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THREE LEVELS OF REALITY FOR INNER GUIDANCE

Greetings, my very dearest friends who are gathered here and who are blessed indeed. You are blessed not only by your presence in the spirit of wanting to receive guidance and truth, but primarily by every inner effort made toward the realization of your true being. The more actively you seek this realization, the more blessings are generated from within.

A person cut off from inner reality is indeed lost. The majority of humans are almost totally cut off from their inner reality and must therefore find their way back to it. The few who have attained this connection always were and will be the spiritual leaders of humankind. Every effort on this path is aimed at reestablishing such a connection for inner guidance, for the manifestation of the inner reality.

Jesus Christ has proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven is within. These words are only too often taken for granted and not much thought is given them. What does the word "kingdom" mean? It symbolizes the absolute power and wealth which the spiritually awakened find to be a reality. We speak, of course, of the spiritual power and wealth of love, truth, peace, expansion, creativity, bliss, and the knowledge that the self has the power to create anything it can conceive of. This comprises everything that life could ever be. It means attaining one's full selfhood as it is meant to be. If only you would realize that you have not even attained a particle of the power and beauty, truth and love, ecstasy and possibility of creative expansion which you could possess and manifest and which already is yours, my friends! These are not empty words, this is the immediately available truth.

The path toward the inner reality and inner guidance is laborious only because you imagine the truth to be so far away, much farther than it actually is. You cannot conceive of what life already is, right now, and how it could be for you if only you could see it, know it, and therefore realize it. You still perceive this as a faraway, abstract, unreal theory, and you experience yourself as an isolated particle in an essentially hostile or, at best, indifferent universe that has nothing to do with you. You conceive of a static and immovable universe into which you are put and whose laws have no relationship to your own inner laws.

This concept, and the way you therefore experience yourself in relation to life, is what makes the path so difficult and laborious -- nothing else. Thus, the difficulty is not actual. The question is how you can change your concept. This is what requires labor and effort. And, unbelievable as this appears to one who has already attained the reality of being, you struggle against the fulfillment of being your true self as if it were the most horrible fate in the world. If the illusion about the separation between your true being and your momentary consciousness, or the separation between the universe and yourself, did not exist, there would be an instant awakening -- a "click," as it were -- and you would know who you are and what life is.

All my lectures, all our work together, attack the problem of your illusion from different angles. These various approaches have a certain sequential order. Generally, you find that your own private personal path follows the same order. Yet you cannot force your individual path to imitate the sequence of the lectures. Rather, the process is -- as some of you have already found out -- that with this guiding help you find your own truth as a direct, spontaneous experience from within. In the first moments of understanding, the truth usually appears so new and fresh that you think you have never heard it before. But afterward you can verify that it confirms the teachings you have studied and which have penetrated the deeper regions of your unconscious. You study the lectures and then you use your own intuitive faculties, freed more and more by facing the truth you did not want to see in the beginning. Elimination of error frees intuition and creative experience from within. The lectures first give an impetus to this process and later fortify and confirm it when you read them again.

Tonight our specific approach will explore three levels of reality. If you can first comprehend and finally assimilate what I say here, this path will become much easier for you. You will eliminate some of the illusory difficulties so that your inner guidance will manifest itself as a natural, effortless phenomenon.

What are the three levels of reality? You may expect to hear of the well-known levels of the physical, mental and spiritual realities, about which we have spoken in many different contexts and connections. But this will be something else, so gear your mind to a new approach.

The first level of reality is what you think exists. The second level of reality is what actually exists. The third level of reality is what could exist. It is preferable not to discuss this in a philosophical, general or theoretical manner. The more specific and personal you can be in assimilating what I outline here, and the more you can apply it to the seemingly most insignificant, subjective experiences and reactions in your daily struggles, the better it is. Examine your problematic reactions and attitudes, those that do not leave you peaceful, happy and alive, and try to see how what I say tonight applies to you.

No matter how insignificant a disturbance may appear to you, or how world-shakingly important, ask yourself, "What do I really believe exists? In me? Around me? In the interaction between me and others? In the condition as I experience it?" Finding the answer to these questions is not as easy or simple or self-evident as it may appear. Not at all! To penetrate this level is perhaps the most difficult. Once this is done, the next two levels of reality will be much easier to deal with.

You are utterly confused and ignorant about what you really think and feel. As a rule you look away from it and you are only vaguely, fuzzily aware of some disturbance, which you quickly rationalize or find some convincing explanations for -- whatever seems most acceptable, most "logical" or most compatible with your superficial approach to life and to yourself. Thus you acknowledge only one of what are often many sets of contradictions and conflicting emotions, and even that you do in a cursory, shallow way at best. Thus you almost entirely obscure the true drama of your beliefs and opinions, impressions and reactions, concepts and ideas, hopes and fears. Collective, oversimplified labels are supposed to express what is really going on within you. When you say you are depressed or anxious or hopeless or angry or hurt or fatigued, you are content to call

a host of feelings, impressions and beliefs by any one of these names, as though no further search would be necessary. Naming such emotions as a beginning to explore them would serve a good purpose, but only too often you use the names as labels, as a final explanation. Thus you cannot even attain the first level of reality -- of identifying your often confused and erroneous interpretation of life, of others, and of self.

It might sound paradoxical that I call this level "reality" at all, but your mistaken interpretation is a temporary reality -- it is what you actually feel, think and believe, whether true or false -- while the haze and fog of unspecific awareness is a no-man's land and not even a temporary reality. This is why it is so painful and feels so insecure and why in no state could one be more estranged than on this level of pre-reality, if I may coin this expression.

As you know, it is part of the individual work to painstakingly examine where such collective labels come from and why. The first reaction often is that you do not even know why you feel this way and give yourself a quick and easy answer, which may sound exceedingly plausible and serious in a world that shies away from a fresh, new approach. However, every problem needs examining as if it had never existed and as if society had no predigested answers ready.

If you give some attention to what you really believe causes the specific unhappy feeling -- and usually this requires relatively little attention -- you find some answers quite easily. As I mentioned, it is hardly ever just one thing. Contradictory opinions and ideas exist simultaneously. One set of contradictory ideas results in other sets of contradictory reactions, counter-reactions, defense measures, further false beliefs and their inevitable consequences, which create more and more chain reactions. When all this remains in the fuzzy climate of unawareness, half-awareness and easy explaining away, how can you reach the first level of reality -- knowing what you think exists?

For example, it is not at all impossible that you think secretly at one and the same time that you are the most important being in the universe and that you are the least worthy in the universe. Even one such assumption is bound to have innumerable consequences, breeding further wrong assumptions in one's dealings with the world. Each primary wrong assumption snowballs into a host of untenable, painful, destructive beliefs and defense measures, each in itself causing complicated webs of entanglements and growingly painful beliefs. But the two contradictory original assumptions multiply the confusion, entanglements, misconceptions and the resulting pain. For error is pain as truth is happiness.

Anyone working on such a path knows from experience how burdensome such misconceptions and confusions and mutually exclusive ideas are and what a relief it is to shed them. Each web of entanglement sets up a particular resistance against clarifying the confusion, in spite of remaining in pain while the confusion lasts, in spite of knowing the liberated, happy state after it is cleared up. Although you know all this, to some degree even out of personal experience, and most certainly as a valid theory, none of you are fully aware to what extent you still dwell in the state of pre-reality. Most of you, my friends, do not see in your day-to-day lives where just such a dualistic concept of the self as at once the highest and the lowest is responsible for that layer of reality where you think certain things exist without that necessarily being true.

Often, though you have actually recognized a false assumption about yourself, you still do not follow this through to its consequences. You fail to see, for example, how this assumption affects

what you believe about others and what you believe they think of you; what a situation or incident means in the light of your assumption; what your reactions and the reactions of others really mean. If you clearly formulate what you believe a situation or event or someone's reaction means, then you will know why you are unhappy in any particular form. This clear-cut knowing of why you feel the way you do makes a tremendous difference. It also gives you the possibility of realizing that some of your beliefs are preposterous. Again, you might have admitted this in general and as a theory, but to do so specifically is still extremely hard. Your intellectual arrogance makes this so difficult. It is arrogant to set yourself up above others, but it is even more damaging to overestimate your own intellect and thus miss out on your real inherent wisdom, while negating and denying the childish misunderstandings in your personality.

To admit what childish nonsense is lodged in the unconscious is so hard because this contradicts the concept you have of your "intelligence." But perhaps an even greater motivation for keeping your secret beliefs in the haze of vague impressions and feelings rather than acknowledging them precisely is that you have a vested interest in keeping these things secret because you feel vaguely that, once they are out in the open, you will be obliged to make changes. You fear to do that precisely because you are so committed to your false ideas that a different mode of approach appears to threaten you. But you do not realize that it threatens you only because of your false ideas. The illusory assumptions compound, one leading to another, and you must disentangle them all in order to bring order and truth. If you elevate yourself above your own actual self, above where your self is still ignorant and misinformed, you cannot establish order. It is hard to admit the utterly childish side, with all its senseless ideas and beliefs. The moment this childish side is out in the open, you know it is nonsense, and you are relieved to give up the burdensome beliefs.

In addition to such nonsense there are also false beliefs and impressions you even consciously assume to be true -- at least to some degree. These are even more difficult to handle.

Then there are beliefs you do not wish to alter even though you may sense they are somehow false. The painful premise seems preferable to another alternative that appears, deep in your unconscious, even worse. This, too, is of course, an illusory assumption, for no truth is ever burdensome, hopeless or in any way undesirable. The complications and interactions of all the knots, ensnarlements, false beliefs, half-truths and contradictions comprise what actually exists in you. You must face them before you can make any further progress.

You absolutely must disentangle this level of reality. If you are unwilling to see what you believe to be true, you cannot ever come to see what is really true, at this moment. Consequently, you will be unable to reach the third level of reality. That you can only do by changing the present reality into one that is more favorable for you, and this cannot happen by wishful thinking, illusory magic, or denial of the facts.

Let us take a frequent occurrence as an example: your fear of rejection. This fear runs through your psychic life, and consequently through our outer, physical life. Rejection itself would not be the threat it is for most people if there were no specific assumptions connected with it. These specific assumptions are what you must unearth. For example, you may believe that you are worth nothing; what makes rejection such a great threat is that it seems to confirm the "fact" of your worthlessness. Thus it is not sufficient to acknowledge a stereotype "explanation" by saying you feel anxious. It is necessary first to acknowledge that the anxiety exists because you fear rejection.

Subsequently, you must unearth that rejection is so threatening because you feel worthless and do not wish to admit this feeling. But even this does not go far enough. Now it becomes necessary to find out on what specific grounds you base the heretofore secret conviction of your worthlessness. In other words, you must take all these very specific beliefs and assumptions out of the fog of vagueness, where they hide under the collective label of "anxiety."

When you change your approach in the fashion suggested here and conduct serious investigation, when you take nothing for granted and approach everything in a new and fresh way, you will find out what you believe exists. From there on you can begin to look further and begin to question the premises of these beliefs. You can begin to open your eyes and look objectively for what really is. In this transition from one level of reality to the next, you must also ask yourself the question whether you really want to find out, first what you think exists, and second, what really is. All the false assumptions you harbor seem to dictate keeping them secret. For example, should it be true that you actually are worthless and beyond redemption, facing such a fact would indeed be a hard undertaking. But then, is it preferable to live a lie by pretending you believe in your worth, while underneath you doubt it? Such considerations will give you the necessary logic to look at what you believe exists, in order to then find out what actually exists. The actual truth is that you have a great deal of worth, although, perhaps, in a different way than you believe.

Conversely, and simultaneously, you may believe that you are the most important and valuable person on earth, who deserves very special privileges. To ascertain such a belief is difficult because your intellectual knowledge refutes such arrogance and even creates shame. Also, admitting such an idea brings you closer to questioning its validity, which you fear all the more since in the psyche there also lurks the precise opposite extreme -- the assumption of your worthlessness. If you are not special, then you assume you are nothing. Hence, you must keep both assumptions hidden from consciousness and you cannot examine them. This keeps you from testing the reality of further chain-reactions and compulsive behavior patterns based on such assumptions.

So, when you discover that you do not want to find out what exists in you, push on and find out why not. What false beliefs prevent you from doing so? When you answer that question, you open another little gate that will eventually enable you to change your mind, so that you will want to find out (a) what you think exists, and (b) what really exists.

In that moment you are already two important levels closer to the inner guidance and to the inner reality, to the possibility of what could be. This is the Kingdom of God inside you. As long as you do not clear up the entanglements of false opinions -- of what you believe exists as opposed to what actually exists -- you cannot see that even what actually does exist need not be your ultimate state of being. To realize this leads to a tremendously important transition.

The level of what actually does exist is always an enormous relief compared to what you believe exists. Truth is never anywhere near as threatening as the foggy half-truths and evasions, no matter what it is. What you believe exists is a relief as compared to the fog, and what actually exists is an even greater relief compared to what you believe exists. The discovery of the manifold possibilities in Creation of what could exist is more than liberation. It opens the gates to the world, to the great freedom of co-creation, to unlimited expansion. I might say here that in mundane psychotherapy, the highest obtainable goal is usually the level of reality of what actually exists. To accept this reality -- your manifest values and liabilities, the limitations of yourself and the outer

world, to cope with the world so as to produce your best actions and feelings -- this would be the ultimate that psychotherapy can expect under the very best of circumstances. It would be the point at which a patient is successfully dismissed as cured.

Our spiritual path begins precisely here. Of course, the levels overlap and you cannot say that you must first have completed one level before reaching the next. It never quite works that way. This is why realizing now that the third level exists and working with it to the best of your present abilities will help you attain the lower stages perhaps a bit faster and more painlessly, perhaps a bit more safely and more meaningfully.

As to the third level, what could exist -- what in the spiritual sense is usually called the reality - - is not a static condition. It is no more real, true and unchangeable than the level of what you believe exists. If you are convinced of it, it seems true and real, so that we can speak of your reality at that moment. It is the reality of your assumptions, which lead you to further ideas, with their actual energy and dynamics, with all their consequences that happen in experience and fact. So, what you believe and what is are not so different when one considers the vast stretches of possibilities.

When you assume that reality is static and immovable, you are as far removed from actual, ultimate reality as anyone who assumes illusions to be the final truth. Ultimate reality is essentially flexible and movable. Humankind is not put into a universe that has its predetermined existence, whose conditions are fixed. Even objects are in flux, are condensed energy, constantly moving. The energy is generated by consciousness and by the way it operates. Thus, the immovable outer world is a direct product of you and your consciousness. When you can begin to question whether what you found to be reality need be so, you begin to expand the horizon of your concepts, of your mental grasp. This increases your creative power to alter the seemingly static reality. You can expand reality to the exact degree you wish to expand the horizon, or the frontiers, of your concepts. By concepts I mean more than the superficial beliefs and theories, of course. When your mind can truly and deeply embrace limitless vistas of experience for happiness and self-expression, this is exactly what your reality must become, for consciousness is explosive, powerful stuff. Each thought, as you know, creates and truly builds your life -- your very own reality circumstances.

However, if you strive unconsciously for the limitless expansion as the child strives for magical omnipotence because the personality fears and dislikes dealing with the present limitations, it cannot possibly work. It is necessary to first accept the present limitations and cope with them, for they are a product of what the consciousness believes. It is impossible to discover your own creative power in the positive before you recognize the connection between negative reality and negative beliefs. Only when you realistically accept a limitation as it is now can you transcend it, in the realization that the limitation does not need to exist. Thus you move into the third level of reality, in which your intellect cannot help you. It is then that the inner guidance can come forth. The inner guidance will be unobstructed once you have moved from the outer level of haze and fog where you do not know what is going on in you, to the level of what you believe exists, then to the level of what actually exists in comparison, and further, to opening your way into the third level, of what could exist.

Realizing what could exist, the ultimate truth of the inner being, of the real self, is the aim of life itself. Then you come into your own. The more you transcend these levels, the freer inner

guidance becomes, and the more you will comprehend those three levels of reality which are your way from "being thrown into the outside world" to coming back home into inner reality.

