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## DEADENING OF THE LIVE CENTER THROUGH MISINTERPRETATION OF REALITY

Greetings, my dearest, dearest friends. Blessings for every one of you. Blessed be this evening. May your understanding of this lecture open your mind and your vision so that you all advance a further step in your self-realization.

One of the most difficult accomplishments is to fully understand the present situation, how it is a direct creation of the individual. Just because this understanding could be immediate and near, it seems distant. Just because the connection is so easily available, it seems that to obtain it would require much effort and struggle. Once one discovers the knack of it, it becomes easy and natural, and it is obvious that the connection has been there all along. Even those of my friends who have been involved in the pathwork for a considerable time, still overlook what is most significant and fail to see themselves as they are. They do not understand their present situation, what it means in terms of their own innermost being, because the mechanism of escape is often so deeply entrenched. This lecture, once again, is destined to shake you up, to make you more aware, to awaken you to yourself and your immediate outer situation.

Whenever you find yourself in a situation that is not desirable, that leaves you unfulfilled in any way, your usually vague discontent causes you to strive for another situation. A clear-cut goal-directedness and precise concept of a better way of life can succeed only when the present situation, with its lack, is totally understood. Striving toward a different situation when the present situation is not fully understood must result in failure and frustration.

How can the present situation be fully understood, my friends? That can only happen by becoming fully aware of what you really miss. You must put into words precisely what you would want to be different in your life. This must be the first awareness. The second awareness must be the extent to which you suffer from what you miss. For that, too, is often pushed aside and not acknowledged. How much do you really miss what you miss? Do not glibly content yourself with a vague, general acknowledgement. The full intensity of partly-repressed longings and frustrations must be aired out. The third awareness, in this respect, must be a total comprehension of your present situation. And that, of course, means -- after the above acknowledgements -- to ascertain why you endure your present situation. It is essential that you profoundly understand how the present situation is a direct outcome of who you are.

I have discussed this many times in the past. I repeat it now not only to connect it with the lecture to follow, but also because I see among you, my friends -- despite your good progress -- that this is still vastly overlooked. Therefore, I invite all of you to follow this simple formula and give your total attention to what you feel and experience right now, and why this is so.

How is your outer situation a symbolic representation of your inner state of being? When you finally connect with the fact that your outer state -- no matter how undesirable it may be -- is exactly a result of what you are, think, feel, and want, you will immediately understand that your outer situation cannot be any different. When you deeply know that it cannot be any different, then you have totally exploited, assimilated and comprehended your present Now, your total situation. This comprehension, this analyzing in depth results in knowing that any present situation must be a direct link to the inner being. You will find that the present situation is an exact result of the sum total of your personality. This includes, of course, the favorable circumstances. When you overlook and neglect the enjoyment of all the good circumstances in your life, you must be commensurately unaware of your values. As you learn in each moment to value, appreciate and enjoy what life offers you, you must simultaneously become aware of the good in you, your values and assets. This will give you greater strength to come out of vicious circles and self-generating negative attitudes and will make the understanding of the undesirable situation more realistic as it relates to your inner personality. You will gain a more rounded picture of your total person and of your life.

As long as you are vague and hazy about what you miss, and as long as you deny what you miss, you cannot possibly understand your life. Understanding one's life in this fashion is the key to changing it into a more desirable and fulfilling manifestation.

Most of you, my friends on this path, have occasionally understood your lives and yourselves as one unit, in the way mentioned here. These moments are always deep experiences of the reality of being, of vibrant aliveness, light and truth. To achieve this seems so difficult just because it is so immediate and near. It seems so much easier to wish for something vaguely different, or even precisely different -- in an attitude of discontent and tense struggle, in a mood of complaining, resentment, and self-pity. Meanwhile, you ignore: a) the intensity of the real longing; b) the presence of reservations to this real longing; c) their "reasons"; d) the consequent thoughts, feelings, emanations, attitudes in inner and outer behavior; and e) how these must affect others, and thereby create the present situation. You often overlook that the present situation is a result of many years of deeply entrenched patterns of thinking, acting and feeling and cannot change instantly after some recognitions have been made. The effect of these recognitions is diluted when they do not bring an immediate result. To expect instant results is a childish demand from life, an angry refusal to cooperate with life's laws, which are most certainly contained in the reasons for the unfulfillment itself. This also causes you to overlook the good that is in your life and that you fail to enjoy and appreciate.

