

SHAME OF THE HIGHER SELF

Greetings. I bring you blessings, my dearest friends. Blessed is this hour. Blessed is each one of you and your dear ones.

I have discussed at length with you the guilt and shame all human beings feel about their lower selves, their faults and weaknesses, their misconceptions and deviations. Tonight I should like to discuss another aspect of the human personality, the shame about the higher self, the best and noblest in the human heart. This may sound incredible -- nevertheless it is so. I am certain that you will all recognize the truth of these words when you listen carefully.

Strangely enough, people are just as ashamed of their faculties of love, humility, generosity -- the very best they have to offer -- as they are of the small, selfish and ungenerous part of their nature. Let us consider what causes this inner tragedy, this senseless struggle. One main factor is responsible, which varies in extent, detail and manifestation with every individual.

When a child feels rejected -- and you know that every child does -- whether this feeling is justified or unjustified makes no difference -- in most instances it feels more rejected by one of the parents than by the other. This need not be so in reality, because the very parent who appears to reject it may have more real love for the child than the other parent. But the way the child feels is what counts as the inner impressions accumulate to form the images -- the petrified wrong conclusions -- and establish the patterns of the person's subsequent emotional life.

The child would like to be loved and approved of to a much greater extent than is possible, particularly by the parent who seems to reject it. When this exclusive tenderness and affection is not forthcoming, the child feels it as a rejection, and a confusion arises in the soul. In the child's vaguely felt emotions, love and acceptance from this particular parent becomes the most desirable aim, all the more so because love and acceptance to the degree that the child would wish it seems unattainable. The desired aim -- exclusive love and acceptance -- is confused with the parent withholding it. In the confused, immature mind of the child, the rejecter now becomes desirable, taking the place of that which was originally desired: exclusive love, approval, and acceptance. A further result of this confusion is that the rejecter seems unloving. The mother or father is desirable also because that which is wanted from him or her is desirable. Therefore, to be unloving is a desirable state. The child's psyche says: "If I am unloving, I will be desirable, my love will be sought. Just as I do not reject my rejecter, so will I no longer be rejected. Since the rejecter seems cold, aloof, and free of emotions, this behavior pattern -- imagined or real -- becomes desirable and something to be emulated.

When you consider this inner process, you will again find that although the process is not logical when analyzed and the emotions are translated into clear-cut thoughts, it has its own quite

understandable limited logic in the child's mind. No conflict that arises in the psyche is utterly meaningless, although the emotions can be very limited and faulty when examined closely. A true picture can be obtained only after understanding the peculiar logic of confused emotions.

With the confusion about parental rejection in the unconscious, the personality grows into an otherwise mature being, but retains the particular impression that is bound to color his or her entire emotional life. Deep in the unconscious, he or she feels that it is undesirable, and therefore shameful, to demonstrate all that for which the child within still yearns.

An individual's withdrawal from and refusal to love is often much less determined by the fear of being hurt and disappointed than by the parental circumstances disclosed here. It is important to recognize this element in you, no matter in how hidden and conflicting a way it may manifest by contrary drives and compulsions. Heartbreaking problems arise from this conflict. They can be eliminated only by recognizing the basic wrong conclusion with all its chain reactions and ramifications.

There is, on the one hand, the guilt of selfishness and self-centeredness which makes loving an unprofitable, disadvantageous adventure. There is, on the other hand, the shame of loving. This conflict in itself tears apart the human heart. You try to force yourself to love, while your natural desire coming from the higher self and truly wanting to love is stopped because you are ashamed of it. Thus you feel guilty for not loving and ashamed to love.

Consider also that the child feels deeply humiliated when it yearns for love and affection but is rejected instead. In its unconscious mind the idea forms that to love is humiliating. Since the most desirable person for the child has withheld the love and the free giving of feelings, love must be something shameful one has to hide. The realization that your fear of loving is often based less on your fear of being hurt and disappointed than on the elements I am discussing is a very important insight.

In your self-search you can find the existence of this conflict by recognizing various symptoms. Self-observation will reveal how you react in certain situations, or rather how your emotions react and behave. These reactions are often quite subtle. Such subtleties are at work when you are ashamed to ask for something, or when you detect an acute feeling of shame about showing your heart and exposing your innermost need. Or, for instance, you find that you are ashamed to pray. Does not that which you are ashamed of -- the need of your heart, the demonstration of your true self with all its loving generosity, as well as prayer -- stand for the best in you?

