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LOVE: NOT A COMMANDMENT, BUT SPONTANEOUS SOUL MOVEMENT OF THE INNER SELF

Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for all of you who are here now and who read these words.

It has become apparent through this work of self-realization that unreality breeds disharmony, and where there is disharmony, there is no love. The circle closes. Where there is no love, there can be no fulfillment.

All religions, philosophies, and psychologies agree that love is the key to fulfillment, to security, to creative growth. And yet love cannot be commanded, nor can it be a commandment. It is a free, spontaneous soul movement. The more people try to love as if it were a duty demanded by conscience and obedience, the less does it truly manifest.

Where love exists, there must be fulfillment. Lack of fulfillment is a sure sign that the soul has not yet learned to love. Although these words may be understood in a general sense, this simple equation is often overlooked.

Let us look deeper into the topic of love now. In this way we can come a step closer to obtaining the greatest of all keys to the true life -- not by following forced, artificial, superimposed commands from the intellect, but the spontaneous inner activity of the heart.

When love exists, physical health, one of the most vital requisites in human life, must also be present. Love is a purifying force, and to the degree that it is lacking, all sorts of negative emotions will cause ill health, especially when the trouble remains unrecognized for a sufficiently long time.

Where love exists, there must be successful human relationships because in love's presence there is no fear, no distrust, no illusion. Love can flower only on the substantial soil of reality and fearlessness. Where one perceives reality in truth, one does not trust or distrust where it is inappropriate to do so. One accepts the other as he or she is, and adjusts one's own feelings to what the reality is. Then there is no necessity for groping in the dark, fearfully half-trusting, half-distrusting, thrown between one's needs and one's fears.

Love and self-confidence are inevitably interdependent. Where love is lacking, the psyche must be confused and, conversely, where confusion exists, love must be lacking.

When love exists, all conflict must be eliminated. The personality will find the fine borderline between apparent extremes, and will recognize the difference between the healthy and the distorted versions of an attitude. An example would be demonstrating healthy assertion without deviating

into unhealthy aggressiveness or hostility. Nor will you be confused between the alternatives of submissiveness and domination through selfwill. You will know when to assert your rights without hostility against unjustified demands, where compliance would be destructive for all concerned. You will not be driven to the opposite of compliance, namely stubborn rebelliousness -- because conceding always appears like a submissive, humiliating giving in. It is only through love that this precarious balance of opposite extremes is achieved. This fine balance comes automatically through the heart's ability to love, but when merely intellectual understanding tries to find the golden mean it remains elusive, no matter how arduously it is sought.

And yet, this universal key of love is so very difficult for humanity to use. There is nothing that human beings shy away from more and are more afraid of than simply allowing themselves to love. Loving seems such a risk, so dangerous, so threatening, so irrevocable. Nothing could be further from the truth. But you build elaborate defenses and flee. You not only flee from involvement and contact with others, or from facing faults and destructive attitudes in yourself, but primarily you flee from allowing yourself to love. This prohibition causes all the other ills.

The prohibition against loving comes from two basic misunderstandings. The first is misinterpretation of reality, in other words, illusion. Illusion produces confusion along with a host of negative emotions such as fear, hostility, separateness, self-pity, ambivalence, and vindictiveness. These emotions make love impossible. It is unthinkable when your innermost concepts, perceptions, and value systems are in accordance with reality that you could be afraid of loving. The second misunderstanding is the underestimation of the self and the consequent inferiority feelings. This may sound almost paradoxical. Superficially viewed, it certainly seems possible to think little of oneself without impairing one's ability to love. And yet, my friends, this is not so. For in the moment you underestimate yourself you cannot possibly perceive the other person as real. By dint of your feelings of helpless weakness and inadequacy, others assume the role of giants against whom you defend yourself. This may take the form of rejecting, resenting, or despising them, but not then does it occur to you to sense the other's vulnerability and human needs. The other's strengths and weaknesses become distorted and discolored. Both come to represent elements hostile to you personally. Therefore your underestimation of yourself forces you into a hostile role, no matter how this is camouflaged by outer submissiveness which, in itself, may appear as lovingness. When you think so little of yourself you do not evaluate the importance of your actions and reactions.

