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ASPECTS OF THE ANATOMY OF LOVE: SELF-LOVE, STRUCTURE, FREEDOM

My most beloved friends, blessed are you in your whole being, blessed is your path, blessed are your endeavors to grow and struggle and find your inner truth.

The love of the universe permeates all that is. It is always available, although often you are not aware of it because of the false direction of your thinking. As you struggle on your path, you discover the many conflicts and confusions of your mind. But when you work your way through these ever-narrowing spiral movements, the issues become so much simpler. And in the final nuclear point of your being, the issue is love. Love is the key to all. Love is the medicine that heals all illness and all sorrow.

We shall talk about certain aspects of love in this lecture. To completely cover the topic would be absolutely impossible in one lifetime, even if it were discussed every hour of the day, so deep and so far-reaching is it. We shall discuss those aspects of love that you most need on your path at this juncture.

There is much discussion in your world about what love really is. To many it seems to be primarily a feeling. What is it really? Is it a force, is it a feeling? Now I say to you, my friends, it is all that, and more. Let us speak of the fundamental personality structure in the human being in terms of reason, will, and emotion, and apply love to these functions. In the following example we will see that love is literally all and everything.

It is obvious that love is a feeling, but it is not so obvious that this feeling must result from an act of will motivated by intelligence. So love is certainly intelligence. If you truly look at any single issue in the full scope it deserves, you will have to conclude that hatred is ignorant, no matter how justified it may appear. It is lack of intelligence. There are, of course, many forms of hatred that are never acknowledged as such; there are also many degrees. Lack of love can simply manifest in separateness, in hopelessness, in lack of faith, in depression, in a bleak vision of the universe, in fears, in feeling victimized. It can also manifest in resentment, blame, hostility, and overt hatred, with many shades in-between.

Love is certainly pure intelligence and reason. The deeper the understanding of the prevailing circumstances, the farther the vision goes, the closer the person is to truth, the less will it be possible to experience hate, and the more love must grow.

The emotion of love is impossible without the will moving toward a loving state. If you do not wish to love, if you do not purposely express the desire to love which means to fully understand, and if you do not intend to love, you will not love. You will never be able to feel love, and you will often wonder why. Sometimes the will to love stimulates the will to understand fully, and

consequently understanding grows from love. Other times the understanding occurs first and results in the awakening of the will to love. Either way, the feeling of love cannot exist without intelligence and intention, or, to put it differently, the emotion follows reason and will.

If you have misconceptions that to love is to lose, to be impoverished or taken advantage of, or that to love means to be weak, submissive, and spineless, then your ideas reflect a lack of reason and a lack of intelligence, which will hamper your will to love.

Love is also much more than reason, will, and emotion. It is sensation on every level of your being. This is easily verified if you pay attention to your own reactions. When you are in a state of love, you see differently, you hear differently, you taste differently. Life around you has an altogether different flavor. You feel and touch differently. You perceive and experience everything that comes to pass in a very different way.

When you are not in a state of love, your sense perceptions highlight experiences that you find undesirable. They appear unjustified to you. Certainly, whatever intelligence you bring to bear on the situation constructs reasons that justify the reality you want to perceive. In other words, your unloving perceptions appear absolutely correct. But, my friends, question this. It is only a very limited truth you perceive in the unloving state. It is, in fact, so limited that you cannot call it reliable perception. You merely perceive isolated fragments of the truth.

When you are in a state of love your body functions very differently. Your breathing is different, your heartbeat and pulse are different. Your bloodstream functions differently from when you are in a state of hate, whether or not you are aware of hating. When you love you remain in a state of health. Although the lack of health is not necessarily a direct reflection of your hate, it may be a necessary byproduct of your struggle to find the way out of hate and fear into love and trust. For that is always the inner struggle, whether you know it or not.

There are many other experiences, perceptions, sensations, some of which you do not even know exist, that are indications and expressions of love. They reflect your state of consciousness, whether it is already enlightened and loving or still unenlightened, defensive, hating, and fearful.

