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The Art of Giving

MAYAN REVELATION NO. 269

Giving — an Art

Happiness Through Giving

The World's Crying Need

Health and Healing Through Giving

Your Secret Longing

Harmony Through Giving

Affirmation

Beloved Perfectioner:

Giving and Receiving are twin arts. One balances the other. It is necessary to master both if you would have a life of poise and fulfillment.

As a student of Mayanry you are striving for a rich, full, and completely satisfying way of life. During these past weeks you have been learning THE ART OF RECEIVING, how to open your life to receive man's gifts and God's blessings. This Lesson will bring instruction in THE ART OF GIVING. After consideration of the crying need for mastery of this art, there will be instruction in how you can find happiness through giving; how health, and often healing, can come through giving; and how harmony is produced as you give yourself as well as your material resources.

Approach this Lesson with prayer for insight and understanding.

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PRAYER

Father, open my mind that I may grasp Thy Truth.
Warm my heart that I may reflect Thy Love. Touch
my hands that I may give generously, as Thou hast
given. Amen.



GIVING - AN ART

"The only gift is a portion of thyself."

THESE words of Ralph Waldo Emerson express a divine truth which is valid in every generation. Often it is easier to part with a dollar than to show concern for others. Greeting cards - sentimental, or humorous, and often trite - have had a tremendous sale because they offer a convenient way to send a message. Sometimes telegrams are available at a cheaper rate if we use a conventional wording instead of our own. One company, having quoted the price for a standardized message, informed customers: "LOVE can be added for a few extra cents."

But LOVE can't be added for a few extra cents! Love is conveyed by letting someone know we are not only thinking about him, but sharing his joy or sorrow, and wishing for him all that makes life rich, and full, and beautiful. To do this we must go to a little extra trouble and in some way express personally our deep concern. (Of course cards and telegrams have their place, but they should be used to convey our real thoughts, and not be substitutes for some intimate, sincere expression of our love.)

Fancy, and often expensive, wrappings for gifts are displayed in department stores, drug stores, and even in supermarkets. We are led to believe that not only the gift we offer should have appeal, but the very paper and ribbon in which it is wrapped. This, of course, is a worthy practice unless it becomes a substitute for something better - unless, like with much of our Christmas giving, we let commercial interests dictate our policy. What is really important is that you wrap your gift in love.

James Russell Lowell caught the essence of this truth in the lines:

"Not what we give, but what we share;
The gift without the giver is bare."

This is of central importance in THE ART OF GIVING. Let these lines echo in your mind as you study this Lesson.

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THE WORLD'S CRYING NEED

WE are disturbed whenever we realize that we have more food than we can eat, while someone else is hungry. It troubles us if we hear of someone who is shivering, while our closets are crammed. It haunts us when we are confronted by those who are frightened and bewildered because they lack knowledge of the Truth, while we have faith to sustain us.

This is your experience and mine whenever we are confronted by human need. But often, wilfully, or through lack of perception, we just don't see it. Ignorance, or self-interest, can make us blind.

In Russia, in the eighteenth century, when Catherine the Great was to tour remote parts of the empire, the peasants were forced to erect false facades to their dingy homes so their empress might not be offended by the squalor of the

villages. Nobles and wealthy landlords, as well as the head of the empire, didn't want to see poverty. They knew it would disturb their complacency.

This desire to avoid the suffering of others is not limited to one generation, or to one nation. It is widespread. It is as prevalent today as in the time of the czars. Modern communication, however, has brought news of hunger on the other side of the world right into our own homes. So, both as a nation and as individuals, we have sent aid in large quantities. Often those who received it have thought our gifts were not prompted by concern for their welfare, but by a desire to secure additional allies.

We are learning that we can't purchase loyalty with dollars, nor with material goods. Emerging nations want our respect as much as they want our technical assistance. They long for us to appreciate what is fine in their culture, much as they long to possess the comforts that we accept as our natural state. LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING IS THE WORLD'S CRYING NEED.

