



Three Qualities Of Holiness, by Anthony De Mello

True happiness is uncaused. You are happy for no reason at all. And true happiness cannot be experienced. It is not within the realm of consciousness. So it is with holiness.

Holiness is unself-consciousness. The moment you are aware of your holiness it goes sour and becomes self-righteousness. A good deed is never so good as when you have no consciousness that it is good - you are so much in love with the action that you are quite unselfconscious about your goodness and virtue. Your left hand has no idea that your right hand is doing something good or meritorious. You simply do it because it seems the natural, spontaneous thing to do. If it is real virtue, it would feel so natural that it wouldn't occur to you to think of it as a virtue.

Secondly, Holiness is effortless.

Effort can change behavior, it cannot change you. Think of this: Effort can put food into your mouth, it cannot produce an appetite; it can keep you in bed, it cannot produce sleep; it can make you reveal a secret to another but it cannot produce trust; it can force you to pay a compliment, it cannot produce genuine admiration.

Love and freedom and happiness are not things that you can cultivate and produce. You cannot even know what they are. All you can do is observe their opposites and, through your observation, cause these opposites to die. Understand your pride and it will drop -- what results will be humility. Understand your unhappiness, and it will disappear -- what results is the state of happiness. Understand your fears and they will melt -- the resultant state is love. Understand your attachments and they will vanish -- the consequence is freedom.

Thirdly, holiness cannot be desired.

If you desire happiness you will be anxious lest you do not attain it. You will be constantly in a state of dissatisfaction; and dissatisfaction and anxiety kill the very happiness that you set out to gain. When you desire holiness for yourself you feed the very greed and ambition that make you so selfish and vain and unholy.

There are two sources for change within you. One is the cunningness of your ego that pushes you into making efforts to become something other than you are meant to be so that it can give itself a boost, so that it can glorify itself. The other is the wisdom of Nature. Thanks to this wisdom you become aware, you understand it. That is all you do, leaving the change -- the type, the manner, the speed, the time of

change -- to Reality and to Nature.Â The changes that follow are not the result of your blueprints and efforts but the product of Nature that spurns your plans and will, thereby leaving no room for a sense of merit or achievement, or even any consciousness on the part of your left hand of what Reality is doing by means of your right.

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