

WHAT KINDS OF SUFFERING AND LOVE FOR WHAT KINDS OF HEALINGS OF WHOM?

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Summary: If we have to suffer in order to grow physically and psychologically, and if at each stage of our evolution we do experience specific sufferings, the same seems true as far as love is concerned. We need love right from the beginning of our life and throughout our different evolutive steps, until our physical death. At these different levels though, these loves have different qualities, related to different degrees of human maturity.

In fact, these different types of love we are looking for, feeling and providing along our life seem to have a common denominator. But they do not have the same effects and don't heal us from the same ailments. The main difficulty for us is to accept the necessity to go through pain and suffering, in order to develop universal love in ourselves.

As far as therapy and healing are concerned, for one human being to be therapeutic to another one seeking help from him, one must himself previously be healed from the ailments corresponding to the various stages of evolution presented to him by his different patients. As a result, such a therapist will treat them with humanness and facilitate their access to the next evolutive step and its corresponding type of love.

More specifically, the only safe way for a true spiritually orientated therapist to favour a healing process consists in being himself or herself connected to a divine source, that should be free to flow through him or her in the most refined possible way, if possible continuously. This kind of source will automatically provide a supra-individual type of love, which may also be called transpersonal, universal or divine love. This automatic phenomenon becomes possible when the corresponding channel is open, namely when the spiritually orientated therapist contributes to create and to maintain in himself or herself a "spiritual condition", which is the result of an effective spiritual practice, behind which we'll usually find a spiritual Master worthy of such a name. Of course, such a spiritualized inner condition becomes permanent only when the therapist or the healer is surrendered to this divine source, that is to be found in his own heart, where it dwells eternally. This divine source, which may also be called by different names (such as the Atman or the Self or the Centre or God or the Master), is in fact the real doer.

As far as healing is concerned, this love has to be associated to some other spiritual qualities and spiritual tools in order to be effective, such as faith and will. Different kinds of results may also be observed, related to different levels of spiritual approach (closeness to the source). For instance, the visible miracle consisting in the disappearance of a physical symptom is not of the same order as the less spectacular miracle leading to the transformation of a human heart.

A sensitive subject:

Knowing that I have not become love myself I started to refuse to talk when Jean-Marc Mantel asked me to participate, despite his affectionate, brotherly way to do so. Knowing that my spiritual Master had said that people usually talk of what they have problem with, and knowing that he was to be present in our gathering I later on accepted, with the prayer that he would do or undo the right thing on me, only if I would take the risk to expose myself on that sensitive subject.

Before tackling the subject more directly, let me add that I shall speak as a psychiatrist, working mainly as a psychotherapist, who became spiritually orientated under the influence of the practice of Sahaj Marg yoga and of the spiritual master behind this method, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, whom we usually call Chariji.

First we shall deal with our growth process and its stages, with their corresponding sufferings and the different kinds of love related to these stages. Then we'll see if therapists, whether spiritually orientated or not, are different from their patients regarding their evolutive growth and these two interrelated or connected feelings called suffering and love.

We shall end with some questions and hypothesis concerning the ingredients necessary for different kinds of healing process.

Different sufferings during our growth process, leading to different kinds of loving abilities:

According to my personal experience, which I found confirmed by sayings and by spiritual and religious teachings, love cannot be separated from our growth process and our suffering. If we take for instance the advice or the order of God the Creator, contained in the Torah : "grow and multiply", we may say that it points out the necessity to mature first, to become an adult, prior to being able to love another human being and reproduce.

Now, as far as growth is concerned, we all know, without accepting it so easily, that –as the saying goes – "suffering is a part of growing up".

So there seems to be no growth process –in the sense of evolutive process– without pain and suffering on one side, love on the other side. And this truth seems valid from the very beginning of our life until our death. In other words, the more we are able to accept pain and suffering, the more we become able to love, which is a reliable sign of maturity.

Generally speaking, if we consider pain and suffering as inevitable, we'll accept it as our common lot, the only difference amongst people being that we go through more or less suffering, in other words a variation in the quantity of pain and suffering, whether we learn to walk as a one-year old child or we try to approach God as spiritual seekers.

If we study this phenomenon of human suffering in more detail, we learn to distinguish between different kinds of suffering, starting with what I called elsewhere the "non-specific suffering" [1], a suffering common to everybody, each time one has to operate the necessary changes for getting over the obstacles leading to the next evolutive stage. This non-specific suffering includes a mourning process, or a "dis-identification" from the previous stage of functioning, which includes various behavior patterns, habits, ways of thinking and decoding what we call reality, and all kinds of "belongings" the person possessed. So when we observe ourselves as human beings during our evolutive steps of growth, this more or less painful mourning process seems to be necessary before we can take the risk of being pushed to evolve one step further.

This general or common type of suffering can be distinguished from the more specific sufferings we go through at the different evolutive stages, that have been described by different schools in the fields of psychology and spirituality and that Ken Wilber has brilliantly summarized [2,3].

Now it is obvious that these specific sufferings which we may experience, are closely related to what we call symptoms or diseases. The same is also true for the non-specific type of suffering, which can also result in symptoms, especially when we resist to the necessary mourning process included in the transition from one evolutive stage to the next.

