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THE INDIVIDUAL AND HUMANITY

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless every one of you. Blessed be your path, your development, your continuous growth as individuals. Most of my friends who have pursued this path for some time, and who have truly been desirous of understanding their most hidden problems, again and again experience phases of relief, of enlightenment when they encounter within themselves factors which at last unquestionably explain discontent, unfulfillment, tension, frustration, and other hindrances to full living. The deep insight which comes as a result of relentless self-confrontation truly sets you free. It liberates you from confinement and compulsion, and enables you to freely choose your inner and outer course in life and being. Change becomes possible only when it is a free choice. This, in turn, is possible only when you have attained deep understanding.

Many of you have already experienced the joy and freedom of being able to cope with aspects of life you could not cope with previously. At the beginning, when deep and thorough understanding is still lacking or is only partial, such periods are short-lived. They alternate with periods of confusion and depression. But the more you master the dark phases by the will to understand their inner significance, and by not shirking to overcome the resistance to do so, the negative periods will be less frequent, as well as shorter, and the phases of liberation, peace and joyfulness will grow longer. The more you realize that each negative phase contains a special lesson, that each disturbing happening harbors a knowledge you desperately need in order to find yourself and live the full and satisfying life you are destined to live, the easier will it become to make disturbances and crises productive experiences of short duration. All this is not new, I have said it before, but it is only too easy to forget it if you have not repeatedly experienced the blessings of working yourself out of unpleasant moods, irritations or depressions, rather than waiting for life to remove the outer provocation.

Certain unalterable laws of growth and development apply to all living organisms in the universe. They are identical in principle and procedure for the physical, the mental, the emotional and the spiritual organism. They apply to the macrocosm and the microcosm -- to the one-celled life organism, to the individual human entity, and to humanity as a whole. There are many life organisms whose mechanism you cannot possibly see, understand, or evaluate. Therefore you cannot compare the growth processes of these organisms with your own. But you can make a comparison between the individual laws and processes of growth and those of humanity as a whole. Sufficient historical data offer such an extended view, if you apply to them your present knowledge with the help of this lecture. This will give you greater understanding and a wider vision of the relationship between the individual and the totality of all individuals. It will enable you to visualize that humanity as a whole is an entity, governed by the same laws as the individual who is a part of the bigger body -- humankind. There are aspects within the individual that you do not fully

understand and therefore cannot control, thereby destroying union, peace and integration of the personality. This also applies to humankind as a whole.

The same relationship exists between the totality of one human being and each of his cells, or particles of being, as between humankind and the individual. They conform to identical laws of living and growing. This concept is perhaps more understandable to you at this time, when it is known that every atom is a replica of the universe. But full understanding of this factor can come only when you extend your range of consciousness to a wider dimension. For the moment, it suffices to attempt an overall comparison between the individual human being and humanity as a whole.

Let us begin with infancy. An infant lacks ego-consciousness. There is no self-consciousness, no sense of self. All a baby experiences are sense impressions -- pleasure and pain. Its reactions to both are strong. It obviously rejoices when pleasure is given and as obviously objects when pleasure is withheld or when it experiences any degree of pain. Frustration of pleasure or infliction of pain cause violent anger. The infant knows nothing beyond this. There is no reason, no sense of how its pleasure may have a relationship with the pain of another. There is no logic and no sense of responsibility. The infant is completely isolated in its own sensing of pleasure or sensing of pain. Even pain and pleasure -- this limited range of experience -- do not exist on emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels. The infant is not only entirely a physical creature, but also utterly self-centered.

The same condition exists in any form of immaturity. When you explore the recesses of your psyche as an adult and find the undeveloped, problematic areas, you must encounter this identical infant living within yourself. It is subdued by other parts of your personality which have grown up, which know better. But while this selfish, self-centered and limited infant dwells within, it must always be in conflict with the whole personality. The infant can grow only if it is allowed to manifest in the person's consciousness, if it is no longer suppressed. Hence, one cannot say that infantile traits cease to exist when a person becomes an adult. It is only a question of degree.

