

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Due to the small attendance on account of the storm, we decided to have, instead of a lecture, another question and answer period and give those present the opportunity to receive personal help in some of their problems. We feel that the answers to the personal questions will benefit all. An essay by a member of our group is appended.

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless each one of you. Blessed is this hour. Since you so desire, I shall answer your questions which, we hope, may help you personally and make this a constructive evening for all of you.

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the Way of the Cross, its principles and its course of actions? How is it comparable to the Eastern concept, the one that follows the Buddha?

ANSWER: The symbol of the cross represents a person's twofold being. You are at cross-purposes with yourself. This is the great struggle to overcome. All truth teachings observe humanity's fundamental twofoldedness. You see this particularly by exploring innermost conflicts and problems. This twofoldedness expresses itself in many varieties. There is the desire to be loved and the rejection of love. There is the basic instinct to live and the rejection of it. By that, I mean more than just physical life. I mean all that the essence of vibrant life, meeting it fully, implies. There is the conflict in the human soul between construction and creativity versus destruction and stagnation. All these, and many more, indicate a person's division within him or herself. The cross demonstrates this by the two bars, one horizontal, one vertical, indicating two opposing directions. As long as the opposites cannot be brought into harmony, pain and suffering must result. But once this battle is successfully concluded, the real person is resurrected and lives in harmony, peace and joy. Jesus demonstrated this entire process. He demonstrated victory over the opposites by integration through love and sacrifice. This is meant in the healthy and genuine way, in the way I explained in the lecture on the great human transition, when a person ceases to live in the self-centered outlook and realizes he or she is a part of a whole.

This is in no way contradictory to the Eastern teachings. It is just a different approach, which merely expresses another facet.

QUESTION: After a year of working on the path, both the person I work with and myself feel that I have dissolved a very important image. Is this true, and can you give me any help for our further work?

ANSWER: It is perfectly true what you say. However, as all of you know by now, one has to be on guard. To really shed an image is not a sudden thing. It is not that you find it and then it is automatically gone. After finding it, you feel a tremendous relief, enlightenment, and victory due to the insight and understanding you gain about your entire life and yourself. But do not forget that the human psyche is habit-bound; it is geared to function in a certain groove, so to speak. After many years of constantly repeated habit patterns, these inner habit patterns are established. When not constantly watched and observed as they function in the most hidden, subtle and unobtrusive ways, one slips back inadvertently. However, the knowledge of the finding remains. Due to this success, one may react differently and healthily in some areas of one's life, while a part of one's emotional reactions still follow the old pattern, unbeknownst to the consciousness. If this is not realistically envisaged, the person may be under the impression of having fully solved a problem, while this is only partly so. Where it is not, you get entangled and all the more blocked and blinded, just because you do not realize this pitfall. Then, if after further disharmonies and depressions, you again find the very facet you were convinced had been resolved, disappointment and discouragement may be a greater stumbling block than the problem itself.

Therefore, I cannot impress upon you strongly enough that the fact of finding, understanding, and even changing to some extent, does not mean that remnants of the same old habit patterns do not remain. They have to be constantly observed in your daily review, in your work on this path. Watch your emotional reactions, analyze them, try to understand them and work them through each time anew. Do not become discouraged if you still find part of your old ways persisting in you. Expect this to happen, and this finding will in turn bring you more and more insight, liberation, happiness and growth.

For the moment, the finding should simply help you to understand why, at least for a while, you cannot help feeling and reacting in a certain way. Further insight resulting from uninterrupted effort and perseverance will eventually change this. All that you should expect now is that each time you observe part of your being reacting the old way, you gain additional insight and understanding. You broaden the view you have gained so far. By doing this, you yourself will produce the material that needs to be worked on. Your inner guidance will show you clearly how to proceed. I only point the way in certain directions if and when a person is stuck and cannot get out of a vicious circle in the work. Whatever disturbs or bothers you, whatever oppresses you at any given moment, this is the material that should be discussed in your work. And you will see that out of this you will derive further insight and progress.

QUESTION: I have a deformity which is a hindrance in my thinking and ability. What do I need to know and how can I find the strength to overcome this?