In a spiritually orientated psychology, I would suggest pain and suffering to be considered in different and complementary ways:

-1) as an alarm signal for something to be corrected, in agreement with the cybernetic and the systemic models, which have proved their pertinence in family and network therapy;

-2) as the price we must pay for not effectuating the necessary changes, for example in the case of immature and stubborn persons (or systems such as families, corporations or institutions), who will tend to decode their sufferings as unjust knocks on their head or as bad luck, hence continuing to give and receive such hurting knocks;

-3) as the manifestation of *samskaras*, which are undergoing their *bhoga* for extinction purposes, in other words for refining us¹.

¹For simplicity's sake, I propose to define a *samskara* as a sort of program or a sort of blocked memory, situated in our causal body and made up of impressions of the same nature that we have stored up in the course of successive incarnations. This is due to the lack of the possibility of cleaning them or of actualizing them sufficiently.

In the traditional Indian philosophy, the actualization of a *samskara* is *bhog*. It does not concern only suffering. As a matter of fact, these phenomena are in themselves neither agreeable nor disagreeable: it is we ourselves who tint them with pleasure or suffering because of the attachments and emotional reactions produced during the actualization of our *samskaras*.

Indeed, if we make an element of fundamental theory out of the notion of *samskara*, we admit ipso facto that *samskaras* determine our *karma*. That is, they determine our repeated joys and

One may ask : why insist on pain and sufferings when the main subject is love and its healing effects? Although it may appear rather strange to link so directly these two feelings, they will appear closer if we accept to go a little deeper into our own introspection and in the observation of others.

As far as the non-specific suffering is concerned, which is related to the difficulties we meet during our ascent from a stage of development to the next, we all have felt and observed that a loving attitude is an important ingredient, if not the most important, from the part of the persons in close relationship with the one or the ones suffering more or less when trying to successfully realize the necessary transition from one stage to the next. Let us take two examples:

1- a baby learning to talk, for which a favourable loving relationship with its mother is essential in order to permit the numerous repetitions of trials necessary for memorizing and correcting purposes;

2- family members learning to negotiate amongst themselves, in order to find practical solutions in their daily life: a great deal of human love is then necessary for preventing the escalation of egotic frictions due to personal desires or rigid pseudo-mutual rules prevailing in the family system. Love or rather human affection is also necessary for creating an atmosphere of sufficient solidarity and for facilitating in the same time the individuation process of each member of the family [4].

Perhaps do we discern, through these very common examples, that there are different kinds of sufferings and corresponding loves, and also a common denominator to them. As far as love is concerned, the common denominator proposed here is a sort of attraction force. To see and admit the existence of this common denominator doesn't imply that the various consequences of this force of attraction, related to the different stages of human maturity, should be the same. On the contrary, observation shows that they can even have opposite results, depending on the level of consciousness and of functioning of the person. It is for example obvious that the acting out of sexual perverse tendencies, like the unfortunately nowadays fashionable paedophilia –due to a very strong attraction indeed– has destructive effects; whereas compassion may help somebody to repair himself. This phenomenon of inversion is well-known, and satisfactorily explained in Sahaj Marg philosophy as the *principle of invertendo*, described by Ram Chandra [5].

Perhaps some simple questions, presented in a certain order, will tend to make more obvious this link between different kinds of sufferings and different kinds of attraction, often unduly called love. This way of proceeding will dispense us from a schoolish approach:

difficulties, our habits, our recurring choices, our attractions, the elementary features of our character, and our symptoms. As Ram Chandra puts it: "suffering and disease are the boons of Nature in disguise which helps deliverance from the effects of *samskaras*".

-Why heavily symptomatic patients seem to be so attached to their symptoms?

-Why sado-masochistic relationships are rather long lasting ones, as we may observe in so-called co-dependant partners, married or not?

-Why are we so attached to the house we have built by the sweat of our brow?

-Why a mother, who suffers during delivery, loves her child so much?

-Why are poor people more generous than rich people most of the time?

-Why some generous people have so much difficulty and suffering when they are given something?

-Why did we create the word compassion with a root or etymological meaning of suffering with or together?

-Why is it reported that saints have suffered so much, and in the same time expressed so much love and compassion, like Jesus did, even when he was crucified?

So we can perhaps see a first important link between suffering and love according to the well-known saying: "We love that for which we have suffered the most".

At a higher level, personal suffering has been completely mastered by the Saint, who has become capable of such a degree of compassion and even of universal love, that he can now truly partake of the sufferings of his fellow beings and alleviate them. On this, one of the definitions that Shri Ram Chandra gives of a Saint is : "A Saint is the target for the world's sorrows"[6]. I suppose that in this case, the suffering which is felt, can no more be attributed to anybody in particular, for the so-called others are not only considered as brothers and sisters (essentially equal to himself) but mainly as part of himself in a united universe, where there is neither interior nor exterior, where there is no defensive shell any more. In a Reality where there is no more subject-object relationship, that is no separation, there can only be a question of "universal love and universal suffering", or something beyond both "impersonal" love and suffering. That is, the Saint's suffering no longer deals with ego, with its pleasure or its pride, but solely with universal love, which such a person cannot avoid diffusing, not because he or she loves others but because he or she has become love, as God Himself is characterized in some religions.

Two quotations from Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari illustrate such a level of consciousness:

-1)"Without pain there is no love, the greater the pain, the greater the love, (...). It is easy to suffer from your pain, but if you love somebody so much that their pain affects you, that pain is going to be worse than

your own pain. (...) When I see you eating an ice-cream, I cannot enjoy your ice-cream, but when I see you suffering, I can suffer with you.²

-2)"You cannot avoid pinpricking me, I am like 'a pincushion'.³

One can understand therefore, why certain gurus of lower calibre choose their disciples very carefully and limit their number.

