

OUTER WILL AND INNER WILL -- MISCONCEPTION ABOUT SELFISHNESS

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

Tonight we will discuss willpower. One often hears that with the proper application of willpower practically anything can be achieved. Yet you all have had the experience that you wish very much for something, but in vain. This is due not only to unconscious contrary will-currents that divide your will, but also to something that is vastly overlooked. It is the fact that two different kinds of will exist: the inner will and the outer will. This is very important for you to understand.

Let us first see what the difference is and how to distinguish between the two. You will be able to confirm the truth of my words if you examine your feelings and reactions in the proper light. Each one of you has surely experienced both kinds of willpower, but without awareness that there is a definite difference between the two. Knowing how to make this distinction will open further doors for understanding your self, others, and the laws of the universe.

The outer will is tense, impatient, and cramped. The inner will is calm, relaxed, unhurried. The outer will is anxious and doubtful. The inner will is certain, knowing neither anxiety nor doubt.

Impatience arises when one doubts the desired result. Upon examination, we find that impatience cannot exist where there is certainty. But when one is uncertain about the results, one cannot afford to wait with calmness. Hence impatience, doubt, and anxiety are closely linked. Since the inner will knows no doubt, it can bide its time and will ultimately prevail.

To succeed, the outer will must be sustained, at least to some extent, by the inner will. To the extent the inner will functions, success will result. If the degree of inner willpower is small in relation to the outer will with all its conflicting currents, the desired result will not be realized.

The inner will comes from the solar plexus. The outer will comes partly from the intellect and partly from superficial soul regions. The outer will is often motivated by immature feelings, desires, reactions, and reasonings. The inner will comes entirely from your higher self.

Let us consider now why the inner will is kept from functioning. The prohibition is caused by the various layers of error, deviations from truth, and illusions that are prevalent in the manifest world. In short, the inner will is impeded because of the images, wrong conclusions, and misconceptions you carry in your conscious and unconscious mind. These always make you uncertain and divided within, because deep inside you know that something is wrong. Although you will feel it but vaguely, you know it is not in accord with truth, and will not clear up unless you do the work of self-search and self-finding. The vague feeling of something being wrong makes you altogether uncertain even about your desires and wish-fulfillments. Even if the desires are quite

legitimate and healthy, you are still uncertain about them. This is not only because part of the motivation for the desired result may be so immature and truly selfish as to overshadow the good and healthy motives, but also because the unconscious deviations and misconceptions, apart from the desire itself, suffice to cover the inner will so that it cannot function.

Let us suppose that you have a desire which is relatively small or not disturbed by unhealthy motives. Your inner will is still kept from functioning fully due to your images which may have no direct bearing on the particular wish. In short, the healthier your psyche, the better your inner will can function. The unhealthy psyche is always confused, not only about others and the world, but foremost about itself. Confusion creates doubt; doubt impatience; impatience anxiety and tension. In addition to this chain reaction, we have other currents to consider. If doubt exists about a desire, it is accompanied by a feeling of guilt. Yet the desire may be doubly strong -- due in part to the healthy and good motive and partly to the unhealthy one. The latter always creates compulsion. Thus, guilt and compulsion -- two contrary directions -- further afflict the inner will.

You may desire a certain result with all your might, but in a confused and divided state your inner will cannot penetrate the unhealthy layers. What you outwardly wish you inwardly question. Not only do you doubt that you can gain what you wish, but you also doubt the rightfulness, the justification of it. You have a vague, unconscious feeling that your possible selfishness will jeopardize obtaining what you want, because you don't deserve it. Needless to say, these doubts are the gravest hindrance to the functioning of your inner willpower.

The more the inner will is hindered, the more you try to make up for it by strengthening the outer will. But the strength of the outer will is always unhealthy. It is a poor substitute. It is full of tension, anxiety, and impatience. Since it cannot function, it brings frustration as well, and with that a renewed doubt in yourself. The feelings of inadequacy and inferiority are thus fed anew.