ANSWER: Well, my dear, dear friend, the only truth I can tell you in this respect is that you will find the strength only by complete understanding of the negative emotions that still exist in you and of which you are unaware, whether in direct connection with this matter or not. This is the only way. The real, pure, permanent strength can only come through the painstaking piecemeal work of daily analysis of one's negative reactions, emotions, impressions and moods. There is no other way. Instead of passing them by half the time, as you all tend to do, by either putting them out of your mind or ascribing them to outer reasons -- which at times may be quite logical -- you should investigate these reactions with will and vigor to find the hidden wrong conclusion. For, if there is a disturbance, a disharmony or an unhappiness, no matter how much outer circumstances

lend themselves to explain it, an inner wrong conclusion, a wrong impression about the facts and about reality, must exist. This simple truth is being constantly forgotten, even by my friends who work on this path. If you keep in mind that any negative feeling, be it lack of strength or whatever else, is in some way the sign that you are not in truth, you are bound to take the right steps that will enable you to find, out of untruth, the truth that strengthens.

Motivations of actions, as well as desires and ambitions, have to be examined with a maximum of self-honesty. The outer, conscious motivations may be true, but keep in mind that they are not necessarily the only existing motivations. Find those which slumber underground. Take them out of hiding and view them in the clear light of consciousness.

Unfortunately, humanity is made up of nine-tenths pretense, in one way or another. All your compulsions, drives and a good part of your motivations are to a large extent the result of pretense. This does not only refer to the desire to appear better than you are, in order to belong, to be loved and accepted, it also applies to negative emotions such as hate, resentment, and contempt. If you look deeply enough, you will find that you superimpose not only positive but also negative emotions on your genuine feelings. You produce artificial feelings because you are under the impression that this is the way you are supposed to feel. You cultivate these artificial feelings for a long time, until they become part of you, so that you can no longer distinguish between the real and the false you. Only this work will finally bring you to the point where you realize, sometimes quite suddenly, that these emotions are false. You have them because of a wrong conclusion and an unrealistic desire. You are under the mistaken impression that you will get what you want by feeling, reacting and being in a way that is not really you, that is destructive. Once you find this hidden reasoning process, you will realize the pretense and its complete futility, and you will shed it as the burden it is. Thus you will become real. This will free your intuitive faculties so that they can take over and function properly.

The picture looks roughly like this: Consciously one is often unaware of negative emotions, be they resentment, hate, or contempt. As far as valid desires are concerned, one is conscious only of their constructive purpose, while ignoring the false motivations beneath. After some exploration in the right direction, one finds the existence of such negative emotions, as well as the existence of additional motivations, which may be childish, unrealistic and unproductive. At that point, you don't yet understand why this entire layer exists. Upon further search, however, you will find the real reason. As I have said before, you discover that you have assumed your pretense in the mistaken idea that you will then belong and be accepted, admired and loved. Then, after making your choice, you will learn that even if this attitude could bring you the desired result -- which, of course, it cannot -- it would not be worth your while, and you will give it up. You will shed the pretense of positive and negative attitudes, trends, desires and motivations. Instead you will assume genuine attitudes, desires and motivations.

These words will make sense to all of you who have come across this area of your being. The others will understand them only after this has been accomplished.

Compulsion is a result of artificially accelerated emotions, desires and ambitions. The artificiality, in turn, is the result of pretense. The pretense is a result of a mistaken view of cause and effect; a mistaken judgement: "If I am, or feel, or do thus and thus, I will obtain such and such." This entire process is so subtle and most of the time so hidden that it is impossible to recognize

from a superficial investigation of the self. But wherever problems in life exist, as you well know, inner problems must be their cause. Such inner problems are always connected with this process of pretense, in one way or another. Needless to say, pretense prohibits real healthy strength because such strength can only come from the real self, which is entirely covered up by the false layer of a pseudo-self.

Another factor that contributes to prohibiting strength is the mistaken time concept. By this I mean the attitude of impatience. The inner child causes you to rush ahead, to think you must have now whatever it is you think you should have. This, too, causes artificially produced acceleration -- and therefore compulsion. Since impatience is not in accordance with truth either, it has the same effect and produces a similar set of chain reactions as the pretense. In fact, these two are often interacting. False motivations cause impatience.

The strong, often unconscious, desire to belong in the world that seems most desirable to you produces impatience. It causes you to assume artificial attitudes and emotions. Since neither this "desirable world," nor the way you go about obtaining it is based on reality or truth, your real self is covered up, and hence your real strength.

What I said here applies to every human being in one way or another. But it also answers your question. Your outer deformation is not the reason for your lack of strength in this respect. It may appear that way, but, believe me, it is not. The inner processes are at the root of it. If you should find and change these currents, I can promise you, in spite of the outer physical difficulty, strength will come to you in a way that you may not believe possible now. Your inner strength will flow out the moment the subterfuges, the superimposed, compulsive feelings are shed. And this, in turn, can only be done after you are utterly aware of their existence. You see, my friend, you constantly manufacture an artificial strength, using compulsive elements to build it up. The more you do this, the more you undermine and prohibit the real strength. This real strength can only begin to function if you first have the courage to free yourself of the artificially produced strength, and investigate its origin and the inner reasoning processes.

