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## SELF-IDENTIFICATION DETERMINED THROUGH STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Greetings and blessings are poured forth unto all of you in a great and magnificent spiritual force which you can partake of and assimilate to whatever degree you truly open yourself to it with your heart and your mind.

In this lecture I will discuss consciousness from a new and different approach. It is perhaps difficult for human beings to understand that consciousness permeates the entire universe and creation. It is not simply dependent on the personality of an entity. It permeates everything that exists. The human mind is geared to think of consciousness as exclusively a byproduct of personality, that it can exist only in human form, and is associated exclusively with the brain. This is not so. Consciousness does not require a fixed form. Every particle of matter contains consciousness, but in inanimate matter consciousness is solidified, just as in inanimate objects energy is petrified. Consciousness and energy are not the same, but they are interdependent aspects of the manifestation of life.

As evolution progresses, this static condition decreases as consciousness and energy become increasingly more vibrant and mobile. Consciousness gains in awareness; energy gains greater creative power to move and to make forms.

Consciousness has experienced a separation, through processes impossible to convey to the human understanding, so that aspects of consciousness float around in the universe, so to speak. Every trait familiar to human understanding, every attitude known in creation, every aspect of personality is just one of many manifestations of consciousness. Every manifestation that is not yet integrated into the whole needs to be unified and synthesized into one harmonious whole.

It requires a leap of your imagination to comprehend the concept I am trying to convey here. Can you imagine for a moment that many familiar traits, which you have always assumed could only exist through a person, are not the person *per se*, but are free-floating particles of overall consciousness? It does not matter whether these traits be good or evil, such as, for example love, perseverance, sloth, laziness, impatience, kindness, stubbornness, or malice. They all need to be incorporated into the manifesting personality. Only then can purification, harmonizing, and enrichment of the manifesting consciousness take place, creating the preconditions for the evolutionary process of unifying consciousness.

About unification it is important to note that disharmonious and destructive aspects of consciousness always remain separate. This can be readily verified by all individuals who observe their own inner process. Positive traits and constructive aspects of consciousness are always harmonious parts of the whole, enriching and expanding the entire unified consciousness. I cannot

begin to convey the full reality of these ideas because human language is much too limited. But I do not intend to give you an impractical abstract lecture.

According to its nature, each aspect of consciousness has its own characteristics, its own vibratory movement and frequency rate, and its own emanation of color, scent, and tone. The same is true of its many other subtle sensory expressions of which human beings with their limited spectrum of senses know nothing. There are infinitely more colors, tones, scents, and so on, than you can perceive.

The human being is a conglomeration of various aspects of consciousness. Some are already purified. Some have always been pure and are thus part of the individual, forming an integrated whole. Other aspects of consciousness are negative and destructive and thus separate, like appendages. It is the task of each human being in each incarnation to synthesize, unify and assimilate these various aspects of consciousness. If you truly try to comprehend what I say here, you may find that this is a novel way of explaining human existence. Naturally this not only applies to the level of human consciousness, but also to higher states of consciousness where the struggle is no longer as severe or painful. Increased awareness of higher states of consciousness facilitates the synthesizing process immeasurably. The human predicament is the general lack of understanding of what is going on, the blindness with which people are involved in the struggle, and their deliberate perpetuation of that blindness.

To the degree that struggle and tension exist in a personality, the various aspects of consciousness will be at odds with one another. You who are unaware of the meaning of the struggle are trying to identify with one or several of these aspects of consciousness without knowing what the true self is, where it is located, or how it can be found in this maze of discord. You wonder if you are your best qualities, or if you are your over-severe conscience which annihilates you for your negative traits. Or are you perhaps the destructive demon within you? Which is your best self? Is it your rage at the demon in you or your total negation of its existence? Whether individuals know it or not, this inner struggle and search is ongoing, and the more conscious the struggle is, the better. Any path of self-development must sooner or later come to terms with these questions -- with the deep problem of self-identity.

It is a human distortion to identify with any of the above-mentioned aspects. You are neither your negative traits nor your self-punishing superimposed conscience, nor even your positive traits. Even though you have managed to integrate the latter into the fullness of your being, this is not the same as identifying with them. It is more accurate to say that you are that part of you which managed this integration by determining, deciding, acting, thinking, and willing, so that you could absorb into your self what was previously an appendage. Each aspect of consciousness possesses a will of its own, as those of you who do the pathwork know. As long as you are blindly involved in the struggle and therefore submerged in it, each of these various aspects will control you in turn because the real self that could determine your identification differently has not yet found its power. Your blind involvement enslaves you and inactivates your creative energy. This missing sense of self leads to despair.

