

## THE HUMAN ROLE IN THE SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL UNIVERSES

My dear friends, you have had many discussions about how difficult it is for you human beings to subject your own free will to God's will. Let us therefore examine what the real reason for this is. When you reflect upon this question, you will have to admit that there must be a lack of trust here, a lack of trust in God, even if you have not formulated any clear thoughts about it. Emotionally this must be the case. For if your trust in God were as it should be, then none of you would have any difficulty in placing His will above yours. Yet, emotionally you react as if you believed that you know better than God what is good or advantageous for you -- while in reality this is not so at all.

The kind of self-love that everyone has is a sick and shortsighted love, while God's love for you is a clean, strong, healthy love, and therefore a more farsighted and benevolent love, intent on giving you the best. What God sends your way is, of course, often somewhat unpleasant -- not because He wants it so but because it is in accordance with the law of cause and effect you yourselves have set in motion by your past actions or attitudes. Your difficulties will substantially diminish when you know how to accept them and subject yourselves in this respect also to God's laws. To fight and overcome what weighs you down will make you stronger, freer and happier; with every forward step you will understand better the meaning of it all. Only when the self-created obstacles are overcome can you reap, already here on earth, the happiness that God wants you to have. For only the victory over the self-created difficulties, even if you don't yet understand their origin, makes you free enough to receive this happiness, makes you able to bear it and keep it.

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I have said it before, but I want to repeat it: Every human being, not only a medium, can and should have personal contact with God's world. Everybody can have it! But the conditions have to be met. When God's spirits speak to you through a medium, they never want to turn you into some puppet who is dependent on them. Yes, there are unaligned spirits -- and I am not even talking about the dark ones -- who would gladly give you instructions about what to do or not do; this would give them power and flatter their vanity. But an evolved spirit of God does not need or want power, does not need or want flattery. An evolved spirit wants what God wants, and God wants to make free and independent human beings out of you. Real liberation can only be in God and through God. You must have your own personal experience in understanding what God's will is in any particular case. And we will help you in that, we will teach you how to establish your personal contact. There are definite rules for this, but you must first overcome your individual obstacles. I

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<sup>1</sup> Note: These asterisks indicate that several paragraphs are omitted. Those paragraphs deal with the God image, of which there is a much more detailed description in Lecture #52.

will help all those who are willing to establish such a contact and explain the principles that govern and facilitate it. But the desire for it has to come from you; we will not violate your free will, God never does that either. I will ask you after the session whether you want the contact or not. I may not always and exclusively talk about this subject; I will tie it in with the topics of my lectures; they always contain material referring to it. I could give you a course, if you want it. But tell me honestly if you don't. Not everything will be entirely new to you, but this "course" will summarize the conditions for personal contact with the spirit world step by step, in line with your progress. You can obtain a great treasure through this, my dear ones. But it does not come easily, as nothing can that is truly precious and will bestow happiness on you. And the decision must be made by you; it cannot be made for you.

Here I would like to add that those who do not apply what they learn, have no right to deny the reality of spiritual truth, not even to themselves. For everything that is taught to you by a spirit of God, here or elsewhere, can be personally experienced at an intensity that leaves no room for doubt, that overshadows any outward, material proof. And you can experience that. Therefore they who do not fulfill the conditions necessary to experience all that they learn here and so find it confirmed, have no right to question its validity.

And now to your questions, my dear friends.

QUESTION: I would like to ask you, what is the difference between the Indian and the Western concepts about the continuity of life after death. Which one is right? Is it true that there is nothing after death, as the Indians say, that after repeated incarnations the soul finally returns to nothingness, that the individual personality does not survive? Or does personality and individual consciousness remain in existence in some form?

ANSWER: First I want to mention again that there is hardly any religious concept which does not contain a kernel of truth. And whenever you ask such a question, ask about that also, and I will help you to see where you can find this kernel of truth, whether it concerns the Bible or any other religious teaching. So, to come back to your question, I want to explain to you first how it really is. This will shed light on the contradictions.

The higher evolved an individual is, the more will the limitations of the ego fall away. It is the ego which erects the wall of blindness and separation around the soul. The higher the development, the more will the band of love which ties one soul to the other become visible -- but this band is tied in freedom, in the sense that we are bound to each other by love. All who are connected with this band of love will feel the other's pain with the same intensity as their own; the other's joy will be like their own. The experience will be the same for you and the other. The ego, putting itself in its own separate place, elevates itself above the other by wanting something better for itself than for the other. The ego will disappear with each step that the being -- human or spirit -- takes on the upward path. When the highest steps are reached, the feeling of brotherhood, of love, of at-oneness with the Thou, every Thou, is so complete that each soul vibrates in an ever-growing unity with every other soul, forming a true, free bond with all its brothers and sisters and with the Heavenly Father. It is very difficult to explain this to you in words, because you lack the inner experience of such a state and therefore have no concept for it. Therefore I am asking you to try to feel into the meaning between the lines, so that you can in some way imagine what I am trying to convey.