So love is in everything. Thus we now come to the very important aspect of loving yourself. Self-love and love for others are intricately connected. Here I need to repeat a statement I have often made: you cannot love yourself if you do not love others, and you cannot love others if you do not love yourself. Conversely, if you hate yourself, you also hate others. Again, you may not be aware of this correlation and of the unconscious process that makes you deny your self-hate and therefore your need to hate others.

The inner struggle to find the ability to love yourself is unceasing. Humanity gets confused in this struggle by the dualistic state of mind. This confusion is extremely important for you to understand. The confusion is: if you love yourself, do you then also indulge yourself? Do you then follow the line of least resistance? Do you then rather blame others than honestly look into your lower self? Does self-love mean giving free rein to the aspirations of your lower self and your mask self? Or does the necessity on the path of facing the truth of your lower self, with its subterfuges and deceptions, mean that you have to express and live the self-hate embedded in this aspect of your personality?

This is a very deep and tragic struggle for all of humanity. It is tragic, on the one hand, because to hide from it, to deny it makes it much more painful and prolonged than it needs to be. Yet, on the other hand, this struggle is also beautiful. You begin to experience its beauty when you find your first foothold in true security. Security lies in your first admitting the struggle, becoming aware of it. When you are not aware, you seek the false solution to self-love, which is self-indulgence and blaming others.

You all know on your path how tempting this game appears and how unsatisfactory and constricting it really is. It makes you constantly fluctuate between self-righteous accusations and morbid self-recrimination and guilt. The accusations never deeply convince you, because no matter how accurate some of them might be, you suffer the uncertainty that comes from hiding from yourself. Thus you find it impossible to love and esteem yourself on a conscious level. You swing between conscious hate for yourself and hate for others, and that is truly a very painful state that you need not endure.

Most of you fluctuate between hatred for self and others. It remains for you to find the places in your inner being where you still live in the pseudo-solution of loving yourself by indulging yourself, by blaming others, by excusing and justifying your own lower-self traits and all the more severely heaping accusations on others. Your view of yourself and others is thus always somewhat lopsided; you live in inner turmoil due to your frantic attempt to hide your self-hate from yourself. The more you do this, the more you mistakenly believe that this is the way to attain self-love and self-esteem. The true, guilt-free awareness of other people's wrongdoing, clearly seen as separate from your own inner wrongdoing, will come when you dispense with the false solution. It will come when you search arduously to attain a truthful balance in facing your lower self honestly and -- not in spite of this discovery but because of it -- loving and honoring yourself the more.

The tragedy of this pseudo-solution to your self-hate is that as long as you use it, you become further alienated from true self-love and self-esteem. Therefore, if you want to find the real way to love yourself, it is absolutely necessary to ascertain that you lack balance, that you are on the wrong road to finding your true divine eternal values, and that you are trying to eliminate self-hate through false means. The moment you can admit this, you can open your heart and your mind to all your true values. You can begin to give yourself honest recognition without hiding and justifications. Most of all, you can open yourself to the inner inspiration that will guide you to experience how you can acknowledge your lower self without becoming ensnared in self-hate. You will then see clearly that the more you do this, the more you can truly love and respect yourself.

Now, as you love yourself in the true way, without indulging your lower self and its childish demands, you will find that being firm with yourself is as much an expression of love as is tenderness. If you can be firm with yourself, as opposed to self-destructively and unlovingly devaluing yourself, you can also be tender with yourself. A beautiful balance will emerge clearly: self-discipline, strict honesty with the self, and firmness with the lower self's desire to act out will create self-honor, tenderness, and deep appreciation for the self. The distortion of this balance is self-indulgence at the expense of others and lacerating self-hate. The distortion is, to begin with, unconscious and needs to be perceived through its indirect manifestations.

Only when you seek and gradually attain the right balance can you be receptive to your own divinity and finally merge with it and find your identity in it. In a meditation of the deepest sort you bestow tender love upon every aspect of your manifestation; every organ that you neglect loving; every attitude, no matter how distorted. Once you face yourself in truth, you can find your underlying divinity. But that is genuinely possible only when you no longer excuse, hide, deny, rationalize, project, and hate others in order not to feel your self-hate.