To the degree that this infantile attitude toward the world exists, the person is dependent. An infant is, as you well know, utterly dependent. Concomitantly, the so-called neurotic, conflicted, immature person is emotionally dependent. You all know, and constantly experience, how your inner problems and conflicts rob you of freedom, selfhood, self-sufficiency, independence. Many of you begin to experience the meaning of gaining true independence through giving up childish, limited self-centeredness. Hence, self-centeredness and dependency are interconnected. You cannot have the one without the other. Many an inner conflict rages just because of this interconnection. You struggle against the dependency that you simultaneously insist upon as a result of your infantile self-centeredness and subjectivity in outlook.

As you mature, you develop a sense of self. The more aware of yourself you become, paradoxical as this may seem, the more concerned with others you must become. Just think of this great spiritual truth, my friends: lack of selfhood means self-centeredness. Full selfhood means concern for others, fairness in evaluating advantages and disadvantages of others and self. It does not mean annihilation of self for the sake of others in a distorted sense of martyrdom -- which is always a "remedy" for inherent and hidden selfishness and self-centeredness. But it does imply a sense of fairness in which one is capable of foregoing an advantage if it creates undue pain and unfair disadvantage for another. So, on the one side of the scale, we have the infant who has no

sense of selfhood, no awareness of itself, accompanied by utter self-centeredness and complete dependency on stronger beings. On the other side of the scale we have the mature person who has a sense of selfhood, an awareness of the self beyond the pleasure/pain principle. This results in a social sense, responsibility, concern for, understanding of, and feeling with others so that they form a harmonious whole with others around them in mutuality of purpose and interest. They are free and independent, which is not to be confused with omnipotence. They do not rule, nor are they ruled. Instead, a healthy interdependence exists between them and their fellow-creatures.

For this growth process to take place, the infant must develop its mind, its intellect, its reason, as well as its emotional nature. When all of them mature in harmony, growth takes place on all levels and the individual is integrated. But as you know only too well, this is rarely the case. Part of the development always lags behind. This then creates crisis.

It is the identical process with humanity as a whole. Primitive humanity can be likened to the infant. I do not have to repeat the words, but you can safely apply all that has been said about the infant to primitive humanity. History will bear me out. Primitive people lived in a much more secluded manner, but even within their own circle of immediate family, their growing became a necessity, for otherwise they could not survive. Thus, primitive people were forced to develop some mental processes which immediately reduced their selfish primitive drives and made them more responsible for others and less self-centered.

Humanity thus began to form a society for the sake of which it functioned, often with much effort to overcome the infantile drives to destroy what stood in the way of its immediate gratification. Up to this day, there are always those who act according to these infantile drives and whose sense of responsibility for others is lacking. But on the whole, present society and civilization derive from these first attempts of primitive man to find a mode of survival by taming the primitive and self-centered instincts.

If the child were self-sufficient and independent while possessing self-centered drives, you may imagine what would happen. It would rule over all those who are weaker and destroy them. Therefore its weakness and resulting dependency are a necessity and a protection. Similarly, for a long time humanity was governed by the law of strength and power. You can see this again and again in history. Rulers at first were removed by others who were no different than themselves, but eventually they could gain power only by offering their subjects some rights also. Hence, responsibility and concern for others developed first as a necessity, for without it power and advantages could not be gained, and then, eventually, as a true inner development and conviction.

A child will hit a smaller child because it wants the latter's possessions. To an infinitely greater degree, the identical tendency existed in former times, as it does today. Primitive humanity was also much more helpless and dependent than it is today. It had fewer means of controlling the elements and forces of nature. Primitive people had fewer means at their disposal to defend themselves against the injustice and brute force of other people. There was no civil law for protection. There was no code of ethics which ostracized an offender. Humans fluctuated between ruling and being ruled.

