

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Greetings, I bring you blessings, my dearest friends, blessed is this hour. I will answer your questions to the best of my ability.

QUESTION: I have two questions in connection with the last lecture. The first is: I understood that the inner will you spoke of stems from the super-conscious. It was not clear to me whether the outer will then comes from a combination of the conscious and the subconscious?

ANSWER: Yes, that is correct. A combination of the conscious and various levels of the subconscious mind.

QUESTION: The other one is in connection with the second part of the lecture in which it was pointed out that we often do the unselfish thing because we think it is expected of us and therefore the selfish is regarded as pleasant. I would like to ask what tie or connection there would be in the reverse, by which I mean that we live in a materialistic and rather selfish world, and what the world often seems to demand is that we be selfish and self-seeking. When we are not, we are considered crazy or suckers or crackpots or whatever. Sometimes, then, we might strive to become more selfish than we really feel like being.

ANSWER: This question touches a subject that I will, in all probability, discuss in the next lecture. But in the meantime I will say this: What you ask about indicates the existence of an additional conflict in the human soul. It touches a very basic problem of humanity, namely that you often deny the noblest part of your nature, some to a greater, others to a lesser extent. Love, unselfishness, emotion, sympathy, affection and so on are valid qualities that you are often ashamed of. You can all find this element within yourselves. I will not go into the subject now. This is not the time. But to answer your question, I will mention that this general human conflict adds to the confusion. On the one hand, you learn that it is wrong to be selfish, yet you would like to be so, thinking it advantageous. Thus you are compulsively unselfish. On the other hand, your true self yearns to be good, loving and unselfish but, then, it seems to you, the world looks down on you for that, so that you frequently become compulsively selfish. Hence you are both selfish and unselfish compulsively and in neither way act out of your true, honest, self. Thus the conflict is a double one, or rather a quadruple one. Each trend -- the selfish and the unselfish -- is counteracted by the need to comply with the expectations of a particular environment. Thereby each trend presents the expectations of that environment, thus presenting a double problem. Needless to say, these problems cannot arise solely out of existing mass images. They always have their roots in personal psychological conflicts. The results of this fourfold conflict is that you feel guilty for being selfish, and guilty and ashamed for being unselfish.

QUESTION: You said: "To succeed, the outer will must be sustained by the inner will. To the measure the inner will functions, to that extent success results." As I now understand, success and wish-fulfillment depend upon the clarity and strength of the inner will. In a lecture in September or October you said that in a person of lesser development the conscience may not be so strong or even be absent. Hence his wish-capacity can function even though the motives are impure. The mere fact that the impure, selfish motives become conscious causes the wish-capacity to function better.

ANSWER: That is quite true. Wish-capacity functions if the wish is unhindered by counter-currents. Therefore, it is often the case that people of lower spiritual development, with a lesser conscience, are unhindered by scruples. Thereby the wish-capacity is without counter-directions and flows without hindrance. This wish-capacity can very well come from the outer will and still be successful. The outer will may succeed. I did not say that it does not. But how lasting and how satisfying the result is will depend on the presence of the inner will. If you have a great amount of will power, coming from the outer will, the inner will may be there to a certain extent, but it is blurred, it is superimposed by the outer will, which can come from healthy, as well as unhealthy motives. This outer will can succeed if it is relatively unobstructed by inner, often unconscious scruples and other hindrances. But it will usually leave a taste of dissatisfaction and even frustration, whereas the result brought about by the inner will is always very satisfactory. Does that clear up your question? [Yes, thank you very much.]

QUESTION: In a recent discussion in our group, one of our friends expressed the thought that prayer was indicative of weakness and he was therefore opposed to it. I was taught that prayer is the means by which God's power is released onto human life. Perhaps you would be willing to tell us about prayer in general, and I have also three specific questions. One: is it valid for us to pray for others?

