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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON LAZINESS AS SYMPTOM OF SELF-ALIENATION

Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for all of you. Blessed are your work, your perseverance, your strivings on this path.

May more and more people find the joy of true self-facing, no matter how painful this may appear at the beginning, for there is no greater security. In fact, there is no other security than becoming your real self. This cannot be accomplished in any other way than by facing your errors and illusions. Your little self may obstruct this endeavor, may try to humor it and deny it. Do not give in to the voices of this little self that pull you in the opposite direction from the true security and experience of life that you are destined for.

I promised that this evening would be devoted to answering your questions. First I should like to add a few words to my last lecture, on the subject of self-alienation. Although there is much more to be said about it, I would like just to touch upon one particular point.

We discussed some of the symptoms of self-alienation such as: not relating to yourself and to others as you and they are in your true selves; not experiencing yourself in your true strength; not identifying with yourself and your deep inner reality but instead with the superimposed layers of your personality; relying on public opinion rather than on your own convictions, on pseudo-solutions and defense-mechanisms that you have laboriously built up over the course of years.

So many people are held back from living by a feeling of tiredness and even apathy. This can make you feel angry and guilty about what you would commonly call laziness. It, too, is a symptom, one of the many effects of self-alienation. It is generally assumed that laziness is simply a fault. This is a very superficial evaluation, however. Laziness is not a fault to be commanded away by sheer will. But you will get over it if you look deeply and understand its true significance as a consequence of self-alienation. For if you are truly anchored in the center of your being, you will not be lazy. You will not feel apathetic. You will not desire to remain idle. You will enjoy your periods of rest and relaxation, but this has nothing to do with laziness or apathy. You will enter the full flow of life, approaching each day and each activity with zest. The more you are alienated from yourself, the less possible is this. The less you are alienated from yourself, the more you will participate in and experience life in its fullness. The necessary energies will constantly regenerate and replenish themselves.

Losing energy is not a question of age -- not in reality, my friends. Although it is true that a young person has a certain store of energy that spends itself no matter how many obstructions exist, once this energy is spent, self-alienation hinders its regeneration. Thus you see the outer manifestations and judge them -- assuming that energy wanes with advancing age -- rather than

seeing the true underlying cause. The moment you think this way, you are in error, my friends. Such erroneous thinking shuts a door. You believe an illusion, a superficial manifestation.

When you understand the previous lecture in its entirety -- and this you can do only by applying it to yourself -- then you will realize that what you often judge quickly and superficially as "old age" is nothing but a product of your self-alienation.

Compulsive overactivity comes from the same root as energy loss and is only a superimposition. It is your fight against the laziness you disapprove of. You do not know how to fight constructively by understanding the source, so you battle one of the many symptoms instead of the cause. Needless to say, that remedy is precarious. Compulsive overactivity as well as laziness and apathy stem from an identical root. You will find in the overactive person a nostalgic desire to do nothing.

Your strength, energy, and zest for life can be replenished only within the center of your individuality, when you no longer believe in pretense and illusion. The work you are doing on the path -- provided you are truly willing -- must lead you to this result, which is such a constant joy and makes life truly meaningful and productive. Only then will you find the activity that is in itself meaningful for you so that you are at one with it. Only then will you unfold your destiny.

There is no human being who does not operate on pretense at some level. We have gone into that at length in many of the previous lectures and in your private work. It is now important that you connect the pretense with self-alienation and with all its ramifications. Find the subtle pretense, for that is the only key to becoming aware of your real self.

And now, my friends, I am ready for your questions.

QUESTION: I will ask for a private session to ask how to improve my shortcomings with a view to becoming worthy for a reunion with my husband, who passed over on April 5, 1960. I ask you with all my heart before such a private session to please contact my husband over there, enabling him to contribute his very special desires and instructions concerning my growth. I ask from all my heart to be given not only an outline, but also specific guidelines adapted to the limits of a human being still held down by the physical body. I have hardly made any progress beyond recognizing my shortcomings and would be grateful for indications of additional shortcomings not yet recognized by me.

ANSWER: My dear child, I will be very happy to make contact with your spouse. But let me tell you something I can see so clearly. Do not be so frantic. Do not believe that your efforts, commendable and advisable as they are, depend on your finding your mate again. This is not so! If it were, the Creator who made the world that way would indeed be cruel. You can rest assured in the certainty of the love that is Creation. You believe in God's love, do you not?

COMMENT: I can't overcome the rebellious feeling that God took my husband.

ANSWER: Yes, my dear, but do you not see that because of this inability to accept you are so frantic and compulsive. Without the rebellion, you would not need to flagellate yourself so much. No one can truly develop in such a frame of mind, no matter how hard they try. If your incentive to

develop is based on fear of not seeing your mate again, of not being good enough, this very fear is a product of your bitter, unreasonable rebellion. And on such a foundation growth is really not possible. Therefore, you should first work on this very rebellion and subsequent frenzy.