If the personality blindly believes it actually is nothing but its own destructive aspects, it becomes embroiled in a special kind of inner battle. On the one hand there will be self-annihilation, self-punishment, and violent self-hate as a reaction to perceiving the self as only the negative parts.

On the other hand, how can you truly want to give up these negative traits or even fully face and investigate them when you believe that they are the only reality of the self? You are thrown back and forth between the attitudes of, "I must remain as I am, unchanged and unimproved, for this is my only reality and I do not want to cease to exist," and, "I am so terrible, so bad, so despicable, that I have no right to exist and therefore I must punish myself out of existence." Since this conflict is too painful to face when it is believed to be real, the entire issue is put to sleep.

You then lead a life of "as if," or pretense, which then shifts your sense of identity to your mask. You struggle against exposing the pretense, let alone giving up the pretense, for the only other alternative is the painful struggle I have just described. No wonder human beings have so much resistance. And yet, what a waste it is. For none of it is the true reality. There is a real self that equals neither your negative aspects, nor your the adamant self-annihilation, nor the pretense that covers everything up. Finding this real self is our main concern.

Before the universal self can fully manifest in you, there is already one aspect of it available right now which you can immediately realize: your conscious self at its best, as it exists right now. It is a limited present manifestation of your spiritual being, but it is truly yourself; it is the "I" you need to make order out of all your confusion. This already manifest consciousness exists in many realms of your life, but you take it for granted. You have not yet brought it to bear on this area of conflict where you continue to be blindly controlled by a false self-identity, or rather by its consequences.

The "I" that is able to make a decision, for instance, to truly face this conflict and to observe its various expressions is the self with which you may safely identify. To the degree the personality awakens and self-consciousness is gained, such decisions and choices of attitude are possible. Conversely, to the degree such decisions and choices of attitude are made, consciousness awakens and expands. The immediately available consciousness of every living human being is usually not fully put to use right where the greatest sufferings and conflicts exist. The full scope of its power is not put into the service of this struggle about identity. When the entity begins to do this systematically, a major change will take place, and a new stage of development is reached. To the extent your conscious self can use its already existing knowledge of truth, its already existing power to execute good will, its already existing capacity to be positive, committed, truthful, courageous and persevering in the struggle to find your identity, plus its already existing ability to choose how to deal with the problem, to exactly that degree your consciousness expands and becomes increasingly more infiltrated by spiritual consciousness.

Spiritual consciousness cannot manifest when your already existing consciousness is not fully put to use in the conduct of your life. By using existing consciousness, new inspiration, new realms of vision and understanding and of profound wisdom and experience all well up from your depths. But as long as you follow the line of least resistance, giving in to blind involvement, giving up on finding true self-identity and settling blindly for a would-be existence, you remain stuck in the old rut of reacting from habit and easily justifying it. You indulge in compulsive, negative, hopelessly circular thinking, and your present consciousness cannot be fully put to use. Consequently, consciousness cannot possibly expand, nor can it transmute and synthesize the negative aspects with which it falsely identifies itself. It also cannot bring in deeper aspects of the spiritual self. As long as existing values are not fully put to use, additional values cannot possibly be realized. This is a law of life that applies to all levels of being. This is a very important thing to understand, my friends.

When you identify with one or even a cluster of aspects and believe that these aspects are you, you become submerged in them. At the very beginning when I started giving lectures, I used the terms higher self, lower self, and mask self. These are very abbreviated terms which comprise, of course, many subdivisions and variations. As a convenient frame of reference, one may classify certain aspects as belonging to one or the other of these three basic categories.

The genuine will for good is, needless to say, an expression of the higher self. But there is also another will for good which can easily be confused with the former, though it is by no means the same. It is the will to be good for the sake of appearance, for the sake of denying the lower aspects, because the conscious, determining, choosing self does not take up the challenge to confront the negative aspects. The demoniacal, destructive aspects are obviously an expression of the lower self. But the giant guilt that threatens to punish these destructive aspects with total annihilation is not an expression of the higher self, although it may easily pose for it. It is, in fact, more destructive than the destructiveness itself. It comes entirely out of the false self-identification mentioned above. If you believe you are your demon, you seem to have no other choice but to annihilate yourself; yet you dread annihilation and thus hold on to the demon. But if you observe the demon, you can begin to identify with the part of you which observes.

