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## HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD IN VARIOUS STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless all of you. Blessed is this hour. Blessed are your efforts. Blessed is your work.

Before I turn to tonight's lecture, I wish to extend our thanks, from the world of spirit, to all of my friends who have worked on this Path of self-recognition. For this is, indeed, something to be thankful for. Nothing helps so much in the entire world, as every little step towards the further self-awareness of each individual. Nothing can help eliminate suffering and confusion so much as your own efforts in this direction. The sincere desire to face the truth in yourself, the reality that is in you right now, is the only way, not only for helping yourself, but to help better conditions all over. Nothing else will eliminate strife. All of you have made progress in this respect in the past year. Each one of you has gained a little more insight into himself. All of you, some more, some less, are a little better able to face yourselves as you really are. Perhaps not entirely yet -- that is true -- but surely better than a year ago. So it has been a fruitful year, more than you can possibly realize. We believe that, after this short interruption of activities, the year to come will bring still further progress in this direction -- the ability to face yourself as you are now. When I say progress, I mean the removal of barriers to see that which is, rather than striving away from it in the false belief that it is spiritual progress to try to be what you cannot as yet be.

In your daily life many possibilities are offered to you to see yourself as you are; to verify what you really feel, rather than what you try to feel. All you have to do is to remind yourself constantly to be alert to this reality in you; to cultivate the awareness. After this very fruitful year, it is to be expected that most of my friends, after perhaps overcoming a defense here and a resistance there, will penetrate deeper into emotional levels, so as to become aware of their existence, and then of their significance. This further understanding will liberate you more and more, after the initial fear of it has proven unreasonable; if only you continue and do not let this fear stop you, but face it, examine it, grasp it, instead of repressing it, and then come to terms with it.

And now, my friends, let us turn to tonight's subject. I wish to discuss man's relationship to God in the cycle of development, in the various stages of this cycle that man goes through. In the last lecture I discussed the state of being without awareness, as the first stage in the great cycle. Primitive man, during his first few incarnations, is still near to this state of being without awareness. He lives unto the day, tending to his immediate needs. As yet the mind is not developed and therefore not equipped to ask questions, to doubt, to think, to discriminate. He lives in the now, but without awareness. In order to live in the now in awareness, various stages have to be gone through.

As man continues to develop his mind, he will first use it for his immediate needs that become more pressing in a growing civilization. In other words, he first uses the mind concretely. But later, he begins to use it abstractly. He begins to ask the important questions that have preoccupied mankind ever since the beginning of time. These questions are: "Where do I come from? Where do I go? What is the meaning of life? What is the significance of this universe?" Man begins to perceive nature, her laws. He observes the magnificence of nature's laws. And he begins to wonder. This first wonderment represents the first conscious steps towards relating to the Creator. "Who created these laws? Who made all this? Is any superior mind responsible for this creation?" With such questions, the first ideas about God come into existence. Thus, when he then concludes that there must be someone of such infinite superiority, wisdom, intelligence, he feels he must relate to this supreme Being.

But simultaneously, man's spiritual and emotional immaturity producing fear and many other problematic emotions, colors this concept of a superior Creator. On the one hand he wants an authority who thinks for him, who decides for him and is thus responsible for him. He clings to this authority in the hope of being relieved of self-responsibility. On the other hand, his fears of life and his inadequacy to cope with it, project onto this God. He senses the power of this immensely wise and resourceful Creator of all the natural laws that he can see. Since he cannot yet separate power from cruelty, he begins to fear this God of his own projection. Thus he begins to appease, to cajole, to submit to, and become subdued by, this imaginary God-image.

To recapitulate: the first state of awakening causes man to wonder. In this spontaneous experience of wonder and perception, he often has a genuine God-experience and relationship. But then, as he grows more conflicted and fearful, after his desires become more urgent, all these emotions and attitudes color this first God-experience and he relates no longer according to a genuine, spontaneous, creative experience, but to a projection of himself.

The more the mind grows in one direction only, without being used to resolve its problems and conflicts which remain hidden away from awareness, the more does his relationship to God become false. False, because it is based on personal needs, on wishful thinking, and on fear. The more this proceeds, the falser the concept of God becomes -- consciously or unconsciously. In the end, it will become a superstition, with less truth and more dogma.

