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SELF-WILL, PRIDE AND FEAR

Greetings in the Name of the Lord. I bring you blessings, my friends; blessed is this hour.

This lecture will not be entirely understandable for those who are not familiar with the preceding ones, since this is part of a series. For the benefit of those friends who are here for the first time, I should like to say again: It is so very difficult for some human beings to understand that such communication is possible. Those who do not understand the great things that are possible in God's creation readily use the often misunderstood word "the subconscious" to explain this phenomenon. I beg you, my friends, divorce yourselves of the preconceived idea that a spirit cannot manifest through a human being and that it is merely the medium's subconscious, or superconscious -- whatever name you choose to give it -- that you are listening to. Communication with the spirit world of all spheres has always been possible, is possible now, and always will be, provided that the necessary conditions are met by the human beings who wish to establish such communication. That in some cases the communication may not be genuine does not mean that it is always so.

I could give a more thorough explanation why it would be impossible for a human being, still in the cycle of incarnations, to bring out the knowledge I can put through simply by the medium going into a trance. If a human being's unconscious were so penetrated with such knowledge that merely going into a trance would suffice to bring it to the surface, the discrepancy between the trance state and the normal state would not be so strong, my friends. However, I do not want to take up more time on this subject. I simply ask you, do not think that because the majority of the people around you believe this is all superstition, that it cannot be possible, and that they are absolutely right. Do not believe that it is this human being's unconscious that talks to you tonight. This is not so!

Now, my friends, tonight's lecture will appear at first similar to the last one, in that it will resemble a very abstract and philosophical lecture that seems to have no bearing on your present existence. However, the opposite is true. When I continue, you will see that everything I say to you -- no matter how far away it appears to be from your life -- has an immediate and direct bearing on it.

In the "Pistis Sophia," on which my friend is lecturing, you have a plan or a scheme, as you call it, where spiritual spheres are designated in various gradations. Immediately below "The Ineffable," or the House of God as we call it, a sphere is shown with the name of "The Highest Lightworld." In this Highest Lightworld an infinite number of lightforces exist in one vast reservoir or pool. What are these lightforces?

The lightforces represent every divine aspect in creation and every good quality or virtue you can possibly think of, each as one particular lightforce and each personified as a spirit or angel. I

mentioned in the last lecture that the twelve active and the twelve passive forces are also personified. It is the same with the lightforces; representative spirits or angels exist as well as their emanations. The emanation of these forces, condensed in a spiritual form of extremely fine texture, creates these beings, and these beings emanate in turn the respective lightforce. The lightforces gather in a vast reservoir. Just as all is one with God, so it is with these lightforces. They constitute one whole. Yet each individual lightforce stands out as something individual or particular with its own different color, scent, tone, and other qualities. If I were to tell you how many kinds of perception exist in this high sphere, you would not believe it, for you have a very limited perceptive capacity. The individualized forces are recognizable in this reservoir and yet they form one harmonious whole. They emanate from the sphere of the Highest Lightworld, where they are concentrated, into all spheres below, in decreasing strength, of course.

Further along this plan you will find the "Higher or Middle Lightworld," where these lightforces are gathered again, concentrated and condensed into a slightly coarser texture that is still extremely fine compared to your standards. From there, they are being sent forth into all other worlds. But in this sphere, the Higher or Middle Lightworld, spirit beings or personifications of individual lightforces have their organization, or as it is referred to in the "Pistis Sophia," "the Orders." Each Order represents one of these lightforces, headed by the individualized spirit, and serves the entire Plan of Salvation in different gradations as a sort of hierarchy. These Orders may also be designated as "Choirs," and are distinguished from one another by special marks, appearance of robes, and so on. Each created being, including each one of you, each human being, belongs to one of these particular orders of the lightforces. Your basic being is part of one of these lightforces and Orders. In deep meditation, if a certain degree of development has been reached, you may find out or sense what your ground being is, which does not exclude, of course, other virtues, qualities, or talents. However, there is one basic, significant core element in each being, spirit, or person. Such a basic quality may be courage, another love and kindness, and so on. To have courage does not mean that you do not possess love or the capacity to love. Though the highest angel representatives of each force have all other qualities as well, they have one basic, outstanding quality that strengthens and furnishes all other divine aspects rather than weakening or excluding them. So it may be possible for you to find out the ground tone or marked quality of your being.

