

The value of the age-old service of Blessing needs to be reaffirmed

The Science and Service of Blessing

By Roberto Assagioli

Part I

Radiation and Blessing

The value of the age-old service of Blessing needs to be reaffirmed. It is a conscious and deliberate use of radiation and is one of the greatest contributions we can make to the well-being of our fellow men.

Blessing is therefore a service which is based on the laws that govern energy and radiation, and to bless effectively we should have some understanding of radiation, its nature and its laws.

In general terms, radiation is an outward projection of energy from some originating source. It is a subject which is today being increasingly studied by scientists, and the extensive explorations in this field now being undertaken by, for example, the Radiation Laboratory of the University of California, are an indication of its growing importance as the New Age science emerges.

As a result of these investigations, we may expect to learn a great deal more about this ancient means of distributing beneficence. In the meantime, let us remember that radiation is magnetic, and similarly that Blessing is an act which blesses those who give as well as those who receive. When we seek to bless, we place ourselves in a divine circulatory flow of benediction.

What is Radiation?

Active, or conscious, human radiation finds a close analogy in the projection of radio or television waves from a transmitting station. It can be put into operation in two ways:

In all directions, with no specific aim or target as in broadcasting, and addressed to "all it may concern," to all who may be able and willing to receive the message or impression. In order to be effective this type of radiation demands a considerable degree of inner power, a high spiritual "voltage."

Specific radiation directed towards a definite target. This is analogous to those etheric waves which are projected in only one direction. This method does not demand so high a "voltage," because the effect is increased by the focussing of the energy, much as the heat of the sun's rays can be sufficiently amplified by concentrations through a lens to kindle a fire.

What We Can Radiate

By means of mental and spiritual telepathy we can radiate ideas: either pure abstract ideas, or ideas formulated into thoughtforms. We can also radiate qualities, aspects, attributes, such as Love, Light, Joy, Strength, Will. These two forms of radiation can be combined, that is, we can radiate ideas of thoughtforms conditioned or vitalized by spiritual qualities.

Each of us necessarily and inevitably radiates what he is. It is time that we realized this and became aware of the opportunity it offers and the responsibility it entails, so that we may consciously utilize this power to the full and use it only in constructive and helpful ways. Radiation can be considered a form of telepathy; it is a way of "impressing," and it has both general and specific aspects. It expresses what we really are, which, in both a higher and lower sense, is much more than we are aware of.

Emerson wrote in his essay on Social Aims: "Don't say things. What you are stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary. One may disguise the tone of the voice, but the radiation of the heart cannot be falsified."

Techniques of Radiation

Let us consider how to radiate. This is important for the success of our endeavour.

First comes a general preparation in which we concentrate on what we want to radiate. In the case of a spiritual quality, an effective preparation consists in arousing in ourselves that quality, of identifying ourselves with the idea, the feeling, the qualified energy. Then it radiates spontaneously. In this way we can combine both spontaneous and purposeful, directed radiation.

Another factor which increases the effectiveness of radiation is joy. This may cause surprise at first, but we can easily become convinced of it by realizing that joy has always a stimulating and vivifying effect, so that it facilitates and enhances the effectiveness of every action.

After this preparation comes the exact formulation or visualisation of the idea. It can be a word or a phrase and, whenever possible, an image or a picture.

In the third stage we link up with and tune in to the recipient. This is accomplished in two ways:

By visualising the person, nation, world, etc.

By sending a wave of love in the same direction. Love is a great linking and unifying energy.

In the fourth stage comes the actual projection. This is best done by visualising a channel or beam of light projected towards the target; or, in the case of a general radiation, beams of light in all directions.

Responsibility

A real danger arises, when prompted by our will-to-power, we are tempted to impose our radiatory influence on others. Even if we do this with the best motives, it may be harmful. Let us remember that we never have the right to infringe the freedom of others, and we must beware not to project on others our "ideal" image of them, or what we think they should be.

This very common mistake is often made by parents. It is committed either by an outward display of authority, or by means of "persuasion" and suggestion, but it can be just as harmful in a subtle way if it is done through radiation. Therefore, let us realise our responsibility in this respect and never try to influence in any specific direction.

The same warning may be given concerning "prayers" or projected thoughts used for influencing political or religious leaders in specific directions.

