

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Greetings, God bless all of you, my dearest friends. Blessed is this hour. I shall be glad to answer your questions to the best of my ability.

QUESTION: In your answer to my question after the last lecture, about the right way toward the love we all desire, you described the work process of realizing, observing, and finally abandoning the wrong way in order to clear the path for the right way. You ended with the sentence: "Then you are on the road upward." I would now like to ask you to describe that road upward, the right way, the healthy approach that should follow the work of letting go of the compulsive wrong way.

ANSWER: As I said, the first step is to constantly recognize the emotions substituted for the desire to receive love. These emotions will not disappear the moment you first detect them. It is, therefore, part of the road upward to observe them as they live in you and then to deal with them by analyzing their significance. We also discussed that inner, subtle, and very devious current with which you try to force others to love you -- mostly by trying to make an impression on them, and by proving yourself in one way or another. Once you become fully aware of them, you will be able to translate such feelings into clear-cut language.

You will then see how far-reaching their significance is. For instance, you will recognize that due to the very existence of this forcing current you cannot help being subjective. You respond favorable to those who agree with you, who appreciate, admire or love you. In those who please you you see the good in disproportionately stronger light than their shortcomings. You may be aware of their faults but, emotionally, you minimize them. On the other hand, when someone displeases, hurts or disappoints you -- or you believe so -- you will develop resentment and contempt toward that person. What you see may be correct. Nevertheless, you put things out of proportion when you

overemphasize the good or the bad, according to the person's reaction to you. That is a distortion. At first you are unaware that you are distorting. You are even less aware why. As you become aware of these emotions and their deeper significance, you weaken their impact. In this way you keep moving upward toward the solution of the problem. You will increasingly realize how subjective your emotions are, no matter how much you may pride yourself on your objectivity in other and outer areas of your life.

The time will have to come when you not only recognize these reactions, but also see how they block you from receiving that which you yearn for. By recognizing your hidden subjectivity, you automatically approach objectivity -- and thereby truth and reality. You may not be able to feel differently as yet, but the remaining wrong reactions will already have a different effect on you -- and on others, for now you have become your own observer. With continued practice, you will fully understand that when you are subjective, you do not know the meaning of love. You do not respect

the other person for his or her own sake. Oh, you know all the right answers and theories; you know all the truth teachings. You may even be convinced that you follow these universal truths -- and may very well be doing so. But it is necessary to start searching in areas deeply hidden within that you may not yet have reached.

Let us examine in depth the significance of the inner universal process I have just described. You long to be loved, while you are unable to give love -- certainly not to the degree you desire to get it for yourself. Your love will function only if people do right by you, at best. This means that you request others to give you something that you are inwardly unwilling to give them. You request unconditional love. You expect to be so well understood that people love you in spite of your shortcomings and various weaknesses. You do not realize that with these very weaknesses you inadvertently hurt and disappoint them just as often as others inadvertently hurt and disappoint you due to their weakness. You want to be understood and loved in spite of your shortcomings, but you are not willing to do the same when other people's weaknesses affect you negatively. This request -- though unspoken and unconscious -- is unfair; it amounts to pride, for you claim an extra special position for yourself that you are not willing to concede to others. This attitude is highly subjective and unrealistic and affects others more strongly than you can possibly realize. It is easy to see that the effect of such an attitude will not be in your favor.

Thus, it is necessary that you learn to love, for only then will your attitude affect others in a way that will result in their loving you.

In learning how to love, the first step is to eliminate your personal subjectivity. Love is objectivity, among many other things. Subjectivity is self-centered, and love and self-centeredness cannot exist side by side. This is an important aspect of love. You all know, love cannot be forced, but love will grow organically as you remove the obstacles. Your inherent self-concern and subjectivity is one of the greatest blocks to giving and receiving love, especially so because it is submerged.

No human being is ever completely capable of real love and real objectivity. But there are degrees. To the degree you observe your lack of objectivity, you approach objectivity and, thereby, the capacity to love. Your capacity to love, in turn, increases steadily as your willingness to love increases. The willingness to love will increase proportionately as you no longer dread the abyss of not being loved in return -- or as much as you desire it or as fast as you would have it. Recognize your fright of every little hurt and disappointment. As you focus your inner view in that direction, you will surely come to see the terror as total illusion, as overgrown imagination. Because of this, you are unwilling to love. Therefore, your capacity to love is constantly diminished and paralyzed.

The capacity to have an objective and detached view of the person who you think has slighted you cannot possibly be reconciled with the current misconception that the masochistic tendency to allow the unhealthy instincts of others to hurt you is proof of your real love. But, in order to have an objective and detached view, you have to be rid of the illusion that every slight, hurt, or disappointment is a tragedy to guard against.