This is no less true on the personal level. As misunderstanding among nations often springs from failure to grasp another's thoughts and purposes, so misunderstanding among friends, and among members of a family, often springs from the same cause.

A father complained because his son didn't respect his wishes, and showed no loyalty to the family. "Why, I've given the boy everything," the man cried out. "He has twenty-five dollars a week for an allowance, all the money he wants for clothes, and this year we even bought him a sports car." What the man didn't say - but everyone knew - was that for years he had been so wrapped up in his business that he left home early in the morning, and usually was late returning for dinner. He showed no interest in what his son was doing, somehow assuming that if he gave the boy all the material things he desired, he was fulfilling his responsibility.

To be generous it is not necessary for you to give lavishly, extravagantly. It is far better to select gifts that will fill some need, or will bring a thrill of glad surprise; and then give a little of yourself with each gift.

Give of your time.

Give of your concern.

Give of your affection.

In your home, on your street, and throughout your town or city, LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING IS THE CRYING NEED.

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YOUR SECRET LONGING

*A*s you learn the Art of Giving you will not only bring happiness and satisfaction to others, you will find the fulfillment of your heart's secret longing. James Russell Lowell followed the lines:

"Not what we give, but what we share;
The gift without the giver is bare."

with two others which are needed to fully understand this divine Truth.

"Who gives himself with his gift feeds three,
Himself, his hungry neighbor, and Me."

The longing in our hearts for love and appreciation may be greater than our desire for pleasure and material satisfaction. We find happiness not by building bigger houses, owning the latest model cars, or swelling our bank accounts. If money then could make people happy, the rich would be the happiest people in the world. Often they are the most miserable.

Money, and also talent, or skill, can help us to find the answer to our secret longing only when a part of all we have is used for others. This brings a sense of oneness with them, and oneness with the Creator and Sustainer of all.

The Empress Josephine of Austria wrote her sister a letter that dramatically portrays the joy of giving. It read like this:

"Today I came upon a peasant woman who was weeping. When I stopped and asked the cause of her sorrow she said through her tears, 'My husband and I are about to lose our vineyard and goats because of a debt we owe.' When I asked the poor woman how much it would take to save them, she cried, 'Oh, there is no saving them, it would take four hundred francs!' I wish you could have seen the expression on the woman's face as I counted four hundred francs into her lap. Gathering them together she fell at my feet and poured out her thanks. I would have you know that this has been the happiest day of my life."

Her happiest day! Why? Because she had learned the Art of Giving. You can have this experience, too.

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HAPPINESS THROUGH GIVING

WE all want Happiness, want it more than we want fame or fortune. But happiness is elusive. If we try to capture happiness we seldom succeed. Why? Because we get in our own way. Of all the things that stand between us and happiness the greatest is SELF.

If this is your problem, don't be overcome with remorse, for most people have it. Man's chief enemy has always been himself. Egotism and selfishness breed misery. Possessions often bring not satisfaction, but the restless urge to acquire more possessions, while fame brings the urge to acquire more fame.

Any morning paper lists tragedy after tragedy stemming from unhappiness: a prosperous man, after many years of married life, is separating from his wife; a boy of twelve has run away from home; a leading citizen has taken his own life. In homes on your street and mine this is happening, while less dramatic situations, which are a source of heartache and loneliness, are never reported.

In this Lesson we are examining the secrets of happiness that will prevent such misfortune from entering our lives and our homes. Of all the forces that wreck homes and friendships the worst is selfishness.

Modern research into the subconscious mind reveals the fact that in many cases mental illness is caused by thoughts which center day after day in "me," "myself," and "mine." Within the range of the normal, more torture of soul is caused by obsession with one's self than by any other one thing. Get rid of this cancer of Self before it eats into your life.

Perhaps you are asking, "What steps are necessary to accomplish this?"

First: THINK OF THE GREATNESS OF GOD. The Psalmist said: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: What is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:3,4)

As you recognize the greatness of God, and praise Him for all He has given, you push SELF out of the center of your picture.