Outer will can be composed of healthy motives too. Unhealthy motives, such as self-importance, pride, vanity, or the will to rule can exist only in the outer, but never in the inner will. The inner will is pure, healthy, and without doubt. It flows quietly. It knows. The outer will does not flow. It pushes and pulls in all directions. Seen from our vantage point, it is a harsh, uneven current, like a lightning flash, sometimes stronger, at other times weakening. It is angular, pointed, it undulates in its direction and frequency. In contrast, the inner will maintains a slow and even flow, always rounded.

This will again show you the need to heal your soul of all unhealthy and erroneous attitudes and reactions. It is important for your happiness. Though it is true that you can move mountains with strong enough willpower, that will has to come from within, and that presupposes the existence of a healthy soul. If and when you discover that your will comes from the outer person, you can look further as to find out why, and investigate what motives and uncertainties block your inner will. This will shed an additional light on understanding yourself.

It will prove most useful for you, once again, to make a list of your desires. Then listen deep into yourself, and by finely tuning in to how your willpower feels, try to determine which will it is. If it is the outer will, you will have a slight feeling of doubt, scruples, a certain guilt and a question perhaps as to whether or not you are entitled to it. Your outer will can also feel so impatient, so urgent, so tense that you are all tied up in knots when you think of the particular desire. Behind the

compulsion and urgency that appear on the surface, you are bound to find the same uncertainty and doubt. In either case, you will be well advised to look into the unhealthy motives which can exist side by side with the healthy ones. As you well know, the latter always serve as rationalizations for the former. The realization that you cannot get what you desire unless you free yourself of the unhealthy and erroneous motives may give you a renewed incentive for doing this work.

If you discover that your inner will functions in certain cases, you will feel very different. You will feel absolutely no qualms; you will feel a very calm serenity in your wish. You will also feel the certainty that you will get it. It may take time, but you will not be impatient, nor will you be resigned. You will be at one with yourself. In the inner will there is a pure strength, a strength that does not make you tense.

This work is very important for you, my dear friends, as it is the only way to eliminate the levels of the outer will that hinder the functioning of the inner will. Even if both will-currents pursue the same goal, even if the outer and inner will desire the same thing, the mere fact that the outer will is tense and impatient prohibits the inner will from unfolding, from floating, from affecting the cosmic forces.

As I already stated, your personal images and misconceptions also hinder the inner will. But so do certain mass images that you have adopted because of your personal inner conflicts. I would now like to discuss one of these mass misconceptions, a very widespread one, affecting practically everybody to some degree. It is also a very strong factor in prohibiting the inner will from functioning. I am speaking about your concepts of selfishness and unselfishness.

People very frequently think -- and if they do not do so consciously, they feel it unconsciously -- that whatever brings them happiness must be damaging to someone else. Hence, it is inevitable that your conscience bothers you every time you are happy, whether you were actually selfish or not. This guilt is bound to afflict your inner will for happiness.

Your unconscious concept is that if you enjoy something, your pleasure will automatically be at the expense of somebody else. Since you were taught that it is wrong to be selfish, you feel you must suppress your "selfish" desire. You fail to distinguish whether your desires are actually selfish or not, and you indiscriminately suppress all desires. In the belief that all desires for happiness are selfish, you do not dare to desire at all. In the process of suppression, unable to distinguish one from the other, you lump together the really selfish with the really healthy desires which have nothing whatever to do with selfishness. Thus, you have no way of sorting them out, of judging, of coming to terms with them. Only then would you be in a position to freely decide for some desires and against some others.