Since you have heard the preceding series of lectures dealing with the Creation and the Fall, you should understand by now that all beings in Creation are perfect in one particular way. Also, if the Fall had failed to take place, the lightforce and the divine power that every being has been endowed with would have served the purpose of complementing the perfection in other ways as well, so as to become really godlike. Before this state has been reached, godlikeness can only be partial. Once the Plan of Salvation is fulfilled, further expansion toward perfection will continue. As it is now, the Orders, with all the many, many beings belonging to them, are particularly perfect in one way. This applies even to the fallen spirits who have kept the ground perfection in its original nature and talent basically intact, though covered up by the lower self and by all the layers of imperfection in varying degrees of density. The process of uncovering the ground perfection is the path of purification. This may give some of you good material for meditation. At the present stage of your development you need to concentrate on finding out what your lower self really is. This means you should find your faults and fully realize their existence, their significance, and their effect on you and your life. It is also important at a certain stage of your work to get to know the special individuality of your higher self so as to use it for your purification and to realize its particular force.

In a previous lecture I spoke about the three basic hindrances to perfection which apply to everyone alike: self-will, pride, and fear. Since the Fall these three attributes became stronger and stronger in the measure to which the Fall progressed; they blur your basic light. It is the purpose of the path of purification not only to sense what your basic light is, but also to realize that self-will, pride, and fear exist in you and to find out to what degree, how they interact, and how one is dependent upon the other. For only with this understanding of yourself will you be able to overcome the dark walls that stand in the way between you and your basic light.

Offhand, my friends, you might ask: How do self-will, pride, and fear connect? Why is one unthinkable without the other? For so it is, my friends. If you have one, you must have all three attributes. You may have one more strongly than the other, or more apparent or more conscious than the other. But it is impossible to possess only two, with the third entirely missing. Sincerely endeavoring to walk this path of purification and understanding the role of self-will, pride, and fear is certainly essential on this path. Do not believe that there is a human being alive who is entirely free of self-will, pride, and fear. Thus my words apply to everyone. The only difference may be that some may have more, some less. I will demonstrate this to you in the following words. They will be of great importance for your self-understanding.

In the first place, we may again clarify that there is a distinct difference between self-will and free will. To make sure that you understand it clearly in this connection, I will repeat that free will can be used for good or for bad; this is important. You cannot say it serves only good purposes, for, as just said, it can be used for evil purposes as well. However, it is certain that self-development cannot be attained without the full use of free will. The will of God cannot be fulfilled unless you use your free will to accept it of your own accord and your own choosing. Free will is the greatest gift with which you have been endowed and without it you could never attain a godlike status. However, it has to be distinguished from self-will, the will of the little self or the little ego. Self-will strives to get what it wants, regardless of the consequences and of the harm that may be done to others and therefore ultimately also to the self. Only the little ego is too blind to understand this. Self-will is a blind and immature state, too blind to realize that what it desires is against spiritual law and must bring hardship and imprisonment to the self. Take a spiritually underdeveloped person, for example, a criminal. Such a person will use self-will in a very obvious way to serve his immediate seeming advantages, disregarding all laws -- spiritual as well as human. For what seems advantageous to him, he likes to get.

Now we are not discussing such easily recognizable cases. The average human being does not commit crimes or antisocial acts, partly because he or she realizes that that is wrong -- the sense of ethics even of an irreligious person is already developed enough to desist the desires of the lower self that may still have such wishes -- and partly because he or she is simply too afraid to get into conflict with his surroundings. However, we are not discussing the obvious outer actions of those who are driven by self-will, for to none of you would this be applicable. We are focusing on the emotional currents of self-will within each one of you. For each unpurified being desires, perhaps unconsciously, things that are wrong and things that are against spiritual law. This conflict between the conscious desire and the unconscious desire represents the greatest handicap in your development. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you muster the courage to test your feelings, to translate them into clear and concise words so as to realize, "Here I have a desire, coming from my little ego and from my self-will, that does not correspond with the other part of my nature that is just as real."

How does this connect with fear? If your self-will is strong -- and it can be all the stronger if it is unconscious -- you must constantly remain in fear that the desires of your self-will will not be gratified. Thus, coupled with self-will you find fear. For deep down in your heart, you do know that all the wishes of your self-will can never be fulfilled. They are, for the most part, impossible and unreasonable wishes. In your own particular case, due to your previous lives and the hindrances you have put into your soul, what you wish cannot be fulfilled, at least not at this time, unless you discover the hindrances so as to eliminate them.