When this goes on and on, man comes to a point, after his original genuine experience and perception turns to a superstition, that makes a farce out of God; when he can no longer continue in this trend, his intelligence, which has grown in the meantime, will prevent him from going on in this way indefinitely. The intelligence will then say "it cannot possibly be that there is a Father who leads life for us. It is up to us. It is our responsibility. We have free will." And a counter-reaction sets in. And then, man often turns to the other extreme and becomes an atheist.

The state of atheism exists in two ways: 1) an absolute lack of awareness and perception of life and nature, her laws and the significance of creation. 2) a reaction to the superstitious God-Image and self-projection of man, denying self-responsibility. This latter state of atheism, erroneous in itself as it is, is still indicative of a further state of development other than a belief in God. This comes predominantly from fear, evasion, escapism, wishful-thinking, denial of self-responsibility. The latter is often a necessary transitory period on the way to a more realistic and genuine experience of and relationship to God. During this stage, faculties are cultivated in man that are of

utmost importance for his individual growth. This does not mean that I advocate atheism. This is no more the case than that I advocate a childish, clinging, belief in God. Both are stages. In each stage there is something important that the soul learns. Something is imprinted in the soul that is productive and lasting, long after the superficial layers of the mind have dispensed with the falsity of both extremes.

In this second stage of atheism, man learns to assume self-responsibility. He lets go of the wished-for hand that leads life for him, absolves him from the consequences of his own mistakes. It makes him give up the expectation of being rewarded for being obedient to rules. Simultaneously, it frees him from fear of being punished. In some ways, it brings him back to himself.

But when a certain point is passed in this stage, it is no longer possible to maintain the concept of atheism. The more any thought, concept, scientific fact, or philosophy is carried to its logical end and conclusion, the less is it possible to maintain an untruth or half-truth; or even a temporary state that had its healthy function at a certain period. When man passes through these various stages briefly discussed here, he is bound to arrive at the point when he uses his mind to question his own motives; to look at and into himself. Thus he cultivates awareness by facing the reality within. As he proceeds to do this, forever deeper levels of his psyche become liberated. In this liberation, genuine God-experience is the inevitable outcome. This genuine God-experience is very different from the childish belief in a self-projected God which the mind has created out of fear, weakness, and wishful-thinking. He no longer acts because he feels God demands or expects it of him. He lives in the now. He does not fear his imperfection and does not fear God's punishing him for it. He can see it without becoming frantic. Yet understanding its harm, but not fearing it, he will then see that not the imperfection itself is so harmful, but the lack of awareness of it; the fear of being punished for it; the pride of wanting to be above it. Being not frantic to get over it, he will have the calm to observe it, thereby understanding its background and its reason for existence. In this process, he grows out of it. As man cultivates this attitude, he makes a genuine experience of God possible. On the other hand, it is the occasional glimpse and sense of it that facilitates the proper attitude toward one-self.

This genuine God-experience is being. God is not perceived as acting -- punishment or reward, or guidance along certain ways in order to take away the effort of man. He realizes that God is. This is very difficult to explain in words, my friends. But it is the only way I can say it. You cannot come to this feeling that God is, if you do not first face what is in you right now, imperfect, faulty, childish as it may be.

It would be misleading to assume that each of these stages I described here roughly, follow neatly one after the other. They overlap. They do not always follow in this order, because the human personality is not made up of one level. It is, as you know, conflicting. Different layers of the personality express different attitudes at any given time, even in this particular respect. Hence, it is possible that at one period of a person's life, he may be consciously in one stage, unconsciously in another. Only after he proceeds on such a Path of self-knowledge, does this hidden unconscious stage come to the fore. In this way, it often happens that at a later period something comes out that seems to belong into a former stage. This is also due to the fact that a certain necessary stage was not fully lived through but repressed due to outer influences and pressures. So my description is only a vague general outline. Beware of judging yourself or another according to what you see. But generally speaking, this is the cycle that humanity goes through.

Self-awareness must eventually lead to the state of being in awareness. Simultaneously, a new relationship to God comes into existence. God is experienced as being. I repeat, you cannot come to it if you do not first experience, in a negative way, that which is, now. Nor can you come to it by concepts you learn; philosophies and practices you observe; doctrines you follow. If you are unwilling to live through, and be in your present confusions, errors, and pains, facing and understanding them, you cannot ever be in God. Or to put it in other words: you cannot be in a state of happiness, peace, creativity without strife, if you do not face the temporary, often unpleasant reality. Only then can the great Reality be experienced. The latter will first come occasionally and in vague glimpses. But this will give you a new approach and relationship to God. It will not only transform your attitudes and concepts of God, but concepts also of yourself, or your place in life.