In short, this is the unconscious concept: since desires aim for happiness and wanting happiness is selfish, I must suppress all desires. You do not realize that as they are driven out they continue their existence underground. The really selfish desires in your unconscious make you feel guilty, but so also do the rightful desires. Both continue to claim and clamor inside of you, often without your awareness. On top of all this, the prohibition you inflict on them makes you resentful. You resent the world for not allowing you to be happy, while in reality it is your wrong conclusion about happiness that is the cause. In the process of suppression of all desires and impulses, the childish and therefore actually selfish ones cannot mature and refine themselves. This can happen

only if they are faced and dealt with in awareness. As a consequence, your legitimate and healthy desires and impulses, which are not selfish in the least, cannot find fulfillment.

You are all weighed down by the unconscious conclusion that something is selfish merely because it makes you happy. This is very tragic, my friends. It is a needless cost you pay in happiness and joy. You dare not wish for happiness simply because you fail to discriminate between actual and imagined selfishness. Every time a rightful and healthy impulse for self-expression manifests, you feel and think of it as if it were your really immature and crude selfishness.

The question now is how to treat the real selfishness that exists in the immature part of every human being. The usual and wrong way to handle this is to suppress it and superimpose a compulsive unselfishness that is not genuine. Out of the superimposition stems the unconscious concept that it would actually be very pleasant to be allowed to be selfish. This notion gets a foothold within you, and you unconsciously believe that to be selfish would bring you happiness, but alas, you are not allowed to be happy. You wrongly think that should you give in to your desire for happiness, you would not be loved or approved of. Since love and approval are so necessary for you, you would rather forsake "happiness." The inner conflict can be stated in this way: "If I could be selfish, I could do anything I wanted. That would mean happiness. On the other hand, I cannot be happy if I am not loved and approved of. Therefore, I must become unhappy, in order to be happy." This sounds completely illogical, but the immature unconscious is this illogical and this contradictory. You can now see what utter confusion exists in the human soul. I am sure, you will not have too much trouble confirming similar feelings in yourself. I venture to say that this conflict exists to some extent in all human beings.

This wrong conclusion accounts for the utter hopelessness you so often feel -- a hopelessness that finds an outlet in occasional moods for which you sometimes find outer reasons and rationalizations. This very conflict is the underlying reality of your hopelessness. Were your misconception true, happiness would indeed be an impossibility. You would be justified in being hopeless if you couldn't be happy without being loved, and you cannot be loved when you are happy, for happiness is selfish according to this erroneous concept. There is unhappiness either way. You may fluctuate between the two alternatives, but whichever way you turn you find yourself unhappy and frustrated. You often rebel inwardly and try to force the people around you to break this law, or what seems to you a law. But your conviction that you are in an insoluble situation causes you to try to get out of it in the wrong way. The irony is that you try to come out of it by sometimes actually acting out your most childish and selfish impulses rather than your legitimate and healthy ones. This must offend others and provoke them to react negatively toward you. And this, in turn, convinces you anew that your predicament is indeed hopeless. Since the cause of your rebellion is unconscious, it does not occur to you to choose to act upon your healthy impulses; instead, you pick the most drastic examples for your experiment. The drastic examples are the selfish impulses. Only by a growing awareness and conscious discrimination can you be in a position to make the proper choices and so receive the proof that your conclusion was wrong. It becomes self-evident that this conflict frustrates your inner will and prohibits the deserved fulfillment of your desire.

The idea that selfishness, if allowed, would be a happier state, may be only in your unconscious mind, while consciously you know all the right answers. In that case, questioning yourself in the proper way will bring you closer to the inner contradiction. By going deeply enough,

your answers will be less and less convincing, even to yourself. When this happens, you are approaching the afflicted area. Some of you, if you but took the trouble to think about it, might even find a consciously-held belief that you would be happier if you were allowed to be selfish.

Whether this misconception exists in your conscious or in your unconscious mind, how can you be freely unselfish in your actions day in and day out? Not doing the unselfish act makes you feel guilty, doing it seems to be a violation of your will and conviction. It cannot be a free act, independently chosen. Whenever you do something out of compulsion and not because you say yes to it, you cannot be at one with yourself. You must be divided, in conflict, you must lose your inner peace and your sense of rightness. How can you be happy either in doing something that makes you feel guilty, or in doing something that appears to be against your personal interests? Either alternative brings dissatisfaction.

