

## INTENSITY: AN OBSTACLE TO SELF-REALIZATION

Greetings, my dearest friends. The divine blessings streaming in the atmosphere around and within you are a powerful force, available to you provided you are open and receptive to it.

Self-realization means becoming aware of this universal, cosmic power, available at all times. It is your tragedy to be cut off from this power, to be oblivious or ignorant of its existence. For knowing of it is one of the prerequisites for making it available. When you enter the realm where it is possible to make this power available, you find yourself in the predicament of not being able to know what you have not experienced. Therefore, to bridge the gap between previous experience and the available power, it is necessary to consider the new possibility. This is always the intelligent approach to every new step of branching out, whether in science or in any other realization of truth. However, you are usually not ready to do this, for you falsely believe you must have definite opinions. You fluctuate at all times between a definite yes and a definite no. No discovery can ever be made with this attitude. The attitude must truly be, "Is it possible? Could it be? I will honestly look and consider the possibility, with all sincerity and without shirking any effort, in any direction that may prove to be necessary."

This may sound like a simple task, my friends. However simple it really is, it is a human peculiarity to find it very difficult to adopt this attitude. Therefore, one of the hindrances to making the universal power available is the inability to seriously and openly question and make oneself available to a new truth -- no matter how revolutionary it may be -- to a new outlook that seems to contradict previous convictions and experience.

This obstacle of denying a fact that is immediately available -- because the openness to look without preconceived ideas is absent -- is never entirely a result of "never having thought of it." When this is the case, a person will instantly adopt an open attitude whenever the opportunity in life presents itself -- and this always happens, again and again. The rigid refusal to look and consider -- the adherence to opinions, often based not on actual and personal experience but merely on hearsay -- is always a result of personal fear to look at the self.

Another grave obstacle to self-realization is that you have unconscious attitudes, opinions, thoughts and feelings which completely contradict your conscious attitudes, opinions, thoughts and feelings. This discrepancy presents a major block, for the unconsciously held material covers and barricades the cosmic force. The mind believes it is expedient to block off this material. Therefore, it cannot relax, it cannot adopt the flexible, unafraid attitude that is essential to be attuned to the cosmic force. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to take the road into your unconscious in order to realize the power you have within yourself. Each false concept, each wrong conclusion, each erroneous opinion, each destructive attitude, each negative emotion stands directly in the way of the realization of this power.

All this you know, and we, on our path here, work diligently. However, no matter how much all of you are involved in your pathwork, it is easy to lose the outlook which aims at and emphasizes the significance of self-realization. Self-realization means, as I said, to make use of the power you have. This power is tremendous, my friends.

The power is twofold. It is a cosmic energy and strength that is so revitalizing and infinite, so undying, so self-perpetuating in its dynamics, in its aliveness, that you cannot even dream of the effect it can have on the individual. The whole of life must drastically change when this energy is made available -- not here or there because of temporary openness to the power, but permanently through a changed personality that no longer cultivates attitudes which obstruct the power. This energy works according to its own built-in law. As you know, it is totally impersonal. When conditions prevail that are compatible with it, its flow will stream without obstruction. When conditions are incompatible, it is blocked. According to how the unblocking occurs, it will begin to flow again, often differently from what you might expect. The energy flows according to immutable, impersonal, built-in laws.

The second aspect of this power is its autonomous intelligence. When you comprehend this you can integrate with the intelligence and power. Once there is no longer unconscious material in you which you fear and shirk, you are truly independent of authority and help that comes from outside. Your dire need for such authority cripples you, for you possess everything you ever need within you. If you do make use of this power, there is nothing to fear anymore in your life.

The main topic of tonight's lecture is a specific obstacle to making use of this power. I have not spoken about this aspect in the past, except in a very cursory way. It is a specific soul movement, an emotional climate that I wish to describe. In order to be compatible with the universal power, it is necessary that the personality is in inner and outer relaxation. Such relaxation does not imply immobility, nor lack of energy. It is not the kind of false relaxation that does not breathe, move, respond. Quite the contrary. It expands and contracts like breathing -- is rhythmic and relaxed, effortless yet vibrating with power, poised and calm, peaceful and dynamic. This state, when attempting to describe it, may easily be confused with indifference, passivity, or laxness. It is none of these. But it is entirely free from tension due to fear, pride, and selfwill.

People's habitual state is one of more or less taut intensity which is foreign to and incompatible with the universal power. This very intensity may cause, as a final effect, an outer immobility, paralysis, excessive passivity. These extremes are always the result of an intensity of soul-movement which must be dissolved.