What is evil, my friends -- all the evil that is so deplored? Evil is all the error and confusion on the outer hazy level of pre-reality -- as well as on the level of what you believe exists, which is not quite conscious -- that drives you into actions and feelings which are truly destructive and are called evil. They blur out the spiritual light of oneness. The existence of evil is the blind drive of not knowing, the vagueness of misbelief, distortion, error. If you truly comprehend these words, my friends, it will be quite impossible for you to ever hate anyone, or believe in the evil nature of certain human beings. You will then see that such hate is senseless. You can hate the evil of error and the error of evil, you can hate the effect of the error and the vagueness of not knowing what you believe -- or what others believe. That you can hate, but you can never hate the person ensnared in the error of not knowing what he or she believes. That is truly the most alienating state -- not knowing what one believes, assumes and concludes.

As I keep saying, you must beware of judging whether you or others have reached any of these levels on the whole. It is always a question of fluctuation and overlapping. You may have attained a state of fluctuating between the second and third levels. You may have activated sufficient power from the third level to guide you in all your life-expressions. But where you are still trapped in your haze, the guidance does not easily penetrate and you cannot hear it.

QUESTION: What if one doubts that one's needs are justified? Isn't it also a question of what should be?

ANSWER: This is part of the confusion. If you do not know what you are supposed to want, what is a legitimate need on your part, you get confused between the childish aspect that desires unreasonable and unrealizable love and attention, and the legitimate adult need for human warmth and affection. In this confusion you may reject yourself for the latter, while at the same time you rebel against not obtaining the former. You must bring all these confusions out in the open and examine them so that you can put order into them.

In addition to this confusion, there may be confusion about what the other person really feels. Your own confusion inevitably breeds confusion about what exists in the other person. The childish level may conclude you are being rejected, since the unrealizable demands are not fulfilled. You may not be able to recognize actual love, because it appears in a different way from what you imagine in your present state, in which you may not be able to make room for differences in self-expression. You may also misinterpret the actual rejection as a personal one, and not recognize that this is the manifestation of another person's immaturity and fear of love. You must investigate all these interactions and mutual currents.

The way you can gauge whether you have arrived at what you ought to know about yourself at the moment is the only reliable gauge there is: Do you have the feeling of utter relief and liberation, of being energized and light? If so, you can be absolutely sure that you have attained, at this moment, the level of self-knowledge that you ought to have. When this feeling is missing, you can be quite sure that many answers are still outstanding and that you need to find them. You need to ask yourself the appropriate questions.

QUESTION: I am aware of the fact that I distort reality. I wonder how this applies to my job situation, in which I am caught in a hostility cycle with my boss. At least on my part I feel very hostile to him. This is very real to me, although I know I am overreacting. Would you comment on this?

ANSWER: As you already know, this has really not much to do with your boss. It is all a question between you and your father. You have to ask yourself the relevant questions. What do you really feel about your father? What do you believe he felt about you and why? If you tackle only these three questions, you will already be more in clarity on the level of what you believe exists, rather than being in the fog of not quite knowing what bothers you. Out of these questions more questions will arise, of course. But let us not hurry ahead. Just concentrate on these three questions, without taking anything for granted. It is essential that you ask yourself and answer these questions. Then you can tackle the next level of considering what is.

For you who heard this lecture, even if you did not always concentrate on my words, something went into your heart, where a seed can grow into a wonderful fruit. Allow this to happen, my friends, for life is so good. The truth is happiness, while unhappiness is always error and misconception. Do not ever forget this. Knowing this may lead you to have more initiative about discovering the misconceptions of your suffering.

On this day that commemorates the leading faith of this hemisphere, you can perhaps find a special strength in the memory of your forefathers -- not because such a special day in itself is of any value or importance as such, but because at times you need an outer impact or push in order to put something in motion within. For some, religious memories and considerations may represent such a push. For others this may not be necessary. They, in turn, may need other reminders and incentives, or another impetus that gives them a motor force with which to grind a way out of the entanglements on the outermost level of fog-bound existence, which cause so much anxiety and suffering.

Be blessed, my very dearest ones. The love of the universe, the truth and beauty of the universe, are within you and around you at all times, my friends, always. Make yourself see the truth by calling upon inner guidance so that you and your inner guidance eventually become one. This will happen when you have experienced it sufficiently often as real. Be blessed, be in peace, be in God!

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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