ANSWER: Yes, certainly, it is valid to pray for others. But the question may arise in some of you, "What if I pray for something for another person that this other person cannot receive due to his own inner obstructions?" This is a valid question. Nevertheless, prayer is good, right and beneficial. But the prayer is not necessarily answered exactly in the way you thought, or as the person involved may desire it. This may not be possible. But it certainly brings out harmonious currents and forces. That takes effect. It is like your love touching the heart of another person. When you pray and wish well to another person, it generates a pure strength, a pure effect that produces results around you. Let us suppose that this cannot affect the person involved because he or she is so cut off from reality, from the spiritual forces. This strength nevertheless works and takes effect in the universe and therefore benefits many, including yourself and even the particular person who is in darkness, but at a later time. For the love and goodwill you generate by praying for another person definitely makes an imprint on the cosmic forces, and, it also has a definite effect on your own soul by the unselfish love and well-wishing, by the constructive desires that have nothing to do with your selfish aims. The best prayer for another person can be formulated in words asking that the other person receive guidance, inspiration, and insight most necessary at the particular time. That includes everything.

What you said about a friend who feels prayer to be a weakness is, of course, an emotional, subconscious and illogical reaction that has probably nothing to do with his conscious ideas on the subject. I believe that the person in question is well aware of the fact that this is one of those typical

wrong conclusions you will often find in the unconscious. It is of tremendous importance to find such wrong conclusions in the unconscious mind. Many of you have similar unconscious misconceptions without being aware of them. To find these illogical conclusions is the first step toward creating order in your inner universe, your soul. In truth, it is actually a sign of strength if you can ask for something. Not being able to ask because of pride is nothing but weakness. But to find out where and in what way this element of error exists -- and it exists in all of you to some extent -- is the basis for correcting such misconceptions which may lie only in your emotions and not in your thoughts at all. Then, and then only can you replace the misconception with the right concept. But find out where you feel that way, even if you do not think you do. Not everyone may feel it about prayer. But many of you may feel it about asking another human being for a favor. Basically it is the same thing.

QUESTION: These are merely extensions, but I will present them anyway. Will praying for others be productive of constructive results in securing peace.

ANSWER: Oh yes, indeed. If prayer has effect, sooner or later, on one individual, it certainly has effect on humankind as a whole. I do not mean that the desired result manifests immediately. But I would like to add something more. Prayer is most constructive if one also gains a bit of insight about one's own inner errors. How can this be combined with the prayer for peace? It can be done in the following way: What goes on in your world is exactly the same thing on a larger scale as what goes on between two or three or four human beings. From the point of view of spiritual truth and spiritual reality, there are no big and little issues. The tiniest issue in a domestic quarrel, for example, is of exactly the same impact and importance as big international issues. This may sound fantastic to you. Nevertheless it is so, my friends. You think that because many lives are involved, the larger issues are more important. Little do you realize that, in truth and reality, your inner deviations and errors affect and involve just as many lives in the long run. You think that because the question of life or death exists in international quarrels, it is more important than the little, inner, subtle rights or wrongs in your private lives. But you ignore that with these subtle private undercurrents you contribute to the so-called big and important issues. In fact, the former are the cause of the latter.

I can very well understand your difficulty in grasping what I say here. To be able to understand what I say calls for your innermost depth. In creation there is only one question: right or wrong, truth or untruth, light or darkness. From our view it makes no difference whether such conflict exists in one soul or involves many. One causes the other and it is therefore the same. If you deceive yourself and your motives and thereby create a confused and disharmonious situation -- for your self-deceptions and confusions are bound to negatively affect other people -- you, together with the other people involved, create very unfavorable chain reactions and vicious circles. Not only does the very same principle underlie what manifests in world politics, but is partly responsible for it. Each emotion, each attitude, each current of the soul leaves an imprint on the cosmic forces and consequently returns to you, often in a roundabout way, until these negative forces are exhausted.