Their general, overall development was such that life was a question of who ruled whom, who was stronger and therefore better equipped to pursue selfish drives at the expense of others. This

limitation and ignorance -- just like the infant's -- made them dependent. The more they manifested brute force in the absence of mental and emotional development, the weaker they became. Their God-concept was based on being ruled; government was arbitrary, and the individual lived accordingly. Each person ruled weaker ones and was in turn ruled by stronger ones. They may have violently resented their rulers, but could not help obeying, while simultaneously even needing the stronger ones.

When the child leaves infancy behind and enters childhood proper, it has to learn consideration of others and the curbing of its selfish instincts. The feelings may be lacking, but at least by gesture, the child learns to get along with others. Similarly, at a certain point in history, humankind became more aware of the needs of others. Here, too, it was first a question of self-preservation rather than a matter of inner feeling. The transition from utter self-centeredness to concern for others is a crucial period in the development of an entity, be it an individual human being or humankind as a whole.

Each transition in growth, small or big, is fraught with crisis. Humankind went through many crises -- the crises of growth. Let us look at transitional periods of growth in the individual from the point of view of crisis. When the child is being born, it is not only a crisis for the mother, but even more so for the little entity. I said in a different context that birth is a traumatic shock for the baby. When the infant is weaned from the mother's breast, it is a crisis. Each such phase is a step toward further independence, going into the world, away from seclusion. When the child starts school, this is again a step into the world, toward selfhood, away from seclusion. The child begins to learn responsibility; for the first time it is, to some extent, away from the complete shelter and protection of the parents. Again it is a crisis.

To the degree that you resist such growing periods and fight against them, they will be painful and present conflict and disharmony. To the degree that you embrace them, the new way of life will become desirable and offer new vistas, experience and challenge.

The physical system also undergoes crisis in growth. A teething baby experiences pain. Puberty is psychologically a painful process. It is, again, a step toward individuation.

This path is the best demonstration of the law of growth. In fact, my introductory words to this lecture demonstrate this on the level of humanity's psyche. You all know that the more you hold on to destructive patterns, even resisting understanding their mechanism, the more painful these old, obsolete patterns finally become. Conversely, the more willing you are to be in the growth process by your inner determination to understand and change, the more exciting and rich, the more meaningful and fulfilling life becomes. In the latter alternative, the crisis is short-lived. It lasts only until you summon the strength to overcome the resistance. But if you give in to the blind, faulty reasoning of resistance, you drag out the crisis. Gradually it becomes more acute until you can no longer bear it, and you are forced to take yourself in hand, discard worn out and incorrect concepts, and leave behind your childish seclusion which can no longer work for the adult you now are.

Humanity has now left behind infancy and childhood. It is just about coming through its adolescence, but is not yet a mature, adult entity. If you compare the individual's period of

adolescence with humankind's present development, you will see that this is where humankind is today. This will prove helpful and widen your understanding.

Many individuals who grow into adults are not mature. Their body has grown up, but their psyche limps behind. So it is with the world. The average individual who grows into adulthood may have a number of aspects which are quite mature, responsible, concerned, free, independent, while harboring problem areas in which the selfish ruling child reigns. The world, your earth sphere, is the same. There are groups, countries, nationalities, religions, sects, sections -- geographically and ideologically -- with different outlooks and attitudes. They can be likened to the different aspects of an individual. On this path, you have discovered how you must lack inner peace due to split aims, mutually exclusive drives, contradictory concepts. You now know that the human personality lacks integration, wholeness and union due to unconscious divisions. In the course of your self-exploration, you find areas within which completely contradict your conscious convictions. Emotional reactions either contradict conscious views, or are split within themselves. When you find these contradictions and splits, it is easy to see why you are disturbed, why you are at war with yourself.

This is exactly what happens to humanity on the planet earth. It, too, is divided within itself. The organism which, in perfection, could and will function harmoniously, in union with itself, must be at war with itself as long as it is divided within by unrealistic concepts, wrong conclusions, self-centered and infantile pursuits, limited outlooks, lack of concern, subjectivity and unfairness due to blind, isolating tendencies. If two nations have opposite aims, it is as unrealistic and senseless as opposite aims within one individual's unconscious. It is just as destructive and wasteful.

