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APPROACH TO SELF -- SELF-FORGIVENESS WITHOUT CONDONING THE LOWER SELF

Greetings, my most beloved friends. Blessings for every single one gathered here. May you be enfolded by the force of the love and the blessings that are given forth.

In tonight's lecture I would like to explore specific facets of the path which is an eternal path in one form or another for all human beings, for all creation. I want to discuss how the process of the path can be furthered in the developmental stage where you are now, my friends. You may find, at this specific stage, hindrances that you need to comprehend better on a deeper level of your being, so that you can remove them and enhance the ever-moving process of which you become more and more a part. You initiate this process anew at every step -- yet you also become a part of it and follow it because it is greater than the you that must initiate it.

You are indeed doing this in ever greater measure. You are growing and changing and discovering the wonders of your inner world. But it will also be helpful to become more aware of what you are doing and what these inner rhythms are. There is a constant fluctuation of initiating -- and thereby indirectly setting up the process that unfolds and that in rare moments of exhilaration you perceive -- and of following this process. Most of the time you are still oblivious of being part of a process you have set in motion through your commitment to be in truth, to wish to grow and change.

That, of course, is the basic aspect of initiating the process: the general commitment to being in truth and to changing what is negative and destructive. But then there are specific aspects that require a deeper understanding because the human psyche is extremely befuddled about certain issues that become lost in the duality of human life. In tonight's lecture I should like to discuss one such aspect. Before doing so, however, I need to apparently digress. Yet this is not really a digression: you will see the connection later on.

One of your most basic fears is the fear of death. The fear of death has its origin in the confusion of dualistic thinking and perceiving. The fear itself leads to further confusion. The fear of death can be allayed by not thinking about it, but nevertheless it lurks in the soul until the personality has completely fused with divine reality. The fear persists even when intellectual understanding has been attained and inner experience has occasionally occurred as a result of growing and connecting with the divine nucleus. Although at times a deep knowing about the continuum of life exists, the spreading of this knowing is a slow process. All of the soul and the personality have to be filled with truth, without any fluctuation, without any temptation into erroneous, faulty conceiving and experiencing the world. To be deeply aware of the eternal nature of life requires a slow process, contingent on many other attitudes that have apparently nothing or little to do with this great question. Such conviction can come only after overcoming many hurdles

and after facing this basic fear on different levels, no matter what you believe in your mind. This fear can take different forms, but whatever they may be, I wish to address you, first of all, on the level of your conscious or unconscious fear of death.

Life cannot be non-life, for it is the intrinsic nature of life to be alive. This may sound, on a more superficial level, like a redundant statement, but if you listen deeply into yourself and think about this sentence, you will perceive that there is a deeper meaning to it. For you take unthinkingly for granted that life can suddenly become non-life, that its innate nature suddenly changes into an opposite. If you truly ponder this, you must come to the realization that this is pure nonsense. Life can only be life. Everything that is created, everything that is, can only be what it is. It cannot be what it is not, even if on a superficial level of appearance it temporarily seems otherwise. Only in the dualistic state do you live with two opposites within your soul. But this dualistic state is obviously only a very limited state as compared to all of creation. Even while you are in this realm of consciousness, when you truly work on your path, you soon discover that all opposites are illusion and are facets of the same oneness. You yourself have already succeeded in many areas of your inner life to fuse such opposites so that contradictions no longer exist and become conciliated. This must apply to all opposites on your level of reality. So if there is a oneness about life, there can only be life. Therefore death must be an illusion.

On the level of your consciousness you are totally, or almost totally, focused on the level of manifestation, and not on the level of origin, or on the level of the source. Life radiates outwardly. It sends out its irradiations, its streamings, its energy currents, its rays. But these rays are only the outer "messengers," bringing life forth gradually. Some time in the past, I have spoken about this process of creation in a different context.

The spiral movement of growing needs repetition and needs to link up these repetitions with different contexts and connections. I have explained in the past that life -- which is divinity, for life and divinity are one -- very gradually penetrates the void and fills the void. Once the void has been penetrated by life, it can never again become the void. On the borderline where life meets the void, energy and consciousness -- which are life's main aspects when expressed in human language -- congeal and harden into matter. This level can also be called the level of manifestation, which must not be confused with the real life, the source. Matter or manifestation is enlivened and animated by life until, in the process of evolution, it transforms and retransforms itself sufficiently so that it becomes totally one with life. But as long as it is still on the "outer border" it is only temporarily animated by the life spark that, however, by its very nature, returns and returns.

I recapitulate: The rays of life animate the matter that is the creation of the meeting between life and the void. The void must be filled totally with life: that is the inexorable destiny of evolution. Everything that is alive is animated by the eternally divine consciousness. And consciousness is eternally moving forth and changing manifestation in its myriad forms.

Now how does this apply to you, my friends? As always, we want to use profound metaphysical verities not just as philosophical thoughts to speculate about, but to apply specifically to your human condition and to your pathwork. There is no greater truth, no universal fact of creation, no macrocosmic event that cannot also be immediately applied to your personal development, your growth, your self-confrontation, and your immediate microcosm. If you use

great truths without linking them to your work on the Path, you are using spirituality as an escape from self, an avoidance of personal purification, a failure of fulfilling the task of incarnation.

You are geared to the level of manifestation and you confuse the manifestation that is animated by eternal life with eternal life itself. Only after you achieve higher realizations of consciousness does this focus switch -- perhaps almost inadvertently at first. It merely seems a byproduct of the purification work. Life can temporarily withdraw itself from the matter it has created and then allows the matter to dissolve itself into its original substance. It will then create a new form that it animates. The process of evolution is a continually changing process.

Human consciousness needs to open the mind to explore the truths I am presenting to you here. For your fear stems from being identified with the manifestation that is animated by the source. You are the source. Even your present personality, your thinking and feeling, your being and experiencing, your capacity to will and decide -- all that is the source. Non-life cannot do any of these things. Even if much of your manifest personality modifies itself, changing and expanding, all that you know and feel yourself to be is source, not manifestation. Therein lies the confusion that creates fear of not being.

You need to learn that everything you are now, even in its imperfection, is the ever-existing eternal life and can never not be. Within your present limited manifestation lie unlimited possibilities of expansion of your consciousness, of your experience, of your creative ability to mold life and life forms, of your sense of being who you really are. And you believe, my friends, still somewhere, somehow, in a part of you, that when you withdraw that life from the matter that you created through the meeting of life and non-life, that you then cease to be. Yet all that you know and are aware of as yourself must continue to be and cannot not be, even to the limited personality as you know yourself now. It is what it is now, in addition to its potentialities that also exist in the now. As these potentialities increasingly animate matter, self-awareness expands and you then know the truth about your unlimited continuity. Then matter merges with the source.

In order to make this jump of the mind, in order to open your comprehension to the ideas I unfold here, we have to overcome certain specific obstructions, as I said before. There are many obstructions and you work with all of them, in one form or another. Fear of death is connected with one of the most important obstructions, which is the approach to the self on the arduous path of self-purification. I wish to discuss this now in detail, for there is a great need for it. The issue is your confusion about accepting the self with its lower-self aspects, squarely facing its negativity, and yet seeing its destructiveness and its damaging effects for what they are.

You confuse self-acceptance and self-forgiveness with condoning and whitewashing the negativities of the lower self; and you equally confuse self-devastating guilt and self-hate with honest admission of what is indeed wrong and needs to be changed. This specific dualistic confusion is obviously extremely important. It is not hard to see how it can be an enormous obstacle on your path, for either alternative prevents you from growing and expanding and becoming one with your God. The negative aspects must be fully accepted, forgiven and seen in context with the whole personality, but they must never be condoned. All this has been said many times before, but it is still a major stumbling block for many of you. You stumble over this particular duality again and again.

The fear of death, the fear of non-life, has a great deal to do with this. It has to do with it in two apparently opposite ways. If fear of death lurks in your heart, consciously or unconsciously, self-forgiveness is extremely difficult, because one of the worst punishments is the threat of extinction. Lack of self-forgiveness brings this threat into focus. It triggers it.

Fear of death creates also a fear of movement. And that is of course completely contrary to reality. For life is eternally moving and where life is withdrawn, movement stops. But from the inverted position within the level of manifestation, of which the passing of time is an integral part, it seems that life is a constant movement toward dying. Therefore changing is a movement that seems to accelerate the process of dying. Staying immobile upholds the illusion of stopping time and sustaining the status quo. This is one of the major inner reasons for resisting and distrusting change and growth. This illusion is so primitive that it is virtually superstitious, but on those levels of semi-conscious thinking and reasoning this is hardly surprising. You have found many absurd misconceptions in the course of your path that you hold and uphold on this level of your being with ferocity, that govern your life to a degree that your conscious, mature mind is at first unable and unwilling to comprehend.

It hardly needs to be emphasized here that remaining stagnant is courting the cessation of the manifest level. It can only accelerate the will of the animating consciousness to withdraw from this manifestation and start afresh. When you are determined and committed to change and bring out the divine potential, duality will fuse into a unity in which you can be charitable with yourself, in which you can have mercy with yourself, and in which you can face the lower self precisely because you have this basic love and mercy toward all being, including your own. You can face your lower self unstintingly -- without whitewashing, without explaining it away or justifying it, without shifting the blame for it onto others, yet without a trace of self-hate. That attitude becomes available to the personality if it can be perceived as a possibility, even as a necessity. Then it will be a goal of aspiration. You need to consciously actualize it by constantly checking up on the imbalances in these two directions and modifying them.

Only to the degree you embrace an utter commitment to move and to change can you trust that the person you know and experience as yourself must continue to be. No matter how much you change your manifestation to bring it into accord with your divine potentials, you still ultimately remain you, for you are God. You become more you as you perpetuate this change into more of your potentiality.

This is very important for you to understand, my friends. Everything that exists, lives and breathes, is even in its most minute form a manifestation of God and therefore essentially eternal. The stumbling block of not recognizing this fact is very prevalent. Although I have spoken about it many times in different contexts, it has not by any means been eliminated. You are still stumbling over the self-hate in you. You often still stumble over the defense against recognizing the self-hate and feeling its pain, because you secretly believe in the justification of the self-hate, which makes the pain of it unbearable. The fear of your own unforgiveness on the one hand, and, as an apparent antidote, self-coddling and self-indulgence and denial of the lower self on the other, always exist simultaneously. They are the expressions of this specific confusion and stumbling block. They are the distortion and inversion of the unity of self-respect and total self-honesty.

So what you need is again and again to make room for the presence of your divinity, which can then make it possible for you to face whatever exists in you. Realize that the lower self is nothing but a creation that has come about through the encounter of life with non-life. When life meets non-life, energy creates matter, and consciousness splits off into fragments. Truth and reality become confused because of the limited perspective of the fragments. Truth is diminished and put into limited aspects. All of your duality is that -- a limited aspect. You have created artifacts, artificial thought-splits that confuse your mind. They are as much a creation as matter is a creation of the meeting between life and the void -- the non-life. Life finally penetrates and thrusts itself into non-life and enlivens it, even if in that process -- again and again, in an ever-rhythmic dance -- it withdraws itself at intervals from the life manifestation.

As matter disintegrates, it has already been spiritualized by having possessed the kernel of life, even if only for a temporary period. And it will reawaken. Matter itself is a creation of life, for the void cannot create, it is essentially non-life, until it is filled by life. So even when matter seems to disintegrate, it is not lifeless. It merely pursues an inverted, indirect route. The disintegration of matter will bring it together again in new combinations and the more obvious, greater life spark returns to animate it again. Yet you must realize that the very process of disintegration and reintegration is a movement that leads toward the same goal. Where there is movement, life must still exist. Life in inanimate matter is, as I said, an inverted movement and a much-diminished animation, but that, too, must be what it is, following inexorable, wise laws. To explain the nature of these laws now would go beyond the scope of this lecture.

The same principles exist on the level of consciousness. The split perception of reality we talk about so frequently exists in many diverse forms, which create the suffering humanity experiences. The further the movement of life advances, the more these split concepts unify and eliminate suffering. The mind that is aware and animates a unit of consciousness tries to grope with the split concepts until they become clarified and unified. And clarification and unification are possible only with courage for commitment to divine truth. For then truth is love and love is truth.