The solution of this problem demands therefore that you recognize 1) your substitute emotions which find gratification through the subtle current of forcing others to love you; 2) your subjective outlook, hidden in your emotional reactions, that makes you unable to give love; 3) your

world of illusion wherein you are in terror of being rejected; 4) the effect of all this on your personality and on your surroundings.

Full recognition of these elements takes time, perseverance, and very effective willpower to face anything that is within yourself, without reservation. As you experience the truth of these words, alive in you to a much stronger degree than you can possibly realize now, you are bound gradually to change these elements and attitudes, slowly but surely.

You will realize that you can never receive the exclusive, unreasonable, one-sided love that the child in you requests. But as you steadily convince yourself that not receiving it is no abyss, you will be able to give up the request. Hence, you will be without terror. Being without the terror of being slighted or rejected, you will become willing to love others, often by quietly withdrawing and simply respecting them as human beings, even though they do not please you. Since there is no terror, there is no need to be unwilling to give love. With this willingness, your capacity to love will increase. You will show discrimination in the kind of love to give others, and you will be undisturbed also in the realization that not all people love you to the degree and in the way the child in you would demand. When some people do not love you, or even disapprove of you, it will no longer be a tragedy -- which is how your emotions register such incidents at present.

As you thus grow and mature, not being loved, or being disapproved of, will not upset you. And as it does not upset you, it will not bring out the worst in you. You will take life's disappointments with a certain equanimity. You will become capable in a real way, deep down in your emotions, not superficially or by pretense, of having sympathy and an objective, undistorted view of those who anger you.

In this process, you will also learn to evaluate the manifestation of your love-capacity. The two extremes are always close by. You either withdraw completely from allowing yourself to love to your utmost capability, or you give your love full force to those who may still be afraid of it -- not because they reject you, but because this same process goes on in them also. When they are reluctant to reciprocate, you use the forcing current. In doing so, you refuse to see the truth. And when their reluctance becomes evident, you take it personally. You do not understand it and turn against the person in question. Living in the illusion that the other rejects you and that this is a tragedy, you then swing to the other extreme of locking your heart in fear of giving love because of the hurt that may result.

In the process of growth all this will change, not only because of the reasons stated, but also because you will see, observe, and discriminate. For those who are unafraid of loving and receiving love in a mature fashion, you will have a store of love in reserve. From those who are reluctant to love because they are still living in this illusory world you will quietly withdraw, without losing your basic respect for the other as a child of God. You will not distort his or her negative side due to your own hurts and resentments. In its own fashion, this kind of love is as good and valuable as the former kind. The child in you knows only one kind, and if this one kind is, or seems, impossible, you lock your heart altogether. The mature person will distinguish between many kinds of love, because he or she is liberated from the "abyss of illusion" that not being loved spells terror.

Broadly speaking, this is the way upward. Of course, there are many details which I cannot go into now. They could only be discussed personally, as they apply to the individual.

QUESTION: We learn that every sickness, or every symptom of a sickness, is based on psychological reasons. How is it possible that a person has a symptom or a sickness in one country and loses it in another country?

ANSWER: This offers a much stronger indication that the origin is psychological. Such a case may have various reasons. For instance, in one country certain psychological conditions may prevail for the person which do not exist in the other country. Naturally, the conflict is not in the country or the outer environments, but these outer environments may bring the inner conflict to the fore. Something is triggered off in the psyche, entirely unknown to the conscious mind of the person. It may be an association, an emotional climate which subtly affects the personality.

The reason cannot be determined merely by what is outwardly pleasant for the person. Yes, there are instances in which outer hardship becomes so difficult to bear that the psyche puts up a sickness which disappears the moment these outer hardships are removed. But it often works also the other way. When outer conditions seem most favorable, a sickness manifests and then disappears in a different environment in which conditions are much more difficult. This may be because the real self knows perfectly well what is good and necessary for the development of the personality. Isn't it often true that only through some difficulty do you become aware of the significance of your inner conflicts? When difficulties are removed, they continue to slumber in hiding and you cannot do anything to remove the core. Thus, the psyche reacts often to the best interest of the person, because the easy and pleasant conditions cause stagnation, while an unpleasant condition may shake the entire person out of his rut and cause him or her to seek the remedy for the origin of the conflicts.

This general explanation will not suffice for anyone in this predicament. It would be necessary for you to find how these facts apply to you personally, with all their details and variations. Do you understand that?