Needless to say that in man's relationship to God, his prayer -- meaning his speaking to God - - also goes through these phases. The prayers are the expression of the various phases. It is often the case, as it is with all things on earth, that man is actually inwardly already in a new stage, while he outwardly still clings to old habit patterns; patterns he adopted in a former stage. This may not only apply to the way man prays, but also to certain concepts he clings to, in his conscious mind, while inwardly he is already beyond it. The mind is habit-forming. Habit is an intrinsic quality of the mind. Experience out of being never forms habits. It is only the mind that does it. The memory, combined with the tendency to form habits, is the danger of the mind in regard to true spiritual experience. The more flexible you are, the less will you fall into the trap of set habit patterns; of clinging to old concepts and ideas that once gave you an experience and which you wish to recreate by holding onto it.

If you increasingly train yourself to face what is in you now, you free yourself of habit patterns that hold you back from productive living; from true experience, whether this is God, life, yourself -- it is all the same, it is being. Is it not habit that made such deep grooves into your mind of a certain experience so that this experience turned into a rigid image? Isn't it habit that causes you to stick to misconceptions, wrong conclusions, generalizations that are always half-truths, at best? This applies to many things, my friends.

Again, I wish to emphasize that whenever you discover such erroneous ways in yourself, beware of feeling guilty, of being frantic, of feeling "I should not." This attitude is the greatest barrier, the very greatest of all!

And now, my friends, let us turn to your questions.

QUESTION: I tried to explain what you explained to us about the spirit and the free will to two people -- one very religious, and the other a scientist. They then asked if God is omniscient and loving, then He also knows the future. If He knows the future, while He gave us free will, He must know what we will do with it. And this I cannot answer.

ANSWER: In the first place, the future is a product of time. And time is a product of the mind. Therefore, in reality, future does not exist. Just as past does not exist. I realize that this is impossible for most people to understand. Outside the mind, there is being -- that is, no past, present nor future, only now. This can, at best, be vaguely sensed, by feeling, rather than intellect.

Furthermore, this question arises from the same complete misconception I outlined in this very lecture in that it shows the concept of God who acts, does. Creation is, in the true sense, not an action, and certainly not a time-bound action. When God created spirit, it is out of time, out of mind, in the state of being. Each spirit is, in this sense, God-like and creates his own life. God does not take away or add on.

Moreover, I have this to add: it is man's complete illusion to believe that pain and suffering are terrible in themselves. Please, try to understand what I am saying. Man's inordinate fear of suffering is utterly unrealistic, and again a product of the mind, in error. Man fears pain and suffering mainly because he believes he has nothing to do with it; that it can come without his being responsible for it. In other words, it is either unjust, or chaotic coincidence. But once he realizes that every pain he experiences is due to his own evasion of truth and reality; once he not only understands this as a principle, but actually connects the links, he will no longer fear it. He will see the key, long before he can even begin to use it. He will no longer guard against the supposed arbitrariness of life against which he feels helpless. Thus, his suffering will take on an entirely new aspect and become productive.

This then, will make man see that the actual suffering is not half as frightening as his fear of, and attitude towards it. To a slight degree, many of you have experienced this. You have experienced that when you fear something before it happens, it is so much worse than when you actually go through it. And you have also experienced how your pains take on a new face once you thoroughly understand how you have created them. If you observe this chain of events within, abstaining from perfectionism, moralizing, and justifying, the pain instantly recedes, although the outer situation may remain the same. When you truly come to terms with your reality, you can also accept the imperfection of life as such. Without rebellion against imperfection, many patterns transform and you cause less suffering for yourself. But your conscious or unconscious expectation that life should be perfect, causes you to rebel, to resist, to erect barriers which cause more imperfection and suffering than life would otherwise contain. So it is your attitude to suffering, to life, to your position in life and towards yourself, that determines how you experience suffering. If man's attitude toward suffering were not as distorted as it usually is, he would find that the problems he has to solve in conquering mind and matter are beautiful. They are the most beautiful things in your earth life. Only by conquering your own resistance and blindness, your lack of awareness of yourself, will you experience the beauty of life, whether at one time you go through difficult periods, and at others, you experience happiness and fulfillment.