I cannot be more personal than this. What I said can and should open the way for you to find all of what I indicated existing in you, as it exists in every human being. If this work is not done systematically, and with the help and cooperation of another person, one can accomplish only so much and not more. I must say, as well as it can be done alone, you have made a very good start. In many ways, you are proceeding amazingly well, my friend. But without the systematic help of an objective person, this work will remain limited. Certain areas remain where you do not see clearly yet, where you cannot get ahead inwardly. This is bound to happen when one doesn't have help. If there is a will for intensified search with the help of someone else, a way will be found sooner or later. Then, and then only, will you realize how much I have told you now. But to be told, even if more specifically, and to listen with one's brain, can never suffice. You know that.

COMMENT: May I add something? Since I have been working, as one of the oldest members of the group, I find that if we do shed some negative attitudes, it is so gradual that, even after three and a half years, I am now just at the beginning of what needs to be done. Complete healing may take many, many years, and perhaps I won't even get to it in this life. Certainly, for our friend here who asked this question, it is much more difficult because he talked about a deformity

which is very difficult for him. What he really wants to do is to sing, and certainly he gets impatient, and he can't conquer it in this life.

ANSWER: The outer, physical deformity is no graver than the soul deformities all human beings have to some degree. It is your human illusion to believe an outer deformity stands more in the way than an inner one, merely because you can see the one and not the other. In case our friend should find the inner obstacles, it would be possible to achieve outer success, too. It will then be seen that the outer deformity need not stand in the way.

What you said about slow progress is true to a certain extent. But here again, it varies with each individual and with each problem. There are certain problems in some inner makeups that are not as locked and blocked as others. Although this is slow work, each tiny step forward brings liberation and matters a great deal. This you can evaluate only when you gain a retrospective, overall view. There are moments in your life when you gain glimpses of how far you have come, how much you have changed while involved in this work. While you are in the process you do not notice how decisive is each tiny step forward. Each step seems little, and yet it counts tremendously as part of the whole. Is that clear?

QUESTION: Yes, it is clear. You said to him that he will get the strength after he has found all these processes, but that is the hardest thing to find. To find oneself is such a big order. If he has to wait to get the strength only then, afterwards...?

ANSWER: Gradually, little by little. You have all noticed, in the course of this work, how after each insight and liberation a new strength surges out of you. It may disappear again, temporarily, when you tackle a new aspect, but each step forward brings more strength.

QUESTION: We are on this path because we want to develop ourselves, whether or not we can realize certain ambitions. But he still wants to attain his ambitions.

ANSWER: I can only say what I see obstructs his ambitions. Whether he tries to dissolve these obstructions because of a desire for development, peace and harmony, or due to a more direct aim of a particular ambition, is not even the point here. I can only show where I see the hindrance. To start the process of finding and dissolving the obstruction will not delay the realization. Even though the work may be long, it is the only way to really free inherent capacities. The very impatience that is a result of the inner processes described before is a problem in itself. The greater the impatience, the greater also the mistaken belief that it will produce results. In reality, however, it has the exact opposite effect. It paralyzes all the genuine attributes that are necessary for fulfillment.

COMMENT: May I add something to this discussion? I have a feeling that a certain misunderstanding may exist here that confuses impatience and striving. I think it was understood that he should not strive anymore in the direction of his ambition. Also I feel that nothing is so locked, no matter how hard or how short the life span, that something cannot be gained in this lifetime. It is a question of personal work. Isn't that right? There is nothing so locked that it cannot be dissolved.

ANSWER: That is absolutely right. If the will is there, any inner problem can be solved. It is also right that my words should not be interpreted to mean that our friend should give up striving

for his ambition. But the difference between healthy, relaxed striving and frenzied, compulsive impatience has to be seen. The latter can be dispensed with only if it is understood.

QUESTION: To make it clear, may I say that perhaps the impatience is in seeking a shortcut, which is unrealistic. The goal is unattainable in that way.

ANSWER: Yes. And also the motivations which are not fully recognized. There are some unrealistic, immature and distorted motivations, in addition to the conscious valid ones. These unrecognized motivations are not "bad" or "wicked" or "sinful," they are merely shortsighted and erroneous and of limited logic, as the inner child always is. These motivations do not go to the essence of the thing, they bypass the real issue and are therefore ineffectual. This paralyzes success, which, in turn, causes frustration. The frustration causes frenzied compulsion, which manifests as impatience, so easily confused with striving and ambition. That is what blocks success, not the physical impediment.

