

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Greetings. I bring you blessings. Blessed is this hour, my dearest friends.

All kinds of questions are welcome, particularly those dealing with the subjects I discussed lately. You all need further understanding of these topics. The very fact that you have questions must indicate that your mind is active and searching.

QUESTION: Where is the borderline between compulsion and very strong desire?

ANSWER: The difference cannot be generalized. You will discern it clearly within yourself as you work on this path. What can be said is that when you have simply a strong desire without compulsion, you are free to let go of it, if need be. Compulsion means that you have to do it, you cannot help doing it even at a very disadvantageous price to you. This price may be emotional. And also, if others or circumstances prevent you from doing or getting what you compulsively need, the loss will seem out of all proportion. Intellectually you may know perfectly well that your desire is unreasonable in its force and subjective importance, yet you cannot help it. The only way to correct such an unfortunate and often very damaging situation is to find out what the unconscious motivation is. Do you have anything particular in mind?

QUESTION: I am reminded of someone who, as a young girl, wanted very strongly to leave her home. It is very difficult for me to find the difference between desire and compulsion in this case.

ANSWER: The desire to leave home may be the result of a compulsion, rather than being the compulsion itself. The desire in itself may be quite healthy, at least in some circumstances. The wish may be due to unhappiness, to predicaments one feels hopeless about. This creates the desire which may be partly healthy and partly an escape from solving one's inner conflicts. The conflicts are never created entirely by others. They are always due to one's own inner disturbances, in conjunction with the conflicts of others. If this is understood, one may or may not leave home, depending on the circumstances, but one will try to find the inner root of the problems and eliminate the cause. Compulsion enters only when the cause is not understood. A compulsion can never be created by outer conditions alone. The outer conditions may merely bring the inner problems to the fore. The inner wrong condition will finally also create a wrong outer condition. As long as one does not realize the basic facts of the soul, as you learn them here, it is very difficult to cope with the inner situation. The outer conditions are a convenient hitching post. The more unjust and crass they are, the more they can be used as rationalizations. That does not mean that one should never change the outer conditions as well. However, it may be that only after finding one's unresolved conflicts can one have the strength and fortitude to effect the outer change. The more one desires something but is unable to follow it through, the more likely it is that the originally

healthy wish turns compulsive. This is one form of compulsion. There are other forms, but they are not connected with your question, so we will not discuss them now.

QUESTION: We know that when we are asleep, often the Spirit World teaches us or communicates with us. Is there any way of remembering these communications? Is there a way of training oneself to be more open to receive them consciously?

ANSWER: I would not say that there is a particular way, other than the one you are following. This path gradually makes you more aware of yourself and of spiritual truth as such. Increased awareness will bring out all the knowledge that is within yourself, and this includes knowledge that is given to you during sleep. Only by understanding yourself can given knowledge be fruitful. Otherwise, at best, it will have no effect; at worst, it might even harm you. By a systematic method of increased self-awareness, a condition in which you are open to knowledge coming from within yourself is created naturally. Instruction from the Spirit World during sleep is one form -- there are others. You may not necessarily remember the instructions immediately or directly in the form they were given to you. You may not recollect having been at a certain place, receiving certain information, or advice, or teaching. In fact, it rarely happens that way. The way you will remember it, without being aware as to how this new knowledge came to you, will be that sometime after the experience you will come to insights you did not encounter before. The experience in the Spirit World is due to your past good efforts. It is a positive chain reaction.

If your entire attitude and life direction is geared to self-development, knowledge will come to you at certain periods of your life. But it has to come out of your own psyche, whether due to spirit instruction during sleep, or because now your higher self can penetrate better and manifest into your consciousness. In a way, the two kinds of knowledge interact and ultimately amount to the same thing.