When man comes closer to this understanding, a question such as this could never be asked. It is so confused, contains so much blindness and lack of awareness of reality, it shows such spiritual immaturity, that it cannot even be answered in any way that will make sense to the questioner. You cannot understand with the mind what is beyond the realm of the mind. For that, another faculty is necessary, but so long as the existence of such a faculty is denied, how can you even make the person lead to an eventual understanding?

The question also contains an eternal conflict in mankind, conflict in religious concepts. On the one hand, man postulates that God is an omnipotent Father who acts at will; who rewards you if you obey His laws; who guides you without your active participation in your own inner life, provided you humbly ask for it. On the other hand, it is postulated that man has free will; that he molds his own fate; that he is responsible for his life. While religion teaches the latter, it simultaneously

cripples free decision and self-responsibility by forcing man to obey certain prescribed rules. Between these two, apparently mutually exclusive concepts, man is confused. The question you asked is a typical example of such confusion.

An omnipotent Creator and man's self-responsibility are only mutually exclusive when viewed in time, and from the mind. When this omnipotent creator is perceived as acting like man, in time, from the mind. You do not yet have to be in the state of being in awareness before you can sense that, in reality, in the state of being, there is no conflict between the two. All you have to do is face yourself without resistance, without the pretense of being more than you are, without striving to be more perfect than, at this moment, you happen to be. Each individual aspect that you view in yourself in such freedom, puts you, at that moment, into a state of being and you inwardly perceive the truth of God as Being without contradictions of the sort you asked in your question. Then you will know, profoundly, that complete self-responsibility is not exclusive of a supreme Being. A person who is inwardly not ready, cannot possibly understand what I am saying here.

In this connection, I would like to say that it may occur to some of you why it is that some great spirits, either in the body or without body through human mediums, have passed on great wisdom, yet their teachings actually seem to encourage one of those temporary stages I mentioned as a phase in the great cycle. Their teachings were adapted to this still immature stage, rather than to drawing people out of it. You may rightly wonder why this is so. The answer is that each stage has to be gone through thoroughly. One cannot be forced to skip a stage, otherwise something unassimilated will remain in the soul and manifest in a later period. Let us suppose we had a group of people here who have not gone through the development you have gone through in the last few years. What I would say now, for instance, about the relationship to God, would make absolutely no sense. A person who has not, at least to some degree, experienced the peace of true self-awareness, without self-condemnation or self-justification, as rarely as this may happen to you, cannot possibly sense the meaning of the state of being. If a group is, perhaps, just between the second and third stages in this great cycle, a spirit will have to talk in such a way that he can be understood. Yet, he does not lie. But for such a group, it is humanly impossible to understand more. Only by gradually bringing a group out of this stage in to self-facing, can the souls of these people begin to absorb more truth, even if the mind cannot follow it. This is why it may often occur that spiritual helpers, from this or the other world, seem to encourage a phase from which you have already emerged.

COMMENT: I know that if I would have listened to this lecture a year ago, I would not have felt it as I do now.

ANSWER: Of course not. Now at least, there is a chance of understanding, of grasping, of sensing, be it only in rare moments.

In a smaller way, man repeats these cycles over and over under various levels. It is not just once that he goes through each of these stages. You may even observe that the lectures I have given you in all these years, in a way, go through these stages. Each of the phases we passed, prepared you for that which is the key: self-awareness. The ability, willingness, courage, incentive, and reason to do so, has to be cultivated and does not come easily. This is why these phases exist. But they do not exist as ready-made laws. They exist because of man's inherent rhythm of growth that cannot be hurried. Yet it needs encouragement and preparation. It needs help to direct attention to his resistances.

QUESTION: Will you please elaborate on the meaning of prayer in the different stages?

ANSWER: I believe it is rather evident from the lecture itself. Prayer will be adapted to the conscious attitude and concept of any given phase. In the very first stage, when man is still almost in the stage of being without awareness, there is no prayer, because there is no God-concept. In the next stage, when man begins to ask questions and wonder, and in this spontaneous experience of wondering and allowing new considerations to fill him, this, in itself, is prayer or meditation. The next stage may be the realization of a Supreme Intelligence. In this stage, prayer takes the form of admiration of the marvel of the universe and nature. It is worship. In the next stage, when the confusion of the mind, the immaturity and inadequacy cause fear, clinging, helplessness, dependence; when wishful-thinking and greed, unacceptance of reality causes supplication, prayer will be expressed accordingly. When prayers seem to be answered in this state, it is not because God acts, but because, in some way, man is sincere in spite of all his self-deceptions and evasions and has thus opened a channel within through which laws of being can penetrate to him. This is an important distinction that will only be perceived at a later stage. When man realizes his own participation in whether or not a prayer is answered, he will lose the sense of helplessness and of the arbitrariness of a willful God he has to appease by man-made and superimposed rules. But I might also add that what often appears like an answered prayer is the strength of an unconflicted mind in the particular area where the prayer is answered, at least at that time.