When you ignore the oneness between your innermost self and your outer situation it is always because you run away from yourself. You do not really and totally want to see yourself as you are, but look at yourself only in a limited way and with reservations. Ask yourself, all of you, do you truly wish to see yourself totally, as you are? Do you cultivate such an aim by expressing this desire, particularly in moments of discontent and disharmony? Or are you quick to glibly furnish rationalizations for your disharmony? Or do you actually admit that it must be in you -- because you know enough about the truth of these matters -- but let it go at that, without the willingness to really look? The simple formula of expressing the deep and full intention and desire to see the full truth about oneself at all times is still not sufficiently used. So much greater liberation could exist if this were followed through in more detail and with more attention of the self to the immediate situation.

The reasons for the strong tendency to escape from the self -- and therefore inevitably from life, with all its good possibilities -- are manifold. In the course of these lectures we have discussed many of the possible motives and reasons for escape. Let us now pay specific attention to one aspect that I have only generally and vaguely touched upon, for the simple reason that none of my friends were quite ready to face this aspect in themselves. It could only be discussed and contemplated in very general terms. The last few months have brought considerable progress for a number of my friends, and therefore many of you can now accept what I have to say.

The aspect that I want to discuss is not mere hostility. Hostility has become too vague a term, almost meaningless in its repeated use. Let us deliberately be as crass as possible. In most human beings -- in some more and in some less -- there exist elements of cruelty. This cruelty is hard to face. But when you do face it, relief and liberation must follow, because nothing further bars the way to being totally in truth with yourself. As long as the cruelty within yourself is not fully faced, as long as you run away from it, you cannot be clear and comfortable, unafraid and relaxed about yourself. You cannot be good friends with yourself. You can be good friends with yourself when you accept, acknowledge, understand and work openly and candidly on the cruel aspects, even before you can totally eliminate them. But as long as you still struggle against cruelty in the wrong, self-defeating way -- namely by denial and hiding -- you must be in constant friction with yourself, and therefore, inevitably, with life and with others. Since you cannot be comfortable in your own skin, your life and living with yourself will feel wrong; problems will appear without solutions. Solutions can appear on the horizon only in exact proportion to your facing in yourself what you fear most -- and that is usually cruelty. You cannot think of anything worse, nothing more frightening than this aspect of yourself.

A reliable gauge to determine whether there is still unrecognized cruelty within is the amount of fear you have left. Consider your fear of other people -- generally or specifically -- fear of life, fear of death, fear of the unknown. The more you are afraid -- of ruthlessness and separateness, of rejection and humiliation, of physical and mental cruelty -- the more must these exact same aspects slumber within yourself, as yet not fully acknowledged. As long as this is the case -- regardless of how large or small the unrecognized aspects are -- you will be in conflict. You will run from those areas in your life which appear difficult and uncomfortable. That they are unpleasant for you now is a sign that they contain the very key you need. If only you stopped running and really looked at yourself, you would see that you are avoiding certain outer and inner situations and why you do so. These instances harbor the secret you are still unwilling to unveil, in spite of all your good efforts. Yet, as long as you cannot meet yourself and others without reservations, you cannot possibly fulfill yourself. It means that you want to continue deceiving yourself by avoiding these aspects. You may vaguely feel something like this, but there is a great difference between that and really looking into yourself.

Those who have begun to do so must already have overcome the worst. This is not necessarily a question of time, of how long one has been in the pathwork -- not by any means.