The two interrelated tendencies of underestimation of the self and misinterpretation of reality create the barriers to loving and its apparent danger. These two tendencies make the human heart so timid and so reticent. Being overcautious about loving increases one's withdrawal and isolation. Many an individual is half-willing, but this half-willingness denies love rather than affirms it. It makes all sorts of conditions and provisions; there are always so many ifs and buts.

The lack of love, which comes from illusion and confusion, distorts perception and prevents self-evaluation. From these results, disturbed interaction and disharmony follow. The disturbed emotions and distorted perceptions form a nucleus, almost like a foreign body, in the soul.

The spiritual being as originally created knows nothing of these disturbances. Its nature is love, a fearless state of abundance, of positiveness, of productivity and expansion, of meaningful growth both in and with the universe. Its natural state is the wisdom that comes from accurately

perceiving reality. It is the nucleus of distorted perceptions, this foreign body, that prohibits the soul from being in its natural state -- the state it is born with and born to express.

Human beings struggle and fight against this foreign body in wrong ways. They sense its existence and want to rid themselves of it, but the ways they choose to attempt this are often tragically the opposite of what could lead to its successful elimination. People struggle by denial and flight, by forcing away and superimposing, as you all know.

But, for many of you, even having heard these words so often has still not opened the door to the truth that sets you free. Some who follow this path do not see that they struggle against acknowledging this foreign body. They often find themselves in an interim state between giving up the armoring that has covered this foreign body so far, and not yet being quite able to muster the courage to acknowledge the full significance that its existence entails.

The fact that this foreign body is denied causes more misery than the admission of its existence. People feel that they have to deny it because they misunderstand the application of the teachings of truth and love. Instead of ridding themselves of the foreign body, which can only be done after close examination reveals its nature and the reason of its coming into existence, people still act as though this foreign body did not exist. They continue to superimpose more foreign matter on the original soul substance.

Why is it so difficult for you to acknowledge this foreign body? Not only because of your fear that others will find fault with you and reject you, but also because of the underlying basic fear that the foreign body may be your ultimate self. At this stage you believe that only the superimposed veneer that covers the foreign body gives you the feeling that you have love, generosity, unselfishness, and kindness. Only this thin layer assures you that you are nearly as good as you want to be, that you are a decent person. Such faulty awareness of your goodness does not give you a sense of reality, because you have not truly discovered that which is genuinely good and loving within you. But you dare not acknowledge the opposite of this seeming goodness, so you struggle against admitting that which is actually foreign to your real nature. However, you do not know this. You think, fear, and suspect that the foreign substance is the ultimate you. This is why you struggle.

When humans come to that vital part of themselves which responds not out of a "should," but out of a natural, unquestioned "I want to," the response is free, with an utter rightness that is hard to conceive until the inner live center has been experienced. The foreign substance covers this very experience of the real self, the live center where a spontaneous, loving intelligence and fulfillment without conflict awaits you.

To sum up, you fear taking the vital step so necessary to liberate yourself from the substance which is not compatible with your real nature, because you anticipate that this foreign body is the final answer to who you are. Many of you have already advanced in certain areas and have succeeded to some degree in stripping off your superimposed layers of pseudo-goodness and pseudo-love. However, you have not yet quite succeeded in seeing that these pretenses are pretenses, because you fear that underneath the pretense there is nothing but the opposite of love and that there is no further reality beyond that. So you cannot experience the truth of your genuine lovingness, your genuine generous nature, unless you take the seeming risk of exploring yourself to discover whether the foreign substance causing you so much misery is really the ultimate you, and

whether you can indeed find the promised land underneath that layer. Only by diligently taking stock of your non-love can you spontaneously feel your love. Only by painstakingly acknowledging your selfishness can you truly convince yourself of your potential unselfishness.

This requires the courage that comes into being when you reach for it in the spirit of loving the truth of encountering yourself as you are more than anything else. When doing a daily review, examine your reactions of disharmony and meditate in the following sense: "If I am in disharmony, somewhere in me there must be a misinterpretation. I wish to see the truth. I declare that my will to be in truth is stronger than my resistance."

Such a meditation, my friends, will give you the results you wish for. You will come to the point where you clearly feel the foreign body of misconceptions to be just that. Many of your victories over fearful resistance are the living proof of what it feels to function out of your vital, live center which is now less obstructed than ever before.