QUESTION: Is it possible to do image-work with children?

ANSWER: Yes, it is possible, but in a very different way. With a child, so much is on the surface. The trained eye will discover where wrong concepts are in the process of forming, due to certain emotional distress. The child will then have to be guided and taught to assume the right concepts. Such teachings will have to be conducted in a way that they affect the emotional area where problems exist or are in the process of forming. In the right way, the right teaching will be given in the right moment so that it will be directed to the subconscious. Broadly speaking, this would be the way. The approach is different even for a young adult and for one who is more advanced in years.

QUESTION: I would like to have a little help. In working, I discovered a negative emotion toward a brother of mine I had clung to since I was a very young child. I thought I really felt this emotion. But then, in working, I found the real reason I had it. It was similar to reasons you have discussed tonight. In other words, I did not really feel that way myself, but thought I had to for various outer reasons. Immediately upon seeing this, I was released from it. I could let go of this negative emotion. I have the same negative emotion toward my husband, but I'm not able to release it or to let go. Could you give me a little light?

ANSWER: Yes. I will try. The reason for your inability to let go is that a particular hurt exists which you do not acknowledge to yourself. You concentrate on all sorts of other hurts which are only a subterfuge or cover for that which really hurts you. Because of your ignorance of what really hurts, you are also unable to find your own cause, how you contributed to the situation. Whatever you find in this direction may make sense to you intellectually, but emotionally it will only penetrate once you have unearthed that which really wounded you but which, for reasons of your own, you do not want to face. That is the key to the whole problem -- and, I might say, to much more than just the problem you mentioned. For some childish reason, you think the real hurt is inadmissible, therefore you keep it under lock and key. Thus you superimpose and artificially exaggerate other hurts. As your work progresses, you sometimes see it is unreasonable of you to feel that way, yet you cannot help it. At other times, you feel the superimposed hurts are sufficient reasons to maintain your resentment. In this way, you go around in circles. Inwardly, of course, you know, but outwardly, so far, you have not wanted to know what really bothers you. If you really and

truly want to find this hurt, you will be able to let go, just as you did with your brother. You will remember that you went through a similar process in that instance. You found that what you thought had hurt you was not really so. After this discovery your entire attitude changed. It will be the same here. [Thank you.]

QUESTION: I would like to know about the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" in everyday life, in different emotions, for instance. Has the destructiveness of thoughts and feelings any reference to this commandment?

ANSWER: Of course. All commandments apply to all levels of the human personality. So is it here. It does not merely refer to the act of physical killing. As you rightly said, thoughts and emotions can be destructive, and in that sense they are acts of killing. The terms "life" and "death" do not merely mean the physical manifestations, as I have often discussed at length. When you consider the commandment from this point of view, it takes on a very different meaning. It also does not apply merely to your destructive emotions and thoughts negatively affecting -- killing -- others, but also to your own life force, how you darken and deaden life itself. The more you advance in this work, the more you realize how your unresolved problems, conflicts, deviations and images negatively affect your surroundings, yourself -- and therefore life as such.

Take the current example of the universal psychological process we so often discuss. When you feel rejected and insecure, you often assume an attitude of trying to please the very people whose acceptance you crave. In doing so, you often despise others who, you think, are despised by those whose attention you want so much. Often this is a subtle thing indeed, but nevertheless, you all have similar problems. This betrayal has not only the most damaging effect on yourself -- bringing you the very opposite of what you originally wanted and why you assumed the role -- it is bound to hurt and reject others. This may not manifest in deeds or words, but exists as a hidden, well-camouflaged attitude. You may even bend over backwards so as to hide this attitude from others and yourself. Nevertheless, it exists in you and causes damage. This, for instance, is a typical and frequent act of emotional "killing."

There is only one way for salvation and real solution, and that is love and truth. Neither love nor truth can be part of your entire being unless you find and understand those areas in you where you are not in love and in truth. Only such work can produce and gradually bring about this state. There is no shortcut and no formula, no miracle and no easy way to accomplish this, my friends. Only utter self-honesty in all your doings and reactions -- be it in little, insignificant things, be it in something important in your life -- will bring you to the desired goal. If you persevere in that, your entire being will become more and more constructive, healthy and beneficial for yourself and others -- and for the universe.

QUESTION: I'm not sure whether this is a general question or a personal one. It seems to me that through our years of work here, there has been a tendency on the part of the earliest members, certainly on my part, to ask increasingly fewer questions of you. Why is that so? Surely, although we know a little more, we don't know so much that there are no questions. Is it conceit, is it a block, or is it a lack of imagination?