Let us now examine why this concept is wrong. I am addressing that part of your personality where you hold the misconception. First, not everything that makes you happy is automatically selfish and damaging to another merely because it makes you happy. Quite the contrary. As a happy person, you are better able to bring happiness and joy to others. You are entitled to the same consideration for yourself as another person. Only as a free, strong, and happy person can you have fulfillment in life and be constructive in your environment. In order to accomplish this, you have to give yourself consideration, you have to respect your own rights, and they will not conflict with the interests and rights of others. If sometimes it appears that way, ascertain the truth with absolute self-honesty. There are no fixed rules to determine whether actions are right or wrong when they appear to be against the interests of another person. However, it is essential to become completely aware of all your wishes, impulses, and motives. Only in that way can you discriminate and judge which one is selfish and which one is not.

As to the actual selfishness that seems, consciously or unconsciously, so advantageous and desirable: In reality selfishness cannot offer any advantage to you, even if it seems so at the moment. The higher your consciousness is, the more absolute will this conviction be in you. At the moment it may be difficult for you to understand this truth, and then you should just strive toward this fuller vision as a goal. But the true concept cannot become part of you as long as you try to force it upon yourself; as long as you act in the right way because you think you should; as long as the decision is not wholly your own and therefore free. In the meantime, all you can and should do is to be honest with yourself.

When it still seems to you that the selfish act would be more desirable, contemplate the following: An isolated event, with all its causes and effects, will have a different aspect than the same event would in its larger context. In other words, a particular incident may actually seem to warrant the view that selfishness is advantageous. But if you follow through the chain reactions, you are bound to gain a different perspective. The different view will give you the desire and activate the free will to decide for the unselfish act rather than be driven to it as before. This in itself will make a tremendous difference. It will automatically open a new vista, showing you that selfishness is not advantageous, either now or in the long run. It is divorced from reality. As long as you see only the first effects of an action, you do not possess a view of the whole picture. It is only a segment, and the segment cannot convey the whole.

Let us say, you are shown a little stone from a big house. You can tell certain facts by looking at the stone: the quality and material, as well as the color. But you cannot tell what the house looks like from seeing the stone. You can judge neither its beauty, its architecture, nor the proportions and furnishings of the rooms.

It is the same with the inner and outer actions, attitudes, and reactions of the human being. By considering only the immediate effect, you take it upon yourself to pronounce judgment upon the whole picture with only a segment available. You need to extend your view, so that you are in a position to have a truer vision. This does not mean to accept something on faith; nor does it mean that by being good, you will be rewarded in the hereafter. The effect of right action can be seen here and now, while you are still on this earth plane.

When you think or feel that selfishness would be to your advantage, you are leaving out the obvious. You fail to connect cause and effect, and therefore your view is blurred. But you do not need supernatural vision or metaphysical knowledge to put two and two together. You need only to think, reach a little further, and see what is right in front of your eyes.

Let us suppose you have to make a choice between a selfish and an unselfish act. The unselfish act does not seem to bring you benefit, at least not directly. However, if you are objectively convinced that it is beneficial as such, be it for the world at large or for a small group, or for one other person, it is bound to benefit you too in some way, perhaps not always immediately, but often much sooner than you think. This conviction will grow in you. It will become an inner fact, but only if you have made a full and wholehearted decision for the unselfish act. Decide for it only because you are convinced it is right, and not compulsively, because you want to receive a reward, whether in the form of affection, love, approval, or to obligate others, or because you believe that God will reward you for having been a good child. Your action must be self-chosen for its own sake, regardless who seems to benefit from it immediately. When you do so, you will be at one with yourself. This will widen your horizon and raise your consciousness to the necessary maturity. The truth will then dawn on you that selfishness is not advantageous and is definitely not in your interest. Or, to put it differently, unselfishness is healthily "selfish."