But one can also understand the probably irreplaceable usefulness of suffering for one who aspires towards universal love: suffering which has now become truly altruistic is a signpost in the quest for that love.

In saying that I am of course not trying to promote masochism, or naively stating that suffering does always lead to love. I would rather suggest that suffering may have two opposite consequences, according to our decoding, itself related to our basic attitude towards it:

-either it contributes to hardening our protective egotic layers, in other words our egotic defence mechanisms, well described by psychoanalysis[7], and especially our tendencies for splitting and projecting ;

-or it contributes to soften us, to make us more sensitive, more able to resonate to the feelings of our fellow creatures. It happens when we are first able to interiorize or absorb the events which provoke suffering, a capacity that is already at disposal of the child, described in terms of "depressive position" by M. Klein [8]. This capacity can be developed tremendously and experienced at a much higher level of development only by a few human beings, such as saints, sages and spiritual masters.

Now, as far as love itself is concerned, the same kind of hierarchical discernment will be useful for our understanding :

-At one end, some persons are only capable of a primitive type of "love", more appropriately called attraction or attachment or co-dependency or possessivity, for example to a particular person, from whom they expect to receive what they call love – in fact human affection and satisfaction of their desires – rather than to whom they are willing to provide love. This quest for affection and satisfaction is often coupled with a kind of attachment to their sufferings or symptoms, to which they cling or are fixed, as psychoanalysts say.

-In between there are many steps, for instance the common stage where some affection is given in return for the same. Psychoanalysts call this kind of trade: "anal tenderness". In other words: "if you give me first I shall give you too".

-At the other extreme, Saints not only love certain persons, such as close family members or friends, but every human being, every creature, the whole creation and its Creator and the Absolute, so that –as already mentioned– they don't love anymore but they have become love themselves on a permanent basis. It has become possible in their case because nothing of their "I" or ego is left for a

² Informal conversation, Madras, February 1995

³ Informal conversation, Madras, July 1990

subject-object relationship, in other words for preventing them from an effective unification between their self and their atman or Self.

-So a hierarchical distinction between different levels of human love on one side, and divine love on the other side can and should be made, where the former may be seen as related to different kinds of horizontal links and attractions between two or several persons, and the latter as related to a vertical link to the divine. In other words human love deals with preferences, with particular objects of love, whereas universal or divine love exists only when there are no more preferences, no more friends, in fact no more desires. In other words, where there are desires there is no universal love.

Definitions of love:

Let us summarize and suggest that this attraction force may be named love, only starting from a certain degree of purity of our heart, corresponding to a certain level of refinement of our ego, which permits this attraction force to cease to be egoistic and later on even to cease to be relational. At that higher stage love may be defined as a stable quality of the heart that loves continuously without distinction, without any preference for anybody and without any idea of return, so that this loving heart is now able to help us, and to help us to help others. Chariji often compares such a loving heart to the candle that consumes itself and illuminates everybody without any distinction or condition, because it cannot do otherwise, it is in its nature to do so [9].

Consequently and more precisely, possessivity cannot be considered as a helping type of attraction, whereas altruistic love can already be considered as such, and universal love even more so, which becomes a "forceless force" when completely pure, that can radiate and even be transmitted under certain conditions[10].

So it seems that true love is to be considered as effective for our growth and evolution, and also for a healing process to take place (as we'll see later), because of its very attractive and unifying power, in other words because of its reducing and dissolving capacity of our fears and anxiety and their consequences – I mean our defence mechanisms and various psychological and somatic symptoms.

In terms of energy, we could say that love provides the necessary amount of energy for the restoring, and/or the transformation process or the transition⁴ to a new and stable level of consciousness and functioning, in other words to a "nobility of character".

A summary of what has been exposed to you so far is contained in the following tables, which will be also useful for our next topic:

⁴A transition may be considered as a stable change, as described by R. Fivaz, E. Fivaz and L. Kaufmann [], according to the theory of Nobel Prize I. Prigogine [11].

The particular case of therapists and their loving capacity:

Between heavily suffering patients, trapped in their possessive type of love, characteristic of their co-dependant relationships, and saints dispensing universal love, are situated most of the therapists.

I am not aware of true scientific studies concerning the levels of development and the types of corresponding love dispensed by psychiatrists, by psychoanalysts and more generally by therapists, so that I can only give my personal evaluation regarding this point:

-I remember for instance to have been evaluated through one-hour interviews, by two so-called didactic psychoanalysts, when I applied for attending to seminars of psychoanalysis, in order to become myself an officially recognized candidate-psychoanalyst. At those occasions I don't remember to have really been evaluated regarding my capacity for dispensing love, although perhaps indirectly and implicitly by means of the appreciation of my level of functioning, comparatively to the psychoanalytical standard called the "oedipian organization of the genital stage" [12].

-During the years I was running a unit of liaison psychiatry in a general hospital, I remember also to have tried to make aware some young or less young colleagues psychiatrists and psychotherapists of some personality and behaviour problems arising with colleagues and patients, due to a lack of empathy. My not very effective interventions were due to the presence of a preponderance of aggressivity and seduction that I could observe, and unfortunately also manifest myself.

-Very often I have silently evaluated some colleagues during discussions, professional and private.