ANSWER: There is no one answer to that -- there are many. The reasons you mentioned may all exist. Additional reasons may be, for instance, a stagnation in a certain way, even if not in

the inner work. Maybe just because all the concentration is focused on the inner work which progresses very well, there may not be enough attention and curiosity left, temporarily, to inquire about general things that have nothing to do with one's own immediate problems. This should not lead my friends to the conclusion that the better you work personally, the fewer questions you have, because it need not be so. And if it is, it may be a purely temporary phase.

Another possibility is that the person may still shy away from a fundamental inner problem. Since, due to general good progress, this problem comes more and more to the fore, the subconscious resistance, being so afraid of "discovery," may produce a paralysis to prevent asking questions. It is as though the resisting psyche is so afraid to reveal the sore point that any question, no matter how remote, may threaten to break down fences. This produces a paralysis in the manner you describe. As long as the hidden problem is securely out of the way, one may be full of questions, interest and participation. But when the work proceeds in the proper direction, then the resisting part sends out "danger signals" and sets up its guards.

QUESTION: I'm working with one of our group members. She is scared to go into the subway. She gets physically ill when she does. This is certainly due to psychological reasons, but could there also be physical causes?

ANSWER: No. My advice here is not to work and concentrate on this issue. This is an indirect manifestation or symptom of something else. It can only be solved when you get to the roots of the problem, but you will not find the roots by working on this question directly. If you examine everything that bothers her, that disturbs or depresses her, when you work it through, you will see that all these things have the same common denominator. But to find this will take more time. You will find the inner reactions to this subway problem similar to other aspects of life. Then you will see that the subway problem is more a symbol than a symptom of the underlying core.

QUESTION: We found something, and she was relieved. Then two days later it started all over again.

ANSWER: Because you only found a part of the whole, a small segment of it. Each true insight will produce relief, but only temporarily, if these insights are but fragmentary. Permanent relief can only come when the whole picture is unrolled, which, of course, is impossible in such a short time. The relief is a sign that you are on the right track, which does not mean that you have to persist in the same direction. You might have to go to another area in order to progress.

So, my dearest ones, be blessed in the name of the Most Holy. Take this strength with you as something substantial, as the reality it is. Let it work with you. Use it for your inner will and stamina in the one direction that is all-encompassing: this path, this work. Be blessed. Be in peace. Be in God!

THE SPRING

Deep within every human being is a hidden font of life. Like a spring beneath the earth's crust, without any semblance of strength it lies buried deep under many layers of hard rock and

sand. Layer upon layer accumulated during the earth's span of life just as we have accumulated our layers of images.

Considered superficially it would seem that water, being formless and fluid, would be weaker than the sturdy and solid rock. Yet it is true that nothing has more power than the steady stream of water. It can move rocks and force for itself an outlet wherever it gathers the required momentum. But in its endless course it encounters all kinds of obstacles. Some are sandy. They make the waters muddy and their deadening weight allows but little seepage to carry through. Another layer may be formed of clay. This will absorb the spring's fresh flow and give a reddish color to what is released. Judged at that point the spring might be discarded as unclean and worthless. Yet, the very next layer encountered may be the one that serves as catalyst. When the spring has pushed through the porous hardness it probably is fresher and cleaner than ever.

Just so does the revelation of the essence of strength and clarity manifest everywhere, over and over again. It may take ever so long to reach the surface where, finally, it can reflect the light and warmth of the sun. But, one day, without fail, it pierces through all the layers of obstacles and is ready for the task meant for it to assume. It is in being, and ready to transfer life, refreshment and cleansing to everything it reaches; giving endlessly, and thus finding fulfillment.

Wherever is felt the need for a fresh spring, it does not come to the surface by itself nor by the smiting of a rock. Those who feel the need don't just wait and pray. They offer their help by working through the various layers from the outside. And a good well-digger knows that he cannot penetrate all the diversified strata in the same manner. He may have to blast through formations of granite, while sandy accumulations call for slow digging and eliminating to keep the sand from trickling back. The work may prove tedious, but it certainly is worth the effort because it helps to liberate the spring of life much faster.

We are all of us well-diggers. The more definitely we see the purpose that lies ahead, the less are we likely to be caught in the supposed hopelessness of some obstruction's temporary darkness. We come to realize that we must encounter all kinds of obstacles which make it appear that what we pursue is undesirable or unattainable. But if we know and just keep in mind that the spring is there, the more effectively we dig from the outside the faster will it come forth and reach the light of freedom and fulfillment.

This might appear in the form of brook, lake, or geyser, according to its individuality. But the intrinsic quality of purity and life-giving force will be there forever.

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