This is another universal conflict. Sometimes it is very obvious, then again it becomes compounded with so many other conflicts that it is hard to detect. Nevertheless, some of this basic conflict exists in every individual.

Certain particular circumstances also play a role and determine the intensity of this conflict. Observe your relationship to the other parent, the one who seems to give freely what you desire from the rejecter. If the situation is such that the rejecter is outwardly the "superior" one, always the winner, while the loving parent is subdued, apparently weaker and under the domination of the rejecting parent, and perhaps even a little bit despised, the conflict becomes even stronger in the soul -- whether this is actually so or not makes no difference, as long as the child feels it to be so.

Then, in addition to its own experience of rejection, the child witnesses the apparent or actual rejection of the loving parent. The child then gains the impression that the loving parent is weak, while the rejecter is strong. Therefore love becomes weakness, while aloofness is a sign of strength, at least in the unconscious. The child's desire is to be as strong as the desirable parent, and certainly not as weak as the undesirable one.

Your wrong conclusions in this respect may be manifold. It may be completely wrong that the rejecter is strong, while the loving parent is weak. It may be the very opposite. But the situation between your parents may actually be somewhat as you see it. Then the wrong conclusion is that it is not love that makes the giving parent weak, but other attributes. It may be a distortion of love that causes the weakness. Or, the capacity for love is relatively real and other factors cause the weakness and afflict the love capacity. On the other hand, the "strong" rejecter may really not be strong. He or she may have many desirable qualities worthy of emulation, but certainly not the aloofness from love and the inhibition of displaying the best qualities of his or her personality.

The situation is further complicated if, for instance, due to many other contributing factors, the domineering "strong" parent is the one who gives more love than the weaker parent who is under the dominion of the "strong" one. Each parent may then have "desirable" qualities, but they often conflict with one another. You may unconsciously despise in one parent what you try to emulate in the other, being torn apart by the very fact that you are unaware of what you want and that your aim is unrealizable because certain factors in it cancel each other out. When the situation with the parents is not so extreme, it is harder for you to get to the root of the problem. Then it becomes more complicated by the subtlety and elusiveness of contradictory emotions in the parents as well as in yourself. To recognize this is so important because it causes you even more hardship.

A further complication is that often the outward appearance does not correspond to the inner situation. Outwardly one parent may be much more domineering than the other. Inwardly, the situation may be just the opposite. Or, outwardly neither is domineering and "strong," but inwardly such an imbalance in the relationship exists very definitely. You must not forget that especially as a child, you absorb the inner situation, you register it very finely, while you retain the outer situation in your intellectual memory. The latter has much less effect on you than the former. No matter how the outer situation appears, you acutely feel the dependent, wanting, needing parent as inferior, while the one who rejects these wants and needs you regard as strong and superior. Thus, you ally yourself in an ever so subtle way with the rejecter and, together with him or her, you reject the weak parent. You would rather be accepted by the desirable rejecter than be identified with the weak, needy and dependent parent. As far as your innermost self is concerned, whether you actually betray the weak parent in words or deeds, or if you merely desire to do so, does not matter. The mere inclination is sufficient for you to feel this as a betrayal and, in a sense, it is that. The betrayal is aggravated because you abandon the very thing you yearn for.

You betray the best in you because you prohibit the unfoldment of your love capacity. At the same time, you betray the parent who has actually given you what you desired to receive from the other parent. You now unconsciously consider his or her very act of giving as a weakness that deserves contempt.

The betrayal is subtle, but it is at the same time the most dominant conflict in your soul. In the course of your work it is necessary to find that part in you where you betray not only the best,

the highest and the noblest in you, but also the one parent who was the weaker one to begin with, and who might have loved and cherished you in a much more satisfying way. To find and stop this inner betrayal is important not because the parent you have rejected suffers from it, but mostly because you suffer from it much more than you realize. The betrayal weighs you down with guilt. It is the deepest of your guilts.