You must never forget that no one is entirely involved in this struggle, else it would be impossible to rise out of it. There are many aspects of your being where you do use the power of your creative thinking, where you expand your mind and thus build productively. But we are now focused on those areas where you are not expanding and productive.

As long as human beings are unable, or rather unwilling, to recognize their destructive aspects, they must be lost in them, and therefore cannot attain proper self-identification. Although your desire to hide the destructive aspects is more destructive than whatever it is you hide, it indicates that you wish to be free from destructiveness. Thus the desire to hide destructiveness is a misplaced, misunderstood, and misread message of the higher self. It is a wrong way of applying and interpreting the longing of the spiritual self. Now let us discuss further how the conscious self can be more activated and utilized, so that you can expand it and make room for spiritual consciousness to infiltrate it.

Everyone on the path who has worked diligently and conscientiously to shed the mask, to give up defenses, and to overcome the resistance to exposing apparently shameful liabilities, has experienced how acknowledging negative traits creates a new freedom. Why is this so? The obvious answer is that the mere fact that you have the courage and honesty to do so is in itself a relieving and liberating factor. But it goes beyond that, my friends.

Through the very act of acknowledgement, a subtle but distinct shift in identification occurs. Before such acknowledgement, you were blind to some or all of your destructive aspects and were therefore helplessly controlled by them, indicating that you believed them to be you. You could not afford to even acknowledge these unacceptable aspects, because you identified with them. But the moment you acknowledge the hitherto unacceptable, you yourself cease to be the unacceptable; instead, you become identified with that part of you which can and does decide to make the acknowledgement. Then some other part takes over which can do something about them, even if, to begin with, it can merely observe and grope for some deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics. You are in a totally different situation when you identify yourself with the ugly traits than

when you identify them. The moment you identify them, you cease being identified with them. This is why it is so liberating to acknowledge the worst in your personality after having battled the ever-present resistance to do so. It will become even easier once you can make this clear distinction.

The moment you identify, observe, and clearly articulate your destructive aspects, you have found your real self with which you can safely identify. This real self can do many things -- it has options, possibilities and choices -- the first being what you are doing now: identifying, observing, and articulating. Now you no longer need to persecute yourself so mercilessly with your self-hate. There seems to be no way to avoid hating yourself as long as you have neglected this all-important process of identifying yourself with the real self, which also has the power to recognize and adopt new attitudes, without devastating self-judgement. It is also possible to judge negatively in a truthful spirit, but there is all the difference in the world between believing that what you judge is the only truth of your being, and realizing that the part of you which can acknowledge the presence of destructiveness has other options and is closer to your ultimate reality.

How different your attitude to yourself must be when you realize that it is the task of human beings to carry negative aspects with them for the purpose of integrating and synthesizing them. This allows for truthfulness without hopelessness. What dignity it lends you when you consider that you undertake this important task for the sake of evolution!

When you come into this life, you bring negative aspects with you for the purpose just mentioned. Meaningful laws determine what aspects you bring with you. Every human being fulfills an immense task in the universal scale of evolution. An entity who does not offer to fulfill this kind of task may be quite free, purified, evolved and harmonious, but is not contributing to evolution as all of you here do. This task gives you great dignity, which is so much more important than the momentary suffering that accrues from not knowing who you are.

It is one of these subtle apparent contradictions that exist so frequently when dealing with the realms beyond duality, which are much nearer to ultimate reality. It is necessary to acknowledge the ugly aspects as parts of you and take responsibility for them before you can truly understand that you are not these aspects. It is possible to be responsible for them without believing that they are your only reality. Only when you first take responsibility for them can you come to the wonderful realization that you are not them, but that you carry something in you for which you have taken responsibility for an evolutionary purpose. Only then can come the next step, that of integration.