QUESTION: I understand what you mean, but maybe I did not express myself correctly. This does not seem to apply to the cases I know of. For instance, a person I know suffers from hay fever, but the moment he goes to Europe the hay fever is completely gone. The moment he returns, he has hay fever again.

ANSWER: I cannot see why my words would not apply to this case, generally speaking, but, of course, in order to help him, a personal analysis of his unconscious reactions would be necessary. No generality, no matter how true, can ever help a person individually. Since he himself does not know what his emotions convey, no one else can possibly be in the position of saying something does or does not apply to his particular case. You do not know what goes on in his subconscious; what he is reminded of in Europe, what he associates with his surroundings here, or other factors. But let me ask you this: Do the hay fever conditions also prevail at the places he goes to in Europe, while he is unaffected by them? Or would you say that in Europe it just happens that the climatic conditions are not conducive to hay fever? [Yes, absolutely.] Well, if in Europe the climatic conditions are not conducive to hay fever, then it is evident the question is not Europe versus America, but one condition in the atmosphere versus another. He might very well go to a place in this country where climatic conditions of a similar nature exist as at the places he visits in Europe, and he would then also be free of hay fever. In such a case, the inner key does not apply to feelings

he experiences in Europe or America, but rather to the entirely unconscious associations he has toward certain manifestations in nature. One would have to analyze why these natural conditions bring him distress; what was once, perhaps, so painful when he first developed the affliction so that his subconscious is constantly reminded of it whenever the atmosphere reproduces similar conditions. Of course, the possibilities are manifold, and, as I said, only a personal investigation into the psyche could furnish the answer.

QUESTION: I would like to make an observation about this condition. Medical literature cites cases of persons who left their homes, for example for Arkansas or Arizona for the relief of hay fever. When they got there, they did find relief. Later, when some particular member of their family would come to visit, the affliction would recur.

ANSWER: Certainly, this is good proof of what I tried to explain.

QUESTION: This night is the eve of the Sabbath. It also happens to be the eve of Yom Kippur which is the Day of Atonement. On such a night, in ancient Nazareth, it is likely that Jesus, as a Jew, would have been in the synagogue, chanting solemn prayers with His congregation. Yom Kippur is also designated as the Sabbath of Sabbaths. The word Sabbath is loaded with meaning and it appears frequently in Scripture. Jesus referred to it when He said: "The Sabbath was made for man." What did He mean? And also, what is the significance of ritual in pursuit of the path toward God?

ANSWER: Let us take the first question first: "Sabbath is made for man." This, like almost all scriptural quotations, can be answered on many levels. I could not possibly go into all the different levels of meaning, but I shall try to combine them, so as to give you the essence of this quotation, as it applies to all levels. The outermost level is obvious. It means man should have one day on which to devote his thoughts to his inner life. Thus, he devotes himself to God. On this one day, he should desist from his ordinary pursuits. If he wishes to focus his attention on the inner life, he cannot possibly do it effectively if distracted by other things.

Religions have made a rigid rule out of this wise provision and admonition. With rigidity, the inner meaning gets lost. People follow through blindly and simply take the Sabbath -- or Sunday -- as the one day in the week in which to relax and rest. This is fine, and it should be so. But what is real rest? What is the only source of strength that could ever come to man? It is God. And God will give you strength if you try to know yourself so as to overcome your weaknesses, your misconceptions and illusions, your limitations and blindness. God in you can manifest only by way of this path of self-search, of utter honesty with yourself, by working on your development.

This is not to be taken literally to mean that only one particular day should be designated for the pursuit of self-development and spiritual fulfillment. The meaning is: A certain amount of time should be devoted to the inner life, to reflection and contemplation, to self-observation. Thus, and thus only, will you be capable of tuning into the divine forces that are otherwise out of your reach.

The Sabbath of Sabbaths means that there is this special day that this particular religion designated on which an inventory should be made. Again, it is not to be taken literally to mean that it has to be on only one special day a year. All of you who really work on this path know that there are certain phases when you gain an overall view of where you stand now, as compared to where

you stood before, and when, to some extent, you also see what remains to be accomplished, what problems within have not yet been solved. You are still locked and blocked, and although you may see certain facets, you still lack sufficient insight to change these emotions. So, you know this is what remains to be done. You need certain phases, certain times on this path in which you gain an overall view, or try to gain it as best as you can.

Of course, these original meanings have been lost to a great extent. But that is the real meaning of the Sabbath of Sabbaths. It is, in a way, a new beginning, in the Jewish religion appropriately following the New Year. Is that clear?