When man comes into the state of independence, when he lets go of this imaginary God who punishes, rewards, and leads life for him, when he finds himself in the state of atheism, of denial of any higher being, he does not pray, of course. At least not in the conventional sense. He may meditate on himself, he may look at himself in sincerity, and this, as you all know by now, is the best prayer in the true sense. But it may also be that man, in the atheistic state, is completely irresponsible, and fails to think and look at himself. He may escape from himself the same way as the person who uses God as an escape from himself.

When man reaches the stage of active pursuit of self-awareness, of facing himself as he really is, he may, at the beginning, still be accustomed to the old prayer of begging for help, asking God to do for him what he used to shy away from doing himself. Yet, in spite of this habit in prayer, he begins to face himself. Only after reaching deeper levels of such self-facing, will he gradually avoid the kind of prayer he was used to. He may even go through a stage of not actively praying at all, in the usual sense. But he meditates -- and that is often the best prayer! He meditates by looking at his real motivations; by allowing his actual feelings to come to the surface; by questioning them as to their reason for being. In this kind of activity, prayer in the old sense becomes more and more meaningless, contradictory. His prayer is the action of self-awareness and of looking at himself in truth. His prayer is his sincere intent to face what may be most unpleasant. It is prayer because it contains the attitude that truth for the sake of truth is the threshold to love. Without truth and without love, there can be no God-experience. Love cannot grow out of trying to pretend a truth that is not felt. But love can grow out of facing a truth, no matter how imperfect it is. This attitude IS prayer. Candor with oneself IS prayer; alertness to one's resistance is prayer; owning up to something that one has hidden from in shame is prayer. When this proceeds, the state of being gradually comes into existence, little by little, with interruptions. Then, in the state of being, prayer is no longer an action of uttered words or thoughts. It is a feeling of being in the eternal now; of flowing in a current of love with all beings; of understanding and perception; of being alive. It is

impossible to convey that these few aspects I mentioned here, in addition to many more indescribable feelings, comprise prayer in the highest sense. It is awareness of God in His Reality. But this kind of prayer cannot be imitated or learned through any teachings, prescribed practices, or disciplines. It is the natural outcome of the courage and humility to face oneself completely and without reservation. Before you have reached this highest state of relating to God, of being, where prayer and being are one, all you can do, the best prayer in the world, is the renewed constant intent to face yourself without any reservation; to remove all pretenses between your conscious mind and that which is in you; and then, to remove the pretense between what is in you, and others. This is the pathway, my friends.

QUESTION: I have recently learned of a young cousin who has a malignancy. And I would like to ask that I have the prayer of this group for his recovery and I would like to know if there is anything I can do, or that can be done to help him?

ANSWER: My dearest, this question is so very contradictory to everything I said tonight, and previously. It is certainly understandable that you feel that way. Of course you, and the whole group, can pray. The validity of such prayer is the sincere good will that you wish the best to another person; that you do not want him to suffer; that you would do what you could to help alleviate such suffering. If you are so intended, open yourself for inspiration. If there is any way to give strength and consolation, it may come with such openness. But from our point of view, we view these things so differently. Temporary suffering, parting, and death is, in reality, not what it means to you. I know this is painful, at the moment, in time. There is no doubt that pure thoughts and feelings, pure intent, must have an effect. Not necessarily in the exact manner you wish, but nevertheless, it has a very good effect.

QUESTION: It is not his death that is so painful, but the leaving of small children, and so many things undone, brilliance and talent.

ANSWER: Actually, what you think is inevitably lost because not concluded in this life, is not so. No one goes from this earth sphere if it is not right and good, unless he takes his own life. Nothing happens in the entire universe, that is meaningless, that cannot be productive. There is no waste. The waste exists only temporarily when you do not make the best of your life while you have it. But leaving earth life, as such, is never wasteful, regardless of how young a person is who leaves his body. If you truly think and meditate about these words, they will be of greater help, and therefore more consoling than if I were to tell you that any means exist that can interrupt the laws of cause and effect, that God can protect you from certain stages that man has to go through, and which can be so fruitful for all concerned. Now, I am not indicating here that he cannot be helped. This is not within my realm. The outcome may not necessarily be as you fear it. But whether or not it is, no waste exists. There is meaningfulness even for those who stay behind.