Let me recapitulate the four stages of awareness mentioned thus far:

(1) the half-asleep climate where you do not know who you are and blindly battle against what you hate in yourself -- either consciously, semiconsciously or unconsciously;

(2) the first state of awakening, when you can acknowledge, observe, and articulate what you do not like; when you can feel that this is just an aspect of you, rather than the secret ultimate truth about you;

(3) the awareness that the "I" which observes, articulates, can also make new decisions and choices, and can look for hitherto undreamed-of options and possibilities -- not by magic, but by trying out attitudes that were totally negated and ignored before. Some examples of new attitudes

are: setting a positive goal of self-acceptance without losing a sense of proportion; groping for new ways; learning from mistakes and failures; refusing to give up when immediate success fails to arrive; putting faith into unknown potentials which can manifest only as these new modes are adopted by the consciousness.

The attitude of adopting the new modes of perception which your consciousness is capable of right now leads directly to

(4) the eventual comprehension of those previously negated and hated aspects, which means their dissolution and integration. Simultaneously, the ever -- expanding consciousness merges with more of the spiritual reality which can now unfold to ever greater degrees. This is what is meant by purification. To the extent you lead your life in such a way, the overall consciousness permeating the universe becomes less split off into separate particles and more unified.

When you assimilate what I have said here, you will understand several all-important facts. First of all you will see the tremendous overall importance of recognizing the distorted, demonic traits. You will take full responsibility for them which will, seemingly paradoxically, liberate you from being identified with them. You will know fully who you are and recognize that the negative aspects are just appendages, which you can incorporate into yourself as you dissolve them. Their basic energy and undistorted nature can become part of the consciousness that you manifest.

Thus, no matter how undesirable the reality may be, you can deal with it, accept it, explore it, and no longer be frightened by it. This capacity to observe, articulate, evaluate, and choose the best possible attitudes for dealing with what is observed -- that is the true power of your real self as it already exists right now. Freedom, discovery, and knowledge of self are the first steps toward realizing the greater universal, divine consciousness in you. As long as this is not done, your innermost spiritual consciousness remains a principle, a theory and a potential to be realized only in the future. You may believe in it with your intellect, but you cannot truly ascertain it within you until you use the consciousness already available to you now, but which you leave unused wherever your so-called problems exist. As these four stages are recognized and worked through in the way I outlined in this lecture, your conscious mind can expand sufficiently to let in the as yet unmanifest wisdom, truth, love, energy, strength of feeling, capacity to transcend painful opposites that will enrich and reorient your life toward creating more joy and pleasure.

The moment self-identification takes place, a deep and apparently bottomless terror of the human soul disappears. Often this terror is not experienced consciously. Only when you are on the threshold of these states, making the change from being lost, blind, and confused about what and who you are to having the first inklings of identification with your real self, do you become aware of this terror. This is a transitional period which may last for weeks or for many incarnations. You may hide this terror from yourself or face it. To the degree you do the latter, you will come out of it sooner. When you hide it, you have gained nothing, for the terror will still leave its indelible marks on your life. These hidden fears are not one iota less painful and limiting than the actual experience of the terror. In fact the truth is just the opposite.

The terror exists only because you do not know there is a real you beyond those aspects of you which you hate. Because of this terror, you consistently hesitate to even identify what you hate. As long as you lack the courage to explore whether your fear is justified or not, you cannot find out

that it is not, and that you are much, much more than what you fear you are. The human personality is often on the brink of wanting to make this step. But this brink feels like a precipice which brings hesitation and a prolonged pseudo-existence. When this point is not dealt with, terror remains in the soul; then the terror is denied and repressed -- and this repressed terror has additional adverse effects on the personality, which becomes more and more alienated from its true nucleus.

When you finally make the full decision and commitment to face your fears, the terror disappears and you realize that you can find out who you truly are. You also find that life is full, rich, open, and infinite. The moment you experience yourself as being that part which observes, and not that which is being observed, there is no need any more to annihilate yourself, or to limit your identity to the fraudulent mask or the hateful demon or the petty, selfish egotist. So, identification with the real self removes the terror of annihilation -- not just death, but annihilation, which is different.

We shall now return to your conscious mind as it already exists in you at this moment. It is now in the state of being able to acknowledge and observe the self, or an aspect of the self, and it has many choices. Your chosen attitude toward your demonic, undeveloped, undesirable traits is the key to expanding your consciousness.