The highest level is that which we call "the House of God." Do not imagine this as a house, but as a vast sphere. A being who enters the House of God, who does not have to incarnate in a human body anymore, has merged so completely with the Thou that, as I said before, everything is felt and experienced equally in the self and in the other -- exactly because the ego has been overcome. By the way, not everybody who no longer needs to incarnate on earth enters the House of God right away; often the development continues in other spheres first. Now, human beings often make the mistake, by confusing the basic concepts, of believing that the ego is identical with the sense of individuality the personality has. But one has nothing to do with the other. On the contrary, as I tried to explain in some of my lectures, the consciousness of the "I" is expanded and intensified with every higher level reached, and exactly because the separation of the ego has been overcome. Since this separateness is nothing but blindness and lack of understanding, it must necessarily diminish and reduce awareness, and thus the sense of individuality in the personality. One day the ego must be overcome and the merging accomplished. Then individuality will not only not be relinquished, but will come into its own in ever-increasing freedom, light, understanding, and love.

So you can see the kernel of truth in the Indian, as well as in the Jewish and Christian concept, though they seem to contradict each other. The Indian concept refers to the dissolution of the ego, while the Jewish and Christian concept deals only with the individuality of the soul, which truly and eternally exists in a heightened form. Both are true. The reason that the concept of Nirvana has spread in India is the following:

In India there have always been a number of people who, through certain meditation exercises -- similar to what I will eventually teach you -- and also because of their high spiritual development, have reached the capacity to free their spirit from their body without losing their consciousness. Thus they had certain spiritual experiences. Since transcending the ego, at least to a degree, is a basic requirement for a spiritual experience and for the feeling of great bliss that accompanies it, it is understandable that people who have not had such experiences distort the accounts given by those who have had them. Any feeling is difficult to express in words. The higher, the more beautiful and blissful an experience is, the less easy it is to clothe it into words for those who have not yet been able to go through the same experience, and this is especially true with a spiritual experience. Therefore, any spiritual experience relayed from one person to the other is even more prone to be misunderstood than accounts of factual events. And this is what happened here. It is thus not at all the case that the individuality is dissolved and annihilated. If it were so, the personal experience couldn't even have been registered and brought into consciousness, nor could the attempt ever have been made to convey it, however insufficiently. From all this it is easy to understand how the concept that the individuality ceases to exist came into being. Nevertheless, it is a gross error. As a matter of fact, it is an impossibility, my friends. Nothing that God created in beauty and purity ever dissolves, especially not the spirit. And the individuality, in its pure form, that is without ego, is purely of the spirit.

When seeing a beautiful flower or a lovable little animal you believe that they exist only temporarily because the body or external shell will decay, or perhaps because the species is dying out, you are mistaken. No, my dear ones, what is beautiful and noble, what is spiritual -- and whatever is beautiful and noble is always spiritual -- never dissolves, it remains forever, perhaps in a somewhat different form, but fully maintained in its essence, that is, in its individuality. For what is of the spirit is alive. When you see a dead body you often say, "Life has gone out of it," or "Life has

left it." When you say that you know that you are referring to the living spirit. Therefore whatever is good and noble in the character of a human being or any creature never dissolves, it exists forever and in its individuality. Do you understand this?

QUESTION: Yes. And of course for us it is very important to ascertain or at least get some intimation that the ties we have with our loved ones will remain in existence.

ANSWER: That's exactly what I say. Of course. If there were no individual personality, there could also be no contact with others, whether in love or otherwise. And it is not only that the bond of love will remain between you and those who were close to you, but one day, maybe in a very long time according to your perception, this bond will expand and include other beings to whom you now may be indifferent or whom you even dislike. This loving connection will, in ever growing expansion, include more and more brothers and sisters. So that what is achieved through your spiritual development -- love, understanding, and so on -- can never be lost.

By the way, the erroneous concept of complete dissolution of the personality was never formulated or propagated by the Indian mystics who have had the spiritual experiences referred to as Nirvana. I can assure you that if you spoke to such a person, whether Indian or not, he would confirm that it is a misunderstanding and that the truth is exactly the way I tried to describe it to you. He would confirm that, on the contrary, the individuality, the capacity for personal experience, will only increase and in no way decrease, and that only the ego dissolves. And this is an essential difference! It would be good if you reflected and meditated about this difference. For you think that your whole personality hinges on the ego.

