went on and on about this by saying: ***“FOR WHOSOEVER EXALTEH HIMSELF SHALL BE ABASED; AND HE THAT HUMBLETH HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED.”*** He did not stop there; ***“IF ANY MAN WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT; BUT WHOSOEVER WILL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE, THE SAME SHALL SAVE IT. FOR WHAT IS A MAN'S ADVANTAGE, IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIMSELF, OR BE CAST AWAY?”***

Do you think this harsh? If so you are not *ready* for the blessing of insight that comes with Karma. Everything he is speaking about here goes against the grain of our society, our politics and economics. In fact, his teachings are against everything that we pride ourselves upon in this world. To the human ear the Master sounds so grating to our ego's senses that we just do not want to believe that he said such a thing. Masters are both sweet and sour! They are sweet into the core and sour to

the taste. They reveal our distastefulness, which has become more than a lifestyle...it has become our Karma.

He even went further by teaching us: *“Take heed what ye hear. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.”*

Yes...if we *“hath”* the willingness to become aware of the very tone and texture of Life as Love we come to the place where everything becomes a blessing. Even those things we do not “like” or “want” in our life. We see how it all works together to bring us to the place of consciousness where we overcome ourselves first...and not worry about the world. Karma is not about “reward or punishment.” It is about realization of those realities that exist to help us to Love. That is it!

To put this power of generosity in perspective and give it the simplicity it needs for understanding, Jesus said this: *“The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.”* How true this is. Seek not to rectify the life we live by being “better than.” Seek first the simplicity of living through the effort of generosity. This unconscionable generosity is the kind of heartedness that brings the richness of insight into our lives and not a mere philosophy that matters not in the actuality of our living. This occurs as we begin to realize just why we are here on earth, through the practice of meditation and learning how to place the value of no-thing into our living. Emptiness is the greatest achievement in life...for within it, we return to our origins of simple beauty.

And oh, by the way, his closing remarks on all of this were: *“And blessed is he, whosever shall not be offended in me.”* Offended? Most people are. Until Love has been allowed as the ebb and flow of our life and this lifetime, we will live as a deep form of excessive fear. With fear always comes hate. Our Karma will reflect this in all ways.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WEEK:

It might be important to consider the way we live, the method of our living and how we go about making our life meaningful. Most people will turn to their family or careers. But what about the bigger picture of what is deeply important to our authentic core of life? How do we really live in the ebb and flow of a world that is constantly demanding the “me first” mentality? To be willing to sacrifice this “me first” demand and live as the compassion that allows others to do what they do without our insistence that they are “bad” or “wrong” or even “good”...is very helpful to our effort to know the beauty of Karma. Just watch and observe everything without the need to understand. Much will happen.



Hearing What Our Eyes Cannot See

"I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. How be it when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into Truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come."

~Jesus from John 16:12-13

There are many things that we need to "hear" before we can see. As Jesus said, we just cannot "bear" the Truth. Most people are simply unwilling to "hear" anything that is outside their small mindedness that exists out of childhood conditioning. I have had people tell me that they did not want to realize the truth of any given situation, because they were too emotionally insecure to shed their ideals and beliefs which would have proved that they were...WRONG.

Most of us just want *reality* to be what we want it to be, so we can go on in this world, through a parade of self-righteous gratifications and assumptions! Many people that I have known throughout my life have lived this way and it, in some cases, killed their bodies. In other situations, this unwillingness to hear the Truth brought on circumstances that were profoundly painful. I have seen many things in my years of teaching that defy Love for the sake of an ill state of logic and reasoning.

Expanding our capacity for Love and the Truth is a very difficult process for most people – few can really do it. I sit in sessions all day hearing people spin a web of lies about themselves and others in order to NOT "hear" what they need to see about themselves. To be in a body that is in its late forties and fifties and realize that one has lived as a selfish putz is a hard realization to accept.