Let us now discuss why cruelty exists. After having acknowledged its existence, what then? Before answering this question, I shall remind you of that innermost center of every human being which activates all of you with all you need to live productively. This live center furnishes you with energy, life force, wisdom, vision, solutions, love and harmony. It exists deep within every individual. In a young person, a child, it manifests as a very vulnerable spot. Its very aliveness

comes forth from a tender and soft center. When children are hurt and puzzled -- when they misunderstand the events around them -- they proceed to toughen this vulnerable spot to defend themselves against its soft openness. By these various defense mechanisms, the live center becomes more and more overlaid, hidden and covered by tough substances. Without an adult and realistic understanding -- that is, a mature ego -- the child cannot handle this soft, malleable live center in which the most powerful, creative and intelligent forces are contained. For its own protection, it must separate the live center from its consciousness. However, when the child grows into an adult, when the ego becomes mature, the separation becomes an unfortunate handicap. The individual lives in a crippled way, leaving out the best and most reliable aspect of his or her whole being. Only when he or she proceeds to uncover it again and integrate it with the adult ego does the personality become whole and equipped to handle life.

The existence of this bare, vulnerable live center can be determined not only by remembering your childhood with its strong emotions and deep experiencing, both positive and negative, but by truly observing yourself. You cannot fail to become conscious of moments when this vulnerable spot is present. You can further observe how you then proceed to make it invulnerable. In other words, you continue to use the process that was instituted in childhood, but which now operates greatly to your detriment, for it is the wrong way to protect yourself and to cope best with life. The means to inactivate the live center are various: separating and withdrawing, toughening yourself, numbing your feelings, denying your real feelings and substituting counterfeit feelings, and also becoming cruel. All these measures serve to make the vulnerable spot within you invulnerable, because this seems the only "safe" way.

You overlook and ignore the fact that the vulnerability is the very material, as it were, with which to govern your life in the most dynamic and fruitful way. For this vulnerable spot is the live center out of which all energy and wisdom is derived. It is that in you which makes it possible to fully experience and enjoy, to have and give pleasure. The potent energy deriving from the live center can be utilized most constructively and meaningfully in the realization that the live center must become a conscious aspect, to be integrated with the ego. If this integration is hindered due to misunderstanding and ignorance, the energy will turn destructive. The result of the inverted power must be chaos, separation, disintegration, confusion, suffering, and an inner division and numbness that makes life appear difficult, ugly, removed and senseless.

The activation of your real self, or the divine center, is not something that you gain from the outside -- or even from within yourself, as something faraway you have not yet experienced. There are many occasions when you vaguely and hazily experience the real self, such as in natural, unexaggerated sadness. But you make sure to deny the experience, because you do not know how to cope with it, how to handle it. You flatten the experience, prohibiting the deeper, richer dimensions that come from your innermost center.

As long as the inner center is still in the condition it was when you were a child, it is not yet in a position to handle life. The inner wisdom contained in the live center begins to manifest only after integration with the ego. In the child state, the inner center is just alive, full of feeling, energy, and capacity for experience, for pleasure, as well as for yet unutilized potentials of creativity and intelligence. What you must learn to do now is: 1) observe the existence of the live center, 2) observe the mechanics by which you discourage its manifestations and toughen the vulnerable spot; 3) deliberately stop the mechanics of disengagement and allow the live center's unfoldment.

Through appropriate meditations, integration between the live center and the ego will take place, so that its substance will become strong and resilient without losing its soft aliveness.

You find yourself in the predicament of possessing an adult ego with all its faculties intact, yet separated from that vulnerable live center. The vulnerable live center is separated from your wakeful consciousness -- that is your problem.

The more the live center is unrealistically and inadequately "defended" and blocked, denied and covered up, the more do some aspects of the self come into being of which one will feel ashamed and guilty. One of the severest forms is that of cruel impulses. Cruelty will truly cease to exist in the depth of the human soul -- not only in action and conscious thoughts, but in the unconscious emotions -- when the live center is not denied and hindered, but recognized, observed, and allowed to function. The intense feelings of the live center can then be compared to reality, as it unfolds. The ego-faculties will help in the process; reason and intelligence will adjust imbalances and deviation from reality. But when reason is used to deny the depth, scope and richness of feelings as they manifest from the live center, the human personality cripples itself and puts itself out of balance. Bring together the manifestation of the live center, with its vulnerability and its strength of feelings, with your adult understanding and ego-faculties.