Often, an inventor or artist wakes up with a new idea or conclusion. The idea is there; he does not recollect clearly how he came by it. He has that new knowledge simply because, in this one direction at least, his soul is open to tap the vast universal cosmic knowledge at everyone's disposal, provided the necessary inner conditions are met. It comes out of the depth of his being. In the depth of being is the whole universe. The adoption of a method to recollect instructions would limit, would cast aside, what should be accomplished inwardly. This would not be healthy. Concentrate on your endeavors to develop yourself. In your prayers, concentrate on finding the truth about yourself, on realizing what you need to know in any given stage of your path. Everything else takes care of itself. Help may be given by strengthening your power to recollect your spiritual experiences during sleep, although you will rarely remember them as incidents. As I have said, the knowledge will simply be there. Or, help may be given at times by making your pathwork a little easier. Or, something another person says may lead you to a crucial new insight. There are many ways in which increased self-awareness can come.

The concept of approaching contact with the Spirit World outwardly, or in the form you have mentioned, expecting the Spirit World to hand out knowledge that should be gained from within, is a great misunderstanding. Such given knowledge must lead finally always to your own contact with divine truth. Any help, instruction, or teaching which does not have this clearly as its aim is unhealthy. This should be understood by all who seek such contact in any way.

Contact with the Spirit World is often also sought with the aim of avoiding certain human difficulties that other, less privileged people, do not avoid. This approach is also very wrong. It must not be taken. The privilege you can gain, however, provided the contact is a divine one, is having access to a more vigorous and constructive help showing you the way out of your prison. You will earn this privilege by your own efforts in this direction, for, as you well know, this work is not always easy. But contact with the Spirit World must not and cannot be a shortcut to save you from the labor and pain of self-development.

QUESTION: Bearing in mind that Adam and Eve in Genesis stem from the masculine and feminine, that is, the active and passive aspects of the spirit, why is it that it is the feminine and passive aspect that is shown as taking the first step toward the Fall of the Spirit?

ANSWER: There is a very deep symbolism in that, my friends. In a forthcoming general lecture I shall deal with man and woman -- and you will surely find this question answered then. But I may now say a few words on the subject, enough to give you some clarification in response to your question. A great error in human thinking concerns the supposed difference between man and woman. For you it is like two different worlds. One world has difficulty understanding the other world. You often feel discouraged because to bridge the gap between the sexes seems impossible. For man, a woman's way of thinking and feeling is an enigma, and vice versa. They both battle along in their separate worlds. The only way they can at times unify is through their need for each other. However, in actual truth the difference is not half as great as you think. Woman is a "reverse" of man, and man a "reverse" of woman, if I may put it that way. Man manifests an active current, whereas woman is more passive. Where man is more passive, the woman is more active. In both cases, it is the other side of the coin, so to speak. The outer active side is passive inwardly, and vice versa. This applies not only to activity and passivity, but also to other trends that may be thought of as typically male or typically female.

There is a prevalent notion that the male is more intellectual, the female more intuitive. Even that is a misconception, at least it was originally. If it often works out that way, it is because people have lived so long with this mass image that only one side was developed and encouraged in each sex. I will explain this in greater detail in the lecture I will give on the subject. By nature, both qualities are present in each sex and could and should be developed equally in both man and woman.

Even anatomically, the male is the counterpart of the female, and the female is the counterpart of the male. Understanding the anatomy of the human body should translate into a deeper understanding of the emotional level. For the body is always a symbol for the spirit and the psyche.

Now, to come back to your question: The symbolism shown in Eve, taking the active part, hereby being responsible for the Fall, brings several factors to our attention. Activity, as such, is not wrong for a woman -- no more than passivity, as such, is wrong for a man. But if a healthy, active current is suppressed, it will go into a wrong direction and become destructive. The same with a repressed passive current, where an unhealthy, compulsive activity is superimposed. Both sexes have been afflicted by the long-existing mass images in this respect to which they adhered out of their own disturbed souls. If neither is allowed to develop freely, according to his or her very own nature, considering the person rather than the sex, this will have very harmful effects.