Out of your solar plexus flow new wisdom, strength, serenity, and dynamic vitality. A fearless love for all creation, a security, an understanding of self and others, an ease in letting your soul-movements flow forward in the beautiful rhythm of the cosmos permeates your soul. At first you will experience these qualities occasionally and faintly, only to lose them again and doubt the reality of your few moments of bliss. Later they will come more often and last longer, commensurate with your victories over your resistance. You will come to feel that the disturbed substance in you is truly foreign matter. At the beginning of such a path, this foreign body seems to be all there is, your natural state as it were. You are so deeply involved in it that you cannot conceive of anything else. But there comes a time when, having experienced the real self more and more often, the still existing nucleus of disturbance is clearly defined as a malignant growth, rather than as a diffuse overall climate permeating you completely. This stage is significant and indicates good progress.

The struggle to turn away from facing this disturbing nucleus of foreign matter, with all its distortions, negative emotions, pains, hurts, and hostilities, takes on many forms even while you are actually on such a path. To counteract the danger of continual evasion and therefore of continual misery, the assertion of the following statement will help greatly: "I am afraid that what I find may be the ultimate me. Is it or is it not? I will take the chance of finding out, for only such clarity will bring me peace. My doubt allows for the possibility that there may be more in me than either the pretense, or that part which is so hard to look at and which I try to ignore and project in so many ways."

This means acknowledging your present state instead of running away from it. Through this approach to yourself, you will come much closer to the next phase and to liberation than by trying to force your present state away through denial and superimposition of feelings that cannot ever be forced.

The next stage will gradually lead you to a state where you can feel the boundaries of this foreign body, even while occasionally still being immersed in it. Now you will know that it is not the ultimate reality of you because you will have experienced sufficiently often the reality of your real inner being. Hence your real self will be easier to recapture, and you will have more strength and stamina to transcend the momentary immersion in your distortions which make you so confused and blur your vision. This strength is increased only through repeated victories over the temptation

to run away from the foreign substance, to shift and displace its effects on others, to rationalize and concentrate on that which is not vital for your victory, whether or not it be true or false in itself.

The acknowledgement of the immediate now is still not sufficiently understood and is often overlooked by the majority of my friends. Whenever you acknowledge the truth of each moment, you will be in peace, regardless of how much disturbance and unreality still exist in you as conditions to be gradually eliminated. Fully acknowledging your condition in the now must give you peace. So please understand and do not forget: It is not the problem itself, nor the conflict, nor even the misconception which create turmoil in your soul, but it is your running away from yourself. Your not being in the immediate now, your fighting and struggling against it in an unconstructive way, causes so much soul-hardship.

If you remember these words, you will be able to take up the struggle in an increasingly constructive, successful, and effective way. You will be nearer to loving because reality and loving are much more interconnected than self-righteous trying and loving are. Now, are there any questions in connection with this topic?

QUESTION: Lately, I am experiencing something new which is evidently a result of doing the pathwork. I am no longer so afraid and frightened, but still something is bothering me. Deep inside I know that I am not afraid, and yet on a more superficial level I seem to think that I am. Is that what you were talking about?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed. Exactly. It is part of it. You seem to function on two levels simultaneously, as it were. This is a typical experience a person goes through in the course of transcending the foreign body and beginning to sense another reaction coming from the real self.

The fact that you had so often and consistently acknowledged your fear made you lose it eventually. You acknowledged it first without even understanding why you were afraid, and then realized that you feared going from one level to another. When you understood the true nature of this fear, it lessened. This is what you now experience.

QUESTION: How can I now completely get rid of the fear, because sometimes I seem to shift the fear to something else?

ANSWER: The moment you shift it onto something else, you again get away from the reality of the immediate now and therefore new attempts have to be made to get back to the reality of your feelings. Also, you often substitute fear for another emotion, so that when you are in fear you do not have to face your real emotion.

QUESTION: My hostility?

ANSWER: Yes. It is hostility, it is hurt, and it is at times a kind of vindictiveness turned around so that you punish others with your state of unhappiness. If you can acknowledge all that, your fear will vanish. And gradually these emotional attitudes themselves will disappear, because they are faced in the now. When you get to the nucleus of the now, there are no more problems.