Radiation may also be too intense, and this may have two effects; it may repel the recipient, evoking a contrary reaction, or it may "burn" and be destructive. The effect of the sun's rays provide a good example. The sun is the source of all life and its rays are beneficent, healing and life-giving; but when they are too intense, we retreat into the shade, or, if we persist in remaining exposed to them, we may get sunburnt and even suffer sunstroke. But that is not the fault of the sun, but of our own stupidity.

Radiation and Magnetic Attraction and their Redemptive Effect

Radiation and magnetism appear first to be contradictory. Radiance, however, evokes magnetism, its effect is magnetic and the recipient of radiation is attracted towards the radiating centre or source. A clear example of this is the response of a plant to sunlight; the sun radiates light to the plant, which is attracted and reaches up towards the sun. The radiation of the sun is thus magnetic.

The same is true of the light of the Soul or Self playing upon the personality; the Soul radiates its light and the right reaction of the personality is a yearning towards this source of light; it is its response to the magnetic attraction of the soul. But the personality does not always react in this positive way; sometimes it is not aware of or repels the Soul's influence.

Magnetic attraction also takes place in inter-personal relationships; if a person radiates light and love towards other human beings, they are attracted. The normal effect of radiation, therefore, is

attraction- magnetism. It attracts towards the source of radiation.

Spiritual Radiation

Spiritual radiation is a redemptive process, producing what might be called almost a “chemical change” in the substance of humanity and of the planet. Each of us is contributing to it all the time, and the group contribution – the radiation of groups gathered for specific purposes – is a growing factor in life on earth today.

As we progress, we become increasingly radiatory and magnetic and we have to respond to those who are attracted by this magnetism. It is inspiring to realise that each step we take upward changes, heightens and intensifies our spiritual emanation.

The conscious projection of thoughts and the active radiatory work of blessing are specific types of radiation. To be effective, this radiation must flow from the soul-infused personality – at least soul-infused to a certain extent.

A blessing or benediction might be regarded as “a transfer of spiritual energy.” This illuminates the concept of radiation. When someone with spiritual power blesses another, and the blessing is not formal or perfunctory, it is a transmission of energy, a form of radiation.

Blessing and healing are also linked and a real blessing can have a healing effect. This is not necessarily physical, but can be psychologically and spiritually beneficial. Also in healing, however, there is need for caution. For instance, concentrating the attention on the patient’s illness, or on the parts of the body affected, might have undesirable effects.

Under the Law of Cause and Effect the release of divine energies emerges as radiation, and the redemptive process of evolution is thus carried out. So blessing becomes part of the redemptive process of evolution.

When radiation has a spiritual quality, when it emanates from a man who has achieved a high point of Self-realisation, its effects are potent. A modern psychologist, A. H. Maslow of Brandeis University, has recognised the reality of such radiation and has described it as follows:

“ ... in self-actualising, creativeness is ‘emitted,’ like radioactivity, and hits all of life, regardless of problems, just as a cheerful person ‘emits’ cheerfulness without purpose or design or even consciousness. It is emitted like sunshine; it spreads all over the place; it makes things grow (which are growable).”

(Creativity in Self-Actualising People, p. 12)

Keyserling has stated the same truth in a strong way: “... the mere existence of a saint is a blessing – the mere existence of a hero gives strength and courage; the mere existence of a great believer creates faith; and that of one who greatly trusts generates confidence. Moreover, it is the silent effortless radiance of deep being which ensures the most powerful action at a distance. This has proved itself true thousands of times, in space as well as in time.”

(Hermann Keyserling, From Suffering to Fulfilment, p. 90)

From the angle of human evolution, it might be stated that only when the soul aspect is dominant does the response apparatus (the form nature of man) fulfil its destiny, and only then does true radiation and the pure shining forth of light become possible.

The creative faculty works by means of radiation and magnetism. These bring to its possessor the material for creation and a magnetic capacity which arranges in due form and beauty that which radiation has evoked. Creativity is a consequence of a particular state of mind and a specific state of being; it signifies a point in evolution wherein the person is definitely “radioactive.”

Radiation and magnetism are an expression of the energetic or dynamic aspect of love, and our attempts to realise spiritual love may be helped by the recognition that it is a magnetic energy.