Humanity is beginning to leave the adolescent stage. This does not necessarily mean that its whole organism is any more unified than is the average adult. Nevertheless, the approach of a more mature state can be felt on earth, in spite of the remnants of immature trends in the psyche of humanity. Many aspects in the entity humankind will be comparable to the conscious concepts an individual has gained through absorbing good education, good influences, and intellectual truth. Certain groups within the human sphere and their aims will represent this maturity, while other groups and their aims will represent the entity's unconscious infantile, erroneous, short-sighted and destructive elements. But the more humanity grows, the less confused it will be about what is constructive and what is destructive. Its discrimination will improve. In the past, while in the child and young adolescent stage, it was often difficult for humankind to distinguish truth from falsehood, between what is constructive and what is destructive. Crass injustice and cruelty could often parade as a righteous cause, while the truly meaningful and mature solutions for humankind's problems were too often discarded as wrong. The child's mind lacks the power of independent thinking, of discriminating, and it shirks the labor of even making an attempt to do so.

As the individual grows capable of dissolving destructive, childish trends through reason and the power to understand, so will humankind. Hence, humanity is now on the threshold of greater maturity and is therefore in a state of crisis. As everyone on the path experiences periods of darkness before the dawn, so does humanity -- over and over again. Adolescence is a particularly painful and trying period because the individual leaves the accustomed and safe period of childhood behind, without possessing, as yet, the necessary equipment to be an adult. A similar adolescent crisis has especially marked the last hundred or two hundred years. Do you think that this world you live in would have wars, upheavals, crime, starvation, and all sorts of other difficulties if

humanity's organism were not similarly split and partly operating on unconsciously false premises, just as you do as an individual?

You still see life too much as a process separate from yourselves. This is why I draw this parallel, which is not symbolic or arbitrary. It is an actual fact that the individual human body, soul, and spirit is identical with the body, soul and spirit of humanity as a whole. Contemplation of this will not only help you to understand the world you live in better, but will deepen your self-understanding. Identical processes are at work in all organisms. One apparently single cell also consists of many aspects. It, too, becomes sick if it is split. The many aspects in one cell are a replica of the bigger organism it forms a part of, as the individual forms a part of the larger body, humankind.

True individuation occurs when you gain access to your inner brain, your inner will, your inner conscience. This occurs when you thoroughly explore and understand all levels: the outer conscious, the semi-conscious and the unconscious. The moment you have penetrated the layers of consciousness that cover your real self, your real conscience, by using profound understanding and truthful evaluation, you reach the inner reality of any particular situation. This is a profoundly elevating, peaceful and joyful experience, but it requires the labor of stringent honesty with yourself. A few of my friends have already experienced this phenomenon. After thorough exploration and self-confrontation about a problem in which you are involved, the inner will functions better. The inner brain, so to speak, located in the solar plexus, gives you the most enlightening guidance, wisdom, understanding and creative outlet. Your inner conscience conveys the truth without the burden of destructive guilt feelings, showing a way to truly absolve yourself from wrongs you have committed. The freer you are of inner unresolved problems and misconceptions, the more accurately will these inner faculties function. The more you are in touch with these inner faculties, the more reliable the guidance throughout your life must be, the more constructively you will live your life, the greater understanding you will gain about yourself, your disturbances, your interrelationship with others, and about the world as a whole. In short, the deeper you go within yourself, the more capable you will become to go out into the world and have fruitful contact and union with others. Conversely, the more you live on the outer fringes of your consciousness -- on the superficial level of manifestation -- the more withdrawn you must be from the world, the less a part of it.