QUESTION: Would you comment, please, on the progress of our group work and show us a way to make it an even more dynamic experience for us, that is truly group work?

ANSWER: Yes, my friend. I believe most of you can begin to sense and experience that this group work is of immeasurable importance. How else can you safely allow your negative emotions to come to the fore? To allow them an outlet that will not only be destructive for an environment that does not understand, but will even be fruitful for everyone else's further insight? How else can

you rid yourself of the pressure of repressions? How else can you learn to understand yourself in the mirror of the other? How else can you, best and fastest, learn to communicate on a deeper level of your being, rather than on superficial ones? All this has begun and can be furthered in the years to come if you keep this in mind. Provided you continue to grow in the future, as you have this last year, the group work will prove more and more fruitful, an addition to the private work that is one of the greatest assets you will not want to miss under any circumstances. The progress of the various groups depends primarily on the individual's participation and willingness to penetrate the surface defenses; on his willingness to let go of resistance; on his willingness to see the truth within; on his willingness to dispense with justification, moralizing, rationalizing, intellectualizing. All that you know. You have made tentative beginnings in this respect, in some instances very good progress in this particular area. But as yet, there are many guards and much pride that prevents the true opening of the channels that will yield the results it ultimately will. Too often you do not see yourself. You do not want to expose yourself. This will undoubtedly improve, as your sincere will does not falter; as you face these emotions within, in the candor I so much advocate. So I wish to remind you, once again, also as far as the group work is concerned, learn more and more to bring out your feelings. Learn to observe your own reactions. Observe your tendency of always explaining your reactions away. Observe your subjectivity. And gradually you will come to the point when you will be capable of expressing unreasonable, childish, imperfect emotions without explanations. Then, and then only, can you begin to examine and understand them in their true light. As long as you are ready with an explanation before you express them clearly, you cannot gain the self-awareness you wish and which is so essential for your liberation. As you become aware of your own defenses, you will learn not to strive away from it, but rather that of experiencing yourself, in awareness, in your defensiveness. This then, is the right approach. This is more progress. In the real sense, it is more enlightenment, it is more constructive, than trying to force yourself away from something you cannot feel. I know, my friends, that I am being very repetitious. But it cannot be emphasized enough. It is always forgotten, and needs constant reminding. This emotional experience, being in what you feel, seeing it for what it means, this is the way of the group work, also. This will then make a more fruitful interrelationship. It will contribute more to your individual progress than anything you are capable of imagining at this time.

You have made a very good beginning in this direction. The first year of this particular group work has gone better than expected. But that does not mean that you cannot do so much more. In the following year, so much more benefit will derive for each of you who is sincere in this endeavor. More interaction will be established from one soul to another, not from one intellect to another.

QUESTION: Could I ask you a question about man's development, as you talked about it last time, and this time, too? It seems to me that our Western culture suffers from holding onto the intellect and to the will, instead of approaching the special state of being. And, if that is so, what can we do to counteract this tendency, in education, say, or in cultural life?

ANSWER: It is quite true that this is a general tendency, of course, as you all know. What you can do? There is only one answer. At the risk of being again repetitious, I have to say once more, there is no other way than cultivating self-awareness in the way you are doing. The more you mature emotionally, the more awareness do you gain, the more this will emanate from you and, in some way it will find expression, spontaneously, creatively, in your activities, whatever they are. Whether you are a doctor, a teacher, or a shoemaker, makes no difference. You will influence your surroundings, not so much by what you say or preach, but by your mere being, by your emanations.

Each individual going through such a path of self-finding, is bound to contribute to this great change. The world cannot be changed unless a sufficient number of people are doing just what you are doing. But every single human being helps toward that end. No one's efforts at self-honesty are beneficial only for himself. Incidentally, this change has begun to take place already, here and there. A group like yours contributes more than vast masses of people who preach doctrines, who force away the emotions, who feel they must be good, while their true state of being is removed from such goodness. A group of only five people, who face reality as it happens to be now, contributes more to the entire world, not only to your earth sphere, but to all spheres, than the best intended teachings and ideals that reach merely the surface intellect.