The dualistic approach to life leads to a typical misunderstanding of intensity. The idea exists that the more intense you are, the more serious, responsible, and focused you are; conversely, the less intense, the more you are irresponsible, frivolous, and distraught. This is not true, my friends. In fact, it is just the opposite. Only when the psyche is in flux and not taut can the personality give its total attention to what it is doing, thinking, feeling, and experiencing. This means wholeness, integrity, undivided motives and attention. This state can be achieved only when there are no opposite forces dividing the inner person, hence no hidden fears. The more lightly psychic material flows, the more energy is available to invest into life, and the less exhaustion will follow when energy is expended. The unnatural tautness and intensity of a person's state of mind and emotions has

become so much second nature that it has been accepted as natural. In fact, intensity is viewed as the desirable state, connoting all the spiritual qualities I described -- qualities which are only realizable when the psyche is "unintense."

Every neurotic attitude is a result of -- and results in -- artificial intensity, which is, half-consciously, deliberately cultivated and nursed. This cuts you off from the life-stream. The reason for cultivating this destructive attitude is in part the dualistic misconception mentioned before. Partly, its motive is childish self-importance, waiting to set oneself off from the rest, to draw attention to the self by making everything seem so important. It is what I often referred to as self-dramatization. This may happen even within oneself and never be displayed to others. In the deepest sense, all mental illness, all emotional imbalance is a result of a deliberate intensification of soul movement.

This is a very subtle process that becomes observable only when you focus your attention on it. You are so used to a state of inner tension that only repeated focusing of one's finely attuned perception will produce verification of this intensity, which will then be felt as something foreign and unnatural. This is the first step toward being able to let go of it. It will feel as though you are shedding a tightly constricting straightjacket in which you once lived. You will step out of it into a new freedom that may, at first, feel fraught with dangers. You will feel exposed without it, only to learn that all you expose yourself to is the revitalizing life-stream of the cosmos. You will then realize how hindering this tautness in you is. The artificiality of it creates an incompatibility between your inner personality and the universal power. It causes a deep indentation in the soul substance, which in a healthy state is unindented. You will even come to feel this indentation, which is connected with too tightly held convictions, too intense and exaggerated emotions, overreaction, as well as muscular tightness. All this prohibits the flow of the force. The universal power must enter into all levels of the personality for it to function well. If the mental realm is too intense in its tightly held views, the fresh flow of the life force is prohibited. If there is unreal emotional intensity, the life force cannot enter the emotional realm. If the physical realm is muscularly tense and taut, the life force cannot enter the physical system. Thus gradual illness, decay, and physical death come about.

You may remember that a few years ago I gave a lecture on the expanding, restricting, and static principle, describing the movements of the cosmos, the rhythmic breathing of everything alive. This cosmic breathing can only exist when there is no artificial intensity in the system. The indentation of soul substance through intensity causes paralysis on all levels. Resiliency must exist on all levels for you to be open to the universal power. It cannot exist when the flowing movements are made taut through intensely held opinions, emotions, and physical muscles, both outer and inner. It does not matter from where you start to look and become aware of your own intensity. If you follow through, you will dissolve the cramp such intensity causes on all levels.

The misconception that intensity is favorable also applies to pleasure. It is believed, half-consciously, half-unconsciously, that the more tautly intense the personality is, the greater the pleasure. In other words, intensity is not only supposed to connote seriousness and concentration, but also pleasure. This is not true at all. The lighter and easier the flow of the personality is -- it may first appear almost as "inconsequential" -- the greater the influx of the cosmic force and, hence, the more heightened the pleasure. Intensity is an ego-attitude and prohibits the letting go of the ego. Thus pleasure cannot be experienced to the extent that the ego holds on and obstructs the

involuntary processes. Whoever takes his or her person and life too seriously is unable to partake of the cosmic flow. This is why the self-realized state, conveyed in human language, often sounds deceptive. Its properties may so easily be confused with truly undesirable and faulty attitudes. However, the lightness and lack of seriousness of a self-realized person is completely different.

Let us recapitulate: A relaxed, lighthearted, natural, undramatized, unintense personality is essential to look at the self in truth; to give undivided attention to whatever it does; to renew itself with energy so that more can be invested; to be whole in motive and in experience. This must not be confused with the numbness that is the result of a hidden layer of fear and resignation. The latter is dead, the former is vibrantly alive. Intensity and overindentation of soul substance are also confused with being alive, while letting oneself be in the natural state at first appears as if one didn't have sufficient life.

This applies to very subtle levels, my friends; it may not be easy for you to know what I am talking about. My words may seem obscure. It is therefore necessary that you listen with more than your intellectual ear. Furthermore, you must become observant of yourself until the intensity of your emotions, thoughts, and also your physical being becomes conscious and you begin to sense the unnaturalness of it, to feel that this is foreign to your innermost nature.