If I try to summarize my appreciation of about a hundred of psychotherapists, met and observed during the last 30 years, I would say that:

-1)psychotherapists were functioning at their best with their patients rather than with their colleagues or family members;

-2)no one I happened to know personally was established in a transpersonal state, from which level he or she was radiating universal love;

-3)only a minority of them were mainly established at the so-called centauric or existential level of consciousness described in the literature [2](see table 1). In my understanding of this existential stage, corresponding to the self-actualization stage described by A. Maslow [13], or to the stage of autonomy and solidarity of M. Bowen [14] (see table 2), the person is already rather tolerant and respectful and capable of dispensing a human type of affection, often called empathy in our corporation. This is possible when the therapist is not any more loaded and bothered by personal and interpersonal problems. Although he has not yet solved for himself the problems of human mortality and suffering and the meaning of life at that level of consciousness and functioning, he has become more altruistic and tends to evolve in the direction

of what Chariji has described in details and summarized under the label of a "noble character" [15,16]. Of course this level should ideally be attained by all psychotherapists;

-4)most of the therapists were mainly situated below the existential or centauric stage, namely either at the identity stage or at the rule-role (or script) level described by K. Wilber, with or without so-called phantasmic-emotional overflowing tendencies[3], in other words not offering regularly truly altruistic love or even a natural type of tolerance.

Now I am not saying this with the purpose of criticizing anybody, but as an explanation why psychotherapists are usually most able and skilful for treating one or two evolutive categories of persons requiring help. To be more precise, therapists will usually be most at ease with patients close to them, in terms of their own level of functioning, in which level(s) they have at least stayed during a long time, usually because their own family of origin was mainly transacting at that stage of development.

Maybe for that reason of facilitated identification (psycho)therapists are able to feel what is usually called empathy in our corporation, (a feeling made of sympathy, affection, concern and comprehension), more or less selectively for these particular patients close to them, who for that reason feel themselves rapidly understood by their therapists. As a result a good collaboration or therapeutic alliance or union can take place with such patients, favourable for a positive therapeutic issue. We may also say that in these conditions the therapist is able to dispense a human kind of love in various and appropriate manners that a mother, a father, a teacher, a brother or a friend can give. These different kinds of human love seem to bring some repairing effects, especially when the therapist knows the kind of suffering his patient is offering to him, for having suffered it himself and transcended it.

Prerequisites for spiritually orientated (psycho)therapists:

As far as spiritually orientated therapists are concerned, the same general principle may be applied, namely that, in order to be effective, therapists should first have transcended or been healed from the problems their patients are bringing to them. As a consequence the prerequisites are the same for both types of therapists at the human level, in the sense of their capacity for empathy, ideally through the loving heart of a mature individual having built a noble character. For them however the pass mark has been set higher if the recommendations from the International College of Therapists are to be taken in consideration, as proposed by J-Y Leloup [17]. According to this charter, the spiritually orientated therapist is for instance supposed to work part of his time unpaid and to spend part of his daily time in spiritual practice, such as meditation. This measure allows him to test –at least to some extent – the degree of purity of his empathy or loving ability.

Naturally such therapists have ipso facto to be linked to a spiritual source for corresponding to the definition of spiritually orientated therapists and, at a practical level, for being able to deal with some specific problems that patients interested in or already practising a spiritual path may have. To be linked to such a source implies of course a serious dedication to their particular spiritual practice, if possible continuously. This is most possible when love is felt for the divine source, with which the seeker is supposed to unite, as recommended for example in Sahaj Marg Yoga by Shri Ram Chandra in his third maxim: "Fix your Goal which should be complete oneness with God. Rest not till the ideal is achieved"[5]. Practically, for such a goal to be achieved, the best known and most effective way seems to go through a Master-disciple relationship (see table 3), where the latter brings to his Master what he or she thinks to be love, that the Master accepts before starting to teach his disciple what love really is, including a preparation for surrendering⁵. But as we all know, this ability to love and remain constantly connected to the divine source of universal love, up to the point of surrendering to it, is both our aspiration and our main problem, the reason why most of the time an effective technique and a Master of calibre are necessary.

I am also convinced that love is the necessary basis for the spiritually orientated therapists in their use of spiritual tools, like prayers and subtle positive suggestions, which remain silent and not necessarily mentioned to the patients. All these prerequisites appear to me as significant characteristics of spiritually orientated therapists, who want to convey some help to human brothers and sisters having come to them, regarding both their suffering and their preparation to pass from a so-called personal or psychological field of functioning and understanding themselves and their world, to a transpersonal or spiritual stage of functioning [16].

It is my hope that this growing new type of spiritually orientated professionals will contribute to de-specializing the historically split functions of the priest and the therapist. Regarding this point, I would like to thank Jean-Marc Mantel, the coordinator of the International Association of Spiritual Psychiatry (IASP) to have practically de-specialized this association, by opening it to non professional responsible persons, realizing that they also have therapeutic possibilities of interventions, at least upon their close and significant others, such as family members. The composition of the present seminar, with a majority of non-professional therapists, is a significant illustration of this trend.