Human beings constantly move away from this foreign nucleus. When they turn about and begin to go toward the true nucleus of their innermost selves, they gradually find peace and liberation. However, this course is the last line of action that anyone wishes to pursue. People use or even unconsciously abuse every truth teaching and spiritual philosophy in order to avoid going where they need to go -- into themselves. They try to find salvation and solace through adopting rules, theories, teachings, knowledge. They have it all up in their heads, where it does not do any good, unless they use the intellectual maturity thus gained toward moving inward, always to a deeper level.

The fulfillment which the universe has in store for you is not separate and far away from you, my friends. It is not in the distant future, not in a state beyond your physical life, not in attaining something through arduous means. It lies solely in the acknowledgement of what you really feel and think at this moment. It is this great simplicity that seems so hard to comprehend. You go through such pathetically unnecessary struggle in order to turn in the wrong direction, hoping against hope to find salvation without meeting yourself in the now.

As I have said many times before, even on such a path as this whose aim is to attain selfhood, there are many snares to tempt you away from yourselves. You make a successful attempt to reach your inner being, but suspecting something that fills you with dread and anxiety, you are instantly ready to turn away, and use the old means all over again, this time in a new guise. You ascribe your emotional discomfort to factors outside of yourself, which is, in principle, the same escape you used before going on such a path. But as long you do not give up, you can always be helped to change direction and find, again and again, the inner movement in you which flows naturally. It is your soul movement of love and truth which leads to all fulfillment.

QUESTION: My sister has a great compulsion to physically run away. And when she gets there, she wants to turn around and run back. There is something she has a great fear of. Can you find and pinpoint that?

ANSWER: Yes. It is an outer symbol of the inner fear mentioned in this very lecture. There is a great readiness and willingness to love; the potential is great, but in spite of this fundamental potential, there are afflicted areas which the soul does not dare to face. The existing misconceptions and confusions, as always, stop the flow of love. Just because love is such an inborn need for this person, the afflicted area causes even greater self-rejection, increasing the fear of finding these areas, and therefore triggering the flight from the self. This then is symbolized outwardly by running away.

QUESTION: In other words, she has to turn inward?

ANSWER: Of course, that is always absolutely necessary.

QUESTION: Do I run because I don't love, or because I am afraid of being rejected?

ANSWER: It is intermingled. The immediate feeling is fear of rejection. This started very early in your life. My friends may have noticed that for the longest time I have shied away from saying anything that might appear as pointing an accusing finger at you. The implication of "you do not love" should be avoided here. To say this would be grossly misleading and would hinder insight. But when fear of rejection is analyzed, one always finds that childish fear which precludes love,

regardless of how much love may otherwise exist in you. Please do not take this in a self-moralizing way, and make it more difficult. Just at this moment and on this level, acknowledge where you are in fear.

Before coming to the level of not loving, other factors have to be recognized. In the final analysis, it amounts to not loving, but it is not an overall condition; it merely applies to the trouble spots in your psyche. It varies, of course, depending on how great the troubled area is. There are people who function healthily, happily, and constructively in many aspects of life that correspond to soul areas which are entirely free from misconception, underestimation of self, illusion, fear, and other destructive conditions. Hence in these areas love and trust do exist. Only in isolated spots does the foreign body blur the inner, real being. There are also others in whom almost the entire love capacity is hindered by such grave impairments and distortion that the overall life is disturbed, disharmonious, unfulfilled, and unhappy.

The more this is the case, the greater is the temptation to run. And the more you run from yourself, the more this foreign body grows.

QUESTION: As I see it, this love you speak of is expressed in some form or another at all times, not just in relationship between mates and sweethearts. It is also in the love for work. What would be some of the very highest aspirations for the realization of love in pure flow? Would they usually be expressed by a creative force or a creative realization? Would this expression usually be expanding from a point where one has known one's environment and one's experience to a point that has been unknown before? Would this be true?

ANSWER: Yes, of course. Most decidedly yes. Because it is unimaginable for human nature to comprehend the free-flowing current of the love force, and what the ability, versatility, scope, and variety of its expansion and creativeness can be. Let us imagine a human being who is entirely free. Such a person's inner being would be constantly manifest, functioning, and expressing. The tremendous power of the life force would flow into all directions. Since this being would be free, there would be no fear of the unknown, and thus no blockage of the free-flowing energy current or the vast possibilities for creation and expansion.