If you try to comprehend the thought I present here, you will gain a great deal of insight and understanding. In your prayer for peace, try to find where, in your own surroundings, you act in ways that are similar to the actions and reactions of nations. By such discoveries, you will contribute more to peace than through other approaches. Find the similarity, then you will gain the insight and understanding that it is all one and the same. The so-called big issues could not exist if the many

little issues in thousands of individual cases were not a precedent to the creation of the same situation on a larger scale.

This contemplation should help in a double way. One: it would contribute to your personal insights. Your philosophical understanding would increase and thus facilitate your incentive for purification. Two: you would recognize, without the slightest trace of guilt, how you personally contribute to and are in a small measure responsible for the world's unrest. Not in the sense, as many people would believe, of not participating in political activities, but in the sense that your personal conflicts add to the general world conflict. Try to see this, and if you really try, you will find it.

QUESTION: Does prayer have any effect on the wills of those who are indifferent to spiritual values?

ANSWER: The effect may not be immediate, but, as I said before, sooner or later it will have an effect. But often, it is not only that such a person is responsible, but many other people, too, as well as yourself. If you have clearly examined your real motive for praying and have no illusions about it, your prayer is bound to have some effect. The prayer may open for you a way to help such a person, a way of help you had not seen before. Thus, your sincere prayer may directly reach such a person.

Prayer is always constructive, provided one has no hidden selfish motives, no self-deceptions, and provided it is combined with action. The best deed is very often a recognition of deeply hidden trends in one's own soul. By virtue of such self-honesty, the outlook for a new direction may often present itself whereby such person will be helped if not directly by you, then indirectly through others.

Prayer depends entirely on the "how" and with what motive. This may seem self-evident. You may ask, "What motive can I have?" Sometimes there are hidden motives and emotions, other than the obvious, loving ones. If these are not recognized, the prayer will be much weaker and therefore have less effect. By such honest recognition, you truly combine the deed with the prayer.

QUESTION: I know that to answer this question you would have to take it up individually with the people who come to you for consultation, but I was wondering if there is some general advice you could give to those who, before coming to you for these sessions had made no attempt to make contact with departed dear ones and who now would like to develop the most wholesome, happiest and most fruitful contact with them.

ANSWER: You see, my dear, a fruitful contact with a departed dear one is very rare, because although it is often sought with the best of intentions, the motives are not entirely healthy. If however, one seeks contact, if it is God's will, in order to find and develop oneself, and one does care who is sent, whether it is the personal dear one or some other spirit who is capable of helping, then the motive and approach is all right. But if contact is sought merely because you grieve and wish to be in touch with the departed one, understandable as this pain of separation is, then this motive or emotion should be examined. Often the wish to establish such a contact, quite apart from the obvious factor of love and the desire to be together again, contains a deep, unrecognized doubt. "Is it truly possible? Does one really live on? Perhaps, in this way, I will receive proof." There is

nothing wrong with the doubt itself, however, it is of the utmost importance to clearly face it. There is nothing to be ashamed of. Only by facing such doubts directly can you deal with them properly. As long as the doubts are hidden out of a false sense of shame and guilt, as if to say, "I should not have these doubts, but since they are there, I want to cover them with the actual and true desire to be in contact with my personal dear one," then one cannot come to terms with them.

On the other hand, if you do face the fact that you have doubts, you can ask yourself further questions. Is it a personal fear of death -- which, again, is human and understandable? What exactly is it you doubt? You must clearly establish this. Then you have something to tackle. The next step will inevitably be to learn that you can eliminate these doubts only by finding yourself, by purifying the hidden parts of the self, by clarifying unconscious confusions. That is the only way doubt can disappear and will disappear. Even the most flagrant proof of phenomena offered to you will not really, profoundly and permanently eliminate your doubts. At the moment you would certainly be glad about it. But the effect would wear off. Inwardly the gnawing question would come up all over again, or continue. The more such outer proof you received, the guiltier you would feel about the continuance of your doubts, and therefore suppress them more and more.

Doubt in God, doubt in the laws of the universe, doubt in the continuation of life exist in the same measure as the psyche doubts himself or herself. If you find the roots of all your doubts, namely the doubt in yourself, then you can intelligently deal with it.