I would explain it in this way: The ego is a part of the lower self and the individual personality is the sum total of all that the being is in its momentary state of development, including the lower and the higher self. What passes is only the lower self, which makes you heavy and earthbound with its ego and which limits your individual capacity to experience the divine in every respect, be it a personal spiritual experience, love for your neighbor or compassion, or whatever. Imagine, then, that you have two "selves" who fight each other. This I always tell you. Once you are advanced enough to feel the difference and know how to discriminate one from the other within your soul, you will not only understand my explanations better, but you will also be much closer to the spiritual experience itself. When one clings so tightly to the ego, it is not only because it is so difficult to overcome any aspect of the lower self, but also because one has the misconception that with the ego one would also have to give up the individual personality.

QUESTION: A friend of ours who is a follower of Rudolf Steiner's teachings said that there are not only two "kingdoms," heaven and earth, good and evil, but three. According to this concept the earth is ruled by a being that is not Lucifer or the devil, but Ahriman, who is the ruler of matter and who is supposed to be more dangerous than Lucifer. Is this true?

ANSWER: Here, too, there is a kernel of truth. You know that not only Lucifer "fell," but that he dragged down many other beings also. Not all of them are equally heavily burdened. Now God had seven sons, those first created beings who were closest to Him. Two of these "fell," along with a number of others, among whom there were also some who had been close to God but about whom I don't want to speak here. Let this suffice for the time being. Now one of these other sons who went with Lucifer is the one who rules over matter, and so in a certain sense you can say that

he rules over the earth. This spirit is also heavily burdened; however, Lucifer, who initiated the "fall" is the one who carries the heaviest burden. When some teachings say that there are three kingdoms, they are not quite accurate, because from this point of view there are more than three: Lucifer, who has the greatest power over the domains which are separated from God, has given certain districts -- if I may call them so -- to other fallen spirits, where they rule more or less independently. Only in specific cases do they have to turn to Lucifer. This is an imitation of what exists in God's world and what humans have also imitated on earth, and what has to exist where many beings live together: a certain order, a hierarchy. Here, in God's divine kingdom, the spirit entities also have independent power according to their development; their area of activity increases and expands continuously, and they can, to a certain degree, in the precise knowledge of the spiritual laws, make their own decisions and carry them out. Only when a particular issue exceeds their degree of knowledge do they have to turn to the being who is above them.

Now it is true that the aforementioned brother of Lucifer was given dominion over the earth and that he rules over matter. However, this does not mean that Lucifer's world has no access to you. Ultimately, this spirit is also subject to Lucifer, no matter how great his power, and thus is part of Lucifer's sphere. If this was not specifically explained to you, it was only because it is not so important for you. But you know that Lucifer has his underlings and that they are endowed with varying degrees of power. This specific spirit who rules over matter is one of them. But, as I said, he is not the only one; there are other Luciferic spirits who have just as much or almost as much power in other domains. It would be impossible to explain it all. Also, it is not necessary.

There are then, on earth, beings who are directly under Lucifer's rule, that is, they are from Hell, while others are directly subject to that other spirit of matter. But ultimately they are all ruled by Lucifer. Yet those who say that this spirit of matter is more dangerous for humans than the Luciferic spirits are right. For Lucifer's underlings are the spirits of evil, hate, murder, envy, prideful arrogance and other vices. They are embodiments of all these base currents. However, no such spirit has access to a human being unless there is a corresponding vibration in that person. When a person has gone beyond a certain level of development -- if only in certain respects, since, as you know, all aspects of the personality do not evolve simultaneously -- then the worst of the evil spirits have no access to him. Even if there are still traces of these negative feelings in the soul, such people will know how to fight them and will not yield to their temptations, and will certainly not act them out. There are, however, many people who, although no longer capable of base and evil actions and therefore not available to serve the Luciferic spirits directly, are nevertheless very susceptible to the enticements of the servants of Lucifer's brother. They don't necessarily intend to harm others, but they turn away from God and anything spiritual and thus become blind and unreceptive to the spirit. Thus this brother of Lucifer's has triumphed directly, Lucifer indirectly. For the aim of the dark powers is to turn all beings away from God.

As a consequence of turning away from God and the spiritual life, a person can again become receptive to the influence of the spirits of Hell, since through the strong bondage to material things certain low feelings will be awakened. This is how the Spirit of Matter serves Lucifer in an indirect way. He can take prisoner many human beings where Lucifer would fail. Thus they give over to Lucifer indirectly, through matter. These are not necessarily evil people -- for those Lucifer doesn't need his brother. They are those whose vision is troubled and whose vision will get worse as they bind themselves more to matter. They don't enlarge their vision by taking a path of self-search and discipline, of love and humility, in order to establish contact with God's world. They live in a flat,

shallow and grey world and nothing is really alive to them, because through their bondage to matter they suffocate the living spirit.