The currents within you run in different directions: the self-will desires very strongly something that is wrong, impossible, or contradictory to other currents within you, while at the same time you have the inner knowledge of your deeper being, the higher self that knows very well that these wishes are unfulfillable. This knowledge creates fear, since the self-will is still demanding its gratification.

If you meditate on these words, my friends, you will gain a great deal more insight into your soul, into your life, and into your present situation. Again, it is not enough to listen once to really understand them. If you meditate over them and apply them to yourself, you will begin searching within you where you may have such wishes; you will see how the fear comes automatically from the desires of the self-will. You will thus proceed a step further on the ladder upward. But you must have the courage to search in that direction, for only there lies your liberation from your own chains.

Now let us turn to pride. What does pride mean? It means that your ego is more important than the other person's, that you desire advantages for yourself, and that you have vanity. If you feel the humiliation of another person less than your own, you still have too much pride. And who does not feel that way, my friends? Who has truly the same reaction to other people's humiliation as to his own? None of you! If you yourself are humiliated, you are hurt; if the other person is humiliated in the same way, you may feel sorry, but the reaction is certainly entirely different, no matter how much you try to tell yourself that this is not so. Be honest with yourself and this honesty will surely do more for you than any self-deception. Feelings change indirectly and not by force, nor by simply trying to tell yourself that you feel in a way you do not! Therefore, such self-appraisal will be the best means to change your feelings gradually also in this respect.

I do not suggest that you go about it by trying to muster up the same feelings of hurt vanity as though another human being were humiliated. No. Rather, learn not to make yourself so important, for your little pride and ego do not matter half as much as your feelings tell you. If you learn to be more detached about this vanity of yours, then and only then will you have the proper sense of proportion in comparing yourself to others and therefore have the same reactions for others as for yourself. That is what is meant by loving your brother as you love yourself. As long as you feel differently for your brother than you do for yourself, you violate the spiritual law of justice, aside from the law of brotherhood. For your reactions are surely not just. You may act in justice, that is true, but that may be enough for some people; perhaps not enough for you. You know that your actions and even your thoughts are not sufficient to permit the pure emanation of justice to penetrate; your lightforce cannot be liberated as long as your feelings do not correspond to spiritual laws. Thus, you are unjust in your feelings: you put yourself on a higher plane than your brother. The moment your vanity and pride assume such importance, you are again in constant fear, being afraid that the gratification of your pride will not be granted to you by the people around you. So

you must give up the desire to put your own person on an elevated level above your fellow-creatures, in an emotional sense. Only in that way will you be free of fear.

I do not have to go into detail to show you the connection between self-will and pride. That is too easy. That you can do yourself. You may use that as a meditation exercise. However, do not do it abstractly or impersonally; try to apply it immediately to yourself; try to see where you feel that way. As far as the connection between self-will and fear, or between pride and fear, is concerned, I have shown it to you. Each single day brings you a number of opportunities to observe your feelings in exactly this way.

Unfortunately, you bypass most of these opportunities for self-knowledge and purification. You let them slip by. If an unpleasant feeling comes up in you, you are very quick to put it aside. There will be easy excuses: the faults and imperfections of other people are supposed to be responsible for your own disharmony and your own inner conflicts. But there are times when you cannot find anyone to blame. So you just cover it up and are quick with explanations: you are just in a bad mood; you do not know why you feel disturbed; it is a difficult life in general; perhaps it is even the weather. No, my friends! Whenever there is something bothering you, you will find the answer in the light of what I have just told you. Looking at it from this point of view, you will do a great deal more for your self-perfection and for your liberation, my friends. As long as you are caught within the snare of self-will, pride, and fear, you cannot ever be happy. It is impossible. You may fight all you want, you may do what you want on the outside. But you only remove the symptom; you do not cut out the cancer inside. Think over these words; meditate on them. For in them you have indeed a treasure of helpful material and a key to your problems.

And now, my dear friends, I will turn to your questions and answer them to the best of my ability.

QUESTION: Is not the will to serve God and to be a better human being also selfish since this means that we become happy?

ANSWER: This is a good question you are asking, my child, and I will answer you. Though some people may enter the path with such a slightly impure motive, it is still better to enter it than to stay away. By continuing on this path, the realization must come sooner or later that you are the next fellow and the next fellow is you. If you become happy, you must make other people happy. And when I say happy, I do not mean the happiness that you believe would be yours if the desires of your self-will were fulfilled. I am talking about the greater happiness that must be yours when you walk on this path of self-purification. Once you have attained a certain height, your own happiness will no longer be the goal. It will be a means to an end.