Second: THINK OF WHAT OTHERS HAVE DONE FOR YOU. Perhaps make a list of a hundred things for which you are indebted to family and friends, to relatives and strangers.

Third: GIVE YOURSELF WITH YOUR GIFTS. As you give, not only with generosity, but with love and concern, the frustrations of SELF will shrink in size and eventually will disappear. You will discover that you have broken the barriers to friendship.

William Hazlitt wrote: "There are persons who cannot make friends. They have probably many points of attraction; but they have one that neutralizes all these - they care nothing about you. They manifest no joy at your approach; and when you leave them it is with a feeling that they can do just as well without you. They are intent solely on their own thoughts, and you are merely one of the subjects they exercise them upon."

As you search for happiness, lose yourself in the needs of others. Share gladly of your time, your talents, and your money. Give yourself with your gifts. JOY! RADIANCE! ABUNDANT LIFE! These will be your reward.

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HEALTH AND HEALING THROUGH GIVING

*H*OW can the daily practice of Giving promote health and healing? First, because it directly affects our emotions, and these in turn affect our total well-being.

The novelist's picture of the miser is always of a bent-over, sour-faced creature. Every miserly person is an unhappy person. And unhappiness, we are

told again and again, by physicians as well as psychiatrists, contributes to physical and mental illness.

The reverse is also true. Generosity brings a state of mind that fosters health and healing. This is exhibited in many lives.

One of the most dramatic instances is found in the biography of Charlotte Bompas, the cultured lady who, about the time gold was discovered in the Klondike, left the comforts of her beautiful English home to share the life of a missionary bishop to the Canadian Northwest. Charlotte had been accustomed to lovely things. In the bleak, frozen north, she made woolly lambs, beautiful little painted dolls, and cleverly carved marionettes for the Indian children. She had once enjoyed fine concerts. She brought to the mission station the melody of the harmonium, and she taught young and old to sing. She had always been frail, and from childhood had been sheltered by her parents, but in the harsh environment of her new home, Charlotte went out to help the sick and to bring food to the starving, even when this meant she had to sleep in a tent, eating disgusting food, and braving temperatures fifty degrees below zero.

Charlotte was sustained by her brave determination to give all she could to enrich the lives of those who looked to her for help. Although she was never strong, her eagerness to give of herself brought a surprising measure of health and endurance.

You have seen this happen among people whom you know. A child becomes critically ill, and day and night the mother watches by the bedside of the little one, exhibiting the power to go without sleep, and to do the work of two nurses. A boy, while swimming, is caught in the undertow, and his father somehow finds power to rescue his son. A semi-invalid, when a loved one is stricken with severe illness, amazes everyone by the amount he is able to do.

There are reserves of strength that some of us seldom tap. Whenever we give all we have, more is given to us. So don't hoard your resources, physical or material. Give generously, and more will be given to you.

Alcoholics Anonymous teaches its members that any insight a man or woman has received must be imparted to someone else. If a member has gained power to resist temptation he must immediately help someone else who is struggling. Personal victory is possible only through sharing, day by day.

Perhaps you recall the fable of "The Magic Pitcher." The poor woman who had the jug found that every time she poured milk for those who came to visit her, more milk appeared in the pitcher. It was never empty. This fable conveys a Truth we are seeking. As we give to others, our supply - whether of strength, or of wealth - is replenished in a miraculous way. **THE MORE WE GIVE, THE MORE WE ARE GIVEN.**

Giving not only fosters radiant health, but in some cases it actually brings healing. Of course it is important to obey the rules of health, and there are times when it is necessary to seek the advice and service of physicians and surgeons. We must trust their knowledge and their skill, but they join teachers of religion in affirming that the healing process is beyond man's comprehension. Certain drugs and treatments promote healing, yet the mind and spirit of the patient, also, in some mysterious way influences the healing process.