Total self-realization, therefore, brings laughter and humor and a lack of seriousness or heaviness. But this does not in the least connote an impairment of integrity, nor a half-heartedness or division or conflict in any of one's approaches to life. Quite the contrary. The intensity I discuss is always connected with impairment of integrity, dishonesty on some level, and division of motives and attention, as well as a refusal to give of oneself wholeheartedly. All these create the need, as it were, to be intense. This is very important to understand, my friends.

Integrity, honesty, and lack of self-deception in the way you give of your total self in whatever you do, combined with lightheartedness, are the properties that set up conditions compatible with the universal power. The cosmic power can then manifest in both its major aspects. It can flow and stream through your entire being, revitalizing all inner and outer organs, all facets of your person. In addition, the autonomous intelligence can manifest from deep within you, guiding, inspiring, and instructing you until your separated ego integrates with it, so that you become undivided and whole. The divine then lives in you and you live in it.

In the opposite state, on the dualistic plane, people are overserious, heavy and intense on the one hand, while they lack concentration, are divided in their motivations and desires and deceive themselves on the other. This imbalance must give way to balance on both sides. Where division of direction existed, the directions must unify; where conflicting desires existed, the stream of the desires must unify; where impairment of integrity and dishonesty existed, perhaps on the deepest hidden levels, honesty must be totally established; where an unwillingness to give of oneself to life existed, the willingness to invest of oneself must be established. Simultaneous with this reorientation of character and personality will be the possibility of letting go of the intensity and becoming light where heaviness once prevailed. You do not have to take life and yourself so seriously, in such a negative, despairing, heavy way. You can take life and the self seriously through the honesty you accord to both and through the sincerity of wanting to give as much as you wish to receive. Nothing will be so final, nothing has to be so fought for, or against. This lack of intensity, in the right way, makes the universal power available, while the intensity I discussed is a cramping-up

that blocks off the universal power. The cramping is then often confused with seriousness, concentration, wholeness of purpose and being, as well as passionate pleasure. It is used as a substitute for real honesty with oneself and life, for undivided attention to every aspect of living. These afford the unintense state of being which is so pleasurable and so constantly self-renewing.

My friends, when you can come to this very decisive step in your growth, pay attention to it. Long before you are actually capable of totally letting go of your unhealthy intensity, the mere awareness and understanding of its significance will indicate your great progress. The moment that such an awareness is established, some of the constriction will loosen up and infuse you with new life energy.

The constriction resulting from the over-tension of soul substance makes you withdrawn, taut and immovable, no matter how frantic the artificial movements may be. The movement is an outer struggle. The intenseness of the outer tautness -- whether it manifests in jerky movements or in paralysis -- prohibits the inner powers of the life force from moving you.

Self-realization and unification with the power current of the cosmic stream means to go out, to move toward life and toward others. It is this outgoing movement people are so afraid of. You hold back, you shrink within yourself -- and you think you are then secure. You are often unaware of this, too, for you may have assumed certain mannerisms that give you the illusion of being unafraid of entrusting yourself to this power that moves and unites you with life and others. Superficial devices may make you oblivious of the fact that you do not really want to show yourself as you are to others, but only with your masks and covers on. This is not honest contact with another person. The separateness causes misery, because it reflects the separateness between the outer and inner self, the self and others, the self and truthful, real attitudes to life, the self, and the life processes.

The universal power is utterly trustworthy. To distrust it is sheer folly, my friends. All you have reason to distrust is your fear of yourself, which only exists because there may still be an area or two about which you wish to deceive yourself. To the extent you determine no longer to do this, fear can be overcome. Your salvation will be found in the realization of your own cosmic powers.

Another obstruction is false goodness, which we might also term sentimentality. Easily overlooked, sentimentality is due to a combination of two trends. One is the innate and genuine desire to be outgoing, to love, to be truly sincere to the depths of your being, and to trust the universal powers. The other is your fear with its subsequent dishonesties, causing you to withhold yourself in a tight grip on your ego. The innate urge to let go of the outer self and entrust oneself to the cosmic, inner processes must always exist. It means truly to love. When fear, pride, and selfwill block off this direction, loving is impossible and outgoingness inverts. The tendency to go out, trustingly and lovingly, can never be squelched because it is an integral part of the nature of creation. It is life itself. You are a part of life and therefore must tend in the same direction. The conflict between the tendency to follow life and the fear to do so creates false goodness or sentimentality. False goodness results when real feelings are blocked. The personality feels guilty for hindering the natural flow of feelings, for having numbed them. The vibrancy of real feelings makes overintensity unnecessary, and it also knows no obligatory feelings -- false goodness, sentimentality. It is free and spontaneous, since love has nothing whatever to do with duty. The vague emotions, on the other

hand, if sincerely interpreted and put into words, would say, "This is the way I ought to feel, but, unfortunately, I cannot genuinely do so."

