

## IDENTIFICATION WITH THE SELF

Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for every one of you. Blessed be this hour! May all of you again derive benefit from these words, even though the real understanding often comes only later, when you reach within yourself those levels to which the contents of a particular lecture apply.

When you find your corresponding inner conflicts, then these lectures really make sense. Sometimes this happens only years after you have heard or read a lecture. But when it does happen, you reach an entirely new understanding. You then grasp the difference between intellectual and emotional understanding.

For my new friends, this lecture will not be easy to follow, for the very reason just mentioned. Even those who already pursue this path are not always able to really understand the material. How much more difficult then is it for someone who is not involved in self-exploration. Even intellectual understanding is not possible if you are unfamiliar with the talks leading up to this one. Still, you might feel a deep inner echo from some thought advanced here, which might sooner or later help bring you to this path of liberation. A seed may be sown that will come to fruition later on.

And now, my friends, I wish to discuss a topic I have not gone into before, identification with oneself, as opposed to identification with others. Last time I talked about humanity's relationship to time. I said, in essence, that very rarely do people live in the now. They push into the future. They pull back into the past. Often these two contradictory movements happen simultaneously. In both alternatives, you strain away from the now.

Only when you live in the now do you live in reality. You cannot live in reality when you strain into the future, because such a future may never come to pass in exactly the way you hope, imagine, or fear it. But let us suppose, theoretically, that it were possible to imagine the future exactly as it will be -- which, of course, can never be the case. Even then, you would still be living in illusion, because the outcome does not happen at the moment you think of it. Therefore you do not experience the future in reality, but only in fantasy.

Likewise, if you pull backward, into the past, even if you try to relive it exactly the way it was - - if this were possible, which again it is not -- you would still be living an illusion, because that moment of your recollection is a new segment of time. You react in fantasy, live in fantasy, and not in the reality of the now. One of the characteristics of reality is its constant state of flux; it is not static.

Needless to say, you cannot exactly duplicate the past, any more than you can imagine a future and live it. Your own subjective colorings, stemming from your desires and fears, distort reality, blind you to factors that existed or will exist, including changes in your own state of mind and

feelings, even though you deliberately try to deny them and thus stunt growth -- in order to live your fantasy. You are afraid to allow the natural flux of time to become part of your soul because of your misconceptions.

If you could trust the flux of time, the benign quality of its movement and the growth it can foster, you could allow yourself to bring your inner faculties in harmony with it. You would then not need to manipulate time by holding it back or pushing it forward. You would not need to fear, or wish for fulfillment in the future. Nor would you have to reach back into the past for fulfillment. This, after all, happens only because you do not trust the future; you do not trust yourself to live the now when the future comes.

This distrust is often partly justified, because your destructive, unrealistic concepts and attitudes prevent fulfillment in the now. But by either pulling back into the past or pushing forward into the future you seek the wrong remedy for these obstructions. You seek an easy way out rather than tackling whatever prevents you from living as fully as you are meant to.

In order to live in the now, in reality, you have to have a keen sense of your own reality. All too often you lack this. In fact, most people do not experience themselves in reality. This happens mostly through a subtle process. It can rarely be pinpointed or proven, except in very advanced states. Most of you are probably convinced that you do have a sense of your own reality; however, upon closer examination of certain symptoms, you will eventually find that you do not. Discovery is always the first step toward eliminating a destructive condition.

All my friends have gone through similar experiences before. Outwardly and consciously nothing seemed to indicate that anything was amiss. You were convinced all was well with you in a given respect. Only after closer inspection did you find, deeply hidden, the very opposite to be true. You then understood how this hidden distortion destroyed so many possibilities for fully living, for happiness and meaning.

Finding what is can never harm you. It is not seeing what actually is that harms you! You will eventually discover this.

Before I talk further about self-identification, I would like to describe a few symptoms by which you may begin to detect the lack of living in the now and therefore feeling real. The crassest symptom is not feeling that your own death is a reality. To experience oneself as mortal is not negative or morbid, as is commonly believed. A realistic sense of one's own mortality is never a burden. It is never depressing or fear-producing. It never diminishes the now, nor the reality of living, regardless of what beliefs one holds about the afterlife. Quite the opposite. Those who never experience the reality of their mortality are morbidly afraid of death. For if you do not feel your mortality as real, you cannot possibly feel your aliveness as real.