Only the other day we discussed guilt feelings, and I spoke about how often people create imaginary guilts, or blame themselves for very unimportant shortcomings in order not to face their main guilt. For most of you, the betrayal of loving is your main guilt which you keep locked away from consciousness. As long as you do not become aware of and face all the ramifications and aspects of your betrayal of the one who has loved you most for the one who has given you less -- at least, according to your feelings -- that betrayal darkens your outlook on life. It eliminates your self-assurance, your self-confidence, your self-respect. It is responsible for the deepest roots of your inferiority feelings. You do not trust yourself with this betrayal locked in your soul. Your psyche says: "How can I trust myself knowing that I am a traitor, knowing that I go on constantly betraying the best in me? If I cannot trust myself, I cannot trust anyone else." That is the natural result, a further chain reaction. If you do not trust people, you are bound to attract those who will constantly confirm to you that you have no reason to trust them. But if you genuinely trust others, you will have the proper discrimination and judgment and will attract a good many who will warrant your trust. This can only happen if you first establish the reason for not trusting yourself. And this, in turn, can happen only if you find and eliminate the basic betrayal I have indicated.

So, my friends, find in yourself the betrayal which you have been carrying. Follow it through, even if you no longer have the opportunity to observe the interaction with your parents. You may be transferring the same feelings to other people, who in some remote way replace them psychologically. That may be a friend, a husband, a wife, a relative, an associate; someone who is near and dear and important to you in some way. Perhaps you continue the betrayal in the same subtle way as you betrayed the parent. Whenever you reject a person who is ready to offer you genuine love and affection or friendship or help in some way, and for one reason or another you feel or imagine this person to be helpless or weak or dependent, he or she takes on the role of the "weak" parent. On the other hand, there may be another person not so ready to give you what you wish. It need not be love, it may be respect, admiration, acceptance. Then this person takes on the role of the rejecting parent. Examine your most subtle and elusive emotions. Go behind the sometimes valid aspects which may still be rationalizations for the inner betrayal you commit all over again against the one parent, as well as against your innermost self.

The act of betrayal is so very subtle, my dear friends, that you cannot put your finger on it by looking at your outer actions only. No overt deeds can be found to prove the act of betrayal. If you are not truly desirous of examining your innermost reactions and emotions in this respect, no one can convince you. You will find excellent arguments to prove that it is not so. But your heart will never be convinced, and that is what really matters.

The problem, in its simplest terms, is based on the following wrong conclusion: Love is weakness; withholding love and affection is strength. Since you do not wish to be weak and needy, you not only emulate the person who corresponds to your wrong concept of strength, but you also betray the one who seems weak to you. Once you find your emotions, reactions, and attitudes that correspond to this misconception, you can reconsider the concepts and form new ones according to

truth. You will then see that many confusions and errors exist in you, causing you to commit acts of betrayal which have many further negative consequences in your inner and outer life. This realization and a discriminating attitude toward your inner motives will give you strength by enabling you to approach reality. It is of utmost importance that you begin to search in this direction. Find the part in your emotions where you ascribe weakness to acts of love and humility that are tendered in a healthy and real sense. Find in you the part which believes that strength is aloofness or coldness. When you find that, you will find your self-betrayal.

By finding the wrong concepts and then, little by little, adopting the right concepts, you will cease to fear that love is humiliating; that humility, generosity, affection, and a demonstration of your true self are signs of weakness. Your true self is very often hidden behind a wall of stone. This wall of stone is not wickedness, or even selfishness. Neither is it the fear of being hurt and disappointed. Yes, all these also contribute, but to a lesser degree. The main component of the wall behind which you hide the real you is the shame of imagined weakness, of being yourself with all the tenderness and understanding, with all the sympathy and vulnerability of your loving heart.

There are many people who may say, "This does not apply to me, because I am a very demonstrative person. I give my love fully and freely." In such a case, it may be partly true that the real self comes out of hiding. But in the very rarest of instances -- only in an entity very far advanced in purification -- is this entirely so. Part of the real self manifests, but another part remains hidden. Yes, you may have the generous heart that wants to give the utmost and whose love may penetrate the many layers of error and misconception. Yet, you also withdraw behind your shell, or your wall. A part of what you display as love and as giving yourself may not come out of your real self, but may be "borrowed," so to speak. Then it is not really your own. Again, this is a subtle thing. Only in your personal work can you feel whether or not this is so, and to what extent.

