

Eric Butterworth Speaks

Essay #14
FROM HAVING TO BEING

It seems that these days everybody is out to get something. From the time we open our eyes in the morning to the time that we close them at night, we all literally and figuratively have our hands out to get something, to get a seat on a bus, to get the remnant that is on sale in the bargain basement, to get the contract that we seen to think is our passport to security for the rest of time. Sometimes we feel we must go so far as to get companionship, to get love, to get success.

So it goes...the constant struggle to get, to have, to possess. The struggle drives us incessantly, relentlessly toward a goal which is as illusive as a mirage which lies just outside the reach of the weary traveller. The things that we get in this mad pursuit are usually as unsatisfactory and as unreal in the true sense of the word as the sparkling water of that enchanting mirage. Haven't you ever known a person who struggled and maneuvered and went through all sorts of contortions to have something, only upon obtaining it to say, "Gee, it's not really what I thought it would be." Then with a sigh he often adds, "Well, I guess it is just a case of when you get what you want, I guess you don't want it." You have known people like that, now haven't you? Have you ever had that kind of feeling yourself?

Then, there are those who want to have something because their friends already have it or its equivalent. Since childhood, most persons have been conditioned in a multitude of subtle ways to have such a desire without really realizing that it is actually rooted in a false need to appear in good advantage in the eyes of others. Such a desire often boomerangs; almost invariably it brings little or no real joy with it. When it is realized, strangely enough you realize that you haven't been raised in the estimation of your friends at all. In fact, your friends are so busy getting something else, which they have doubtless seen someone else possess, that they hardly have time to observe that you have made the grade. So it goes...unrest, strife, bitterness, greed, cruel competition are all that you find along the course set when you are following another person's star.

Fortunately, we meet the rare individual who knows what he must achieve; notice I said achieve, not have. Such a person believes in his goal; he is sure of the rightness of his desire, and he sets about charting his own course. Persons like this are found in all walks of life from the so-called highest to the humblest. They are the ones who have dedicated themselves to an ideal; these are the people who cannot rest, not from their race to get, but from their quest to the fulfillment of their dreams. To such people the acquisition of material things is of little importance. Often, they become so immersed in their work that they become oblivious to what less inspired people are inclined to call the necessities of life. Note, for instance, painters, scientists, musicians, workers in the creative fields are often capable of great deprivation during times of intense concentration, but the majority of us do not fall I am sure within this category.

Few of us can afford the luxury of complete indifference to the world around us, and who among us are not forced to be concerned with the so-called mundane things of life. Even though we may not strive to be getters, we still must have food and clothing and shelter. We certainly cannot deny our need of happiness, of love, and friendship, and we shouldn't. Indeed, these are things to which we are entitled; these things are part of our unfolding into a greater, more joyful, higher life. How then shall we draw the fine line of distinction? How shall we achieve that subtle relationship between the inner being and outer expression, so that the expression becomes exactly that, an ex-pression--a pressing out of what is within? For the things that are out-pressing, or as I like to say out-forming, themselves in our life are different from the things we reach out to get and bring back to us.

To the casual observer they may look the same, but they are different. It is this distinction, delicate yet dynamic, that the great thinkers of all time have captured and tried to pass on to us. One such thinker has said that progress and acqui-

sition is a fine thing, but progress and being is so much more. Another has said that if we permit our mind to dwell upon the attributes of all-originating life, love, power, peace, beauty, joy, and so forth, we shall reap the specific manifestations of these attributes in our personal life, and this manifestation will be more perfect, more completely in accord with our need and our desires than anything we could have envisioned for ourselves. Of course, Jesus said it first, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added." And he gave us the key to these words by saying that the kingdom of heaven is neither here nor there, neither comes nor goes...it is within you.

So what does this mean to you and to me? It means that the things we desire we can have by divine right, that they must come from us, not just to us. We are accustomed to thinking of things as existing out there, so conditioned to the seeming necessity of going and getting them that at first it is hard to reorientate our thinking so we can begin to realize the inner flow, that the source for all-good is within us, and that to look elsewhere is actually to search in vain. For surely, it is from the depths of our being that all the manifestations in our outer world arise, and since the tree is known by its fruit, it is to the tree that we must give our attention if we would have the fruit to our likening. It is the deep awareness that we share in universal life and love, light, power, peace, beauty, and joy...that we are ever in conscious union with these universal qualities that will produce in our own world the experience of all these things.

It is not easy to think peace when we see turmoil about us; it is not simple to love in the midst of hate; it is often quite difficult to sense beauty, to realize joy, but this is exactly what we must do. Then we shall be tending the tree, and the tree will not fail to give us good fruit. In the fruit of the tree we shall find the things that we have been desiring, and these things will be rooted not in the shallow soil of getting, but in the fertile soil of being. Health will spring from the contemplation of peace because in peace there is a sense of ease, not of dis-ease. Abundance and success will grow in a consciousness and understanding of life, and love, and joy, and peace. If you want a home, cultivate a sense of joy and love which are the qualities of a good home. You see, instead of working for something by itself, we are working for the perfect state of being from which the desired things may evolve.

When your desires prompt you to get, to struggle for things that you want, I suggest that you take a moment to take stock of yourself. Remember, that the things you desire and to which you have a divine right come from you and not to you. They come from the divine flow which is within you. It is true that we work for the material things that we want, but along with our work let us remember that the source for good is within us, the source for our energy is within us, the source of the substance that we may use to purchase the things that we work for is within us. It is from the depths of our being that all the manifestations in our outer world must arise. That to which we give continuous thought or attention will be the thing that will materialize in our lives and affairs.

So, let us think a lot about life, love, light, power, peace, joy, and beauty because indeed it is of these that the happy existence is formed. Commit yourself to a new way by turning from simply having to being, from the idea of getting things to a new consciousness of becoming aware of the consciousness, of knowing yourself in the flow of the infinite process.