Some personal experiences:

In order to become more explicit and less theoretical about this delicate subject, let me here take some risks and give some information related to my own

⁵The natural consequences of such a training will be the ideal state of desirelessness, purity and sahaj samadhi (a continuous meditative state).

experience as a psychotherapist for the last 30 years – the last 10 as a spiritually orientated one – in order to illustrate some of the topics, reflexions and ideas introduced so far in my talk. These observations and experiences are reported in a chronological order, corresponding to my own evolutive trajectory and its limitations, past and present:

-As a rather young psychoanalytically orientated psychiatrist I became once the object of an erotomaniac type of transference from a young and so-called neurotic borderline lady, who claimed to love me; and the only slightly effective thing we could do, according to the advice of my supervisor (a full trained didactician psychoanalyst), was to space out the sessions, with the result of moderating the intensity of this particular type of possessive attraction or transference, which of course was blocking further introspection and possible changes in the personality and in the life of this person. This experience gave me a first opportunity for relativizing the power of theories and techniques – in that case psychoanalysis and its usual tools – when dealing with intense human erotic "love" or rather attraction.

-Without renouncing psychoanalysis and its derivatives, I decided later on to explore and test some other therapeutic methods, like neo-behaviouristic techniques, humanistic types of approach and family therapy. This period brought me the pleasure of exploration and a new sense of freedom for choosing the most appropriate therapy for such and such a person or a so-called system (including several persons, such as a nuclear family), according to different criterias not useful to be mentioned in the present context. Nevertheless several patients continued not to benefit from this or that particular technique of help, wether applied by myself or by colleagues collaborating directly or indirectly with me. Unable to explain these facts, I continued to observe, hoping to become a better psychotherapist, cheerful enough for not yet questioning myself about my true loving capacity, and having now more appropriate techniques at my disposal.

-After several years of teaching in the medical field I started to notice that each group of students or professionals were regularly more joyous, active and creative during our workshops. In fact the only thing I could find for explaining the changes that had occurred in-between was not of a technical order but something in myself, in the sense of a new ability to look at the students in a more positive and affectionate way, just because I was not afraid any more of facing them (even if it had not been an intense fear in the past). It made me understand by my own experience that love is the opposite of fear. In other words fear could not exist when some kind of love – which we may call an affectionate attitude or an empathic attitude – was sufficiently present or even predominant.

-Another thing I noticed after several years of psychotherapeutic practice was that the only determining criteria for refusing to accept a patient requiring help through psychotherapeutic sessions, was my incapacity to feel concern and

sympathy (empathy) for him or her –although many well-known secondary rationalizations can be put forward for such a refusal. This active refusal of mine happened three times in my private practice. It occurred each time with rather paranoid persons, heavily claiming and protesting as soon as they were sitting in front of me during the very first session. My understanding of these experiences was that these three persons were probably demanding much too much love, comparatively to what I felt myself being able to give for a therapeutic process to start.

-In the same line but at a lesser degree, several patients had decided to stop their sessions after some time, in other words stopping their efforts to change further. The main explanation I could give for that more frequent and also very well-known phenomenon was again that it happened when I was myself not open, receptive and giving enough.

-With some patients, who touched me most because of both their tragic lives and their courage, I noticed the appearance of synchronic and "syntopic" events⁶ sometimes even various parapsychological phenomena, as the psychoanalyst M. Balint reported long time ago [18]. Although I could not completely agree with his explanation for the onset of these parapsychological phenomena, that he attributed only to a quest from the part of the patients for more love from the psychotherapist, I felt that something was true in his statement. Later came the idea that synchronicity, syntopicity, telepathy and other Para psychological phenomena could rather be the various expressions of a strong enough attraction or affinity of events or persons, able to produce such phenomena because some particular chakras were open and activated enough.

-During this long period of about 20 years of psychotherapeutic activity I didn't question the idea that I was myself the doer, and I behaved accordingly. So I used to be rather tired at the end of one full day of psychotherapeutic sessions, hoping that my wife would lovingly welcome this tired hero of mine. I was also disturbed when a patient was aggravating, stagnating or stopping his or her psychotherapy, because I felt responsible for results that I expected as positive, partly to reassure myself –self with a small s, in other words my ego.

-Many things started to change for me after my own spiritual path was discovered ten years ago:

-Soon after my introduction in the Sahaj Marg system of yoga I heard the speech of one of the followers of this method, a speech which left a deep impression on me. He was proposing the shift from a decision-making type of

⁶ I have given this name "syntopic" to significant and successive events, which happen at different times but in the same involuntarily and unexpectedly chosen place. Subjectively it is as if the first event happening in the particular and significant place is announcing the next one(s) at a subliminal level, before being fully discovered later on. As far as I understand, the attraction force of universal love plays a predominant role in the appearance of the phenomena of synchronicity and syntopicity.

behaviour, based on personal experience or transmitted knowledge from others' experience – for instance in the professional training – to a non-limited experience stemming out from the Master inside us, providing we could listen and obey to this divine entity, that we may of course also call the atman or the real Self or the Centre etc. This speech was a kind of revelation to me, in the sense that it was giving me a possible solution to the unsolved questions regarding the efficacy of the various therapeutic techniques and to the secret hidden behind these various techniques for helping or not helping people, a subject I had tried to tackle during some of my academics years. I also felt this suggestion of listening to and obeying the Master (or the Self or the Atman) as a risk worth taking. To take such a risk was of course, in my own case, implying a sufficient confidence in the model of both the inner Master and his realized incarnation in the concrete form of a human being representing his own Master. From that day on I observed him and Him as seriously and systematically as possible, often testing Him also, as a precaution and a defence from the part of my ego, preventing me from a rapid loss of control due to a possible loving Him and –worse than that for a complicated Westerner–surrendering to Him!