Each of us can and should be a “center of radiation,” affecting other centres and lives and in this way fulfilling our part in the redemption of the planet. We each have our sphere of radiation; it is our area of responsibility, and within that sphere – which is larger than we think – we can serve in an effective way the Purpose of Divinity.

“The sense of the earth opening and exploding upwards into God; and the sense of God taking root and finding nourishment downwards into earth. A personal, transcendent God and an evolving Universe no longer forming two hostile centres of attraction, but entering into hierarchical conjunction to raise the human mass on a single tide. Such is the sublime transformation which we may with justice foresee, and which in fact is beginning to have its effect upon a growing number of minds, freethinkers as well as believers: the idea of the spiritual evolution of the Universe. The very transformation we have been seeking.”

(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in *The Future of Man*.)

Part II

Techniques of Blessing

A problem continually facing us in what use to make of the energies aroused or received through meditation, prayer, affirmation and invocation. These energies must be used for two reasons:

To avoid congestion and overstimulation in ourselves.

Because they are most valuable, and it is our duty and privilege to utilize them for the benefit of mankind.

It is possible to emanate or radiate these energies on spiritual, mental and emotional levels. The reality of such a radiation has always been acknowledged, except perhaps in the modern, materialistic cultural interlude from which we are beginning to emerge.

Modern physical processes and technical achievements help us to realize both the possibility and the procedure of radiation. Two examples are the phenomena of spontaneous radioactivity, like that of radium, and of induced radioactivity through bombardment of atoms in cyclotrons. Radio and television also demonstrate the possibility of transmitting sound and images on the ether without any material means in the sense of visible matter.

If these things are possible on etheric levels and with etheric energies, it is not surprising that they occur on more subtle levels, in the psychological and spiritual worlds or realms. Here we find the phenomena of spontaneous telepathy, which so frequently occurs, and also the experimental telepathy which has been scientifically studied in recent years and its validity sufficiently ascertained for few to have reason to doubt it.

Blessing Through Meditation

An important fact that should be realized is that the Soul or Self is endeavouring to infuse the personality all the time. We do not have to “storm” the Soul: it is ever reaching out towards the personality. This infusion can be considered the blessing of the personality by the Soul.

“The thinking, loving soul, which tightens its hold over its response apparatus, avails itself upon every possible occasion of every advance made by the form, and employs every influence for the perfecting of its great work.... Soul infusion produces joy.”

Meditation is obviously the great means of transmitting the radiation or blessing of the soul and the spiritual realms. Various forms of blessing are given on the following pages, and these sug-

gest the many different directions in which blessing may be sent.

We cannot, of course, carry out all of them every day, but it will add to our power to bless if we learn to practice the different techniques, and to develop a habit of blessing is to put ourselves directly in the line of its “divine descent.”

In meditation the aim is to pass quickly through the stages of concentration (using the will), through rapid alignment of the quieted physical, emotional and lower mind, to soul levels; this can be visualized as an upward moving to the Soul. Then we should remain poised in a receptive attitude.

We should not look for conscious results, but do the work daily with confidence. Sensitivity to the Soul has to be cultivated; so many earthly energies clamour for attention that we are not aware of the energy of the Soul, but if we persist, just “keep on keeping on,” Soul infusion will be attained. Every technique has to be consistently practiced to attain efficiency. Witness our great musicians, artists, scientists, athletes and all who attain success on the material level.

Every potent blessing requires the use of the will. Its first use is to eliminate obstacles; this can be expressed as “making room” in time and consciousness.

“Making room in time” means consecrating regularly a certain span of time to blessing meditation, protecting it from all the “pulls” and claims which try to induce us to outer activity.

“Making room in consciousness” means pushing out of the field of consciousness all that normally occupies it or tries to invade it: sensations, emotions, images, thoughts, anticipations, memories, etc.

Much will is needed for concentrating on active blessing, avoiding a negative, dreamy condition. Above all, let us seek an enlightened fusion of our individual will with the divine Will, and this for the greater good of the Whole – for all humanity.

Blessing the Lower Kingdoms

This blessing is based, first of all, on recognition of the gifts of the lower kingdoms to us and is an expression of the gratitude we owe to them. In a wider sense, from a universal point of view, it is prompted by the realization that they are all part of Divine manifestation, that they are unconsciously proceeding on the way of evolution, and that the function of humanity is to help them on that way, and finally to redeem them. An effective means towards this is blessing.