Once you commit to divine truth, you will increasingly experience life for what it is. It is all; it can never be anything else. It will not be confused with the manifestation that harbors the spark. In that spark is everything you know yourself to be. That consciousness you are now is not bound to your body, although particles of that consciousness remain as reflections within each molecule, within each cell, within each atom of the matter your consciousness has created. Your body is thus an expression and reflection of your consciousness, but when your consciousness withdraws from the body, it remains exactly as you know yourself to be now. The body that has been animated seems to disintegrate from the point of view of the limited consciousness on the manifest level. But it, too, goes through an immense process in which each cell finds new cells and creates new forms, making room for new vehicles. Each cell of a body that has been left behind by the animating life harbors within it a spark, a tiny spark of that life.

As I said to you, there is no inanimate object that is not alive in some way, that is not somewhere a part of the life process. That tiny spark travels through channels that are infinitely lawful and meaningful and harmonious, following laws of attraction and repulsion -- laws that are impossible to explain and bring into the framework of the human consciousness. When cells reunite themselves into new combinations, they then create genes and these genes within the human

structure change as the consciousness changes. The genes are not the same today as they will be in a few years, provided the entity is growing and moving.

All these particles of matter -- that are invisible to the human eye but are nevertheless matter - - contain inherent aspects of consciousness. Thus there could be no cell in a dead body that is not an expression of the total personality which once enlivened and animated that cell. That again determines the further journey of the disintegrating and reintegrating cells.

Offhand this may not seem very connected with the topic of approach to the self regarding self-love and self-honesty or, in distortion, self-indulgence and self-hate -- or, to put it differently, your need to learn self-forgiveness on the one hand and self-confrontation on the other. Yet the connection is extremely relevant, my friends. Perhaps when you meditate deeply you will perceive and intuitively know the relevance. There is a direct connection between self-hate, fear of punishment, fear of death and the disintegration of the cell structure that falls into a channel that is then attracted to a corresponding new form.

Do not believe that the thoughts you think now are not creations with their own cell structure and their own matter, although the density of that matter is invisible to you. If you live in a split-off duality in which you have to hate yourself in order to face the truth about the lower self, or in which you have to deny the truth about the lower self in order not to feel and experience the self-hate and fear of dying, of death, of non-life, then you live in a very specific channel and create thoughts and invisible forms that bring you into an ever-repeating pattern of confusion and suffering.

You are now ready, my friends, to encompass an entirely new approach to yourselves. It is truly new and yet not so new. You have already taken tiny steps toward that approach. Now you are ready to take a greater step and truly complete that approach, that attitude of total dedication to self-confrontation and self-respect, self-love and self-forgiveness in true proportion. You can now allow the God in you -- which you can be the moment you so choose -- the godly attitude to be in a state of self-love in the healthiest, most divine way, without a trace of self-indulgence or denial of what is true in your lower self. You can have respect, love and compassion for your wonderful struggle, for your wonderful honesty even while you also see the still existing dishonesty, the cowardice, and all the other ugly little attitudes of the lower self, without ever forgetting who you really are. The very fact of facing this lower self deserves the mercy, forgiveness, and love that human beings have been praying for, addressing for millennia a God outside themselves, thinking that dispensations given from the outside will make up for what they withhold from themselves.

That is my message in this lecture, my friends. I leave you with a great blessing and with the suggestion that you become more observant of your thought processes -- the daily little thought patterns that you are so used to, that you take so much for granted that it never occurs to you to consider their creative power, and to also consider that you can choose other thoughts. These daily repeated thought patterns are perhaps your worst enemy. They are insidious, for you are so accustomed to them. Learn to take a little distance from your thought patterns. Observe yourself following them, giving them life, giving them animation and energy, and thereby creating a state of fear, self-hate, distrust and hopelessness. This is what I ask you to do. Proceed every day of your life now with this new observation of your thoughts.

With this I give you a great and wonderful blessing that all of you increasingly feel and take in. It is a palpable life force. For us, in our world, it is very visible, and for some of you it is visible to some small extent. But certainly you experience its reality; you bathe in it. I will speak to you again and again and give you what I have to give. Be blessed, my beloved ones.

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