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FEAR OF BLISS VERSUS LONGING FOR IT -- THE ENERGY CENTERS

Greetings, all my friends here, who are blessed indeed. The blessings result from the strength and love generated by gathering together to search for truth with open hearts and minds. The universal powers can now reach you, work within you, and eventually bear their fruits.

This lecture is on the theme of the human fear of bliss. Of course, my friends, we have discussed this topic before in various connections, but as you go deeper within yourselves and discover more of what has till now been obscure, it becomes necessary to understand more about it. Every human being has this apparently nonsensical fear to some degree. Even though it makes no sense, it nevertheless exists. Coexisting with your fear is an inherent longing for your true birthright, which is a state of supreme bliss, sublime joy, quite indescribable in human language. No matter how unhappy you are, something in you knows and remembers that this fear is not natural. Indeed, if this inner knowledge did not exist, you could accept frustration and lack with much less difficulty. For the very nature of unhappiness is frustration at not having what you want. Therefore each unhappiness implicitly holds out the promise or knowledge of its opposite. First humanity's attitude is ambivalent about how it should experience life. Another ambivalence follows from this: the desire for and the fear of bliss and pleasure supreme.

For some people the fear is much less than the desire. These will be relatively fulfilled people whose life is rich and joyful, whose capacity to experience pleasure is deep, whose attitude to life is trustful, positive, and expanding. They will find it comparatively easy to overcome the remaining defenses and fears that shut off their further expansion into blissful being.

The majority of people, however, fear happiness much more than they desire it. They will be basically unhappy, feeling that life passes them by, that it is meaningless, that they somehow miss out on it. Their capacity to experience pleasure is very limited; they are numb, lifeless, and trapped in apathy. They are distrustful, negative, and withdrawn from life. They have a great resistance to looking within themselves for the cause of their suffering. Their defenses and their fear of expanding into a different state of consciousness and a new perception of life make them hang on desperately to the very state of consciousness that is responsible for their complaints against life. This is their main predicament.

Finally, there are many whose desire for and fear of happiness is approximately evenly divided. They will find areas in their life where they experience abundance, expansion, success, and fulfillment, but there will be other areas where they experience the opposite. The deeper and more honestly they probe, the more it becomes apparent that where they are happy, free, and unafraid, there is fulfillment, and where they are afraid of the best in life, there is unfulfillment, which works out with the exactitude of a mathematical equation. Of course, people are totally unaware that they fear what they want most. The further away the object of the longing, the easier it is to overlook

one's fear of it. But when it comes closer and you truly question your deepest reactions, you will find an inner closing up, a shrinking away from it. This may be so subtle that it needs close scrutiny to bring it out into the open.

I know it is extremely difficult for those who are not yet deeply acquainted with the nature of the human unconscious to comprehend and sense the fear of the most longed for, the most cried after state in life. To them this sounds truly preposterous and they may at first cast such an idea completely aside. However, I say to you that if you go deep enough and probe with honesty and openness your most subtle reactions to fulfillment, pleasure, and expansion, you will find that wherever there is the slightest risk you are too distrustful to take it and you cringe from it, preferring the apparently greater safety of gray life.

Once you find this tendency within yourself, you have made a tremendous step toward selfhood and liberation. For you are then incredibly aware of the reality of life: that your attitudes, your hidden thoughts and emotions, and nothing else, create your fate. This discovery has a revolutionary impact on the individual. Not knowing this makes the tension and suffering infinitely greater. One feels a victim of hazard, against which one thinks one must defend the self, becoming still further alienated from the center of inner truth and reality. One begins to project the causes of the alienation onto the outside world, with less and less relief. No matter how merited some of your blame of others may be, it never removes your suffering. No matter how much you can bend others to comply with your desires, it never removes the emptiness you suffer from. As long as you are unaware of the blocks that close you off from what you consciously wish most, you will feel life is futile. You will feel helpless and incapable of assuaging the pain of nonfulfillment. You will teeter between self-pity and bitterness, between projection onto others and life for your misfortune on the one hand, and distorted self-blame and a sense of not deserving the best of life on the other.

