

THE POWER OF SURRENDER

The concept that there is power in surrendering seems contradictory and nonsensical, because we typically consider surrendering to be an acknowledgement of defeat due to a *deficiency* of power. In military parlance that is certainly the case - the objective is to overpower the enemy, forcing surrender. That is considered to be a victory.

However, military parlance is not God's way of thinking, according to what we have come to know about God. In fact, God often does not appear to take sides in our conflicts, to our chagrin. God seems to be far more concerned about the lives of all people involved, rather than taking sides and empowering one side to overpower the other. This can be disheartening for us when the cause we are espousing and seeking divine help to support, seems to us to have all the qualities we assume God would value. Thus, we are caught between a desire to win, because the cause seems noble, versus surrendering to the Holy One's love, which values the personhood and lives of everyone, regardless of their stance.

It is humanly impossible for us to value *bad apples* as God does. Our heritage and religious orientation instinctively evokes in us the urge to challenge and defeat whatever seems evil. That urge exists because we are drawn to the *act* rather than the *actor*, whom God loves with total abandonment. In our hubris we find ourselves focusing on the negative behavior of persons and attack it, rather than focusing on the enormity of God's love for all people.

In all of this, we conveniently blank out how tarnished our own lives have become. It is our lack of concern over our own tarnished lives that warps our view of other people. While we see

the flaws in other people, we tend to ignore our own flaws, even though we are secretly aware of them. Rather than making a defense case in our own behalf, we need to surrender to God's accepting love, and allow our failures to be overcome with divine help. Clean the slate rather than ignore it.

If and when we do that something inside us becomes radically changed. Our hubris becomes humility. Our perception of the *bad apple* becomes consonant with God's benevolent perception of the recalcitrant person or persons. God reaches out in love, not wrath. We discover ourselves doing the same thing - an amazing transition! Truly, God's work within us.

Thus, surrendering to God's love, corrects our vision, enabling us to see more clearly the world as God sees it. But oh, how we resist this radical refocusing! Surrendering is not something we do easily. Our wills are strong!

The take away from this is for us to surrender to God's love for *all of us* - including those with whom we differ - and celebrate the existential reality: *God loves us all equally and compassionately.*

Finally, God doesn't love us because we seek and do the will of the Holy One. Rather, the reverse is the case: We seek to do God's will *because* we are intensely and unconditionally loved. We can actually feel the power surge within us when we surrender to God's unmitigated love. Nothing is more powerful than this transforming experience with God.