Cruelty can exist only as a result of a separation between the live center and the ego. To put it in more practical terms, cruelty exists because reality is misinterpreted, which causes the individual to further inactivate the live center. It is not only the child who misinterprets what happens around it. Where the child has done that is precisely where the adult continues to do so, right now -- unless and until all this has been found and corrected. All of you, in the areas of your difficulties, go on misinterpreting reality. You do not perceive what goes on around you. You do not see things the way they really are, but misunderstand them.

How can you discover such misunderstanding? Only by first acknowledging to yourself what it is that you actually believe, then interpreting what that means. This applies to anything that makes you feel disharmonious. Ask yourself how you interpret what others feel and think about you.

Let us take a practical example to make this more understandable. You feel slighted, discriminated against, rejected. As a rule you admit this only vaguely. You may say the words, but you do not fully acknowledge to what extent you feel this, nor why you feel this, or what makes you believe that your feelings are justified and appropriate. You can go to the next step and ask yourself: "Is this real, or do I just believe it? Could it be otherwise?" Even when you do admit to feeling rejected, you usually let it go at that and you live in a fog, a haze, in which you do not fully examine whether or not it is real. You may verbally acknowledge that perhaps it is not real, but then there is another level on which you do believe it is real. This level is not totally faced and examined.

Cruelty is the greatest stumbling block to self-facing, to living in the dynamic, adventurous beauty of each Now. It is also the greatest factor in running away from yourself, and is ultimately a result of misinterpreting reality. You cannot interpret reality accurately as long as you do not clearly and precisely formulate what it is that you believe -- how you interpret events which seem to call for the hurt and defenses -- and as long as you do not consider the possibility that the reality could be different.

I have discussed here several points which must be combined in your work:

Point 1: An undesirable situation -- a lack of fulfillment, an emptiness -- cannot be eliminated and changed into a more desirable condition unless you understand that the present situation cannot be different. You fully recognize that the cause is in yourself.

Point 2: Let us separate the admission of the lack, which is the first point, from the second point -- the recognition of what in you caused the lack, so that you deeply experience the oneness between your self and your life situation.

Point 3: The cruel aspects in you represent the main reasons for all resistance and fear of self-facing. Often, these cruel aspects can be found only when one acknowledges one's fear. Do not forget the important correlation between fear of others, or any outer facet of life, and the fear of your unrecognized cruelty. If you are free from cruelty, you cannot ever fear others.

Point 4: Establish in what moments the live center is bare -- as in the vulnerable state of a child, who has not yet integrated these energies and feelings with the ego-faculties.

When this integration takes place, the vulnerable live center is no longer vulnerable in a negative, dangerous or debilitating way, but in a positive, wonderful way. It is flexible, alive, vibrant and full of the strong feelings without which pleasure, joy, and happiness cannot exist. The tremendous strength and intelligence contained in this vulnerable spot will govern all your actions and attitudes. It will cause thoughts and emotions which must bear fruit all around you. It will induce you to be totally constructive in all you do. You will want to give your best and total attention to everything you experience, to all your undertakings. Nothing will be done half-heartedly, with half-attention or divided motives. Therefore, the outcome will be more and more desirable and fulfilling. There is no strain in this attention. You will be carried by a sweeping, marvelous strength. Instead of covering up the vulnerable spot, you will bring it out. Instead of shying away from the feelings in this vulnerable spot, you will widen the area of aliveness. You will strengthen it with a new resiliency, which comes from understanding reality and correctly interpreting what goes on in you, and in others.