The self-hate is a prison in which you are truly suffocated and from which you seek a way out. For the longest time in human evolution, the search for a way out of this particular prison has not been made conscious. When you are committed to an intense path like this and follow through consistently, an awareness of self-hate rises to the surface. At first, this growing awareness does not include the knowledge that this inner condition has always prevailed. Nor do you see that you are about to eliminate it by courageously following the path further. Often people believe that the particular orientation of the outer path creates this growing self-hate. Of course it is not really growing; only your awareness is growing, but from the vantage point of the still-imprisoned individual it appears that way. Such a misperception sometimes creates fear of and rage against this path, and you cling to the old "protective" illusion that your painful feelings of self-rejection are caused by something or someone outside. In such instances the old pseudo-solution is still coveted, if only in the form of putting your self-doubts to sleep through a one-sided positive approach.

If this crucial stage on the path is successfully overcome, however, and the temptation to flee it is intelligently recognized for what it is, then the awareness of this particular struggle is already a liberation. But as long as you are under the impression that your lack of freedom is imposed on you by other people or conditions, you struggle in vain and, in fact, you only tighten the chains that bind you.

We come now to another aspect of the problem. We have discussed the search for liberation in many different ways. When you rebel against authority figures, you believe that through your rebellion you will attain freedom. When you protest indignantly about every frustration that life puts in your way, you believe that if there were no frustrations, you would truly be free. Thus you are furious about what you believe is done to you by authority, by frustrations.

Now I would like to shed light on a similar, related reaction, and that is your innate rebellion against any boundary or structure, against anything that you experience as confining. I say to you here, my friends, structure and boundaries are part of the loving creation. In one form or another they exist in every part of reality. If there were no laws and no boundaries, the world would disintegrate in chaos and destruction. What keeps the planets in place and prevents them from colliding into one another? It is wise law; it is boundaries and structure. There can be no organization in the universe, big or small, planetary or minuscule, and no community of living entities without structure, law, boundaries that may seem confining to some individuals. At least at first they may seem so. In the real sense they are not confining.

It will be of great importance, my friends, to face why you are so angry about this fact of life. Why are you so suspicious that it hardly ever occurs to you to be open to the possibility that laws, boundaries, structure, rules -- name them what you will -- come from truth and love, rather than from hostility and a desire to thwart you? Aside from your childhood experiences, or your interpretation of them, the true reason is that you distrust the tyrant of your own lower self that

wants to rule selfishly and cruelly. In hiding this tendency you project it outward, so that you assume all rules and laws, all restrictions and boundaries spring from lack of love. When you identify love with indulgence, and frustration with hate, then you are constantly confused, distorting reality, and blind to the magnificence of Creation.

Structure and law can be found in every loving aspect of Creation. Look at the life of animals -- of birds or ants, for example. Animals living free in nature obey the structure of the highest creation in poise, in ease, and with tenderness. They embrace the structure and breathe and expand within it in great freedom. The angry rebellion against any structure which you interpret as a manifestation hostile to you is an expression peculiar to humanity, stemming from your own evolutionary place and the rhythm of your rising consciousness as well as from your lower-self drives.

There are, of course, boundaries, laws, and rules in the human condition that directly express your own limited consciousness. For example, the conflict we discussed before that comes equally from using false means to follow the urges to love yourself and to be free. For freedom and loving are inseparable. You cannot be free without loving, and you cannot love without being free. So when you do not love, you are unfree; you find yourself imprisoned in this conflict. You chafe against this lack of freedom; your life is full of frustrations, many of them in your inner condition, some also manifesting as outer creations.

Obviously, these infringements and restrictions are not really necessary. They are not an intrinsic part of Creation's divine reality. They are roadblocks you yourself have unwittingly put in your own way. They are in a different category from the laws that hold life together. Yet your rebellion and your reactions of outrage against restrictions are not only misplaced, but, because they are an inappropriate reaction, they also increase your frustrations and restrictions. So you need to develop a new reaction.