Why is it that you hold the best in you encased, while you "borrow" a similar behavior pattern and use it as a substitute for the real? The loving, giving, outgoing personality you may be at times might very well be only a part of your true self. Why? As I just explained, the shame of loving and giving causes you to hide your true self behind a wall. The inevitable effect must be the realization that you are condemned and left alone. This in no way leads you to reconsider the first impression that loving is shameful. In the first place, this conclusion is no longer conscious, therefore you cannot change it. You know very well that nothing can be changed as long as it is hidden from consciousness. In the second place, the first impression, causing the wrong conclusion, is much stronger, infinitely more powerful, than all subsequent impressions and experiences. Hence, you make a compromise by retaining the original wrong conclusion: "I must not love, I must not expose my real self," and add to it the newer experience that remaining aloof brings censure and loneliness. The latter causes you to assume a veneer of outgoingness, expressing emotions and love that are not quite real. You still do not display your real self.

I do not mean that this substitute outgoing personality is an affectation, or what you may term "phony." No, it is again much more subtle than that. It is a part of your being, but is not the real self. Some emotions of the real self are components of this superimposed layer, however. Many other currents, stemming from these conflicts, dilute the purity of the original and real personality. In a subtle way, you dramatize yourself and your love all the more because you do not dare to show that which is real. This happens in many facets of life. It is most easily found in the love relationship between the sexes.

You can see where this particular phase of the work will lead you. By finding and understanding how the betrayal applies to your own case, you will also find that you keep your real self hidden most of the time. With this realization you prepare the ground to allow your real self to evolve, to come out in the open. This work is not as easy as it may seem, nor is it as difficult as it may appear to some of you.

You may already sense at this point that the goal of purification is to free your true personality. That is the real meaning of freedom and the only possible way to live happily, to be strong in a healthy and real sense. The very fact of becoming aware of the universal conflict around the shame of the higher self, of beginning to feel how it exists in you personally, even long before you are able to open the prison door and let your real self out, will cause you to experience a wonderful new inner strength. The awareness that this exists in you and the constant observation of how it manifests in your daily emotional reactions will bring you nearer to the removal of your prison bars, so that you can liberate the real you.

The real you will rejoice. You will then see clearly and without a doubt that it was wrong to have thought that you have to hide the best in you, that it is something shameful. You will see what an unnecessary burden it was to keep your real self hidden. One person will hide it behind a mask of aloofness and pseudo-strength. Another will hide it behind a superimposed layer of something that resembles the real self in all its best aspects, but is not quite it. In both cases you have to remove the false layer and look where the real self is. Allow it to step out, even if at the beginning it does so only on rare occasions, ever so cautiously. But then the real you will see that you do not have to fear, you do not have to be ashamed. The fear comes mostly as a consequence of the shame of the exposure. By this process you will remove the phantom world you have created out of the false impressions of your childhood. You have no idea what a tremendous relief it is to exorcise this phantom world and live in reality. Only the real you can live in it, for the superimposed layers, created out of unreal concepts, cannot live in a world of reality. You will live in freedom; you will no longer find it necessary to betray the best in you, or betray another.

Are there any questions on this subject, my friends?

QUESTION: How is all this related to the Oedipus complex?

ANSWER: In the condition called the Oedipus complex the connection between it and the conflict I have discussed is as follows: The awakening sex instinct mingles with the longing to be loved by the rejecting parent. Whenever this is the case, the conflict is aggravated. When the awakening sex instinct turns to the other parent, the one who does not reject, or rejects much less, the problem under discussion tonight may not be as strong, but the soul-condition may then be much more complicated and conflicting. It is impossible to generalize. Each case is unique and has to be investigated. Then one can see how it all connects.

QUESTION: I read a book called Cosmic Consciousness. It says, "The loss of the sense of sin is one of the most striking characteristics of the state of cosmic consciousness." What does this mean?

ANSWER: Your world on earth, as you all know from the lectures and teachings you have received, is a world of unreality. You may term it a temporary reality. The things you experience, the deductions you make with the surface logic of the intellect which ignores spiritual and absolute truth, are faulty. They have a limited value and truth, like the wrong conclusions of the soul made by the child, which apply correctly to a particular situation. They are not without their own peculiar logic, limited as it may be. Nevertheless, these conclusions are wrong and unrealistic if applied as a general truth of life. The same relationship exists between the conclusions and deductions the intellect forms correctly as applied to the temporary circumstances of certain conditions in this life on the earth plane and the spiritual laws of absolute reality where these same deductions and conclusions are wrong.