QUESTION: When we are angered or disturbed by the perversity, selfishness or cynicism of others, or disturbed by corruption in high places, is this a fault? Does the light on the path make us blind to the wrongs in the social organism of which we are all members? What should be our attitude towards social problems?

ANSWER: If you consider your question, you will discover the emotional dependency and moralizing character underlying it. Moralizing with yourself (what should be our attitude? Is it a fault?), and moralizing with others. As I often say, you cannot find any true answer as long as the underlying attitude is thus colored. No, you certainly need not be blind because you are on a path of self-finding. You cannot be. Condoning and blindness to what exists is not the answer. The answer is not a lazy acceptance of evil. But neither is the answer a rebellion against evil. You cannot transform it when you rebel. You can, at best, make certain superficial reforms that have no solid ground and are therefore bound to end in an equally wrong opposite -- and so become evil all over again.

The productive approach would be, after discovering and removing the self-moralizing attitude, to ask yourself, "is my anger truly an objective one? Or am I involved?" You will then perceive the difference between objective and subjective anger. The former does not have an urgency, it is detached, it does not make you restless and frustrated. Whenever you feel frustrated and the anger personally hurts, it always hides something that you have not faced in yourself. This lack of peace, this disturbance, is always a sign of subjective anger, which is a sign of not being aware of what is really going on in you.

I have said it so very often, and have to repeat it again, no collective means can ever, ever really, change the world, unless it is sustained by inner growth and transformation which is the product of self-awareness. As long as man does not face his own injustice, greed, selfishness, one-sidedness, pride, fears, all on a deeply hidden psychological level, these same attitudes are bound to continue in the world, regardless of what social reforms are instituted. Social reforms are the product of man, they are maintained by man. If man, generally, hides within, what outwardly he wants to disappear, it is a discrepancy that can have no hope of finding realization. But this does not mean one should not do what one can in order to eliminate wrong or evil. Only, you should understand what is really necessary in order to change the world. As long as you are at war with yourself, outer war is a result. As long as you are inwardly greedy and selfish and do not even know it, outer greed and selfishness cannot be successfully eliminated. If you truly want to contribute to the good of general conditions, apart from whatever you may be able to do in deeds, try to find these similar conditions within yourself that you so strenuously object to outwardly. They may exist in a much more subtle or modified form, but essentially they must be there. When you become

aware of them, know that you, and millions of others like you, are responsible for the ills of the world. No guilt, no self-flagellation, only the recognition of a fact. Outer reforms, regardless how efficient, will work lastingly only when more people do what I advise you, my friends, to do. When you look at history, you will see that this is so. Reforms and general improvements exist in a genuine and lasting way exactly to the degree that man has become more self-responsible, more aware of himself, more mature. But wherever social reforms were way ahead of man's inner growth, they may have a temporary effect, only to evaporate, or to end up in an equally evil extreme on the other side of the scale. The world, in general, is nothing more than the outcropping of the individuals, of their inner state, their present inner truth. I said this already years ago. Perhaps, now, you will be better able to verify it. Such an imbalance of going from one extreme to the other, in the attempt to eliminate an evil, is exactly what happens in the individual soul. When man attempts to change superficially, he swings from one extreme to another. When he adopts one rule, good as it may be, in exchange for another he does not like in himself, he is not profound. He has not attempted to investigate what he really feels. This, as you encounter so often in this work, is what you experience in the world at large.

My dearest friends, I leave you for but a short time. That does not mean that the continued process of inner growth need be halted. It depends on you how you approach yourself, your daily experiences, reactions, feelings. Keep up this self-observation, no matter what. Do not stop it, do not run away from yourself. Bring peace into your own heart by looking at yourself as you are now. There is no other real way of gaining peace, but there are many false, illusory ways. Most of you have experienced this, at least occasionally. Your lack of peace is always due to somewhere not wanting to face yourself. Remember this, and as you do, and more and more dissolve your pride, pretense and resistance, you will perceive what it means to be in reality, to be in the state of being in awareness. Even the unpleasant reality of the moment, the product of your conflicts and confusions, if you truly face and live it, instead of running from it, even that reality is peaceful -- it is God. Only that can be the door to an eventually greater Reality.

With this, I bless each and every one of you, each and every one of your dear ones. Try to feel the love, the warmth and the truth that comes from the world of being; that can be yours for the asking. You have a key now. Use it! Be in peace, be in God!

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