The incident of Adam and Eve is not to be taken as historical fact, but as a symbol. Now, Eve symbolizes the idea that activity becomes destructive if not allowed to function openly and healthily. By the same token, Adam was as much at fault by being too passive in a wrong and destructive way. Were he not passive where he should not have been, he could have stopped Eve. In other words, he was passive where he should have been active, while Eve was active where she should have been passive. This symbolism does not show that man should be entirely active and woman entirely passive. This is a gross misunderstanding, and also illogical. For Adam and Eve symbolize original human entities, the basic qualities present before the Fall. If before the Fall activity was present in the woman and passivity in the man, then it was meant to be that way, and it is only a question as to what way these forces work and manifest. If humanity had properly understood this deep symbolism, it would not have suppressed a valid part of the personality in each sex. People merely regarded Eve's activity as wrong and then concluded that activity as such is damaging for womanhood. The symbolic incident with Adam and Eve shows that active and passive currents are present, to begin with, in both sexes, but become harmful when misdirected.

Do you understand? Does that make sense to you?

QUESTION: Yes, it does, if I think of Adam as the symbol of man and of Eve as the symbol of woman. But I thought that the actual symbolism was not of a symbolic man and woman, but of the active and passive elements as such.

ANSWER: No. Adam and Eve represent much more than merely the active and passive elements. They actually symbolize manhood and womanhood with all their various aspects. The explanation I just gave is only one of many interpretations. It exclusively referred to activity and passivity. Many other interpretations of this symbolism can be given on other levels, dealing with other aspects of the two sexes.

QUESTION: To me Eve seems to be one step closer to the Fall. Why is that?

ANSWER: This is not due to activity, but to other trends. Woman has always emphasized her intuitive forces and neglected her intellectual capacities. Inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity is considered a male element, manifesting constructively in the activities of a scientist, for instance, while woman is more spiritually inclined. This has been built up by society. But both elements exist in both sexes. When Eve was found to be more immediately responsible for the Fall, it was again shown that intellectual curiosity exists in woman too. Only when this is suppressed, and thereby mischanneled, can it be harmful. If curiosity can express legitimately and combine with the intellectual faculties in both sexes, then something creative and constructive can evolve. Now, I know it is not shown clearly that activity and intellectual curiosity were suppressed in Eve, but it is shown that they were indubitably present. And when something is present by nature, it must be valid provided it is properly channeled.

And then there is something else. Just because woman is more intuitively inclined, she is more open to the spiritual forces. Therefore she can attain greater heights, but just because of that she also reaches greater depths.

QUESTION: Communism, particularly as taught and practiced by the Russians and Chinese, seems such a terrifying threat, also for spiritual development. Would you discuss the place of such

Communism in the Plan of Salvation? And also how we should feel toward the threatening Russians and Chinese?

ANSWER: The most important preliminary is the understanding of cause and effect. If you view any phenomenon in your world as an isolated happening, separated from other events that have led up to it by reaction and counterreaction, through cause and effect, one extreme calling forth an opposite extreme, you will never gain true insight. This applies to general world conditions or events, as well as to people's personal lives. In order to eliminate an evil, one first has to see what wrong brought on this evil. For it cannot be otherwise. Evil can only be created out of evil. It cannot be created out of good. One wrong condition breeds another, unless it is corrected. The same can be observed in a great many other aspects of life.

Just about all you can do is to gain a true outlook and understanding. This will help more than you think. If you wish to correct the evils of this world, you can do a great deal by first changing yourself. Only then will success come upon certain outer actions any individual may undertake in order to contribute to the good of humanity as a whole. Otherwise they will not be successful, that is, lastingly and profoundly successful. If the human heart does not change, nothing will ever be accomplished for humanity as a whole, no matter what mass measures will be taken. This applies particularly to those who are instrumental in bettering the world, whose task it is to lead nations. The greatest evil of earth life is always the individual's overemphasis on outer actions, while ignoring and neglecting the inner motivations and reactions, thereby being a prey to his or her own immature and selfish nature.

Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: There was just one other thought in my mind. The great materialism of this tremendous power might be a block to the spiritual development. It might hinder the Plan of Salvation.

ANSWER: Nothing can ever stop the Plan of Salvation from coming to its fulfillment. It is only a question of time -- and from our view the difference of time, called forth by the free will of the human being, is rather unsubstantial. It is calculated into the overall Plan of Salvation that humans are bound to create negative circumstances by their limited view. But the very result of this limited view -- the negative circumstances -- are most instrumental in waking you to the truth. Sometimes you cannot wake up and even wish for truth, unless you have gone through the hardship you yourself created by your ignorance or distortion of truth. In order to be happy, you have first to be in truth. But you cannot be in truth unless you know you are not and have the desire to search for it. The knowledge that you are not in truth and the consequent desire to search for it cannot come to you unless you are left to taste the result of your ignorance. The same applies to humanity. All this is taken into consideration in the Plan of Salvation.

The fear that damage can come to you by the wrongdoing of others is a basic misunderstanding of life. Yes, passing disadvantages can come to you, that is true, but even these must have a corresponding element within yourself. Otherwise you could not be affected even superficially. As far as your spiritual nature is concerned -- and this includes the overall Plan of Salvation -- nothing can ever happen to you. The personal knowledge and experience of this truth is

bound to come to you as you enter upon this path. We shall deal with this question more conclusively in the near future.

QUESTION: I have a question from a friend who wanted to know about the newly discovered Gospel According to St. Thomas. Are you willing to answer that question? He wants to know whether it is genuine, whether it is a real Logos Jesu, or whether it is any kind of apocryphal copy?

ANSWER: I would say, from our vantage point this does not make any difference. This would be interesting only from a historical point of view. With that we are not concerned. Our aim is to further light and life. Your determination and judgment should be governed as to its truth, its value, regardless of who said it. There are many who have and have had access to divine wisdom. You should question rather whether the sayings are in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is not necessary that it be actually said by Him. This would be important only historically and possibly for the scholar, but spiritually it has no importance. From a point of view of growth and personal independence, what should be encouraged is to learn to evaluate something as to what was said, rather than who said it.

QUESTION: There is one point, however, which has merit. In the Gospel According to St. Thomas there are a few statements allegedly spoken by Jesus which are very cryptic and which do not correspond to the other Gospel statements.

ANSWER: I will be very happy to discuss such statements.

QUESTION: All right, I shall bring three or four along. There are a dozen or so which almost sound paradoxical. This raises the question of authority, whether or not one should pay attention to this material.

ANSWER: That can never do any harm. Since, as I understand, you will arrange sessions for questions and answers exclusively, such questions may be very good material. Let us discuss it together.

QUESTION: In accordance with the teachings we receive, I wonder how it is possible that the world is now in fear of excessive growth of population, of "population explosion"?

ANSWER: If people managed the planet at their disposal better, there would be plenty of room for all to come. Perhaps the very fact that more and more people are coming is a measure to teach mankind to fully utilize all it has. If people learned to live in peace with their neighbors, they could exploit boundless resources that are now used for unnecessary and destructive purposes. Moreover, they would discover many resources and possibilities that are still closed to them and which would give many many more people the possibility to live on earth. That is the lesson to learn. If it is learned properly, it will bring benefit to all. If it is not learned, people will have to go through added hardships before they can find the solution that lies right in front of them if they turn in the right direction. Let me assure you that Planet Earth could nourish and accommodate many more people than you now have. All could live in a much happier state than now prevails.

Let me extend divine blessings to all of you. Receive the light and the strength that we want to give each one of you for the fullness of life and to help you overcome your inner obstacles. Be in peace. Be in God!

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