I would like to mention here that many people believe themselves spiritual because they love the arts or because they pursue intellectual interests. This, however, does not make them really spiritual, really alive. Thus it happens that those over whom the brother of Lucifer has achieved such dominance that they become increasingly weaker and duller, can get into a state in which they unwittingly give over to Lucifer, since their vision is blurred and they do not believe in anything but matter; therefore they cannot see the danger and fight it. The enemy whom you do not know is always more dangerous than the one of whose existence and nature you are well aware. Do you understand? [Yes]

QUESTION: I would like to ask a question about the sensitivity of animals. Although man is supposed to be the highest developed creature on earth, in certain areas animals are; hunting dogs for instance have a sense that man totally lacks. Or our cats, who run to the door before they could possibly hear that one of us is approaching, whereas they don't budge when a stranger is at the door. How can this be?

ANSWER: It is like this: What you call instinct is nothing but the sense that perceives what is not material. This sense is more developed in animals because their intellect is not yet as developed as man's. The intellect is very important for the human being, especially for his ascending development, because the executive will is part of it. However, if the intellect becomes the ultimate goal and not a means to an end, a means to reach God, then it is not channeled in the right direction, it becomes overemphasized, and the result is disharmony; then the healthy instincts wither away. This is very much the case these days. It would be necessary to establish a balance. When this does not happen, the consequences are severe. The same is true when the intellect is neglected, as has happened in the past and still happens with certain people. If the animal is in possession of senses that man often lacks, this is so because it needs them, as compensation. Humans could possess many more of these faculties if they created the right balance and placed their intellect into the service of a higher end. This, too, will happen one day. You can observe that in so-called primitive people the gift of instinctual awareness is much more developed. This should answer your question. However, the same question opens up further interesting points, which I would like to discuss in this connection.

Through the distortion in the soul, which I can call the sickness of your times, it came about that technical and scientific progress has been achieved on earth which does not keep step with the spiritual progress. God gave you your intellect so that you can make your decisions with it: "I go this or that way, I decide for this or for that." The choice can be made for the spiritual life and for a spiritual attitude. But it has to come from your free will, and a free decision comes from the intellect. When such a decision is made in the right way, the faculties of instinctual and extra-sensory perceptions -- including mediumship -- will not become paralyzed but will develop together with the intellect. This depends on the direction into which you put your intellectual powers: according to their proper function and nature, as wisdom and lawfulness require. The purpose is the harmonious development of your total spiritual and psychic organism, and if the use of the intellect deviates from this direction, the resulting disharmony will lead to a sense of unhappiness. Be aware that the intellect is an instrument of great importance for the attainment of the highest spiritual

levels. Do not minimize it. Yet be also aware of how it should be used, as well as of its direction. Is it an end in itself, or is it a means to an end?

In connection with the subject of the instincts, ask yourselves the following: First, do I keep a harmonious balance within myself between instinct and intellect? Do I give enough room within me to the activity of the instinct -- or whatever you want to call it? Such an inner power can be developed and cultivated just as the intellect can. Do I limit and constrict the instinctual feelings through the intellect, which itself is ultimately a limited power? Second, do I use my intellect for the purpose for which it has been given to me? Those who use their intellectual powers in this total framework will steer their lives in the true direction. They will completely fulfill their life tasks and enjoy a deep peace within themselves.

QUESTION: I would like to ask a question of scientific interest. A scientist friend told me that humankind has already once before reached a very high state of development, perhaps higher than what we have today. I mean this in the material and not the spiritual sense. He says that atomic energy was definitely known at that time, hundreds of thousands of years ago, when the world was destroyed in a catastrophe. Is this true?

ANSWER: Yes, it is true. You are right in saying that humankind's level of spiritual development did not correspond to the technical progress and the destruction of the world, as you said, was precisely due to this factor. When there is too much discrepancy between the material and the spiritual development, then certain events will take place in order to avoid some greater danger. These events are a natural consequence of the situation and God allows them to take place; otherwise the spiritual danger would be much greater than any earthly catastrophe can ever be. Compared to the loss of spiritual life, the loss of earthly life means nothing. Cause and effect must work out according to law, and God's acts in human history never endanger the spiritual life of man. Sometimes it is impossible to avoid spiritual destruction except by material catastrophe. History often demonstrates this. Only when spiritual development, that is re-connection with God, is commensurate with material progress, will history move in a living and positive cycle instead of the negative, which always extinguishes itself.

My dear friends, all of you are blessed in God. Go in peace.

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