I sit and hear all sorts of bullshit stories about how innocent a person is or how righteous they are in order to merely gratify themselves through pride and vengeance. Rarely have I ever had a person come to me and admit how inept they

have lived in Love and seek to harmonize themselves through compassion and forgiveness.

The world is full of billions of people who live and think as I have described. Many of you who live in cloistered little communities where everyone thinks through a thoroughly rationalized state of hate and fear and do not realize how pungent all of this is upon the state of humankind. Most people do not care until the Karma of all of this hits and then, all of a sudden, these people are humiliated enough for a moment to see what they could not hear. But, alas, I have found this does not last long. Another bullshit story is manufactured by the ego and fills them with professed innocence and, all of a sudden, they are back to square one.

Here is a story that my Master gave us many years ago. It is about the most significant factor about mankind. It is how we cannot “bear” the Truth of anything because we are never inwardly where we need to be.

Five brothers have been thrown out of their kingdom, and they are moving as fugitives in a forest. One day they were feeling very thirsty and one of the brothers, the youngest, goes to find some water. He comes near a beautiful lake, but the moment he steps in the lake to fill his water-pot, he hears a voice.

Some invisible voice says, “Wait! Unless you answer my question, you cannot take the water from this lake. That’s the only condition. You have to answer my question. If you can’t answer this question then you will fall dead here and now.”

The question was: “What is the most significant factor about man?”

The young man couldn’t answer, so he fell dead.

Then three other brothers followed looking for their lost brother. They were also asked the very same question by the “voice” of the lake: “WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR ABOUT MAN?”

They, too, could not answer and all fell dead.

Then the eldest brother went to the lake in search of water and in search of his brothers to see what had happened to them.

Four brothers were lying there on the bank and the moment he stepped in the water he heard the same voice: “Answer this question, otherwise you will also fall dead. And if you can answer not only will you live, but you can also drink from the lake and the same water will make your brothers come alive once again. Just sprinkle the water on their faces. But first answer my questions. And the first question is: What is the most significant factor about man?”

The brother answered by saying; “The most significant thing about man is that MAN NEVER LEARNS.”

He was allowed to drink the water and he was allowed to revive his brothers.

In this story is a real fact that points out one of the important obsessions in humankind and that is that man rarely chooses to expand the capacity of mind into a state of deep consciousness. Many in this world have become very knowledgeable in formats that seem spiritual. But we rarely seek to attain to awareness/spiritual awakening because our Being is vague to us and has no seeming “pay-off.”

We are more obsessed and impressed by facts and telling them to others than we are in the authentic process of awakening through Love. Knowledge and *learning* (meekness, as Jesus put it) are quite different. Knowledge is borrowed, but real learning means expanding our inner capacity to realize past literal thought in order to have a direct experience that is filled with the compassion that would allow for authentic understanding.

Real spiritual awakening is a three-fold process and has little or nothing to do with mere knowledge of the process. We must first be in a place of humility whereby we can realize that, in truth, we “know nothing” about no-thing. It must be impressed upon us through Karma, day after day and lifetime after lifetime, that everything we have done in this world has been at the merciless hand of the ego.

Then we must be able to realize how we have lived in the past (Karma) and how it has affected not only ourselves, but also others. This is deeply important. When a person is sensitive enough to really realize the impact of themselves, upon their own lives as well as others, a true sense of remorse occurs that begins a profound healing process that can overtake a lifetime for the sake of Love. Karma is a big part of all of this as it is the way-shower of the Way.

It is at this point that we can be in the inner place of deep compassion where we can have the direct experience of Life as Love itself. This place is unlike any other in our lifetime. It is a state of being and becomes the inner posture of true *beingness* that brings us to the blessed state of consciousness. From here, we realize not through knowledge, but through compassion that Karma is here to help us, to bless us and to transform us.

I hope some of this helps you. If not, no worries...your moment will come and Karma will make it so.

Enough of me for today...please forgive me.

Metta to you.

Gregory Penn