-After some time of practising this method of Sahaj Marg Yoga I was made a preceptor, authorized to clean the subtle body of followers of this system, and to transmit what we call "*pranahuti*", –which may be considered as "pure Universal Love stemming out from the heart of the Master"[19]. In parallel, as a psychotherapist, I noticed that I felt freer by letting more often my heart work instead of my brain or my ego, so that unexpected words going together with transmission of this *pranahuti* or universal love started to come out automatically during therapeutic sessions. I observed also that these interventions produced almost no resistance, because the patients, now also considered spiritually as my brothers and sisters, were touched in their hearts too. Those who commented upon that type of minimum interference interventions⁷, reported that they felt them as adequate and penetrating, and also giving them the feeling of having been deeply understood. Such interventions, produced very rapidly and spontaneously in a state of inner balance, became for me the true intuitive ones, to be distinguished from instinctive and from emotional reactions on one hand, and on the other hand from intellectually prepared interventions based on reasoning and conscious strategies.

-With the increasing importance given to this essential tool called transmission of universal love –whose effective presence is often recognized as soft vibrations by meditators– it was not possible anymore to perceive myself as the source of the therapeutic effects, neither as the doer nor as the insufficient

⁷ I consider this minimum interference as a basic principle for a spiritual psychology, as described in a special chapter of "Psychology and its role in Spirituality"[16], and as presented in a two-day seminar called "Basic Principles for Spiritual Therapies" (Information: Catherine Wulliemier, CH-1082 Corcelles-le-Jorat, Phone: 41 21 903 22 70. Fax: 41 21 903 23 74).

or the guilty professional. Consequently results became less important to me, although obviously present. In other words, if the "I" diminishes, "I" am not thinking any more that "I" am loving. Hence Master's love or divine love may flow and the results belong to Him, which may be felt as a great relief since responsibility is also transferred to Him.

-Because some patients were spontaneous and open enough to express it verbally, I got the confirmation that without themselves actively practising spirituality, some of them were sensitive to these already mentioned spiritual kind of vibrations and to their variations, or to the spiritual atmosphere that was prevailing during sessions, sometimes right from the beginning of our therapeutic collaboration.

-Later on this touching effect gave the result that quite a few patients, students, colleagues and friends manifested interest in spiritual practice and started to meditate also. At the beginning I was rather reserved as far as talking of my own experience is concerned, according to the professional conditioning called "benevolent neutrality" that I had got from my previous Freudian psychoanalytical training. But later on I lost this so-called neutral attitude, retrospectively considered as the result of some kind of fear. Of course I don't mean that spiritually orientated therapists have to preach grossly but that they should be or become open enough to speak of what they are, what they do and what they love, as recommended by Chariji himself in another context during his recent stay in Spain⁸.

-So I was only half-surprised that the rather fringe line kind of teaching I had been lead to give to the medical students in Lausanne (Switzerland), called "Our Bio-Psycho-Spiritual Development, its Troubles and their Remedies", did not produce negative reactions from the part of my chairman, who on the contrary encouraged me to continue such a teaching with almost the same empathic words as my Master Chariji used when I asked for His advice about it.

-In parallel with the verbal interactions, characteristic of the psychotherapist's work, I started to use the spiritual tools at disposal in my spiritual practice, namely silent subtle positive suggestions and prayers [16]. I noticed that only when I was able to use them in the right attitude, namely with sincerity if not love, something significant was happening. As far as my verbalized suggestions or prescriptions were concerned, I could observe that they were more often followed when pronounced with a new softer voice, specific of my remembrance of the inner presence of the Master.

-Looking at so-called patients in a different way, the selection of them also evolving, more and more new patients phoned me also or even mainly because of their interest or aspiration to spirituality, or because they were already involved in a spiritual path.[20] I noticed also the unexpected return of

⁸Speech delivered in Barcelona, December 95 (not yet published)

former patients, who justified their request for one or two sessions by focalised problems situated at the psychological level, but revealing very rapidly (after one or two sessions) an underlying spiritual quest. These repeated experiences gave me the opportunity to realize that the real cause for these meetings was not the need for a professional competence or a human type of attraction. In other words it was not a psychological problem or an unfinished transference or counter-transference that had brought these persons back to me, but something of a different nature that they had felt in their heart, something not necessarily situated logically according to our classical space-time frame of reference, something I may either call *pranahuti* or universal love or Master's love. This different way of considering things helped me to look more often at events or persons – and especially patients – as sent by the Master or God and as opportunities to do the right thing. By saying that I am of course not pretending to have regularly done the right thing at the right dosage and at the appropriate time.

-Three years ago I decided to work partially at home, outside the city – now 60 % of the time– so that most of the consultations have taken the form of a walk in the forest followed by a cup of tea. This peripatetic way of conducting therapeutic sessions has of course many advantages at the psychological and the somatic levels, already known from Socrates. But the main reason for this change was not to emulate Socrates but was corresponding to a different way of feeling in resonance with most of the persons coming to my office, who are now first seen as suffering hearts or souls, and only secondarily as, for instance, a forty year old woman with a particular personal psychopathology caught in a particular type of transactions in her family system.

After three years of observation I could notice that the nature of the quest tended to remain limited at the psychological level for the patients continuing to prefer to consult in the clinic in town that I share with a few other systemic and humanistic orientated therapists.