A human is not capable of taking this inner direction as a child, and hardly even as an adolescent. In adolescence you could, with proper guidance and education, begin to channel your forces in the right direction, but it is still a greater effort than for an adult. Humankind, too, has to learn to direct the solution of its problems by looking inward, behind the effect, into the inner causes. So far, humanity does not usually resolve collective problems in this manner. In politics, economics, and even religion, humanity approaches life and its problems on the outer, superficial level of manifestation, and therefore cannot find true solutions. But since humankind is approaching maturity, it too will learn to develop its inner conscience, its inner will, its inner thinking process.

You who are in this group, diligently working on this path, have you not experienced time and again how fruitless it is to try resolving a problem, either within yourself or with others, by being concerned with the outer factors alone? Either the solution is a very short-lived one, only to manifest stronger than ever in a different guise later, or you become more negatively involved and

confused than ever, running around in circles. But when you make the effort to look behind the appearance -- behind the outer manifestation -- when you truly face the issues you encounter there, although it may at first seem difficult and unpleasant, you soon see that the situation is not hopeless at all, that there is a wonderful, realistic way out in which none of the involved people are dependent on circumstances beyond their control. When the world spirit begins to operate that way, all existing problems will genuinely find a solution. Permanent peace on this earth can exist only when the overall maturity of humankind has reached this avenue of resolving problems. Then you will dispense with brute force because you can rely on reason and fairness, rather than on power. But to make this possible, each nation, each government, each group, will have to probe itself for its own shortcomings, rather than blame the other, regardless of how much appearances may lend a hand for such rationalizations. By the same token, the growing selfhood of humanity will also enable it to assert its rights, to be aware of its values without guilt. It will not weaken when false accusations are made. This process is identical with the growing selfhood of the individual.

The more each one of you pursues this path in the manner you are doing, being forever more determined to overcome resistance to facing the truth in yourself, the more do you contribute to the whole of humankind's reaching the phase when humanity can really resolve problems by adequate means, not by temporary, shallow ones.

You may ponder the question of what will happen to humankind when it has truly matured in all its aspects. This can, of course, only be discussed in principle, for it will take millions and millions of years before complete individuation of the world spirit is reached. After the entire span of time of humanity's existence, it is only now about to leave adolescence, so what will happen at maturity is not an immediate consideration. Nevertheless you need to pose the question in order to understand certain spiritual laws in connection with humanity's fate on this planet.

You may also wonder why it must necessarily take all that time. The answer to this question is that there are so many individual souls involved. For the totality of humankind to reach maturity, all individual parts of it have to do so, just as your personality remains conflicted until you integrate each aspect of your being with aspects that have already reached maturity. This integration must be a willing, free choice, not a compulsive one. Too often you try to force yourself by blind compulsion, while certain emotional reactions rebel. This does not mean individuation and wholeness. If the world spirit is truly mature, forcing still immature aspects of itself into submission would contradict the freedom of spiritual reality. However, the more humanity reaches overall maturity, the faster progress will be for those limping behind. The general atmosphere and influence will be conducive to faster development. Again, this can be likened to the individual who finds the pathwork and self-confrontation becoming easier as more of his or her major problems are faced and resolved. Therefore, the time element cannot be fixed nor rules made that each period must take an equal amount of time. The period of infancy may be relatively much longer than growth periods of adulthood. The time element cannot be compared to the fixed time that a physical organism takes to grow from one state into the next.

Now, as to the question of the fate of humankind as a whole after it reaches full maturity, again let us compare it with the individual. An individual entity is bound to the earth sphere until it has reached full maturity. It returns again and again. The more it develops its inner faculties, thereby relating more and better to others, the higher it raises its consciousness. A highly developed human being begins to perceive a new dimension which is already outside the human sphere. As

this evolutionary process continues, the individual's emanations become finer and finer. Its matter becomes more subtle, dissolving the harsh, coarse matter, as you now know it. Almost imperceptibly, as evolution grows, the individual creates a new kind of body matter -- soul matter -- thus being drawn into a different world. Such individuals are no longer drawn into this sphere. Their subtler emanations and subtler matter pull them into a corresponding environment. This is not, as is often said, a change from one geographical abode to another, but a change in spiritual and psychological outlook, a different state of being. As the world spirit, as a totality, reaches this state, it too will undergo an identical change. The earth sphere itself will become finer, its matter more and more subtle, its vibration faster due to its correspondingly higher degree of consciousness.