As you begin to integrate the vulnerable spot with the ego, you are accomplishing the goal of your evolutionary process in this particular respect. You have to go through the four points I indicated in order to connect your fears with your unacknowledged cruelty. Discover how the cruelty is a result of misinterpretation. Question closely why you have these cruel impulses. As you do so, acknowledge what hurts you; what you would want to be different; what you believe others do to you, what life does to you. After putting this into precise words, take the next step: ask yourself whether you are in reality, whether what you believe is true or not.

Now, my friends, this lecture must not remain a theoretical study. To the extent you use it for yourself, you will make what I say a reality. Some of you have begun to do so in your personal pathwork. Others have not yet begun this particular phase. I do expect -- if not tonight, then in the next question and answer period -- that you will present me with such problems. You may begin by expressing exactly what hurts you and why. You will come to certain recognitions. Then ask your questions, and I will help you further. Let us consider together whether or not the hurt is justified. Is it really the way you feel it to be? The moment you can question the reality of your experiencing

slight and hurt, you have a firm foundation from which to proceed. As long as you cannot ask yourself this question because you do not yet know that you feel it, you have to seek the proper way in your momentary phase of the pathwork.

Some of you may be aware of the cruelty, even if only vaguely. You can proceed from there. Some may be very much aware of their fears, but are separated from the other side of the coin -- namely, the cruel impulses in themselves. Others may be acutely aware of their unfulfillment -- which can be any type of undesirable present situation -- but have not yet connected this lack with their own innermost causes. Still others may have accomplished this to some degree, but overlook the rare instances when their true vulnerable spot comes to the fore. They have not yet observed how they manage to get away from it, how they cover it up, harden or numb it in one fashion or another.

All these possibilities exist now for your further work. Some of you are aware of one or another of these aspects, but not of the others; none of you are aware of all these aspects. May all of you bring these points together, not just intellectually, but as deeply felt experience. This, indeed, will give you courage and liberation. None of these aspects are equally strong in everyone. For example, with some of my friends the area of their illusion and misinterpretation of reality is relatively small. They are rational and see reality in many areas. Their misinterpretation of reality applies only to certain areas, which may be so hidden and vague, so subtle and elusive, that it is difficult to ascertain. Just because they are apparently so much in reality, it is easy to overlook where they are not and to what extent they are not. In a certain way, these friends have a more difficult time resolving this problem than those who overtly and obviously demonstrate that they are, even on the intellectual level, in illusion or delusion. The latter may suffer more acutely until they reach the point of questioning their interpretation of events and other people's reactions. Then there are those who believe that they are reasonable, rational and realistic, yet are deluded even about that.

The material I have given you can indeed be a major tool for all of you. Now, do you have any questions regarding this topic?

QUESTION: I have found this cruelty in me in connection with revenge. I also feel my cruelty when I withdraw and punish others with my isolation. Now, in spite of having found this, I feel that I cannot give it up. I must hang on to it. Can you help me to go on from here?

ANSWER: Actually, what I said in this lecture is an answer. Your particular key now is to ask yourself why you feel cruel. What do you believe is done to you? What do you expect might be done to you? What do you expect of the other person? Why do you believe the other person is acting -- or has acted, or might act -- in the way that induces cruel impulses in you? Acknowledge precisely what it is that you believe. Then the next step must be to ask: Is it real, or do I only believe it to be so?

QUESTION: To me it seems real....

ANSWER: Of course. That is exactly what I mean. Because it does seem real, you seem to need cruelty. You have always assumed that it is real. Now you must open yourself to the possibility that it might not be as you believe. That must be your next step in this respect. As long as you let it go at that, in a vague attitude of "perhaps it is not so, but to me it seems real," without

considering the consequences, you will remain stuck. When you want to see the truth above all and reach for it, it will come to you. As long as you remain in a hazy climate, you must hold on to the cruelty. The cruelty will be your precarious pleasure. The pleasure will cease when you understand the true facts. The understanding can only happen when you want it and are ready to consider new horizons and possibilities that you had never thought of. Specifically, ask yourself the question: "Do the circumstances, the desires of the other person and the facts bear out what I feel, or might I be mistaken? If the reality is different from the way I think and feel it, I would like to see that reality. I open myself up to that reality. I do not commit or obligate myself to anything except that I want to see the truth." Then truth must come, and truth must remove conflict and suffering. That is the way.

QUESTION: I am extremely aware of cruelty and vulnerability in myself. My feelings are so strong when I feel slighted that I feel the desire to kill those who seem to slight me. Yet, I also sense that my reactions may be exaggerated. What should I do about this now that I have become aware of it?

ANSWER: Again, an exact answer can be found in this lecture. But I also wish to answer you personally. I said before that with some people the area of their unrealistic understanding is relatively small, while with others it is much more obvious. You belong undoubtedly to the latter category. This is a two-edged thing because -- due to this unreality, to your unreal perceptions -- you suffer more while you are in it. On the other hand, it is so crass that you will have an easier time discovering the unreality and finding your way out of the illusion. Here you have an exact example of what I demonstrated in this lecture. It is wonderful that it is so open and that, in the short time of your work, it has come out so strongly. Your vulnerability is also still relatively accessible. You think you defend it by separating it from your ego and trying to numb it by cruelty. On the other hand, cruelty is also generated by your misinterpretation of reality. This is extremely strong and obvious, therefore rather easy to determine once you begin to question it and consider the possibility in a serious way. What you believe people feel and think and what they actually feel and think, what you believe they are and what they actually are, is very, very different.

Think every day, my friend, about where you feel you were insulted, slighted, rejected, or discriminated against. Put it down in writing, every single instance. I want you to do this every day. After a few weeks, or even a few days, you will see to what extent -- actually almost all the time you are in contact with people -- you at least anticipate rejection and discrimination, slight and disapproval. Very often you think it already has happened, while in reality nothing could be further from the truth. When you begin to ask yourself whether your feelings are true and commensurate with what actually takes place -- and when you want to see what is true, as possibly opposed to what you heretofore believed -- you must begin to experience genuine and lasting relief.

I want you to work along these lines by yourself and also in your group. Ask yourself what you believe the other group members feel about you. When you bring it out, compare it with their actual reactions to you. Then also learn what is behind their reactions and why they feel what they feel. Your entire aim must now be to discover what actually is and how it differs from what you think is true. Then you will not need to toughen the vulnerable spot, which is the essence of the real live center, without which you cannot successfully live. When you formulate precisely what you think others feel about you -- and when you then, with equal precision, formulate the possibility that you might be mistaken and contemplate other alternatives -- a new world will open for you. It will



be a free world in which you can live without fear, a world of light in which you need not be isolated.

Now you feel the whole world is against you. Since you feel the whole world is against you, out to harm and slight you, to reject and humiliate you, you must toughen yourself. Cruelty is almost the only weapon with which to defend yourself against such a world. Therefore you must hang on to it. But when you begin to see that this is not so, you will not need the cruelty, you will be relaxed and light, because the world will no longer be your enemy. Other people will no longer be your enemies. For instance, when you pass people in the street, observe the subtle, and yet distinct, feeling of how you perceive the strangers around you, how you perceive that they are all your enemies. Then ask yourself, "Is this true? Are they really my enemies, or might it be different? Might they feel similar to the way I feel -- frightened and lost? And when they are angry, maybe they hit out as I do at the idea that everyone else is their enemy?" Millions of people pass each other by, day in and day out, each feeling they are being singled out to be persecuted. This is often a subtle, not even detectable, feeling, which, nevertheless, is there. Once this feeling is brought into awareness, you can begin to question the accuracy of your perception. You can thus find the way back to reality, hence to truth and light, into a world which is wonderful, not frightening.

My dearest friends, may this lecture bring forth in you all that is healthy, creative, constructive and real. You will find it immediately "behind" that vulnerable live center, once you allow the first manifestations of its initially disquieting emotions to reach your surface awareness. Go through this and see what will then manifest, especially when your consciousness reaches for this possibility. The constant blessings given to you combine with this power within you and fill you from within yourself. Be in peace. Be in God!

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