I said before that performing an unselfish act for a reward turns the act into a selfish one. However, if you do the right thing in the right and mature way without ulterior motives and out of free choice, you will reap a reward of another sort, namely the good feeling of being at one with yourself, the security that only self-respect can offer. To do something wholeheartedly gives added self-respect that is a decided advantage manifesting in many ways. It will give you, among other things, the strength to overcome many a weakness for which you may despise yourself. It will reduce certain fears and anxieties, especially when dealing with other people. Your fear of others is always based on your feeling weak and inadequate. By coming to terms with your confusions, by making independent decisions for carrying out unselfish acts, thus being at one with yourself, you gain the self-respect which reduces the very inadequacy and self-contempt that make you weak and fearful toward others.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough that it is all-important whether or not you act unselfishly because you truly want to or because you think you have to. As long as the conviction that makes you want to is lacking, you have to continue the work of self-search, of examining your motives and concepts in comparison with objective truth, until you arrive at the point of conviction. Only then

are you capable of making a free choice that is not driven by compulsion. This, in turn, will show you that unselfishness is not a yoke that you have to take on against your inner conviction. Instead, you will see without a doubt that unselfishness is really "selfish" in a healthy sense, and that it is to your advantage, provided your motives are right, your decision free, your reactions mature.

This will free you of the misconception that selfishness could make you happy if you were allowed to indulge in it. The other misconception, that happiness is selfish and is therefore forbidden, exists because of this misconception. Because of these wrong conclusions, your inner will cannot function, cannot flow out of you. Each time the desire for happiness manifests, a little inner voice prohibits it so that the inner will is broken. The desire may be reborn on an outer level, but, as I said before, the outer will cannot suffice in bringing you to any goal: it will only tear you apart; it will destroy your inner strength, serenity, and peace.

Try, all of you, to recognize your will; where it comes from, how it feels. If and when you find the inner will blocked, examine where and why you have doubts about the rightfulness of your desire. At times this suspicion may be justified because your desire may actually be harmful to others or to yourself. At times, your desire may be justified, but many unconscious, unhealthy motives may exist together with the healthy ones. At times, a wish may be wholly right and good, but your misconceptions -- about selfishness as well as in other areas -- may prohibit the inner will to function.

Tonight I was focusing on a problem that is crucial and widespread. We shall probably have to work on this subject with each one of you individually. Prepare yourselves by thinking about it, by feeling how these words apply to you.

Are there any questions now, dealing with this subject?

QUESTION: When doing an unselfish act and knowing that it doesn't come from your true self, yet you do it in order to change, you don't want to do it compulsively. But you get so tired, so exhausted, and you don't understand why....

ANSWER: The very fact that you get exhausted is a sign that you still do the unselfish act against an inner conviction, and really out of compulsion. You want to be good and unselfish, but you still feel deep inside that the selfish act would be to your advantage. Thus you force yourself, and this makes you tired. You cannot immediately lose your compulsion and reach the state in which you freely choose. This free choice can be made only after you realize that the unselfish act is to your advantage, while the selfish one is not. The misconception may be deeply buried and has to become conscious first. You cannot bypass this stage. If you try, your unselfish action will remain compulsive and unfree. In other words, you first have to become completely aware that you do not want to do the unselfish act, and why. You have to become aware of your rebellion in complying with the unselfish acts in the past, as well as with the guilt of your selfish actions. This part of the work is essential although sometimes a bit painful, for a while. But it cannot be dispensed with. Only after you have surmounted this stage will you be in a position to discriminate, judge, and choose your own actions and attitudes. You will then be able to re-form your concepts.