There are, of course, many other less extreme symptoms that indicate your lack of self-identification. For instance, in a fleeting moment you may discover that how your thoughts, feelings, or words in a conversation appear is more important than what they actually are. The distinction is not easily drawn because it is subtle, but once you discover it, it stands out and is bound to show you the vital difference between identification with self and with others; between

experiencing yourself as real and not. Even the most vital feelings, thoughts, and inner experiences are often shifted this way, to obtain an effect, an impression on others.

Or you may discover, in a fleeting and vague way, that your attitude about your actions, thoughts, and feelings is governed by the idea of, "If only others could see me act, think, and feel this way." In such a moment of discovery, you will detect that you shift your sense of identity from yourself to others. Therefore your sense of your own reality becomes dependent on others. You live through others.

Now, please, my friends, I do not want to be misunderstood. I do not want you to believe that when I mention these symptoms, I reprimand you, that you are invited to change quickly. As with any other inner distortion we have been concerned with on this path, trying forcefully and deliberately to eliminate it will only make the condition worse because you would then identify with me, instead of with yourself. You merely obey another authority. You have merely shifted your identification.

Rather than immediately trying to correct what you observe, greet it as a symptom that will lead you, like a well-marked road, into deeper understanding and awareness of yourself.

And now we will approach the topic of identification more directly. To a degree, your present-day psychology has, of course, addressed this subject, but I wish to go into it a little deeper.

When the infant is born and grows into a child, its ego is still so weak that it cannot sustain itself. As we have discussed in other contexts, the child is dependent on the more powerful adult world. Everyone understands this dependency. Children are dependent for nourishment, for protection against danger, for shelter.

But the subtle bodies have their own life, which functions according to laws similar to the physical laws. The child is dependent not only for its physical existence, but also for its emotional, intellectual, and spiritual existence. Children need love as much as they need food. They cannot obtain either solely from the fruits of their own resources.

Mature adults do not wait helplessly to be loved, however. Love comes to them by their own capacity for loving and relating. They never feel insecure and helpless because they do not have love. Whenever you find such insecurity in yourself, you now know that it indicates emotional immaturity. Love is an essential ingredient in life. But the weak ego of the child is in reality dependent. The mature adult is no more dependent on others for love than for physical subsistence.

Similarly, children are not capable of forming their own ideas. They cannot discriminate between reason, common sense, logic, and their opposites. They depend on being supplied with the ideas and principles that serve as guideposts to growing up. To deny children such guideposts would not promote independence. On the contrary, if you let children starve, they do not become better equipped to cope with the struggle for existence. If you do not give children love, they do not become better able to love. Just the opposite is true. Only when children grow, provided this growth occurs organically, will they gradually cut the ties to the parents by standing on their own feet financially; by developing their capacity to love so they do not depend on love being given to

them; by discriminating among the ideas they have learned and discarding what they cannot accept, or perhaps returning to the same ideas after discovering them by themselves.

This process establishes soul and spirit. The bond of dependency on parental authority is cut. The healthy spirit will cut this bond, even if the parents do not encourage such severance, but possessively try to hold it intact.

Yet the spirit, or soul, that is burdened with unresolved problems will not desire to cut this bond, but instead will do its best to maintain it, often in precarious, hidden, and distorted ways. Unfortunately, emotional independence is often misunderstood as isolation, whereas withdrawal from involvement while frantically holding onto dependency is interpreted as the ability to love. If you ponder the above, you cannot fail to see that the very opposite is true. Mature people stand, outwardly and inwardly, on their own two feet, and this stance allows for the mutual exchange in relationships.

Beneath the inner and unconscious refusal to cut ties with protective authority lies identification with such authority. Children need a good example from which to mold their ego, which later affords the possibility to stand free. But if the good example serves only to perpetuate the identification, and thereby prevent self-identification, the original purpose has been misconstrued. In this case, children want to become the parent with whom they favorably identify and later try to be that parent, rather than find and be themselves.

It is important to understand that such identification may not be at all obvious on the surface. It is also necessary to look for negative identities. In other words, a parent whom one hates and certainly does not want to emulate, can, on an unconscious level, also be identified with. In one's very fear of ever being like this parent, coupled with suspicion that one might be, is an embedded identification with perhaps a vague sense that this parent may be better off despite unlovable traits. In short, this entire preoccupation, though very often unconscious, may be a negative identification. The tie to the undesirable parent may be even more difficult to sever than the tie to a cherished parent. It is very important to understand this, my friends.