At this time of the year, indicating a new phase, a new segment of time, this lecture will offer you a better overall view and will give you much food for thought which will be useful not only for general speculation, but will prove helpful for your most personal problems in your pathwork, in your life. In the discussion we are going to have on this lecture, it may be fruitful if you think of your personal problems and how they run parallel to world history, to the development of humanity as a whole. If we receive such examples from some participants, this may prove of great value, my friends.

Are there any questions now?

QUESTION: You mentioned millions of years to come in order to complete the cycle. In what way can infancy and childhood be counted from your vantage point? Also in millions of years?

ANSWER: Of course. Just think how long the earth and humanity are known to have existed already.

QUESTION: How do you account for the rise and fall of civilizations and races if you generalize now the state of adolescence? Did they rise and die?

ANSWER: Part of the answer is that some of the souls in these civilizations have already completed their development in this specific sphere. Others come again in different civilizations and races for the completion of their evolution. It is not necessary to come back into the same environment. Another part of the answer is a comparison with the individual. Let us assume that as a young person, you adopt a way of life, an attitude to life and to others, in which you wish to cope with your personal difficulties and the world's difficulties. This attempt may combine a number of facets, constructive and destructive, realistic and unrealistic. For a while, you appear to get by with this solution, but as you grow older and circumstances change, the solution no longer works. So you discard it in order to adopt a new way of life, perhaps still distorted, so that, at a still later period, you have to discard it again. We may liken civilizations which have risen and fallen to the young person's outer or inner pseudo-solutions, ways of life which combine conflicting elements in the self and in the world.

QUESTION: Could you explain the role of Egypt? I can see the theory of pseudo-solutions where Greece and other cultures are concerned, but with Egypt something has been lost, where there seems to have been an inner knowledge.

ANSWER: Nothing real can ever be lost. It may perhaps appear to be lost because of not associating it with Egypt, but that does not mean it is lost to the world. It is just as in the individual who is bound to retain constructive facets of an attempt to resolve problems, even if the whole nucleus does not work out. When you preserve this constructive element, you do not recall each time that, at a particular period, you combined a temporary way of life that proved unsatisfactory with this specific constructive trend. One individual or one civilization does not invent truth. Truth is. It exists, to be used by the created beings. It cannot be extinguished.

My dearest friends, specifically at this time of year, receive very special blessings for your continuous development and self-realization. This time indicates one of those times of crisis I have spoken about. The spirit Jesus Christ acted out visibly one of those crucial periods of change. This marked -- in history -- a shift between childhood and adolescence. It may seem disproportionate that so much more time has elapsed from infancy to childhood, and again from childhood to adolescence, while only two thousand years have gone by and humankind is now on the threshold of maturity. But I repeat that phases of growth cannot be measured in fixed states as with the physical organism. Besides, as I have also said, the individual too may be more or less adult and mature, while continuing to harbor very immature and destructive elements. The fact that humankind is on the verge of entering maturity as a whole is bound to bring a great deal of betterment in this world, but it does not do away with its destructive aspects.

There is a significance in the fact that I chose this particular topic for this night. The incarnation of the spirit of Jesus Christ indicated the same kind of upheaval and turmoil that the human organism goes through when a child reaches puberty. At such periods, the entity discovers a great deal of idealism. Young people are full of strength and ideals and, at the same time, they have violent, rebellious and cruel impulses. This is exactly the stage humankind went through at that period.

With this thought in mind, go your way in peace. Keep the inner light burning so that further growth, further individuation, can proceed within each one of you, thus enabling you to reach out and contact others in their true inner state. You will become more independent, more free, more responsible, less isolated. Our love, our blessings go to all of you. Be in peace. Be in God!

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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