In many therapies people become stuck at a certain stage. They find out that their legitimate desires and impulses were suppressed, but this discovery also brings out the selfish desires, which

they now act out, going from one wrong extreme to another. In such cases the person does not advance. It is not necessary to act out selfish impulses. You have more options than the two alternatives of either suppressing or acting out your selfishness. You can recognize it without indulging in any selfish or damaging conduct. But you must recognize it in all honesty, otherwise you cannot proceed.

Incidentally, it is because people in therapy often display their newly discovered impulses that analysis is often accused of making people more selfish. If properly handled, this need not be the case. You do not have to choose the wrong alternative now, simply because in the past you performed the right actions out of the wrong motives. You can, if you wish, continue to do the right actions even while you are in the process of becoming aware that you do not like doing them. You are in a temporary state anyway. It is a period of transition. More important than anything else, for the moment, is that you become aware of why you are doing an act and what you feel when you are doing it.

To summarize: At first, before the self-search, you are convinced that you do an unselfish act and you hate it without being aware of your hate and rebellion against it. Next you find your hate and rebellion for this act. You will further find that you probably blame other people who -- so you wish to believe -- force you into it. The next step will be that you reconsider why you are doing this act and what your real motives are. In most cases, you will find that you do so because it is expected of you, and that you do not wish to offend people because you want their approval. Further investigation will show that, apart from these reasons, you would really much rather do the selfish act. When asking yourself why, the answer will be that you think it is more advantageous or more pleasant for you. By that time you have recognized the misconception that can be corrected only by means of the true concept. If and when you are entirely aware of the misconception in all its facets, you will have to recognize also that the act in question was selfish, compulsive, and unfree, especially because you wished approval. Therefore your apparently unselfish act was really selfish. The selfishness has merely shifted.

The process of finding out what is really going on cannot be avoided. You can then decide whether or not you wish to act as before. In the course of this work you may discover that some of your actions were unjustified and unnecessary, that other people have taken advantage of you in a way that will ultimately prove damaging to themselves. But in other instances the action as such may have been valid and reasonable and you may choose to continue it, even while your motives are still confused. In either case, the important thing is to recognize your feelings, motives, and reactions; your inner, and often unconscious concepts; and, most important of all, your self-deception.

Only by allowing your true emotions to come to the surface will you finally reach the point where your inner concept will change and the conviction of truth will be yours.

QUESTION: Although I have made the free choice myself, knowing all these wrong motives, but at the same time desiring to change, I still feel it is a little selfish. It is not so much for wanting approval or love, but perhaps that I want to try a new way.

ANSWER: Perhaps you do not want approval or love so much, although you may not be fully aware of it, but you may wish to do God's will, to be a spiritually advanced person. It does not

matter what the motive is. Such a motive may also be superimposed. The moment you feel that selfishness is still there, in spite of the recognition of your negative motives, you are not fully aware of all your feelings, unconscious conclusions and thoughts. You may not yet be aware to what extent a part in you still thinks that going after your original selfish desire would actually be more pleasant. For that matter, you may not even be fully aware of what these desires are. Because of this misconception, the desires themselves are often suppressed and have to be brought out of hiding.

What is it you really wish and why do you wish it? Simple as this question first sounds and later is, to answer it at the start is difficult. The necessary initial work is often harder than you may now think. When that is accomplished, it will become much easier. The trouble is always that before a certain point is reached in this work, you don't really know what is going on within yourself. You feel disturbed, but you cannot pinpoint the reason. You are often utterly unaware of what your desires really are, and why. If and when you learn to become aware of this each time you feel disturbed and anxious, you will have made great progress on the path. You cannot go deeper and analyze these factors if you are not first aware of what it is you want. When you find that out, you will often experience that the disturbance diminishes greatly by the mere fact that you now know what you want and what it is that really disturbs you, behind the rationalization.

My dearest friends, may my words give you further material and food for your inner progress. They contain a very important seed for all of you. These words may open new vistas toward a new freedom. They contain one of the important keys to let your real self out of its imprisonment. Be blessed all of you, my dear ones, be in peace, be in God!

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