For the child, positive identification is desirable. For an adult, a positive identification is often as undesirable as a negative one because both prevent the evolution of the self.

I would warn you against trying to adjudge or evaluate how you identify with others merely with your intellect. This may be very misleading. Only extensive work on this subject will reveal the truth. You may consciously admire and wish to emulate one parent and despise the other. Yet, in the course of this work, many of you have found that you have attitudes and behavior patterns similar to those of the despised parent. This often came as a shock. But such insights indicate that you identify with the very parent you least wish to be like. So beware of quick judgments.

You unconsciously substitute others for your parents, who were the original objects of identification. Often such substitution not only occurs among individuals, but also among national, religious, and political groups. In this psychological distortion, even minority groups, rebelling against the majority, can serve individuals as means to identify with. Conformity is a consequence of the need to identify with someone more powerful. Conforming can occur under the guise of nonconformity, especially if such individualism is very strained and too great a point is made of it.

So often, a rebellious minority believes they are free, and, according to all appearances, they defy conformity. But whenever the stringent need to prove something exists, one can certainly find a flaw underneath.

Truly independent, free individuals do not have to make a show of it. They do not have to be militant about it. So, a rebellious nonconforming minority may very well serve as a substitute authority to identify oneself with.

People may also identify with causes. No matter how good the cause itself may be, if it serves as a substitute for self-identification, there is harm. The harm is not in your embracing this worthy cause, believing in it and working for it -- all this could very well be done with inner freedom -- but in your need to substitute something other than yourself to lean on because you have not found where within yourself you are still as weak as a child. As long as you have not understood your hidden motivation for embracing the cause you are still compelled to identify with an outer authority.

I do not advocate a life in which you separate yourself from all ideas, groups, loyalties, and causes. This would be isolation, and even irresponsible toward society. But there is a great difference, my friends, between embracing a cause out of a healthy conviction and inner freedom, gaining sustenance from your inner resources, and using worthy causes to replace the well that exists within you, waiting to be tapped.

The extreme form of identification with others because of a weak ego is conformity to public opinion, parroting the views of others. This condition exists in almost every human being, in one form or another, only in a subtle way that is difficult to detect. That certainly does not mean that it is not important to find it and grow out of it.

Some time ago I lectured on self-alienation. Needless to say, there is a connection between that topic and the one we are discussing, although they are not the same. Self-alienation comes from the failure of identification with the self. In other words, self-alienation is an effect, while self-identification is a cause. Whenever you find an emotional dependency on others, you can be sure that you have, in some respect, failed to establish your selfhood. Whenever you feel a vague fear that others do not supply you with what you need and expect of them -- be it financial help, approval, love, or acceptance -- whenever anxiety indicates that you are dealing with more than the natural need for human interdependence, which never causes anxiety or other negative emotions, you might very well visualize a need for receiving your inner lifeblood from sources outside yourself. That such a state of affairs is not natural or necessary hardly needs to be emphasized, once you see it clearly. From this insight it follows that you can change; that you do not have to live in such useless dependency, which weakens rather than strengthens you.

Do not overlook your rebellion against the need of being accepted or agreed with. You know from past experience that behind such rebellion you very often find a stringent need for the very thing you rebel against.

When the emotional and spiritual umbilical cord has not been cut, the self cannot possibly grow. It can grow to only a very limited degree, as the baby in the mother's womb can grow to only

a certain point. In order to effect further growth, the baby has to evolve; the umbilical cord has to be cut. Only then is further physical growth possible.

The process is no different for the inner personality. When the inner umbilical cord is not cut, you are, in the truest sense, dependent on others for your right to exist. All the psychological aspects of appeasing, betraying, and self-alienation simply indicate that you have not yet been able -- at least in certain areas -- to identify with yourself. Therefore you have no sense of your own reality, and cannot experience each living moment in its fullness.

Wherever such lack of selfhood, such dependency on others exists, you are bound to find that you try to use others. Since you condemn yourself to living a parasitic life, you cannot help using those on whom you depend. In this hidden using, the distortion of your imagined "love" can be found. You pretend love when you merely need and have to use because without such manipulations you feel yourself sinking. You feel you have no reality other than the reality accorded to you by others.