QUESTION: Yes, it is quite clear. Incidentally, the word Sabbath actually means "rest," and it also means "seven." I wonder if you could tie the two together.

ANSWER: You know that Scripture says that the seventh day is the day of rest. You also know the esoteric, mystic meaning of the number seven. Seven is the holy number. It indicates that things come to a close, to a whole. I will not say to an end, for there is no such thing; there is always a new beginning, a commencement. It is like the closing of a circle or cycle. When you close a circle, it is a state of peace, of rest. Each number signifies a certain aspect of a cosmic, as well as a personal, psychological principle. The significance of the figure seven is the closing of a cycle. Then you go on, starting on the next cycle. You all know, this path is like a spiral. You seem to go around in circles, but you eventually find out that it is not so. The similar cycle happens to be on a deeper, or higher level. "Seven" indicates the phase that is most restful in which, to a smaller extent, you gain an overall view. The puzzle begins to fit. You see certain pieces have fallen into place. For a moment, in this present phase of your development, you have a certain clarity, and with that a certain peace. This is restful, until you come to the next stage in the ascending cycle, when you may become upset and restless again, when things seem to fall out of place again, sometimes so much so that you wonder if the past peace was an illusion. The confusion will provide you with a deeper insight and peace at the next resting point, when this cycle closes again, provided your work on the path is sufficient in depth and goodwill.

The seven-day weeks pass in your world, one week after the other. They are merely the symbol for the small cycles in the larger ones. Actually, the timing and length of each cycle is an eminently individual process. They not only vary from one individual to another, but also vary with the same person. One cycle may be long, another short. There is no regularity in them. The time measurement on your earth plane is entirely symbolic, whereas in real spiritual understanding there can be no rigidity. You cannot artificially force the stages, they grow out of your work, your individual needs, your personal problems and characteristics. And also, they emerge out of your efforts on the path.

As to your second question, regarding ritual, do you refer to a particular ritual or about ritual in general? [In general. What purpose does it serve on the path?]

Ritual does not serve any purpose. It is a symbol, a reminder, an invitation, so to speak, to think about the inner meaning. Try to look beyond the ritual for the deeper meaning. It is nothing but a signpost, a reminder. There are two categories of wrong human responses to ritual. There are those who keep following rituals in an imaginary sense of safety. They think that by following the ritual, they follow the sense behind it. This implies a laziness of thinking, and a wishful thinking that

with minimum effort, maximum effect can be had. Many people belong to this category, and not only those who belong to a religious denomination. There are subtler ways in which this can be done.

People in the other category say that ritual means nothing, and to some extent they are right. But they have come to the wrong conclusion also, because it does not occur to them that something wise, true, flexible and alive may be behind the ritual. They would realize this if they were but willing to think of and consider such a possibility. However, they do not try, and so are incapable of thinking any more freely and independently than people of the other category. Ritual in itself has nothing to do with the path, with growth, with the freedom that you are all bound to achieve sooner or later, whether you now work on this path or not. But freedom is bound to come eventually, when you are ready to see that you need to work for it. Then you approach freedom, but not by ritual.

QUESTION: Would you discuss, please, the effect of our mind -- that is, our images, wrong conclusions, deviations, and so forth -- on our physical bodies, its processes, developments, its degeneration through disease and aging, and how we may relate the work on the path to preserve and further the health of our bodies. Would you tie in the spiritual with this, too?

ANSWER: This is really quite simple. Your wrong conclusions, misconceptions, distortions, create an inner world of illusion. They create fears and tensions. This is bound to weaken you first in your emotions, then, when a wrong condition persists long and strong enough, eventually also in your body. Inner errors cause you to fear life, therefore, often unconsciously, to wish for death in various degrees. The unconscious desire for sickness is a degree of death. The weakness, resulting from tension and fear, indirectly creates a weakening of the physical body, and directly an unconscious desire for sickness and death.

As the emotions heal, they integrate with the thinking process, instead of being two separate facets. This is strength-giving, provided the two coordinate in truth. Thus, the personality lives in a fearless world. The illusions, being untrue, in the last analysis always create fear and withdrawal from life. When the illusions are gone, the will to live, to be healthy, becomes stronger and stronger, since they are not undermined by the unconscious opposite desires.

As to the second half of your question, there is really no separating line between the spiritual and the psychological nature of the human being. They are separated only in degree. It is an illusion that these two facets of the personality differ from one another. I will tell you why you are thus deluded. According to the distorted God-image, people feel that God requires them to be unhappy, to forfeit pleasure and joy, to do something against their innermost self. That is so often at the root of people's resistance to religion. Psychology, on the other hand, teaches the opposite. When psychological understanding is properly applied and assimilated, you will become a happier person, but certainly not because you become a more selfish person. Many religious practices, however, will not make you happier. That is why you think there is such a difference between the two.