-These accumulated experiences restored gradually in myself some hope in the possibility of softening and refining the human character, starting of course with my own. To tell the truth I must say that I had been convinced since my childhood, that the transformation of our character was the main and crucial issue for the human race. Later on, as an adult, this conviction was only slightly transformed in a crucial challenge regarding psychiatry and psychotherapy. Since, as we know, western psychotherapies have been rather unsuccessful regarding this wishable achievement⁹, I had been interested in reading the statements of saints or sages like Vivekananda and Lalaji [21], who stressed the importance for spiritual aspirants to work on their character. This is

⁹The main reason for such a usual lack of success by means of a conventional psychotherapeutic process could be that character transformation requires a great amount of love, faith and will, three ingredients that are not explicitly and not effectively cultivated in the classical psychotherapeutic tradition [16].

a crucial point because if it is not taking place, evolution stops. So I remained disappointed until I found my own spiritual path and the necessary guidance of my Master Chariji regarding this point [15].

Now, one may think that working as a spiritually orientated psychotherapist, hopefully guided by the inner Master, reveals a regressive or even pathological tendency to co-dependency, especially when there is an incarnated Master in the picture, to whom one asks even in conventional ways for confirmations, clarifications and corrections. But it is well known in different Traditions that in a mystic type of evolution, what matters in such a relationship between the Master and the aspirant is love, allowing surrendering and merging – called *layavastha* in Indian literature [5,6] – of the self with the inner Master (or the Self) and the Ultimate. This process may appear as a regression instead of a progression, only because it is a process of a paradoxical nature, which is well explained by the principle of *invertendo*, and by the process of "involutionary evolution", introduced by P. Rajagopalachari [22]. I have used these two principles for explaining this phenomenon of involutive evolution in psychological terms in an article of our IASP Journal [23], so that it has not to be discussed further here.

Healing and healings:

Many questions may be asked concerning healing, which could be a wide subject by itself. Because of lack of time and personal incompetence, I shall limit myself to the formulation of some questions that appeared as being central to me at different occasions in my life, and also recently when I was pondering on the theme of the present seminar. I shall take however liberty of suggesting some guidelines for answering these questions:

-A first question could be: who or what can be healed? Is it first of all a must for the therapists, as it was indirectly suggested above? But should priests and teachers and educators and parents not be healed also? To heal the patients who complain and request help appears of course logical. But what about the different living "open systems", such as families or institutions or countries, caught in problems of violence out of their control, either within themselves or with their neighbours? Is it our society as a whole that has to be healed as a priority since it is presently traversing an important crisis? In that case, whose business is it?

Of course the sole pertinent answer to these questions from a spiritual point of view, regarding who should be healed, is to start with oneself. For instance, am I or was I healing something in myself in pondering upon this subject of love and healing? Am I facilitating something of that kind when speaking to you right now? During this seminar, am I behaving –I mean inside me and in the interactions with others –in a way that has a healing component for someone else? Regarding the atmosphere of these joint seminars of the International

Association of Spiritual Psychiatry, the Israeli Association of Spiritual Medicine and Psychiatry, the Shri Ram Chandra Mission and other Associations, whose precise names I don't know, are we going to contribute to heal each other by sharing universal love and building a brotherhood during these two days? In other words, will our sectarian tendencies be healed and disappear or are we going to remain bound together in different groups, fearing or disqualifying each other?

-As a second question one might ask: what should or could we be healed of? Is it of problems or symptoms in the body, or is it of some pathology in our mind, or is it of some "grossness" in our hearts or of *samskaras* (deep rooted programs or impressions) in our souls [24]?

The conventional medical definition of healing seems to fit best with the physical healing: at that level of observation and comprehension, a healing process has taken place when the objectivable symptoms and the complaints or sufferings have disappeared. It is a fact that the most spectacular healings are the ones measurable by our senses, the visible ones, in other words the physical ones, sometimes called miracles when they appear very rapidly and unexpectedly.

Psychotherapists have also produced criterias corresponding to the results of a successful healing process. These criterias vary according to the different schools of psychotherapy because the variables are softer or rougher, since this scientific domain is itself subtler. Based on my own observations, three minimal conditions seem necessary for a healing process to start at the psychological level, according to a psychological view acceptable by most of the psychotherapists:

1)the person accepts his or her symptoms as part of himself and not as some phenomena exterior to himself, which he wants to get rid of.

2)a shift is taking place in the way of decoding the symptoms or the suffering, as reported by some other authors [25,26], which acquires a credible new meaning, bearing a potential for a positive issue, sustained by both the patient and the therapist. In other words, the symptoms are considered as masking the positive vital force of the patient, that has been blocked and therefore needs freeing.

3)a stable positive attitude from the part of the therapist, leading to a loving understanding of the patient and even of his symptoms.

Now what about a spiritual healing? How to judge and by what kind of experts the changes taking place in the heart or the soul or more technically speaking, in the causal body of the person? Who has the authority and the competence to state that this disciple is liberated or even realized or merged with the Ultimate? Can we say that somebody is healed already when liberated? Is he then

"overhealed" when divinely realized (stage of realization of the Self, to be differentiated from the stage of self-realization described by A. Maslow [13]? It seems obvious to state that a spiritual Master worthy of the name is the adequate expert and authority, but as we know, there are different kinds of spiritual masters on the market, always both praised and criticized. Maybe the classification of masters proposed by Ram Chandra (see table 3) can help us:

According to this classification, one may of course conclude that the subtler the tools and the healers or the closer they are to the divine source, the more subtle, rapid and effective the spiritual healing will be.