Human beings are so used to holding their forces together, afraid of this expansion. They fear it will pull them apart. In truth the expansion does not pull you apart, it unifies you. The great spiritual laws always seem contradictory. Letting go of the self into the harmonious flow unifies, while strenuously and fearfully holding the self together splits and disintegrates the psyche. The more the universal forces flow into the many directions and possibilities, the more do they in the end become one.

This great possibility is frightening for the soul which is used to constantly holding itself together. The holding together happens by force of will, by force of mind, and by superimposing goodness. The natural letting go is not a self-indulgent lack of self-discipline. It is rather a state of fearing nothing in the self and therefore dispensing with all guards. Hence, nothing opposes the cosmic movements of the soul forces. Love can blossom only in this natural state of fearlessness, where you allow all inner movements to perform with their spontaneous rhythm, even if at the beginning of their growing out of affliction, these movements point to undesirable aspects in the self. To follow the natural flow brings the soul into the great unity.

QUESTION: Do I understand you correctly that aggression is sometimes a good thing?

ANSWER: Yes, there is a healthy aggression. Healthy anger does exist. These are byproducts of the interim stage of human nature. Healthy anger must occasionally be expressed in a well-integrated life. Healthy anger does not create inner disharmony. It is a great misunderstanding to ignore or deny this fact. The denial comes from the artificial holding together of one's inner forces, and from superimposing false goodness. It is a false belief born of fear and obedience that occasional anger never exists in a truly spiritually evolved person.

In the human realm, healthy anger is a necessity. Without anger, there would be no justice and no progress. The destructive forces would take over. Allowing this takeover to happen is weakness, not love; fear, not goodness; appeasing and encouraging abuse, not constructive living. It destroys harmony rather than furthering it. It destroys healthy growth.

Anger can be as healthy and necessary an occasional reaction as love is. It forms part of love. It, too, comes spontaneously. It, too, cannot be forced. Trying to force or deny any emotion leads to self-deception which then may take the form of pretending that unhealthy anger is the healthy version.

The cause cannot determine whether the emotion elicited is healthy or unhealthy anger. The cause may entirely justify real, genuine, healthy anger which is, needless to say, constructive in this case. Yet, the anger experienced may be the unhealthy kind because of the personality's unresolved problems, insecurity, guilts and doubts, uncertainties and contradictions. The issue itself may warrant justified anger, but an individual may not be able to express that kind.

To the extent that an individual is capable of experiencing and expressing real love, he or she is capable of manifesting constructive, healthy anger. Both real love and real anger come from the inner self. Absolutely any real feeling is healthy and constructive and furthers growth in the self and in others. Real feelings cannot be forced, commanded, or superimposed. They are a spontaneous expression, happening as an organic, natural result of self-confrontation.

QUESTION: In that case, would you permit physical violence?

ANSWER: No. Healthy anger does not necessarily manifest in physical violence. Expression of negative emotions, even when they are not healthy, need not in the least lead to destructive acts, either physical or otherwise.

This is one of the most frequent and hindering misconceptions in the pathwork. This is why I have mentioned it again and again ever since the beginning, because no matter how many times I have said it, it is forgotten. The inner psyche fears that acknowledgement of negative emotions must lead to acting them out. This is not so. On the contrary, you are free to choose whether or not to act, how and when, or to express any emotion only when you are fully aware. When you are not aware of what you really feel and why, you are constantly driven, and suffer from all sorts of compulsions you cannot understand. A compulsion is the direct result of unacknowledged, unconscious feelings and conditions. The more you know yourself, the more you are in control of your self. It is not, as you say in fear, "I cannot look at myself in candor because then I may have to

let out these undesirable impulses and do harm to others and therefore ultimately to myself." This vague reaction also has to be brought to the surface in order to dispel it and render it ineffective.

Please repeat this in your daily meditation -- all of you: "Awareness of what I feel, no matter how undesirable it may be, will make me free. I will have the choice of my actions only to the degree of my awareness. If I choose to verbally express these feelings when there is a good purpose, such as with my helper, I will do so. If I feel that such expression may impair a relationship, I will not do so, but will withhold it knowingly and without self-deception." Such meditation will strengthen the knowledge and finally penetrate the more hidden and resistant layers of your psyche.

It is entirely mistaken to assume that awareness of anger and even verbal expression of it results in physical violence or in any other form of destruction -- whether the anger be healthy or unhealthy. Healthy anger, since it comes from the real self, knows just what to do and when to meet the necessary requirements of the moment.

QUESTION: What about people who are violently persecuted? What should be their attitude?

ANSWER: The instinct of self-preservation will most certainly make them fight and defend themselves against such occurrence, whether by counterattack or by flight. The healthier the whole personality, the more certainly does this instinct function in choosing the right defense at the right time. This again is not an intellectual consideration, but, as always, a spontaneous manifestation of the real self. If necessary, such counterattack and defense will also be physical.

QUESTION: Regarding expression of anger, I find it unbearable.

ANSWER: Sometimes it is inadvisable; sometimes it is advisable. This is what I mean: When you are aware you have the choice, and when you are not aware, you do not have the choice. The more you are aware of the possibility of making a choice, the more freedom you gain and the less you will feel or think that restraint is due to outer demands, outer authority. With the awareness that you are making a free choice, rebellion against restraint becomes superfluous. There is a great difference if restraint is exercised because of demands from the outer world, or because you choose it with your own free will. Paradoxical as this may seem again, the more you choose restraint willingly, with alert reasoning and constructive motivation, the freer you become. It is not, as might be supposed, that the less self-restraint there is, the freer the person.

The more directly you are aware of what you really feel and express it, if you so choose, the less you will become entangled in detours and evasions. Directly reaching the core of one's feelings or reactions, and thereby understanding their true significance, is the art and the aim of this pathwork. If your aim is finished perfection, you still find yourself caught in perfectionism, which hinders your progress. But if your aim becomes to know what is it you really feel at this moment, then you have a realistic aim leading to instant release, truth, harmony, and dynamic progress.

Again, a seeming contradiction: The more you go to the spot of whatever happens to be true now, the more you grow into real perfection. The more you strain away from what you now feel and think in an attempt to be more than you happen to be in this instant, the less you grow toward

your goal of gradually achieved perfection. These words should also be used in daily meditation because they are a key for all of you.

QUESTION: What about the reverse of what you have just said? What about the person who is afraid or too insecure to show righteous anger? What is happening to love in this situation?

ANSWER: This is a very good question. Where there is fear of expressing a justified anger, to that degree there must be fear of loving. Behind both fears is confusion, misconception, illusion. It is these misinterpreted hurts and pains which are responsible for the foreign nucleus I was talking about. This nucleus obstructs the manifestations of the real self, the outflow of genuine love as opposed to superimposed love, and of the capacity to express healthy anger as opposed to twisted, tortured anger. When insecurity makes a person too anxious to express justified anger, that individual is as yet incapable of feeling healthy anger. When the issue justifies anger, insecurity induces conflicting feelings.

Healthy anger makes you stronger, twisted anger, weaker. Healthy love is all-embracing and enriches you the more you give out of yourself. Sickly, distorted, false love impoverishes and breeds conflict between self-interest and the interests of others. It comes from and increases duality; it always opposes the good to the bad. Ungenuine love is always connected with self-pity, resentment, hostility, and conflict. There is in it always the feeling of, "I ought to love, therefore I think I love, yet I do not want to love because then I will be taken advantage of. Since I ought to love and do not want to, I feel guilty and am bad." When you feel this way you cannot express healthy anger. It is dissipated at the source, for you doubt your right to feel anger, since you do not dare to love.

If you continue to struggle and to find the right expression of your feelings in the now, you must experience the beauty of the universe, the truth of being which knows no conflict. That truth combines loving with receiving one's full share of happiness, instead of mutually excluding either love or happiness, as seems inevitable when love is attempted by outer good will. When, however, you use outer good will in order to recognize that behind your trying to love lies a non-love born of fear, hurt, and illusion, then in the way of finding out what these illusions are, you must finally come to real love, your real self, the genuine expression of all you feel and are -- which will be good and right.

My dearest friends, be blessed, all of you. Find the way, step by step, into the realization of these words. Be in peace, be in God!

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