In reality -- I have said it so often, and I will say it again -- divine truth is that you can only be spiritual and find God within yourself if you are happy. But happiness at the expense of selfishness is not the solution. Your aim is to become unselfish out of the conviction that this is what your real

self wants and not because you should, that it is expected of you. True happiness, therefore, can only come about by solving your inner conflicts.

QUESTION: Once something is learned, like the alphabet, we never have to go back and learn it again. But with the path, it seems that one is forever falling back. How is this possible, after a certain amount of progress on the path? To fall back into the silly and petty little crossnesses. This seems to me like the alphabet.

ANSWER: It is not really falling back, my friends. It merely means that you thought you had learned the whole of this particular alphabet, while you really only learned part of it. Before you can entirely eliminate certain childish emotions, you have to have a vast amount of insight, since no inner deviation is separated from other inner conflicts. They are all tied together. As long as this overall insight is not in your consciousness, remnants of the old reactions continue to smolder and come to the fore when you are provoked.

Inner change takes a very long time, you all know that. This should never discourage you. You have to gather the little pieces of information about yourself bit by bit, while you continue to observe your wrong reactions. This constant process, if performed without impatience and anger at yourself, while understanding yourself better with each apparent relapse, will be the best way to achieve the inner change. You must understand that this change cannot happen so quickly because your wrong reactions have too long been accustomed to function in the wrong way. Your personal vulnerabilities are too well geared in the old channel. Therefore it takes time, and each apparent relapse should serve as a means to learn and understand more about yourself. It thus becomes the best means for the growth that you desire.

QUESTION: When there are so many things we all want to ask, why is it such an agony to ask questions?

ANSWER: This question may seem funny to you, my friends, and yet, it touches a very basic problem which I have mentioned so often that to do so again might bore you. You see, it has to do with the human reluctance and fear to reveal the best in oneself. You are worried that others may smile about you, find you inadequate. Or, perhaps, your question may reveal a basic earnestness, a touching humility, a desire toward the best in life and in yourself. Or, it may reveal a problem, thereby revealing one as a troubled, searching human being, vulnerable and confused as all human beings are. Actually, this is endearing, but people, in their distortion, are ashamed as much of these endearing and touching struggles in themselves as they are ashamed of their faults -- and often even more so. Just as you are ashamed to show love or devotion, you feel more secure to be -- or at least to appear -- superior, invulnerable.

Many of my friends have overcome and many others may manifest this universal human reaction in different ways. But those of you who still feel this shyness, question yourselves seriously and as honestly as you know how. If such emotions simmer on the surface, try to translate them into meaning, and you will see that, more or less, they are what I say.

QUESTION: In the last session you said, "You will no longer feel it an injustice to see undeveloped, selfish people seem to have an easy life. You will understand that they are going through a cycle of favorable outer manifestations." But according to your teachings, the good outer

manifestation, too, must be the product of the inner state of being, something that the person must have produced himself. Now, observing some very selfish and undeveloped persons being loved and living in pleasant surroundings, would that mean that in certain fields they have liberated themselves?

ANSWER: In the first place, no matter how undeveloped and selfish a person may seem, or even actually be, he, too, must have assets in his personality. Otherwise, he would not be ready for incarnation. Just because he is a younger soul, less is expected of him -- by his own spirit or real self -- so that these assets have greater weight than the same assets in a person of whom more can be expected. At the same time, the liabilities of a person of higher development count more than the liabilities of a younger soul. The maximum expectancy according to the overall development determines the length and quality of the various cycles, favorable and unfavorable. This is why all Scripture says that no human being can possibly judge another.

Moreover, it is your human illusion to believe another person as being so happy simply because certain favorable conditions exist. There may be a temporary contentment, but not the real happiness that does not fear life any longer. There is a great difference. With the kind of person you describe, the dependency on others and life's ups and downs is still very strong and this does not make for happiness. However, this has no bearing on the fact that they may experience certain times of outer ease.

One aspect of immaturity and separateness is that people always think the other person's happiness is greater than theirs, while their own unhappiness is greater than the others'.

Let my words again be material for your further self-search. And so I retire and leave you with blessings, with divine love for each one of you. May this blessing and this love strengthen you to meet life as fully as you can, the good and the bad, without withdrawal, without fear. For life cannot ever harm you. Peace for all of you, be in God!

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