Knowing and experiencing your own rejection of pleasure is the first step to removing this block. Yet, invariably, you fight this truth with all your might at first. It seems that you prefer to remain dependent on outer circumstances, even though accepting the great truth of your utter personal freedom is the most joyful of all discoveries along the path. Once you truly see, accept, and understand its full impact, you see, indeed, that there lies the only way out. The beautiful reality of this independence cannot be conveyed to those who still battle against it.

Often, when people sense that there is somehow more to life than they experience, they put away such thoughts and adopt a cynical, resigned philosophy of life. But you, my friends, who are here must somehow sense that you can realize more out of life than you do. Therefore I say that as the first step search for where you say no. The more strained, the more compulsive, the more urgent, the more impatient the outer striving for fulfillment is, the more certain you can be that underneath is just as rigid a no as the surface, urgent, yes. The surface urge is just as much a hindrance as the inner no, because it consists of fear and distrust, born out of the unconscious knowledge that inwardly the yes is blocked off. I want to make clear, however, that the absence of urgency toward fulfillment does not imply the absence of an unconscious block. This may merely imply a different personality structure; it may mean that the person has actually given up. When there is a painful, anxious urge, it can relax only when you find your own specific, personal no to what you want most.

I must come back once more to the difficulty of the personality when one still ignores one's own denial of fulfillment. I have already mentioned the helplessness. I mentioned the frictions and constrictions when the blame for the lack is projected onto outside circumstances or other people. This creates deep entanglements and confusions. I must particularly stress once more that it creates dependency. If you ignore your own inner obstructions and believe that others or fate cause your problems, you cannot help but live in a state of tension and fear of others and life. From practically all I have ever told you about the human condition, you will see that the awareness of one's own obstructions determines everything. You will then comprehend the true meaning of self-responsibility.

Here I have given you a brief review to connect these ideas with the deeper understanding I now wish to convey. Let us try to shed more light on the all-important question of why people say this mysterious no to the fulfillment of their deepest desires, the longing for the most intense bliss imaginable. What makes happiness apparently dangerous or undesirable?

To the extent you reject yourself, you cannot bear happiness, you cannot sustain pleasure. There are two basic reasons for self-rejection. All self-rejection falls into either one or the other category.

The first kind of self-rejection is based on a very exacting mechanism in you that, regardless of your conscious rationalizations and self-deceptions, knows with an inner wisdom exactly where you violate universal laws, where you cheat life and perhaps try to get more than you wish to give. It knows where you play those hidden little games of deception, dramatization, and pretense with yourself and others, not daring to be your real self as you happen to be now. In this case you do not love but pretend to love, for your own ulterior motives. The key to the universe is real love, not the binding, clinging love you often give. Real, genuine love allows freedom and can accept a no for an answer. False love is like a lasso that wishes to dominate and hold tight. It seems easy to pretend that the latter is the former, but the inner self cannot be deceived.

Is there a lack of generosity in your feelings? Do you postulate different rules of conduct for others than for yourself? All these violations go on constantly, unknown to your conscious mind, for you manage to shut out the truth, and thereby commit the gravest of all violations. Your pretenses are so much worse than the primary violations because they deny and falsify. This then becomes a double violation, which inevitably leads to the most painful of all mental and emotional states: a double bind from which there seems no exit, until the double violation is uncovered and abandoned.