A man and his wife from the United States became interested in a rural church in Puerto Rico. While contributing to the support of the pastor, they learned that the house in which the family lived was little more than a shack. After much deliberation, this couple decided to build a new parsonage. While it was being erected, a friend said to the man, "When the parsonage is completed, you and your wife should fly to Puerto Rico for the service of dedication."

"My wife could never make the trip," the man replied, "because she is badly crippled with arthritis, and our doctor has given us no hope that her condition will improve."

As the carpenters worked on the parsonage, photographs showing the progress were sent to this couple. The woman, who had been confined to her home, so discouraged by her own pain and limitations that she had thought of little but herself, found a new interest. The needs of the minister and of his wife and children, became a challenge to her. She planned extra conveniences for their comfort, and made personal sacrifices so these could be installed in the new home.

As the weeks passed, there was a marked improvement in the woman's condition. Her arthritis became less crippling. After six months her physician decided she was well enough to fly to Puerto Rico for the dedication of the parsonage she and her husband had built.

It is impossible to account for the way the act of Giving promotes health and contributes to healing, but we cannot deny the results. We see how frail Florence Nightingale was endowed with power beyond that of a military leader when she organized relief in the Crimea. We see how Kagawa's consuming desire to help the underprivileged enabled a man - half blind and wracked by disease - to work long hours giving personal assistance and instituting needed reforms, and then writing inspired poetry while others were sleeping. We see how Frank Laubach's dream of bringing literacy to people all over the world gave him energy to do the work of ten.

Would you claim for yourself this spiritual power?

FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION UPON THE NEEDS OF OTHERS.

GIVE GENEROUSLY - TO A GREAT CAUSE, OR TO SOME
INDIVIDUAL WHOM YOU CAN HELP.

OPEN YOUR LIFE TO THE SOURCE OF ALL STRENGTH.

Pray not so much for the healing of a single pain or weakness, as that divine strength may undergird your whole life.

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HARMONY THROUGH GIVING

THE Master said, "The kingdom of God is within you." When he spoke of "The kingdom of God," or "The kingdom of heaven," he was not referring to a place, but to a state of oneness with God, a place of peace and harmony.

Unfortunately, many people, while secretly dissatisfied with their way of

living, hide behind a screen of self-interest, a screen that separates them from friends and from God. They can never experience inner peace until this screen is pushed aside so they see the needs of others.

This truth was eloquently expressed in the play titled, THE MAN WHO PLAYED GOD. You may recall this story of an eminent musician who had become deaf and, feeling frustrated, rebelled against society and against his Creator. He withdrew from his friends, and lived with his butler in a penthouse high above a city park.

The man studied lip reading, and with powerful field glasses he amused himself by eavesdropping on the people who came to the park below. At first he did this only to lessen his own loneliness. Gradually, however, he became truly interested in the problems of those he watched.

The musician, by former concerts, had amassed great wealth. He conceived the game of sending anonymous aid to those whom he discovered to be in desperate circumstances. At first he would laugh cynically, saying, "The Almighty doesn't help them, but I'll play I'm God and bring them assistance."

Through his field glasses the man watched a young couple as they sat on a park bench. They were desperately poor, and completely discouraged. As he watched them, they prayed for help. The man sent his butler with money to aid them in their emergency, and smiled to himself, thinking, "I can answer prayer."

For many months the man spied every day on those below, and by lip-reading was able to understand their conversation. Whenever he sensed trouble and heart-ache which his money could alleviate he would send his butler to slip necessary funds into their hands.

Then a marvelous thing happened to the man who played God. As he ministered to others his rebellion, frustration, and unrest ebbed away. Peace and harmony flooded his soul. He had been in the depths of despair. By loving service he found his way into a life of deep joy and satisfaction.

This experience can be yours. Make others' needs your own. As you are able, minister to those you meet, and to all whose hunger and distress can be alleviated if you are willing to share what you have. Give yourself with your gifts. As you do this you will find the joy and peace and inner harmony which are your birthright as a son or daughter of God.

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AFFIRMATION

Daily I will remember:

From giving I will receive peace and joy.

From sharing I will gain harmony and deep satisfaction.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR,