

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for all of you. Blessed is this hour. The time has come again when it is good to have a question and answer period, so I am ready for your questions.

QUESTION: Can you explain the Biblical passage: "The word of God was given to Moses: Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning."

ANSWER: The meaning of these words has been grossly misunderstood by humankind. It has been interpreted to mean that God is a punishing, cruel God of retribution. Of course, it is not so and the words were never meant to imply this. The real meaning simply affirms the utter justice of cosmic law, or of your inner psychological law. The more you work on the path of self-finding, the more you are bound to find this to be so very true. You will find how you cause all your difficulties. You have already stopped regarding these words as mere theory, but the better you progress, the more will you truly understand just how and why you cause your hardships, and by so doing you gain the key to a change in your life.

Most of you have begun this self-search in good faith, yet at this early stage you can barely see how you are responsible for your misfortunes and, therefore, how just this universe is. Only when you reach certain inner depths, perhaps after a long time of hard and sincere endeavor, do you begin to see clearly what in you has so precisely brought about the hardship that you feel as injustice. The more connections of this sort you make, the better you can realize the true meaning of self-responsibility and of divine justice, without any thought of punishment and retribution. You begin to understand that whatever you give forth, no matter how hidden or subtle, is returned to you. And you deeply feel and know that this is not due to a stiff, rigid, merciless law, but it is your own inner law. And in that you realize the glory of God's love and wisdom. The better you understand your own causes and effects, the more convinced must you become of the marvel of this benign Creation. That is the meaning of these words. The various items cited in this saying are, of course, symbolic. If you want me to, I shall explain the meaning of these symbols. [Please.]

"Eye": The eye symbolizes seeing, the capacity to see, not only outwardly, but also the inner view and vista. In other words, understanding. The more you understand yourself, the better you understand others. You know this. But also, the more you understand, the better you will be understood. This truth may have dawned on some of you as you made real progress and the haze and fog of your confusion lifted. As the fog lifts, your real self reveals itself automatically and others perceive you in truth as well. There is no better, no other way of finding this to be true than through the path of self-searching, self-understanding and self-analysis. Any one of you who has reached some victory within will understand exactly what I mean -- not only theoretically, but through having experienced this truth. Your real seeing and understanding begin only when you see

and understand yourself. And in that measure will you be understood. With such understanding, you will see that the meaning of these words has a positive, rather than a negative implication. It does not mean: "If you do wrong, you will be punished by retribution." It means: "As you see and understand yourself and others, so you make it possible, by lifting the veil, to be seen and understood."

"Life": If you heal yourself of your conflicts, if you integrate and become one within yourself, you become alive, vibrantly alive. To a small extent those of my friends who really work on this path have experienced this to be true. Perhaps you experienced it only temporarily, nevertheless you know what I am talking about. You understand these words in a deeper sense than just as theory. There were those moments of finding the truth within yourself when, all of a sudden, your weariness, your deadness was lifted from you. You vibrate life. You are life. And therefore you give life to others. The life force penetrates through you and finds you an instrument through which to manifest only when you are alive, when you are the life force. You have a life-giving effect on others. Life can only coexist with truth. Where the truth is blurred by your fear, cowardice and the erroneous belief that life can be dealt with by evasion, deadness results. No matter how unpleasant the temporary truth in you may be, facing it results in a vibrant feeling of being alive. Most of you know this from your own experience in this work.

"Tooth": What is a tooth? You need your teeth to bite, to chew, to prepare the physical food so that your body can assimilate it. The intrinsic meaning of a tooth is that of an instrument of assimilation. As you assimilate life, the incidents which could truly become an experience by proper assimilation, you are bound to exert a similar effect on others. On the other hand, your lack of assimilation causes blindness. Your blindness in turn must create blindness toward you. I have said that before in connection with the eye -- seeing, understanding. But the tooth refers specifically to the process that makes it possible to see while the eye symbolizes the end result. Some time ago, I mentioned the contagiousness of inner attitudes and reactions. All this is an explanation of that factor.

If you train yourself to follow this through in your observations, you will gain an entire understanding of this meaning. You are so often puzzled by certain situations in your life. You cannot assimilate this situation because you have as yet not found how you caused it. Only in understanding the causes that you have set in motion will you be able properly to assimilate your life. Whenever you are puzzled, it means that you have not properly understood and assimilated the experience. This creates negative emotions which are bound to affect your environment.

People who live with this attitude will tackle any event coming their way in an entirely different spirit than people who still ascribe certain happenings to a fate outside their control. People understanding and living according to this truth will take any event and examine it profoundly as to their real reactions and hidden trends. If done sincerely, astonishing insights must follow -- perhaps not immediately, but insights must come if you persevere. You will then see that the negative result is the only medicine, the only remedy you need to change the underlying incorrect attitude. This, and this alone, is proper assimilation of life and its experiences. You often suffer because others do not understand you. I assure you that this only happens because in some way you have not assimilated life as it could be possible for you. Some of you, my friends, have experienced that people in your environment suddenly began to react differently toward you, even though they

themselves did not pursue such a path. The mere fact of your own inner growth and change has made it possible for others around you to react more positively toward you.

To the measure that you assimilate, to that measure do you affect others, and subtly enable them, to a degree, also to assimilate a little better.

If there are any questions at this point, please ask them, and we can go on with the next symbol after that.

QUESTION: You mentioned an "inner psychological law." Would you explain that, please?

ANSWER: Whether you call it psychological or cosmic law makes no difference. It is one and the same. However, when I refer to "cosmic law," you automatically think of something that is way outside yourself. When I say "psychological law," you automatically associate it with yourself, as you should. The latter directs your thinking and feeling and perceiving into a more correct channel; you assume self-responsibility when you know it is you, your own law. But "cosmic law" seems to you as if it were something that has nothing to do with you. It seems instituted from the outside, and you have no influence over it. This is an error, even if it is only in a vague feeling. In reality, the two are the same. Now let us go to the next symbol.

"Hand": What does a hand stand for? Has anyone of you an idea? [Giving. Friendship. Action. Taking.]

ANSWER: Taking and giving. Yes. All that. Action includes all that -- and more. The hand is the instrument with which you do, manufacture, execute an idea; with which you give, take, receive; which can be extended in friendship. Hence, the symbol of the hand represents a certain type of action, and therefore also "re-action." As you act and react, so will be given onto you. I hardly need elaborate on this. You all know it to be true, not only as a known religious concept, but also from your personal work experience as you work on yourself. This is very different from the concept of retribution. Thoughts and emotions are actions and reactions too. They inevitably have an effect on others and this effect comes back to you.

COMMENT: As you have already stated, this whole text is taken out of its setting and given a distorted meaning. It suggests a negative fear as though this is the rule by which one is to be governed and to retaliate by the justification of Scripture.

ANSWER: Of course. It is a typical human misunderstanding to think of this in terms of retaliation, rather than in terms of cause and effect due to a wonderfully just law that is mercy, grace, wisdom and love.

COMMENT: May I add something too? In Matthew 5:38, Jesus says: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that you resist not evil."

ANSWER: Yes. Understanding the real meaning of the quotation we are discussing here will show you that Jesus' statement is not a contradiction at all. It may seem so, it may seem like a paradox on the one hand, or a correction on the other. It is neither. It is merely an amplification,

an extension. With the understanding that you gain on this path, you are bound to see that all evil is self-created, and thus it is your lesson and medicine. It is the only way in which you can learn to liberate yourself from the responsible inner factors. Resisting evil, translated into terms of your personal life and reactions, means your cringing from the consequences you are directly or indirectly responsible for, therefore not learning from life. It is the attitude in which you blame others, God, fate, life, rather than finding your own causes. It is withdrawal from life, or antagonism against it, due to failure to understand life's real meaning. "Resisting evil" means all that. As long as you resent certain happenings in your life, as long as you disclaim responsibility for such happenings, you cannot even begin to set out finding this responsibility. Thus you are not in reality, in its true sense. By facing yourself squarely and courageously, you must eventually find your causes and be liberated by this insight. You do not have to look to past incarnations, for if you really want to, you can always find in yourself, in the present, the root that has caused an "evil." So this saying of Jesus is no contradiction, but serves only to extend and amplify the meaning.

COMMENT: It only sounds that way, because He said: "But I say unto you that you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." So it sounds like a paradox.

ANSWER: Yes, if not taken in its superficial meaning, it is just the opposite of a contradiction. All sayings in the Scriptures have a much deeper meaning than their surface suggests. If you grasp this deeper meaning you will gain an entirely different understanding of Scripture.

QUESTION: Another saying of Jesus has been misunderstood, I believe. It has been distorted as meaning injustice. The words in Mark 4:25 read: "For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath." This seems to refer to the principle of the vicious circle.

ANSWER: Exactly. You see, my friends, I believe it almost impossible for anyone to truly understand Scripture, unless one does this kind of work on the path. With this work of self-finding, the sayings will have a very clear meaning for you. You now know quite well that wherever a deviation, misconception or conflict exists in you, vicious circles result. They snowball. They become bigger and bigger so that you continually worsen the situation. That which you originally wanted to run away from gets much worse. Out of this evasion, you create conflicts and wrong attitudes which result in bringing more misery than you would have without such evasion and cowardice. The bargain you wanted to make by assuming a defensive, wrong inner attitude has much stronger repercussions than you realized. That is exactly what Jesus meant.

On the other hand, when you are in health, in harmony, whether in minimum or in optimum state, no hardship would have to come to you and I venture to say that anyone who has progressed somewhat in this work has personally experienced this to be true, at least to some degree. Only then will the spiritual teachings of all times be understood in their true meaning. Only then will you see that God does not sit on a throne above you, arbitrarily handing out reward and punishment, fortune and misfortune. But in your health, in accord with reality on all levels of your being, you produce more and more happiness. In your fullness, you progressively attract more positive experience. In your soul-sickness and error, productive of fear, pride, arrogance, ignorance, darkness, confusion, you are not only unhappy, but, with these trends causing unhappiness, you compound the unhappiness. Thus, from the poor will be taken away. The poor meaning the sick,

the ignorant, the ones in error and darkness. The rich meaning the ones who understand. Now let us continue.

"Foot": "What is a foot?" [Moving. Standing on. Progress.] Again, activity, but of a different kind. Let us examine the difference in activity between hand and foot. The hand's activity is of a nature that may take place without causing a change of position of the person himself. People can produce, manufacture and do things with their hands while they remain in place. This symbolizes a certain kind of inner action. Such actions may be significant and important, but only cumulatively so. If a whole series of such actions is added up, they point to an inherent pattern; they show an underlying principle and concept of life. In different words, the actions of the hand symbolize your everyday activities and reactions -- the outer and the inner -- the many little, in themselves seemingly unimportant events, and your attitude to them.

The activity of the feet, however, symbolizes movement of the entire person -- or lack of it if you stand still. This can be positive in the sense of taking a firm stand, of not running away. Or it can be negative in the sense of a standstill, or stagnation. The feet involve the entire body -- or person. In psychological terms, applied to your life, the movement of your feet symbolizes major changes, decisions, attitudes. All life is differentiated between these two kinds of actions: the actions that are of minor importance if they are not a repeated pattern -- passing, fleeting ones, those that do not necessarily involve your innermost being, unless, of course, they are, as said before, a repeated pattern. It is the action that does not necessarily affect the inner being. The outer being, perhaps. But this is not to be taken to mean that such actions do not produce effects that come back to you. The major actions -- feet -- symbolize decisive change, great decisions, self-propelling movement -- or the lack of it. These actions determine your spiritual "stand," your basic attitude toward all major issues of life. I need hardly emphasize again that one's conscious attitude is not necessarily the real inner and unconscious one. It determines whether or not you choose the way upward with all that this calls for in order to pursue it, willing to pay the price by overcoming a special resistance. Such overcoming necessitates more movement or action than just the minor ones of your hands that allow you to "remain in place," so to speak.

Needless to say that such major activity has an even greater effect on yourself and others around you than the minor actions and reactions. The major activity establishes your place in life, your major events. With it you build your fate, and with it you determine the minor actions and reactions.

"Burning": Do you have any idea what it could symbolize? [Sacrifice. Purification. Inner desire for development.]

ANSWER: The fire of love. The burning of being alive, of action, of doing in the right, organic way. It contains all of what you said. Love, sacrifice, purification, everything -- that spark, that burning spark contained in all living organisms. If you let this spark free to become a burning flame, instead of burying it in ashes, you will incite the spark in others.

QUESTION: Is that the Divine Spark?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: May I ask something that I think has been asked before, but I still don't quite know the answer. Why is it that all these things were not explained with enough clarity so that they could not have been misunderstood?

ANSWER: My dearest friends, as long as one's inner growth is not sufficiently developed, there is absolutely no way of understanding a spiritual meaning, whether clearly and directly, expressed, so that misunderstanding can be ruled out, or conveyed allegorically and indirectly. In fact, the more direct the explanation, the more dangerous it is for those whose understanding has not reached a higher level through development.

Even today, when humankind is in many ways more developed, if my teachings were presented to people who are far away from such thinking, such concepts, such ideas, my words could not possibly be understood. The little that might make some sense to them would have a worse effect than what they do not understand at all. They would be bound to misunderstand -- which is not at all the same as not understanding -- and therefore abuse would be inevitable.

QUESTION: I didn't mean my question in such psychological terms, but in simple terms, like some sayings in the Bible which are clear even today. For instance, "Do not do unto others what you do not want to be done unto you." This is similar in meaning, but is much clearer.

ANSWER: I can only repeat that great truth cannot be revealed to one who is not yet capable of understanding. That person is just as apt to misunderstand the "simple" explanation as the concealed one. But for those who can understand, the concealed one, hidden in symbols, has an additional meaning and revelation that cannot be found in simple statements.

Today, when the masses understand much more than they did thousands of years ago, truth can be given more directly, less veiled. But still, misunderstanding cannot be avoided, and therefore the dosage or proportion, as to how much chance can be taken, how much can be revealed, has to be well weighed. Sometimes more truth can have a worse effect and lead to greater harm than less truth. For misunderstood truth leads to half-truth which is the most dangerous of all. Much of this has happened and is bound to happen in the future. It cannot be avoided, because the benefit for those few who derive real understanding from revealed truth will balance it out. This is why there must be a constant weighing between the benefit and the harm that truth can bring. Hiding the inner sense behind symbols is one way in which both considerations can be achieved. The symbolism protects the truth from those who would misunderstand and abuse it. And it reveals it to those who are ready for it.

But since no one is developed and fully open in all areas of their being, those who passed on the truth, who translated it, have misquoted, misunderstood and distorted the original meaning. Everyone who ever did so did it in a different respect. But this did not happen because the truth was presented in symbols and parables, but because the person's understanding was not sufficient. It would have been worse if the truth had been presented directly. Truth can be a very dangerous weapon, my friends. Even the truth that I present to you can have such a result. If people are unwilling to apply it personally, in the deepest possible sense, they will assume judgment over others that may be all the more dangerous in that it would be partly true. Without recognizing their own negative tendencies people would gain an acute perception of other people's negative tendencies, on which they then can focus out of all proportion, ignoring other factors that change the overall view.

With this outlook, they become arrogant. They judge wrongly, although what they see may be correct. And such teaching of truth may just enhance the negative outlook toward others, if they themselves do not sincerely search within themselves for what is most painful, and from what they cringe most! Truth has to be handled with care and responsibility. If people are inwardly ignorant, it is better not to feed them truth, but leave them rather in outer ignorance.

COMMENT: Jesus himself said, "For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

ANSWER: Yes, that is it. You will all see more and more that this holds true. Now, what is your next question?

QUESTION: What is the true definition of ability in a human being?

ANSWER: Above all, it is the knowledge of one's own potentials and limitations. Where the clear understanding of one's own limitations is lacking, ability must be lacking. So we always come back to the same. Self-knowledge, a true and realistic self-evaluation, is the only thing that can bring forth the maximum ability, creativity and healthy strength. The limitation does not only have to be recognized concerning a possible lack of talent that one wants but cannot have due to certain factors. The limitation has to be recognized also concerning a potential one does not wish to go to the trouble of building up into ability, into accomplishment. In other words, a dormant talent may indeed exist, but the person may wish its perfected state without the labor and effort of cultivating it. Insight into one's hidden desires and their reasons will bring the talent forth if it actually exists. If so, if it is supposed to be accomplished, frustration accrues because the person does not realize that he or she is not really doing the work required to build it up. With such honest self-appraisal, proper decisions must finally result, and lead to ability, creativity and healthy strength.

QUESTION: You suggested last time that I bring this question up again. The question was: "If there is to be a hurt anyway, I'd rather have a self-inflicted hurt than be hurt by someone else."

ANSWER: In part, I have gone into the subject of self-punishment and self-destructiveness before, but I will extend it a little in the light of the new knowledge you have gained. Of course, this is also a question of pride, of the feeling of being exposed to others, while one is a helpless victim. All this contributes greatly to the unconscious desire to hurt oneself before anyone else has the chance.

But there is a deeper and more important underlying reason which has evolved out of the recent lectures. I will show you how it applies to this question. As you now know, there are two predominant inner attitudes, currents or forces in the human being. On the one hand, there is the desire for love -- to be loved and to love -- both realistic and unrealistic, mature and immature. On the other hand, there is the aggressive tendency of desire for rulership, for mastery over others, for dominion. One must inevitably interfere with the other. One must exclude the other. Yet, unconsciously you think they can be combined. You try to make one serve for the other, and this attempt is bound to fail. It creates a tremendous conflict within. As long as you are not acutely and specifically aware of these two currents, you cannot come to terms with life. As long as you try to struggle out of this conflict by blind and unconscious attempts to make two mutually exclusive forces serve the same end, you must inwardly be torn apart. Only conscious awareness of this conflict will show you the way to make peace within yourself, or how to integrate the two currents.

How these two currents are distributed varies with each human being. With one person one may by far be the predominant one. With another, it fluctuates and changes, at one time one current is stronger, at another time the other. Still with another person it is sort of evenly split. Your outer life, what you have and what you lack, and how you have what it is you aim for, is a clear indication of the strength and distribution of these two forces battling within.

Integration of these two forces does not mean the complete elimination of one or both. It simply means that both forces be used in a healthy way, when there is a real reason or need for either, without compulsion, without frenzy, without imagined need that does not actually exist. Only upon clear insight of the existence of these two forces and how they damage you in your blind struggle can you realize how much superfluous energy you put into the pseudo-solution that you unconsciously thought would work for you. And only then will you use either of these two forces in the healthy and constructive way for which they originally are destined. Such knowledge can never come to you by theorizing about it. The only way is by finding at first the existence of their negative functioning within yourself. For instance, the desire for love is quite legitimate. But if this desire is used in your adult years to overcome a childhood hurt, if you use all your unconscious energies in this direction, the urgency of this blown-up desire becomes destructive. It no longer fulfills its original purpose. But you have to clearly understand and see how this applies to you. On the other hand, you unconsciously use the aggressive force to overcome your insecurity, your feelings of inadequacy. You use it to gain respect, power, admiration, unconsciously believing that thereby you also gain love. In reality the aggressive force, in its healthy way, is supposed to serve you in actual danger for actual defense, to assert yourself when your integrity is at stake, or to prohibit others from taking advantage of you. But most human beings are submissive in the wrong place and yield where they should assert this healthy current. Yet where they should not, they often use aggression most violently. The healthy way will never cause interference and mutual exclusiveness. The desire for love and healthy aggression are meant to live peacefully side by side.

Due to this conflict tearing you apart -- and the time has come when all of you should become acutely aware of this -- the tendency to inflict hurt upon yourself rather than taking the chance of being hurt by others can be much better explained. Unconsciously, you know perfectly well how futile this struggle is. One part of your subconscious tries to take the easy way out. Another, deeper part of your being, watches and knows this is futile and damaging. This deeply hidden knowledge is not correctly interpreted by your consciousness. This voice merely means to convey: "You are on the wrong track the way you are going. Seek another way out." Your conscious feeling only knows "futility" and this gives you a sense of hopelessness, impatience and disgust with life, the feeling of "What is the use?" Yes, this mood can sometimes be applied to outer things happening to you that seem to be a "reason" for your discouragement. But deep down, this is the real reason. In this disgust with life, this feeling of pointlessness, you must hurt yourself. You must even want to hurt yourself, for then, at least, you have a visible explanation for your deep discouragement. This is easier to bear than the absence of all outer "reasons."

QUESTION: Is there a corresponding organ of the inner eye, located between the two outer eyes?

ANSWER: Yes, my friends. All your outer organs are duplicates of inner organs. In fact, you have more inner than outer organs. Not all of your real organs manifest in the physical body.