Let us say you are selfish; or you have a streak of cruelty; or you hate. If you pretend that your selfishness is the healthy version of self-assertion and thus rationalize it, you create another layer of falsehood. If you feel the cruelty and hate only in secret and act it out indirectly under a facade that seems its opposite, you, in addition to these violations, become hypocritical. The hypocrisy may not be crass and obvious, but its subtlety does not make it less poisonous. If, on the other hand, you courageously and honestly admit to yourself what goes on in you and look at it squarely, the violation is already overcome to a considerable degree. For in accepting the truth about yourself you enter into a general climate of truth. You are on a platform from which you can possibly work yourself out of the particular violation. But even while you struggle, you should seek greater comprehension; meditate for guidance and help so your feelings may change spontaneously.

In these endeavors you are in keeping with the universal laws; you accept your present state; you establish inner conditions compatible with bliss. If you have the honesty to say, "I cannot help feeling this way, although I know I do not like it and I know it is destructive," you are not only truthful, but you make room for change.

Anything that is contrary to the laws of love and truth makes the organism unable to sustain the powerful energy of happiness. For happiness is indeed a powerful energy. Happiness requires more strength than unhappiness. This strength can be acquired by facing the truth and shedding illusions about the self and life.

The second reason for self-rejection is imaginary violation, according to illusory standards of perfection. Perfectionistic ideals are, as you know, extremely demanding and rigid. Adhering to them stems not from an overdose of morality but from a violation of real universal laws. Perfectionism always comes from pride, vanity, the need to control others, pretense, and, last but not least, fear of standing up for one's own feelings and opinions. In short, perfectionism means being untrue to the self out of greed for admiration and approval by others. I do not need to go into further details, for we have certainly discussed this enough in the past. It suffices here to realize that whenever you do not accept your humanity, your present limitations, you violate a universal law. In doing so the "climactic conditions" of the psyche, if I may use this expression, are incompatible with the bliss that you long for.

This may all seem very simple, but it is not. For hidden self-rejection and the even more hidden reasons for it are very obscure when one starts on such a path. Usually people are aware only of what they pretend to be to themselves. If they cannot bear certain emotions, which are locked away, they genuinely believe that whatever they feel and know about themselves is all there is to them. Therefore it is not easy to find out how you really operate. It requires a new emphasis and a new direction, a new awareness of the emotional reactions you were so accustomed to glossing over. The awareness of your violations of universal laws will also reveal, commensurately, the awareness of your rejection of happiness.

Wherever you may be on this path, at the beginning, or perhaps before even starting on it, or having already made substantial progress in self-discovery, my advice to all of you is: to the degree you feel there is still something amiss in your life, that you could have more feelings, experience more intensely, proceed specifically in the direction outlined in this lecture. Find what you do not accept in yourself; what you do not like and close your eyes to. Find that obscure, hidden, and yet available reaction that wards off pleasure. Cultivate a purposeful willingness to see whatever still eludes you. And you will experience, step by step, where you push a part of yourself away. As you consequently cease doing that, you will become better equipped to bear happy feelings. You will develop a very fine awareness, at first observing a subtle inner soul-movement that shrinks back when something good comes along. As you discover this, you will weaken the rage with which you blame others, circumstances, people, life itself. And this already removes a poisonous atmosphere in your psychic organism so totally alien to and incompatible with the bliss that is, by right, your inner home. It is therefore one and the same when you accept the truth about yourself and accept happiness. These two acceptances are interdependent.

The third part of the interactive nucleus, making it a triad, is the recognition of the powerful creative substance that molds your life unlike anything else. There is nothing haphazard about your

life. There is no outside power that determines the extent of your fulfillment, of your fruitful life experience, or the pain, suffering, and frustration you have to bear. Unfulfillment is not even necessarily a matter of self-punishment, as it is currently interpreted. The violation of spiritual law within the psychic organism simply creates a climate ill equipped to endure blissful, joyous feelings. Also, ignoring the truth of what you are and do, and not understanding the ramifications of your attitudes, because you lack the awareness of the power of your thoughts and feelings creates the obstruction. For example, if you do not believe it is possible to be truly happy it becomes indeed impossible. In this case you can solve the problem by cultivating inner knowledge. And this, in turn, is feasible only when you lose the fear of self-responsibility and face the entire truth about who you are at this moment.