The more you use those whom you need, the weaker you become; and, therefore, the more do you believe that you need others to strengthen you.

Living in the now is living in the wave of time. In your dimension, time flows in a certain rhythm. This movement can be determined by the seasons, by day and night, by the positions of the planets constantly orbiting through space. Their movements create rhythmic waves. Over the centuries, humanity has sensed to a tiny degree certain laws of the rhythmic movement of time, for example in astrology. Yet only very limited understanding has been gained here. But everyone knows and often even expresses this sense in terms of having good or bad times. Whatever one undertakes during good times has good results. One feels freer than usual, in spite of problematic conditions. One has a hopeful outlook, and fulfillment comes at least to a degree. And then there are times on the downward curve of the wave when everything seems to go wrong. Those who persevere with a wholehearted desire to look at themselves in truth will, sooner or later, come to these so-called bad times. They are actually manifestations of the disharmony people have created in their relationship to time. When these times yield victory and understanding, you will no longer experience the rhythmic downward curve as depressing, upsetting, or disadvantageous. For each living moment, fully experienced in the reality of the now, will then yield adventure, peaceful, harmonious excitement, worthwhile vital living.

But this cannot happen unless you first learn to understand and evaluate your negativity and thus your bad times. Then you will be in harmony with your time dimension. Then you will experience yourself in reality. This peace, this inner anchor, cannot be described in words. It cannot possibly be replaced with any other goal.

There are riches contained in each individual soul. They are yours for the asking. It is often sad for us to notice how people turn in the wrong direction to seek the fulfillment they vaguely sense to exist. For only when you have tapped your inner wealth will you stop straining away from the now and cease to be estranged from yourself. You will not derive this sustenance from other sources. As long as you remain dependent on a foreign life source, you have to resort to all sorts of tactics that weaken your real self even more.

It is so important to understand inwardly what I explained to you about using others. Do not apply my words only to the extreme outer manifestation of using others; try to see it in its more subtle version in which you have to use others since your life seems to depend on them. You conclude therefore that you need to be in control. So many of my friends have begun to see in themselves this strong tendency to need control. Each individual resorts to different means to exert control. Now each one of you has to find how this applies to you; what your particular means are; how you fear losing control; how you destroy relationships through a mutual battle for control, each one acting as though it were a fight for survival; how you distort issues in this unrealistic fight for survival; how you spoil the growth of mutuality and fulfillment. The need for control causes you to manipulate others, yourself, and your vital natural feelings. By this very process the self cannot evolve strongly, freely, and independently.

Wherever you find a stringent need to be in control -- of others, of a situation, of a relationship -- you have a direct clue to your nonidentification with yourself. If you look at this tendency from the point of view discussed here, if you use these little clues as points of departure, understanding the harm of inner stunting, you will certainly come to the nucleus of your deliberate self-denial, which causes so much unnecessary hardship. You will then be able to go about bringing your real self out. This will be easier than finding the negative conditions has been. But first, you have to be fully aware of your parasitic clinging to others, of identifying with others and depending on them in one way or another. You will see the ties you have so far refused to cut and consequently could not establish what their roots are within yourself. Once you find these roots, it will be comparatively easy to cut the ties and become yourself.

And now, my friends, you have a few weeks to ponder this lecture. Since you will have an opportunity to ask questions pertaining to each lecture at the discussions, we will now deal with questions that have no bearing on this lecture.

QUESTION: Will you kindly explain the phenomenon of sleep?

ANSWER: Your subtle bodies need to shed the burden of the physical body, of gross physical matter. You could not sustain a lifetime without this rest. Physical matter is a burden to the real personality. I mean that literally. You need a respite from this burden in a different dimension where you can move and be free. In this other, wider, freer dimension there is relaxation and a gathering of strength. This is essentially the main reason for sleep. To free oneself of gross matter and to move into a wider dimension actually restores the physical organs through the psychic bloodstream, which is regenerated during sleep. The psychic, or subtle bodies are always the cause; the physical body is the effect.

With great love I now leave you, blessing each one of you. This blessing contains a great strength; a substance that can bring truth and regeneration to your soul, so as to find the necessary stamina and will to establish yourself in yourself.

Be in peace. Be in God!

Edited by Judith and John Saly



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