Our closest relationship with the other kingdoms of nature is that created by our using them as food. In this way they give us a needed service for which we should be grateful. On our part we transmute them by incorporating them into ourselves. This is the basis (even if unrecognised) of the old custom or ritual of blessing food and saying grace. At present food is generally taken in a hurried, absent-minded way, but eating and drinking with gratitude and appreciation would bring added benefit to us.

There are many forms for the blessing of food, but here is one which incorporates gratitude to the lower kingdoms:

The food of which we are going to partake is your gift, O God,
and the fruit of the labour of many beings.
We are grateful for it and bless it.
May it give us strength, health and joy
and may it increase our love.

The Blessing of Money

This blessing has a special significance, purpose and usefulness owing to the peculiar nature of its object.

Money can be regarded as materialized or condensed Divine energy. In its essence it is therefore something good and pure. But in the course of its use money becomes polluted by the evil passions, the low desires, the worries and fears, the selfish attachment of all to whom it temporarily belongs.

This is not merely a symbolical or psychological connection. Evil forces become attached to money and possessions. This is one of the chief causes of the trouble, individual and collective strife, and maladjustment and unjust distribution connected with material goods, and particularly with money. If this cause has a subjective character, the true solution, the effective remedy, should be of the same kind: primarily subjective, psychological and spiritual. In fact, the right use of money depends on right motivation, which is a subjective, psychological urge, determining right choices.

But there is a more specific way of counteracting what can be considered the “curse” attached to money. (This “curse” forms the central theme and the deep meaning of Wagner’s series of musical dramas, “The Ring of the Nibelung.”) The spiritual purification and redemption of money can be achieved by the conscious use of our spiritual and psychological energies. It can be accomplished by the use of concentrated thought, animated by right feeling (or emotional force) and projected by will, through the use of affirmation formulated in words.

If we subjected all money which passes through our hands to such a “treatment,” and if an increasingly large number of people deliberately did so, many problems which find no external and technical solution would be done away with. This may seem surprising, so little are we accustomed in this materialistic civilization to give true practical consideration to the reality and the power of subjective forces. Yet it is so, and if we are consistent in our spiritual convictions, we cannot but admit it.

It is in reality an act of blessing. Any apt formulation of it can be effective. The following, which is being used by many groups as well as individuals, is suggested:

May this money be blessed.

It is a symbol of divine substance and energy.

May it be redeemed from every impure influence,

From every attachment and craving.

I appreciate it and keep it as a divine gift.

I will use it only for good, right, appropriate purposes.

In using it, again I bless it and give thanks for it.

This blessing can be extended to all material possessions and objects. A blessing can also be addressed to those who give money or other possessions for spiritual purposes and uses; this may also include future, unknown “givers.”

The Blessing of Obstacles

This might seem to be the most difficult kind of blessing. Our first natural reaction to obstacles is generally one of rebellion or resentment. According to psychological type, it manifests as irritation or self-pity. Yet there are good reasons, first for graciously accepting obstacles, and then for blessing them.

The first reason is that negative reactions increase the difficulty and have bad effects on our psychological and physical health. A recommended consideration lies in the recognition of the universality of, and men's totality of, obstacles. Alfred Adler, the well-known psychotherapist, has expressed it – "I am in a world full of difficulties and my difficulties belong to me. Why should I quarrel with them?" his biographer, Phyllis Bottome, in quoting this statement, comments: "this belief in Life as a beneficent colleague, gave him the extraordinary ease and strength that characterised him."

(Alfred Adler, p. 3)

It has been said that the purpose of obstacles is to draw upon the latent will. "Blessed be the obstacles, they teach us unity and resistance," we read in the book Heart (Agni Yoga Series).

The positive function of obstacles is often unconsciously recognised, particularly by the young; they resent the easy life and look for adventure and risk, with their accompanying hardships. In a more general way we might say that in sport and games people create obstacles for the satisfaction of overcoming them.

Moreover, the willing acceptance of obstacles and the recognition of their usefulness helps to overcome or destroy them, sometimes in a surprising way.

Therefore we can well say, when confronted by difficulties: "Blessed be Obstacles."

General blessing has been called "the radiation of a rainbow of blessings to the world." Here is a form used daily by many:

Morning Blessing

May all things and all beings
with whom I am, or shall come in contact today,
be blessed – now and forever.