Any truth of yourself and the nature of creation brings inner security, trust, fearlessness. Ignorance creates fear. Fear creates an inner atmosphere of closing up, and your mind will not use the powerful substance to create more expansion but, rather, more tightly shut defenses.

Bliss is a necessity, for bliss is expansion. You cannot expand and use your inherent potentials unless you are in a state of joyousness. Expansion and bliss belong together, as stagnation and frustration belong together. Expansion is a self-activating process that combines the masculine and feminine principles in perfect harmony. If you fear bliss, and therefore expansion, you will also fear growth and change. People, in fact, do fear their own inherent powers.

Bliss, pleasure, and fulfillment require the greatest of all strengths. Unhappiness requires much less strength than happiness. Strength can be generated only if you deliberately and specifically activate and call upon the divine powers within the self. In response to your call they will help you become better equipped to sustain bliss, and guide you so that you do not inadvertently, unconsciously, close up against happiness. Such prayer is just as important as seeking contact with the divine powers when you are in upheaval and crisis. When you are unhappy, it is important that you take the occasion as a meaningful lesson to effect further growth. To do this requires contact with your innate superior forces. When you are happy, it is important to become more and more compatible with the universal powers and sustain this state. This, too, requires help and guidance.

At first, you may find it particularly difficult to remember to use such opportunities of both crisis and happiness so as to be helped, strengthened, and inspired by divine contact through meditation. You may already have experienced its effectiveness, its unfailing responses, its unimaginable wisdom, its various solutions. Yet, when you are involved in deep conflicts, you simply "forget." But there comes a point when it is no longer difficult to remember to use this contact, and you become more proficient at it in difficult times. While it hardly ever occurs to people to enlist these same powers at all relevant opportunities, for many of my friends, who have reached this threshold, this is indeed a key.

Now, before turning to your questions, I would like to begin tonight another topic, directly connected with what I said here, on which we shall spend much more time in the future. All human beings have within their psychic and physical organism certain energy centers. The time has come when it is absolutely necessary for you to become aware of them. These energy centers are located at various areas in your body. They are not actually in your physical body, but in the so-called subtle body, which affects the physical glands. Although the functioning of the glandular system is directly

dependent on these centers, the centers themselves are not physical organs that can be discovered by X-rays or other physical investigation. Their reality is psychic; their physical reality can be determined only by their effects. Each energy center relates to a mental attitude. As the mental attitude changes from ignorance, fear, alienation, distrust, and hostility, to an open, trustful, truthful, and loving state, the energy centers open up. The opening is a distinct experience in the body, because the unity between body, mind, and spirit is at that point very intimate.

Therefore, our approach at this stage must also be unitive, including the total personality. You will learn certain practices that will make you aware of when a center is open and how to use its energy by finding the corresponding mental attitude. You can see easily that there is a connection between the fear of pleasure and the energy centers. For in fear these centers are necessarily cramped and closed, and the life force cannot penetrate them. When, however, you inwardly open up for pleasure, joy, happiness on all levels of your being, the open, relaxed attitude of "letting be" eventually opens these centers. In addition to the general pathwork of self-awareness, of facing the truth, of establishing contact with the universal forces, it will be necessary for you to become distinctly aware of the existence of these centers by following certain practices, and to come to know how to activate them.

Are there any questions in connection with this lecture?

QUESTION: Can you say anything else about the centers at this time? Where they are?

