

Grief

August 15, 2011

According to Gurdjieff, Grief is a positive emotion. He said, a positive or Real emotion, comes from Higher Emotional Center and has no opposite. It has no tinge of self-emotion. We can imagine an emotion not contaminated with self-interest, but that's usually as good as it gets with us in our ordinary state. We can even imagine that we have such an emotion, that we can generate it at will. Clearly such a thought originates in self, proving it does not come from beyond our ordinary centers. How could an emotion as bitter as grief be a positive emotion? Shouldn't a positive emotion feel good? If you've experienced grief, even the ordinary kind based in self-interest, you know it doesn't feel good. The whole idea of positive emotions is quite beyond our ordinary states of consciousness as well as our ordinary understanding. It seems that a positive emotion, a Real emotion is something that exists in Higher Centers but not in lower centers. A positive emotion obeys different laws, or shall we say fewer laws than the laws under which negative emotions thrive. Judging the quality or Reality of emotions based on how they make us feel will surely cloud our ability to see the truth about them. A positive emotion, like Grief, is something that visits us, influences us, affects us, with or without our consent, because it answers to something Higher. So must Real Love be. Something that we cannot conjure but we must somehow receive. All the real work of life then must be found in preparing ourselves to receive what comes from above, whether it feels good or not.

What relationship must positive emotions have with one another? Insofar as I may have been visited by Real Love and Grief I can say they seem very closely related. Why not?

They come from the same Source. Perhaps they are brothers or sisters with the same Lineage. Do they also bear a family resemblance? Some similarity by which we may recognize them? We don't know much about either of them experientially but some know them better than others. Those who have prepared themselves to receive these strange emotions, no matter the cost to self, have told us they do exist and can be ours, if we pay the price. Do soldiers know Grief when they consider the tragedy of war? Does Grief Grieve for their enemies as well as their comrades? Does Grief, like Real Love not respect persons, boundaries and what we call right and wrong? Positive emotions have no opposites. Is it possible to imagine something without an opposite in our ordinary states? Perhaps Jesus' lamentation over Jerusalem is an example of a Real emotion, Grief.

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!
How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks
under her wings, and you were unwilling (Matt. 23:37).*

Grief and Love seem to me to be bound together, for there is some of each in the other. Having been wounded *in Jerusalem* I can verify that the Grief that visits me is intense, powerful and inextricably mingled with Love. No, the Grief did not Grieve for me and my wounds but for those who did the wounding. The taste of the following quote was very Real. This scene at the cross is grim to the self-love.

When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, 'Father,

forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. And the people stood by looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One’ (Luke 23:33-35).

The poignant Grief of the Love He felt for those who *do not know what they are doing* is only made more Real by the fact that they are so thoroughly convinced they *know* quite well what they are doing and that it is a service to both God and man. This emotion could only come from Higher Centers because it defies all ordinary reason and understanding. What is more important, they bear no mark of self-interest. It’s not something we can turn on and off like most ordinary emotions. It is a visitation in the Emotional Center. A powerful influence that alters our state of consciousness, thoughts and feelings. It is something over which we have no power. We cannot create it, generate it or stop it. It simply is and we serve it in the same way a lamp may serve the power that generates the light it sheds. When people boast of positive emotions I marvel and remember, *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Hebrews 10:31).