Another short form of Morning Blessing is:

Blessed be this day
towards the perfect consummation
of the Divine Plan.

Blessing Meditation for the World

Alignment

This requires quieting the personality so that there is no obstruction to Soul union, for it is the Soul, the Self that blesses. Its three stages are:

The body sits relaxed.

The emotions are stilled, so that they do not interfere ("quiet as a mountain lake").

Then we observe the "monkey" mind (as it has been called because it jumps around). This, too, must be quieted and, if it leaps away, be brought back to stillness, to face the Soul.

Meditation

So aligned, we raise our centre of consciousness towards the Soul and endeavour to enter into communion through a chosen seed-thought or consideration of a spiritual quality, such as goodwill, joy, peace, or the realisation of world need.

III. Radiation

“Breath out” the ideas as formulated thoughtforms into the great stream of mental substance which is ever playing upon the human consciousness.

Visualisation and Use of the Hands in Blessing

Visualisation is of particular value in blessing. It not only aids concentration, but brings to the blessing we are seeking to bestow the power of creative imagination and the positive factor of “seeing” the blessing we are sending out reaching the recipient. The following exercise is an example of this:

Visualise a sphere of golden light and place yourself within it. From that centre, holding your consciousness as high and steady as possible, say:

“I stand in spiritual Being and, as a Soul, I serve.

I stand within the Light, and as the Light shines through my form,

I radiate that light.

I stand within the Love of God, and as that love streams through and from my heart, I bless all whom I seek to aid.”

Visualise this blessing going out to:

Your immediate circle of family and friends.

All those with whom you come in contact.

Those in places of responsibility all over the world.

Humanity as a whole.

See this beneficent light and blessing streaming forth as you hold your hands, palms outwards, in blessing.

The hands can play a most potent part in transmitting spiritual energy, and one that is little understood. The “laying on of hands” is no idle phrase, nor is it confined solely to the operations of the episcopate of any faith.

Gestures help to concentrate the mind, focus the attention and direct currents of energy. Physical movements help to give a sense of reality; but their value is chiefly symbolic and when it is not possible to make the movements, they can be performed in imagination, that is visualised. They are effective in this way, owing to the creative power of imagination.

Five Gestures for Use in Blessing

Recollection – Concentration

After the arms have been opened horizontally, they are folded in front of the chest, at heart level, and the hands are joined with the fingers interlaced. This gesture and position represents the phase of recollection and concentration. The consciousness, dispersed and distracted by a multitude of sensations, emotions and mental activities, is focussed into the centre where the personal “I,” ego or self, dwells (pure individual self-consciousness).

Elevation and Communion

The second gesture is performed by extending the arms upwards with the hands joined as they are usually held while praying. It symbolises the raising of the personal centre of consciousness, propelled by aspiration, towards superconscious levels, the realm of Light, Joy, Love and Power, where the Spiritual Self, the Soul, ever dwells. There, as “living, loving, willing Soul,” we joyously

realise our communion with other Souls (Group consciousness). “The Souls of men are one and I am one with them,” in the One Soul (Unanimity).

Invocation – Evocation – Reception

The hands are opened with the wrists joined and the fingers forming a cup (the “Grail Cup”). In this position we invoke, with faith, joy and gratitude, the blessing descent of the divine energies (Light – Love – Power) and remain in an inner attitude of reverent, silent receptivity.

Descent – Infusion

The arms and hands are lowered and brought back to the starting position, with the fingers interlaced in front of the chest. This movement and attitude represent the conscious bringing down of the Light, Love and Power into the personality, which is thus being infused and pervaded by them.

Radiation – Blessing

The arms are extended horizontally with palms outspread forward. In this position we perform the actual blessing, made powerful by the preparation and recharging of the preceding phases. We radiate the divine energies telepathically in all directions, towards all living beings.

The Great Buddhist Blessing of the Four Divine States

1. LOVE TO ALL BEINGS

North – south – east – west – above – below

Love to all beings.

(Silence)

2. COMPASSION TO ALL BEINGS

North – south – east – west – above – below

Compassion to all beings.

(Silence)

3. JOY TO ALL BEINGS

North – south – east – west – above – below

Joy to all beings.

(Silence)

4. SERENITY TO ALL BEINGS

North – south – east – west – above – below

Serenity to all beings.

(Silence)