Sin, as you all know, is nothing but ignorance. It is distortion. No one is wicked or bad or malicious because he enjoys it for its own sake. A person may be all those because he mistakenly thinks it serves him as a protection. The more you analyze and understand yourself, the more you will find this to be true in your own case, and therefore it must hold true also for others. So, when people behave negatively, you will no longer feel frightened or personally involved. It will no longer cause you hardship. This may sound impossible, but it is true.

When a person has raised his or her consciousness and perceives inklings of absolute truth, he or she then realizes that there is no such thing as evil, badness, sin, malice. All this prevails only as long as you live in this earth sphere with the limited outlook caused by your own distortions. Once you raise yourself above this state of error, you will see that all evil on this plane is nothing but a defensive weapon, or rather, a pseudo-defensive weapon, for in reality it has the very opposite effect. Once you understand the motive of evil and sin, you no longer fear it, you no longer feel personally at stake, and therefore you lose the sense of its reality. You are all on the way toward experiencing this truth, at least to some degree.

When you find and dissolve your own wrong conclusions, nothing will any longer prevent you from loving and being free. You then remove the part in you that was in darkness, that was selfish and unloving because of the wrong conclusions. Where you have found and removed the error, you have a true concept of reality, you can love without fear, and therefore you live without sin, if you want to use this expression. Evil and sin are products of an illusory world that exists only while you live in the illusion, but they have no absolute reality. The moment you raise your consciousness, you are free of the illusion; it no longer has any reality whatsoever. Even when you see error in others, with this raised consciousness you will see through it, you will understand its significance, its origin, and so you will realize its very temporary effect. Actually, error, or sin, has no effect on reality at all; it only affects those who still live in unreality while they live in it.

QUESTION: I would like to ask a question about Genesis. In the Garden of Eden, the two trees: I understand why the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden -- because we have to get it slowly by ourselves, instead of having it served us on a silver platter. But I don't understand the other, the Immortality. After all, as spirits we are immortal anyway, so we have already eaten the fruit. Why is it forbidden?

ANSWER: It refers to your life on earth, of course. It applies, just like the Tree of Knowledge, to the incarnated spirit. The meaning of both trees could not possibly apply to the liberated spirit who lives in the absolute reality of the spirit world. If human beings were born with

the inner conviction, the inner certainty, not brought about by the labor of self-development, that they are immortal in spirit while they are not yet purified, their instinct for survival would be too weak. They have to have the uncertainty to the extent that they still have to solve their inner problems and confusions. This is for their own protection. They would not undertake the difficulty of earth life; they would be lazy. They might prefer to develop in a slower way or be satisfied with a slightly raised consciousness, affording them better conditions, but they would lack the incentive of freeing themselves completely so as to enter sooner into a state of unity. The entire Plan of Salvation would come to fruition so much later if people would not hold on to earth life because they have no certainty yet. The prohibition of this knowledge speeds development.

On the other hand, if the inner sense and conviction of immortality comes as a result of the hard labor of development, it will not reduce the will to live on earth. On the contrary, developed beings will then welcome life on earth in another sense, and even more than before, when they simply held on because they were uncertain. The joy of life on earth in the knowledge that there exists a much better state is a byproduct of spiritual development, of a higher state of consciousness. Those who have succeeded in working themselves through to a higher consciousness know they are immortal. They know so because in the sweat of their labor they have freed themselves of error. They will then find beauty in earth life, not because they think this is the only form of life and they have to hold on to it, but just because they know there is more.

The lack of this raised state of consciousness may make life on earth difficult; the outlook is rather gloomy because you still live in the illusion of evil and sin, in error and misconception. But no matter how hard you find it, if self-destructiveness is not abnormally strong, you will hold on to life -- and this is good and important. However, if without the organic growth of self-development, the inner conviction of immortality -- I do not speak of belief -- were given to humans "on a silver platter," as you put it, they would not hold on to life. I do not say that such people would necessarily commit suicide, but their struggle to keep their joy in life alive, even if it manifested only rarely, their capacity to see beauty in it would not be awakened.

My dearest friends, I will withdraw into my world and leave you again with divine blessings, with love and strength, with all the help we can give each one of you who is on this path. May this will of yours to work yourself through to real freedom bring you the joy you are entitled to have and which you can have through your self-liberation. Be blessed, my dear ones, be in peace, be in God!

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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