False goodness stands more in the way of the realization of cosmic power than the admission that one is feelingless as yet where one wishes to feel, that one is loveless as yet where one might wish to love. Once these admissions are made, it is possible to utter the desire to be able to feel and love. In sentimentality, one lives under the illusion that one has already attained this state. After truthful acknowledgement of lovelessness and the desire to love, the next step is to find the part in you which says, "But I do not want to feel, I do not want to love." As long as you are not connected with that part of yourself, you cannot be connected with the life processes, with reality, with universal power. For your resistance to feel and love is your present reality. Denying the present reality makes it impossible to experience a greater reality.

If you can ask at this phase of your pathwork, "Where am I still involved in an obligatory goodness because I do not want to face my refusal to have real feelings?" you can then proceed and question your deep innermost self as to why you refuse to do so. What is the fear and the reluctance? You can also begin to observe your tautness and an intensity that surpasses relaxed and natural attention, concentration, and fullness of experience. This intensity does not feel pleasant at all. It is problematic and leads to still greater problems in yourself and with your environment. Deep, full feelings do not have to be intense in this negative sense. Become aware of the difference.

Focus your attention on the subtle variations -- where thoughts, feelings, and body are strained; where reactions exist that may not really be as strong as you now make yourself feel. Are your feelings really that intense? Consider the possibility that if they were left alone in their natural way, you might not feel that unpleasant intensity about this or that at all. Is this or that conviction really that strong? Do you have cause to be that convinced? Let the intensity of the conviction go and consider the possible opposite.

Next, become aware of the many little areas of tension in your body, of intensity of muscle tissues and your whole physical being. When you thus focus your attention on these areas, you may detect a reluctance to let go. What is this reluctance? In order to be unintense you need to have a certain amount of trust in what goes on with you and life, a trust which you don't have. The trust can only come when your self-trust becomes wholly justified. But even before this is the case, it is of great value to merely observe your reluctance to relax and know that tension and intensity are the immediate blocks to self-realization. Your reluctance is directly connected with a reluctance to see something in yourself. This, in turn, is directly responsible for your self-distrust, hence distrust of the creative powers.

If these areas are observed, you have truly approached the threshold to self-realization. Self-realization will become a gradual process, where you feel yourself flowing with the universe, in harmony with it; where you contact the deep intelligence in you without which nothing can be really successful. When this deep intelligence is left out, whatever you decide or do cannot possibly yield satisfactory answers or results.

When you first contact this intelligence and it manifests in you and you begin to see its utter wisdom and total rightness -- the indivisible, unitive principle that has no dualistic conflicts of good versus bad -- it is as if you had contacted a foreign power within yourself. As you do this more and

more often, you overcome the ever-lessening misgivings to commit yourself to something you cannot quite trust. The integration between your conscious volitional self with the unvolitional processes of this vast power becomes more firmly rooted. Each step of the way, each new overcoming, proves to you how justified your trust in it is. With each such step you become more aware of the reality of this power and that the power is yours. How can you live in fear with this treasure? There are no longer insoluble problems. Since this power exists all through the universe, it is in you, and in everyone else. When this realization truly permeates and penetrates your whole being and your total understanding, brotherhood in the real sense is inevitable. Dislike is only a superficial factor, and you know that you are all united by this power. Conflict between self and others ceases. You become highly unique, yet like all others -- in the best possible sense.

This is the way, my friends. Each time I have the privilege to talk to you and help you shed light on this path from a different angle, with a different consideration, I give you material which you have a choice to use as much as you desire.

Are there any questions in connection with this lecture?

QUESTION: Somehow, for the first time, your lecture upset me very much. I ask myself if this is so because I am near the point you are talking about and resist it?

ANSWER: Can you pinpoint what upset you in the lecture?

QUESTION: It has to do with the hope a human being could have...

ANSWER: It upsets you because you are not yet quite ready to trust it. It is upsetting in a sense that one knows these possibilities exist, and yet one does not trust oneself to go that way. This is why a large part of humanity violently subscribes to hopelessness, negativity, to the view that the world is chaotic and senseless. This is as much wishful thinking as the childish hope that a deity will do your salvation for you, or that you could be helped by following other people's advice and authority so that heavenly bliss will descend upon you in a life beyond. The adherence to an outer faith, no matter in what orthodox or unorthodox form, contains as much wishful thinking as hopelessness. The latter says, "There is no need for me to do anything -- face anything unpleasant, change my personality, or give up a destructive attitude I do not wish to shed -- for it all makes no difference anyway."