In my observation of human souls, the strong desire to communicate with departed loved ones almost always has at its root this very problem. Therefore, I say it is unhealthy, because the actual contact would not really help the evolution of the soul. It would help much more if you set about tackling your inner problems. When you approach it in this way, your desire to be in touch with one particular person in the beyond -- no matter how much loved, how dear to you -- will lessen in the deep inner conviction that the universe is good, loving, benign, friendly. There cannot be death, hate cannot win out. There cannot be chaos and disorder. But these answers can come to you only if you first permit yourself to realize that these questions and fears exist in you. And then ask yourself why they exist, where is your doubt in yourself? That is the healthy approach and constructive attitude to the entire question of contact with the Spirit World.

Contact with spirits is not a necessity. For many, evolution can be reached without it. Development can be brought about without it. However, if and when such contact is offered in a really constructive way, the fact of the contact itself should be of less importance than that which you gain from it. That, my dear ones, should be your main question anyway when you have the opportunity to approach contact with the Spirit World. Ask: "What does it give me? Is it constructive? Does it make me free? Does it help me to develop myself? Does it further my independence, my self-responsibility, my maturity, my self-honesty? Or does it further escapism, no matter how prettily it may be clothed?" When you approach any contact in this way, whether spirit or human, you will be safe. You will not have to ask yourself constantly, before your doubts can really disappear: "Is it true? Is it false? Is it the subconscious of the medium? Is it a spirit? Is it a divine spirit or is it an erring one?" That will no longer be the point, even before you succeed in eliminating your doubts. You will be able to leave such unanswered questions aside for the moment, concentrating on what the contact has to offer you, until you are far enough advanced on your path to find, deep in the hidden recesses of your soul, the real roots of all your doubts regarding life and death, God and man. This will make you strong and certain and truly independent. That is the only

proper approach to all the help that is being offered to you. Once you face your doubts in their true light, you will no longer be ashamed of them. They exist in most human beings to some extent, whether consciously in some aspects and unconsciously in others makes no difference.

But basically the doubts are the following: "Is God a reality or is this a universe where everything is arbitrary and coincidental? Am I at the mercy of chaotic forces or is the universe as benign and as loving as metaphysics, religion and some philosophies teach?" This is the battle in you that contains all other doubts, such as the continuation of life after death, the fear of death, the fear of life, the fear of other human beings and yourself, the distrust because of this fear. The answer to these questions can only become a strong certainty as a consequence of your complete self-understanding and the solution to your inner conflicts. That is the only way.

It is possible that part of you believes in all the truths while another part has doubts, is simultaneously afraid of having these doubts and is therefore hiding them. By bringing them out, you will approach the nucleus of the problem directly. That, in turn, will give you the right approach to any facet of life, be it the contact with spiritual forces or beings, or any other area of human life.

QUESTION: That is most helpful. But in one of the sessions a person was advised to speak every day with her father...

ANSWER: In the first place, one can talk to and help a departed dear one without actual mutual contact. The human who talks to the departed just sends thoughts that may be constructive and helpful in showing the way to that soul. This is not the same as the kind of communication where a spirit manifests. Moreover, I did not say that communication is inadvisable in all circumstances, especially if it is approached with the attitude of helping the spirits. The main point is to cultivate the basic healthy attitude I discussed. When you seek contact in the hope of stilling existing doubts, even though the hope and the doubts may not be conscious, then it furthers something unhealthy and makes for a confused approach to this entire question. Talking to a departed dear one, without receiving proof of his or her continued existence, is an altogether different matter. Spirits are often inclined to take advice from their dear ones on earth rather than from other spirits. Therefore, there is no harm in trying to help in particular, special instances. But this does not alter what I said about seeking contact with the Spirit World in which spirits actually manifest in which or another. [Thank you so much.]

QUESTION: I would like to know how to handle a guilt feeling -- and also how does one make amends?