We now come to three other interconnected questions:

- what are the ingredients implied in the spiritual type of the healing process?

- is love the only active ingredient or a sufficient one?

- are the possible other ingredients facilitated by love?

In order to beneficiate from some light I opened some dictionaries and found that, etymologically speaking, if we take the examples of the English, German and French languages, healing seems to be related to four sources of meaning :

- one in the direction of defence and protection (in the french word "guérir");

- a second one to saintliness and a third one to salvation (in the german terms "heilig" and "Heilung" and the English "holy");

- the fourth root seems related to the concept of unity through the english word "whole".

So, along this etymological line, universal love appears as the ingredient of choice for all these roots of the healing process. Actually, love is usually felt as a protection and we don't think that there can be saintliness without universal love. The same love seems necessary for salvation to take place, and we have already mentioned the association between love and wholeness through its unifying process, its capacity to bring back parts into a whole, to overcome or dissolve resistances to change in the direction of a deeper and higher level of understanding and functioning, and to bring peace between conflictual parts in ourselves or between persons caught in a struggle, like boxers in a clinch. In other words, love is necessary to transform the "dividuals" that we are (as reported by Jacques Vigne [27]), into true individuals that we should become.

- In our daily therapeutic activity however, some action or work seems also to have to be effectuated for a healing process to appear. To this evidence both the therapists and the patients seem to agree. Even the pilgrim who goes to the miraculous source has to dive in the pool. Usually however this spiritual activity may be more discrete and silent, as spiritual tools are, such as prayer or positive suggestions [28].

- This work or these techniques to be followed have also to obey some rules. For that reason discipline must also be taken into consideration for a healing

process to take place. In the Sahaj Marg tradition, love and discipline are often presented as closely related and both necessary for our evolution, hence for healing us. Regarding this point, Chariji defined an immoral society as a society full of love but without discipline. Of course the kind of love mentioned here is not the universal one, whereas the words of Saint Augustine: "Love and do what pleases you" refer to universal love. As a consequence the prescription of Saint Augustine remains dangerous for everybody who has not yet become love himself or herself. That is to say those therapists are not allowed to love and do what pleases them....

-Now, if disciplined actions are also necessary for a healing process to start, what is the backing, what is behind them? Here the scriptures and our own experience give us the answer: it is faith on one side and will on the other. As far as faith is concerned, we all know its healing virtue, as explicitly fed back by Jesus: "your faith has saved you", to the woman whose first action was to touch his dress. When I was preparing this talk the discussion of saint Paul came also frequently to my mind about the faith without the work or the work without faith and also the suggestion of Saint James that both were necessary. A further question arises: can we have faith without love?

-Much could also be said about the will, considered by Chariji and his Master Babuji (Shri Ram Chandra of Shahajanpur) in some of their talks as the most essential or divine attribute when certain conditions are fulfilled. A divine will beyond love, even beyond a love refined to such an extent that it is called "loveless love" [29]. We shall however limit our thoughts about this very effective ingredient, especially when it is itself particularly refined, by just mentioning its capacity for starting an action in the form of a *sankalpa*.¹⁰

-Let us now go on by means of other questions regarding a few more ingredients for a healing process to take place:

In what kind of inner condition must be the person through whom the healing is channelled? Do we all agree that he or she should be blank, open, disponible, ideally in a state of balance and vacuum, without personal desire, so that the divine may flow through an ego-less channel?

Being in such a "centered and virgin openness", has the healer also to feel the suffering of the person requesting help in order to be efficient? In other words, how sensitive and compassionate must we be? Is it necessary to be a medium to facilitate a healing process? Does it help the therapist who feels the suffering of his patients, to work inside himself on and with this suffering, in order to be effective, as some therapists do?

-Shall we admit that there are different kinds of healings and different ways of healing, and also different ways of feeling in oneself what works and how it

¹⁰An act of will

works? The only things that appear clear to me regarding this last point are that a healing process may take place:

1)whether the true spiritual therapist is aware or completely unaware of the effect of his presence and/or his action;

2)whether the therapist is suffering or not, in other words more or less deeply or acutely feeling the kind of problem his patient has, through a phenomenon resembling that of resonance.

On the contrary, it seems obvious that the therapist will always be paralysed or hampered or at least disturbed if he is significantly affected by the suffering of the one seeking help through him.

These questions and suggestions, I am sure, are nothing new. In different Traditions and their scriptures we find many words from various Saints or sages for guiding us or showing us that several spiritual aspects must be taken into consideration regarding this phenomenon of healing. Perhaps the differences in their wording that we may find are related to the different kinds of healing, requested in a particular situation, and/or to the different levels of consciousness of the authors of the words passed on to us. Nevertheless, if time has come again for truly holistic care, I am sure that it will be based on such teachings and inevitably be connected to an activated or reactivated spiritual source, that will help us on towards a true healing. In that sense, true healing would take place only when our ego and our divine Self have reconciled.

I would now rapidly conclude with two statements and one maxim from Babuji (or Shri Ram Chandra), the master of Chariji, that are significant to many of us and that I would like to share with you in today's context, dedicated to Love and healing:

-"Everybody can be won by love; even the ferocious animals are tamed by this very instrument"[30].

-"Love is opening yourself to Reality or Divinity" [31].

And last but not least his ninth maxim goes like this:"Mould your living so as to rouse a feeling of love and piety in others"[5].