First, you need to distinguish between the two kinds of boundaries: loving, meaningful ones - whether they are cosmic or human -- and the ones you create yourself through error and misperceptions. When you clearly recognize both, it will be much easier to reeducate the willful, tyrannical child inside you, and you will be able to accept lovingly both kinds of boundaries: the first in recognition of their intrinsic meaningfulness, the second in recognition of your own limitations. You can use these boundaries to understand yourself and the universal laws better. By thus embracing your self-created boundaries you transcend them most meaningfully. Soon your frustration will become a new doorway to freedom. What first appeared to be an infringement will soon become an opportunity to grow and become freer.

You often find yourself rebelling against your own tight structure of false needs. Take the need to be always indulged, for example. Again, as long as you fight it, you only pull your chains tighter. Only when you relax your rebellion and open your mind and intuition so that you can comprehend what your struggle is all about will you see what your tight structure really does to you. By temporarily accepting the structure you have created, with its own inner logic and laws, you can relinquish it, you can grow beyond it, and you can even choose it.

You constantly overlook the tremendous freedom you possess in how to think, interpret, and react in any given situation. You fail to comprehend that through freedom of choice you have the

power to create and change conditions. Instead, you are mostly busy demanding from others that they present you with the conditions that you fail to create through your own choices.

These concepts are of utmost importance for you to understand, my dearest ones. For all too often you continue this unnecessary struggle. The more you rebel against what does not require rebellion and overlook what within you creates your self-infringement, the less you find true self-love and liberation.

As you accept the narrow structure and recognize it for what it is -- the product of your limited thinking -- so will your scope of freedom widen. But it does not widen by rebelling against the necessary outer boundaries, and against what appear to be restrictions. Freedom comes from an intelligent recognition of the structure and from the choice to accept it. This choice is made not out of fear and weakness, dependency and submission, nor is it a rebellion of the inner tyrant, which disregards reason and wisdom. It is made with the will to see the truth and meaning and lovingly accept, on those grounds, the narrow structure of the present, even if this seems at first to restrict personal desires. This is the act of love and freedom. The first two alternatives of fearful acceptance and blind rebellion are obviously unloving and unfree. They are not deliberate choices, but blind, automatic reactions, and they bear the seed of hate, distrust, suspicion, selfish demands, maligning of truth.

There will come a time when you will find that outer infringements of your freedom diminish steadily. When you are without childish temper tantrums and blind rebellion, you will be able to dissolve these infringements. In order to attain this ever-widening scope of freedom, it is necessary to first find how often your reactions are thoroughly misplaced. Then you can develop a knowing reaction instead of a blind one. The knowing, conscious, probing, objective, deeply honest search for the particular truth of the particular circumstances will immediately fill you with the self-esteem that can never develop when you pursue a road of blind selfwill and accusing fury.

An open mind and heart allows you to love and be free, to be in truth, and thus to trust and respect yourself. You will then see which boundaries, restrictions, and rules are meaningful, and which are not. You will create conditions that make the meaningless restrictions unnecessary, and you will tenderly and lovingly embrace the restrictions that you find meaningful. You will accept them even when they at first seem to impose a momentary disadvantage on you. You can cultivate an open and intelligent frame of mind much faster than you think, if you will only stretch your consciousness and make room for this possibility.

Freedom does not mean what the infant imagines: no boundaries at all, taking the line of least resistance. That is the strongest enslavement imaginable. Nothing could be less free. In that attitude you depend constantly on something that cannot be, no matter how much you try to force, manipulate, and cajole. You become the slave of unreality, and reality defeats you.

I suggest to all of you, my dearest friends, a small assignment that you may incorporate into your self-observations and your daily review. When you find yourself in rebellion, no matter how you try to explain and justify it, forget for the moment the issue and the pros and cons. Focus rather on what are your feelings. Do you feel rebellious? Do you react blindly? Do you let in other considerations? What is your state of mind? In these questions you will get the clearest answers you need and you will immediately be able to determine whether you are in a state of love or in a

state of hate. You can then further ask, compare and think, how you really feel when you are in a state of love and how that differs from the rebellious, blind state you find yourself in now.