ANSWER: As long as an attitude, an emotion, an action or a thought causes guilt, one has not found the roots of it. Therefore, the gnawing guilt persists. It is as if the psyche says: "You have not come to the roots of it yet," and, therefore, it is an indication to go on searching about the very thing you are consciously guilty about. Examine it, and you will find that it often is a camouflage a real guilt. It is as though the psyche says: "I produce this guilt so that I do not have to face the real guilt." Do not be misled by such discoveries. Go on from there.

You will also find that quite often one feels guilty about a common human failure or fault. Upon further analysis you will find that there is something in you that is not ready to give up this fault or weakness, for reasons still hidden. Therefore you feel guilty. That means you have to find

out why you do not want to let go of the failing. You will inevitably find that the failing is thought to be a defense against your uncertainties, your fears, your vulnerabilities. Only when you find that this is so can you examine why you think it will protect you and whether or not this assumption is correct. Of course, you will find it is a wrong conclusion, a misconception.

Only when you realize fully that it is a misconception will you let go of it. Your inner will will function. You will let go without effort. You will find that the defense mechanism, the pseudo-protective armor of this fault, is useless, senseless. It does not work. When you clearly see that, you will be willing to give it up -- and then, when you are willing to give it up, you will no longer feel guilty. You continue to feel guilty only if you try to give up the fault compulsively, while inwardly you cling to it for the reason I have stated.

Therefore, I say, do not force it, for forcing cannot succeed. Rather try to find out whether you really want to give up what makes you feel guilty? Or isn't there some hidden recess of your soul that says, "I must have that fault because otherwise I would expose myself and be hurt." When you find that, you approach the core of the problem.

Then there is another alternative regarding guilt feelings: One often feels guilty when that feeling is unjustified, as I said before. As I also said, these unjustified guilts are a camouflage for the real reason about which one feels guilty. As I said some time ago, often the imagined guilt is actually graver than the real hidden guilt. But just because the real guilt is more difficult to face, emotionally it seems harder to bear than the unjustified, imagined guilt. The real guilt may be that you deny yourself in some way, you betray yourself by a weakness that is the result of a wrong conclusion. By betraying yourself -- the best part of yourself, that which yearns to love and give, to feel and to sympathize, to be generous, to be humble -- you are bound to betray also those you love best. When you find this indirect betrayal toward others because of direct betrayal toward yourself, you have another clue to your guilt.

By finding all this, you make amends. To find these answers by the piecemeal work, the patience, the perseverance and the relaxed, continued effort in this direction, you do the only thing that is constructive and valuable. Therefore you make amends not to a higher power, but to yourself. God's ways, the ways of truth, bring happiness and liberation. If only humanity could feel that, so much sorrow and hardship could be avoided! For many of you feel that although God's ways are wonderful, they are a hardship on you, demanding a saintly life that is not to your advantage. That is so untrue, so very untrue! Only when you experience a few major liberations in this work that I show you, will you discover that this concept, often unconscious, is a wrong one. God's way works to your immediate, direct advantage and is not something "goody-goody" and saintly that is beyond you. With that knowledge, all your doubts and guilts must disappear, because you can be at peace with yourself and at peace with that which is the best in you, knowing it will not bring you any disadvantage.

May these words take root in your souls. May each one of you find something in the words I am privileged to give you from which to build deeper understanding, the inner will and inner peace to find yourselves without impatience, without inner haste. May these words help you to search in the knowledge and the awareness that whenever the world seems dismal and gray it is an indication that you are not in truth. If you can but retain this thought, it will help you in difficult times. Know that the shadow is not truth. Unhappiness, hopelessness is not truth. For the world is a beautiful

one in which there is nothing to worry about. Whether you succeed in your work a little faster or slower makes no difference. For all of you, each soul ever created, will come to the light that is eternal happiness. It is bound to be that way! Take along this thought. May it strengthen you. Be blessed, my dear ones, each one of you, in God and in Christ. Be in peace, be in the Lord!

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