I advise you even before this realization is yours and before you can feel this way, to pray not only for the understanding of what I am saying here. Pray also for strength and enlightenment and everything needed to follow this path, not merely for your own sake but so that you may become a source of giving and serving. In essence, this means that the ultimate purpose is not your own happiness, but the service you give and are to others. But do not deceive yourself; realize how far away your emotions still are from your prayer. By seeing this discrepancy and yet praying for that end and continuing the work of self-analysis and self-honesty, one day you will feel as though you are one with every creature.

QUESTION: If our soul is taught during sleep, why do we not remember in an awakened state what our soul has learned?

ANSWER: There are many good reasons for that. In the first place, the reasons are the same that operate when the memory of your previous incarnation is taken away from one incarnation to the other, or the memory of the soul's existence in the spiritual worlds between incarnations is blotted out. If knowledge of the existence of spirits, the vast worlds that exist beyond your earth sphere and the fact of reincarnation were so easily accessible, you could not possibly fulfill your life. It would be too easy.

The highest treasure of knowledge must be fought for and paid for with the price of self-development and victories over the lower self. No matter how much you have read about the subject, you will never be convinced if you have not gained divine enlightenment. Divine enlightenment is something you have to work for. You have to pay the price and deserve it, for it is the highest gift. If knowledge of your past lives and the beyond were just put into your lap either by retention of memory or other means, there would be no fight, and therefore no development. It may also be a hindrance to know certain factors of your previous lives. As long as you are not ripe for it -- and this can only happen through development -- it may be harmful for you to know certain things.

During your sleep, when your spirit is in the spirit world, you often have insight into your previous incarnations, into the reasons for this present life, and about what you are supposed to accomplish. Painful knowledge might be connected with it which you cannot use constructively at this time; it may depress you and hold you back from your development. God has given you the opportunity to start on a clean slate, without any burden. According to your merits on this earth sphere, you will receive instruction, guidance, and advice in the spirit world when your body is asleep and your spirit is free; this knowledge remains in your unconscious and can affect you indirectly when you are awake, even though you do not know why you react in a certain way, why you make certain decisions, and so on. Consciously, you have to fight for everything, for knowledge, as well as for spiritual development. By fighting, of course, I mean fighting your lower self. Also, if someone is already developed to a certain extent, during the hours of sleep he or she may fulfill tasks with other spirits, who are out of the body, or with other human beings who are also sleeping. This helps others and therefore the entire Plan of Salvation. But there must not be clear remembering unless the circumstances are exceptional. This may happen too.

QUESTION: In what form do spirits who are still undeveloped see higher spirits?

ANSWER: When undeveloped spirits come into contact with higher spirits, they do not see them as angels or light creatures. That would be much too easy. Again the same law holds true here. If higher spirits go into lower spheres, which they do at certain intervals regularly and according to plan, they change their fluids and the light does not show. For it would be much too easy for these creatures to accept God's word because an obvious angel has spoken it. How many of you, for instance, say "If I could see God, or if I could see an angel, I would believe." But you do not listen to the words I speak. It is the same with these spirits. There is not an iota of difference. They have to learn, just as you have to learn and to distinguish between right and wrong, between truth and untruth by truth's own merit and not because the person seems to be an authority and

therefore easy to believe. How many people accept something said by a respected authority and yet reject the very same words if spoken by someone whom they look down on! That does not mean they are developed. Development means independence, the ability to select truth from untruth. Therefore the spirits in the lower spheres do not see the angels as they really are. Higher spirits appear to them just like one of their own kind and they speak to them in that way. It is then left up to the spirits themselves to decide whether they want to believe what is communicated to them or not. They must accept what they hear for its own value, and therefore it is good that they believe these ideas come to them from someone on their own level.

The same holds true for humanity; many spirits, in varying degrees of development, are incarnated on this earth; yet human shape or outer appearance does not give an indication of the entity's development. This is the only possible way for you to become truly free and independent. However, there are certain exceptions in this respect too. Not that there is ever an exception to the law of the necessity of independent selection and recognition, but at certain times light penetrates to some degree into the world of darkness. Then the angels of God show themselves. There are good reasons for that too, but it does not happen for the purpose of teaching the truth to creatures in the lower spheres.

Be blessed.

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