You hear so much today about the concept of expanding consciousness. Often this is believed to be a magical process that suddenly occurs. It is not. To attain true spiritual consciousness it is necessary to first pay attention to the not yet fully utilized material within you. Every minute of depression or anxiety and every hopeless or otherwise negative attitude toward a situation contains various options. But it requires an act of inner will on your part to awaken your dormant forces and make them available to you. When the already available potentials are being used, a much greater power of spiritual consciousness unfolds gradually and organically.

Often people go through various spiritual practices and wait for a miraculous manifestation of the greater consciousness, while their immediate mind and thought power is ensnarled in the same negative attitudes, feelings, and thoughts. They must either be disappointed or experience delusions. No exercises, efforts, or hope for grace intervening from outside can bring you genuine awareness and genuine manifestation of your spiritual self.

The creative energy that is inherent in thoughts and thought processes is totally underestimated by most human beings. Hence, your processes for creating and re-creating life are neglected. Making use of this creative power is a challenging and fascinating undertaking. Right now you can explore the recesses of your conscious mind to search for new, better, and more creative ways of meeting difficulties, for more realistic and constructive ways of reacting. You do not have to react the way you do; you have at your disposal many possibilities of thinking, of directing your thoughts, thought processes, and attitude patterns to a new goal.

To whatever degree proper self-identification has not taken place, and you find yourself still secretly identified with the aspects of you which you most hate and therefore resist even observing, to that degree your consciousness is unable to avail itself of its options and possibilities.

When you begin to pose the question to yourself, "What attitude do I choose toward what I now observe in me and what I do not like?" you have made one of the most significant discoveries

in this present phase of your evolution. This does not require a subliminal breakthrough of the profounder spiritual self. It simply means using what you already have made available to yourself in the course of millennia of evolution.

What are your choices as you observe the destructive attitudes and intents within you? You can choose -- which you have done until now, only without awareness -- to be totally dismayed and hopeless, thinking that it is impossible to ever be different and that this is all there is to you, or, equally erroneously, imagine that you have the power to make an immediate and drastic change. This last attitude is no more positive than the previous one. Because it is based on unreality, it must lead to inevitable disappointment and to an apparently even more justified negativity. Unrealistic hopelessness and unrealistic magical hope are the two extremes which lead to a vicious circle.

But do you not have other options available? Isn't it possible, with your mind as it is now, to choose other modalities? Say, "It is likely and predictable that I will forget and become involved again in the old blindness and its conditioned reflexes. But this need not deter me. I will have to struggle again and grope to find, over and over, my key. I can do this, and I will do this and thereby gradually build new strength, resources and energies. I will not be deterred by the fact that building a beautiful edifice requires patience. I will not be childish enough to expect this to be done at once. I want it and will use all my powers to do it, but I will be patient and realistic. I would like the spiritual powers in me to guide me, but if I cannot perceive the guidance yet because at the beginning of this undertaking my energies are too dense and my consciousness too dulled, I will trust and wait and persevere. I want to give my very best to the venture of living. I will try over and over again to identify, observe, and articulate what I do not like, without being identified with it. I will grope for new ways of understanding it all, so that I will eventually grow out of it."

Such an attitude is at your disposal. It is not magic. It is an immediately available choice. You can start now with the attitude that you would like to observe and identify, rather than be submerged in what you hitherto did not even wish to acknowledge. These and other attitudes and options exist in every possible dilemma and difficulty. Knowledge exists in you which you can bring to bear upon what you observe. If you use this available knowledge you expand the knowledge as well as the scope of your attitudes and feelings.

The more you do this, the more the infinitely greater and unlimited consciousness of your as yet submerged spiritual self will integrate itself into your conscious mind, and you will become it. As I said previously, this happens best in a threefold dialogue: the dialogue of the conscious self with the demonic aspects, the dialogue of the conscious mind with the divine self, and the dialogue between the divine self and the demonic self. In all three of these possibilities, both sides alternately speak and listen, as in every meaningful conversation. But this threefold dialogue comes only at a later stage of your development. Therefore, the more you can perceive and observe in this way, the easier it will become to make the next leap: the realization of your true spiritual identity. You will then truly know that this incredible, beautiful, limitless consciousness is the real you, where all the power lies and where there is nothing to fear.

My friends, this lecture also requires diligent attention. Much of the material cannot be taken in at first because it is difficult. It requires you to concentrate your mind and use your good will, and also contact through meditation higher realms of spiritual reality and power to help you absorb and put to use what I have said.

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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