When you are in a state of love you do not submit. Submission is the price you wish to pay in the hope of attaining self-love through others, or placating a benign authority in return for a life of unrestricted indulgence. For this impossible aim you sacrifice your freedom and integrity and then blame the outer world for the result. You conceal the true motives for your submission by pretending you are innocent and good, your only "fault" being that you have not yet learned to rebel and to hate.

In a state of love and freedom you probe and weigh with an utterly open mind and then choose whatever truth you find in that state. The choice is totally voluntary. You may want to choose to embrace and accept a particular infringement on your freedom. In that frame of mind, your choice will be a totally different act from submission. It will make you stronger, freer, more loving to yourself and others and open to the issue in question. Or you may reject the infringement in a clear, wise, intelligent assertion, comprehending the deeper meaning of the choice. Again, this will never be confused with blind rebellion, with the false kind of freedom, but will be as creative an act as the acceptance of the infringement in other circumstances.

You are all coming into new states of consciousness in which old blind reactions no longer have any room. In the past, when they were less obsolete and therefore less of a discrepancy, you would not even feel as uncomfortable as you must feel now when you blindly revert, out of habit, to outdated reactions toward yourself and your environment. You are no longer in a state of needing to hate yourself when you are not always perfect. You are already in a condition to truly face aspects of your lower self and find more of your self-love. You no longer need to rebel blindly against others and hate them when they do something that seems momentarily to your disadvantage or feels unwelcome. You are no longer in a state in which you cannot bear a little frustration. You are already in a state in which a little frustration can become a threshold to freedom and expansion for you. Think about this, my friends. Relinquish your taut, habitual reactions.

And now, before ending this particular message to you, I would like to speak about a state of evolving love in you that, as a result of your pathwork, you are bound to encounter and that you need to comprehend. There comes, of course, increasingly the opening up from within, where your heart begins to throb in love for others around you, for the beauty of Creation. In this state you experience moments of an intense pleasure that permeates your total being. When self-love has not yet been completely established, you contract in these moments in a frightened reaction, finding yourself unable to endure the state of lovingness, for it is too ecstatic. Inside, a tiny voice of self-hate still proclaims that you do not deserve it. And you close yourself up involuntarily, in an almost unbidden reaction on an outer level, against this state. In this back-and-forth struggle of your soul you increasingly feel the spreading love of the universe. Yet as long as self-love has not yet quite found a foothold in you, particular kinds of fear may arise: fear of death, fear of illness, fear of losing what is dearest to you. You may then revert back to the old, drab, gray state to feel more secure and less afraid of loss.

Now it is very important, my friends, that you recognize these manifestations for what they are. When you do not love yourself and therefore hate others in order to deny your self-hate you rebel against others and wish for impossible false freedoms. In this condition the experience of

deepest love for and by the universe will be unbearable, and you will produce false fear. You may experience physical manifestations, as I said before. There are varieties of ways in which the same syndrome can manifest in an individual's life. Whatever it is, there will appear a renewed urge for self-destruction in this halfway period in which more ability to love, feel, and perceive has grown, but remnants of self-hate remain because a stake to hide them still exists.

I want to suggest here a very specific meditation, asking to contact the highest forces within and around you in exactly the areas discussed in this lecture: Where and how do you hate yourself? Where and how do you project this self-hate onto others and thereby increase the self-hate? Where do you prevent experiencing your freedom by childish denial of boundaries and structure, of laws and rules, in small and large areas? And where do you feel within yourself that you are unworthy? Where and how do you love your soul, your mentality, your body?

Go deeply into the meditation in which you let yourself know that you are divine, that you need to fully face all aspects of yourself and that this will only increase your sense of divinity. Let your consciousness align itself with the divine will of loving yourself without indulging yourself, without whitewashing your lower self, seeing it straight, and loving your beautiful structure, your incarnation, all that is around you, even that which seems to infringe on you in some way. Recognize its lesson and begin to love it. This is tonight's message.

I now bless every single one of you with the golden light of Christ, with the eternal power of love, of truth, and of beauty. Be enveloped in it, breathe in it, know it, and live it.

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