ANSWER: There is one center at the base of the spine. There is another in the solar plexus region. A third center is at the front of the throat. Another is at the base of the head, at the back of the neck, but a little further up -- between the neck and the base of the head. One is between the eyes, and there is another at the very top of the head. These are the basic energy centers. Each is connected with a mental attitude. Each center determines certain mental and emotional ways of being. Each has its own function. The center at the base of the spine represents all the physical, emotional feelings -- sexuality, partnership love, personal love. The solar plexus center opens the way to the connection and unification with spiritual wisdom, universal truths -- and also the impersonal love feelings connected with this experience. Opening up this center must bring you to the seat of all your feelings, which usually precedes contact with the divine, at least to a considerable degree. This is as far as I can go now. Needless to say what I have expressed here is the barest of all summaries. Much more will come later in a series of lectures.

QUESTION: Is the physical work going to be connected with breaking through the closed centers?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed. The physical work has a great deal to do with it, since it specifically deals with blocks in the body. As long as there are blocks in either the body or the feelings or the thoughts the centers cannot possibly open up. In addition to that other practices will be established later. You see, breaking through these centers can begin only after a certain degree of self-knowledge has been obtained; after certain basic resistances, fears, mental, emotional, and physical blocks have been eliminated. Only then will this new approach begin. Before it would be quite impossible. If it were attempted through artificial means, or by mechanical means, such an attempt would even be dangerous. It is perfectly safe, however, to open up these centers once the personality is firmly grounded in reality, in love, in a state of fearlessness and undefendedness. A

certain basic state of selfhood must be attained in order to use all the available spiritual energy. The physical work is one aspect of preparation. As we approach the energy centers themselves, we will, in addition to the various levels of work we are using now, be concerned with some new approaches, for example, a combination of breathing, together with meditation.

QUESTION: Can you comment further on the centers in relation to the movement of energies? Do they charge, do they discharge?

ANSWER: As I said, I shall comment much more on the topic in the future. Now I shall say this: when the human being is totally self-realized, these centers can function optimally because then the flow is not stopped. Charging and discharging takes place in a self-perpetuating, constant inner movement -- just as everything in creation is subject to the same movements and laws. The movement creates an immense feeling of bliss that cannot be described. It is the most intense pleasure on all levels -- physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual. Most human beings are not ever truly charged by these centers. Those who are are charged only fleetingly, and to a relatively small degree during exceptional states in their life. Most people are usually in a state of cramp because their centers are closed. Your misconceptions, fears, and negativities create this cramp. It is the task of each incarnated entity to discover the truth of these laws and apply them to itself. As self-deception ceases, a deep relaxation sets in, a flow starts, an undefendedness takes over that makes the personality "chargeable," if I may use the expression. Here is another way of trying to convey the almost unconveyable facts: imagine the conscious, functioning personality as an overall center. Imagine it like a planet. Then imagine the universal spiritual self as another center, timeless, spaceless, the center of everything that ever lived and ever shall live -- a huge planet, so huge that it is the same for everything and everyone. Totally self-realized entities are parallel to, exposed by, and in orbit with this spiritual center. They are always in its field of vision and influence. The movements of both are completely coordinated.

But most human beings are almost always "off-center;" their planet personality is not exposed to and is out of the field of vision of the spiritual planet. At times, the personality center moves slightly toward the spiritual center's field of vision, which is constant, moving only within itself, as it were. At times the personality center moves into, at other times out of the universal field. On this movement depend the strength, the truth, the love feelings, the aliveness--or the lack of them. When self-acceptance, truthfulness, positive attitudes prevail you tune more into awareness, trust, and love and become more like the universal life center; then the convergence occurs. Total self-realization makes the two one. The personality center is first parallel, covered, charged, enlivened by the spiritual one, until it is soaked up by it. This is not the annihilation of self, as many falsely believe. For all life is really in the spiritual center, which enlivens the rest. Death means a separation from the center, so that its light can no longer shine upon the personality and fill it with its energy.

Let me bless every one of you here with the great strength that has been generated more and more by many of you who have indeed come a far way. Rejoice in the knowledge that life is intrinsically the most benign and joyful fact. It is a constant, immutable, unalterable fact that no amount of separation from the spiritual center can deny. Ultimately you must come to this truth. Be God!

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