If life makes no sense, if there is no rhyme or reason, if there is no evolution and continuum of all that lives, then, indeed, overcoming of character defects is unnecessary. Subscribing to a nihilistic philosophy of life, one can comfortably shirk unpleasant aspects of self-facing. This is why hopelessness is no less wishful escapism than the hope of being taken care of by another intelligence than one's own. In both instances it is possible to avoid facing the unflattering facets that destroy the ideals one holds about oneself. Both are two sides of the same coin: the rosy-colored future in a life hereafter, attained by adherence to an outer faith and obedience to laws and rules that come from outside, is fundamentally no different from the hopelessness of nihilism. Both avoid that which seems so difficult -- honest self-facing.

QUESTION: What is the reason, and who bears the responsibility for the inability of the majority of humanity to perceive the cosmic force? Is it that most people are unaware of the cosmic force due to lack of development?

ANSWER: Yes, it is a lack of development, lack of awareness. Now, who bears the responsibility? Each individual, himself. The truth so difficult to face for so many people is that no one is ever responsible for anyone else. This may seem incomprehensible in view of certain historical events -- or in view of superficial considerations, when judging according to appearances and in possession of fragmentary truths -- but, in the last and deepest analysis, each individual entity is responsible for himself. Whatever happens in the course of a life offers the opportunity for unfoldment and expansion of awareness. It is also quite true that a child in the lowest grade of school cannot understand what an adult understands. So it is not a sin when a person is unable to perceive. It is different when someone has the capacity, but is unwilling to do so; when a person could unfold and expand, but deliberately hinders it by needless destructiveness and obstinacy.

Today, humanity as a whole is exactly where it must be, where it cannot help being, for it is the sum total of all the individuals, past and present, who inhabit this earth. Each individual has the opportunity to make every living second of life an occasion for expansion and growth. Anyone who seriously pursues this path can corroborate this. You can make whatever happens to you the greatest stepping stone, the best material for further growth, or you can allow it to influence you adversely. This applies not only to unhappy incidents, but equally to favorable events. They often retard growth as much as life's traumas do. Favorable events may encourage laziness, stagnation, and illusion. What you make of anything that happens determines whether it will help or hinder the expansion of perception. People have a tendency to consider outer conditions as the decisive factors in their lives rather than their attitudes. It is always one's attitudes that determine what is of real importance.

Cosmic forces can become available only through overcoming outer difficulties, which are the direct reflection of inner obstructions. Once you see this and know that you are responsible, you are on the road toward the realization of your real self -- or, to put the same thing differently -- the realization of the universal powers.

QUESTION: As a physician I ask if there is any way that the cosmic force can be applied in some way directly to human beings by physical means, by physical devices -- not necessarily to solve the whole problem, but to help alleviate suffering and give direction. For instance, Wilhelm Reich's accumulator and certain other devices, as explained by Cayce and other people who work with this -- are they really attempts in that direction?

ANSWER: Yes, they are. These -- and many, many others, in many corners of the earth, which are not publicly known -- are ways to channel the life force so it flows in humans where it should and could if an imbalance had not taken place in the system. It is possible to make the life force more available to the physical system through outer devices, thus opening the possibility for an inner penetration by the cosmic powers into the mental and emotional realms. However, it must be understood that no matter how much of it can be made available through physical devices, the essence of the life force is a mental, or a spiritual, power. Its availability depends on mental, or spiritual, attitudes. The effect of physical devices must, after a while, wear off if the mentality does

not become compatible with the nature of this cosmic power. It can be used physically and temporarily, to a certain degree, but that direction has a limit.

The best way to use the physical approach is to help the personality reorient itself, which may give to many the necessary stamina they otherwise lack. A change of personality does not make people lose their uniqueness, but rather makes them more uniquely themselves by eliminating distortions, imbalance, destructiveness. The personality must become compatible with this power in order to no longer rely on devices from the outside, but to have the constant access to the inexhaustible source of this power deep within one's own being. As long as people working from the outside understand this, all is well, because then they will not be disappointed when the effect does not last.

May all of you make full use of what I have given you tonight, so that the wonder of the universe -- of this life right here and now -- can unfold itself for you. This will happen -- not through shortcuts, illusions, wishful thinking, panaceas, but through decency and honesty with yourself and your life. Be blessed, all of you. Be in peace, be in God.

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