You make the rebellion and frenzy your incentive for growth. These unhealthy, self-destructive emotions have to disappear before you can begin your ascent. So what you have to learn first is acceptance of reality. If you were more accepting of the world, you would be more accepting of yourself. And if you were more accepting of yourself, you would have more trust in life, in the life force, in God, in the wisdom and love that Creation is. But your lack of acceptance makes you blind, self-centered, and fearful. Only in learning acceptance can you attain the state of inner relaxation that is so badly lacking. This does not mean that you should not strive for development. In fact, this is the development you want so badly. Every step on the path of development requires different emphasis and different subjects to tackle. There can be no question of further development for you unless you master this step now. Who can possibly accomplish anything, even the most insignificant earthly thing, in the state of frantic fear in which you find yourself, and which is a result of your rebellion!

I say this to you in truth: Even if you should not work on yourself at all, but accomplish nothing more than letting go of your frenzy and rebellion, it would get you further than all the fault-finding and self-accusation without letting go of the very situation that makes such self-accusation necessary for you. The terror in you, which you cannot let go, is this very rebellion and lack of acceptance of life -- and therefore also of death. If you absorb nothing but this at the moment, you will free yourself of so much. And believe me, your reunion with your mate does not depend on what you do or do not do. That is all I can say to you at the moment. For the rest, I shall be happy to make contact with your mate and will let you know.

COMMENT: Thank you.

ANSWER: Do you understand what I said?

COMMENT: Perhaps. I'm not quite sure.

QUESTION: In my search for my real self, when and how do I feel that I have really fully contacted it?

ANSWER: Before you can feel it, you will first become utterly aware of a falseness, no matter how subtle; a pretense not only of how you wish to appear in the eyes of others, but your whole mode of approaching life. Your mode of operation is often built on a subtle pretense. Once you are aware of it, you are much nearer to realizing your real self than you may think, provided you do not remain mired in this difficult phase. If you then make the inner decision of dispensing with such pretense, taking what first appears like a tremendous risk, you must eventually discover your real self. Only by stepping into the apparent nothingness without these pretenses, only by giving up their false security, do you have a chance of finding truth -- that is, your real self. Only after risking insecurity without pretense do you find real security in your real self. The decision must be made to take the chance of living on your own merits, rather than on the pretended ones. To begin with, you have to see that the pretense exists; that you seek to gain something particular through the pretense. And then you have to be willing to give up what you want to gain through pretense if you cannot

have it solely on merit. Chances are that only after you have relinquished the pretense, and whatever you think you cannot get without pretense, will you find your real self.

A new strength will come into you with the ability to relinquish; a new force and security will grow in you. You will begin to experience yourself for the first time as being no longer helpless. Whenever you find an issue that bothers you, determine whether or not you feel helpless. If you do, you now know from all that has been said on the subject that here lies a nucleus of self-alienation, inability to relinquish, pretense that does not work in this instance. Once you have found, and fully realized, how you have contributed to this negative situation, you have arrived at a feeling of the real self. When you change inner direction by no longer feeling dependent on others, on circumstances, but actually comprehend your own causes and bring your problem back to yourself -- even this negative finding will give you the experience of reality, thus of the real self.

This is where you put up the greatest resistance. You go through great pains to convince yourself and others that this situation is different. Although theoretically you may be convinced that no one is a helpless victim, that you all create your own life and fate, nevertheless there is always a reservation in your mind concerning your special problem. And there you go to great lengths to prove that your problem is different; that it has nothing to do with you. Once you change course and give up the resistance to seeing how you created this situation -- not alone, not without others who also contribute, and not by badness, but by ignorance, distorted concepts, and shortsighted defenses -- once you truly see that -- even long before destructive conditions have been changed -- in that full acknowledgement and experience you do find your real self. You feel a new strength. Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: Yes. You mentioned pretense. Is it only pretense that clouds the real issue?

ANSWER: Not only, but to a very great extent. There is some subtle pretense in every single person. Everyone has pseudo-solutions and an idealized self-image. Both are based on a form of pretense. Define this pretense clearly, and you have found a major key to your real self. Rationalizing is also a pretense, for instance. Can you understand that?

QUESTION: In the form of a motivation?

ANSWER: Yes. And in the form of using a truth and shifting the real issue to another point. In itself the truth you lean on may be valid, but you may use it as a rigid cover for something else. And thus it becomes a pretense.

QUESTION: When I started working with you, I felt very much afraid. Then one day, I was afraid because I was no longer afraid. When I have that feeling, I feel hope. Now I don't have that feeling and I don't know what I'm afraid of. Why can't I still not let go with all the recognitions I have made and change the pattern in me?

ANSWER: You see, my son, your fear is based on change itself, of giving up the crutches of childhood. This, in itself, is a very human and universal stage to go through on this path. Now, in your case, your very defense mechanism, as you know, is that of remaining a child. Your fear is part of the helpless baby that you feel you have to remain in order to be safe. To give up being a helpless, fearful baby means to you that people will no longer protect you and therefore it is difficult

to risk the change. You do not want to stand on your own feet. You want to continue using the crutches that have once seemed so safe. So you are divided now. One part of you wishes to change, another fears it. It may take a little while longer until you convince the negating part to become flexible and grow with the rest of you. This part puts up a last fight against letting go of all the old, obsolete defenses.

QUESTION: You see, I'm becoming a pest already with the medium in my personal work sessions, talking about the superstitions I have. For a long time, I wasn't aware of these superstitions, but all of a sudden they have come to the surface again. And I'm becoming tired of myself in this way. I don't want to go on and on like a broken record.

ANSWER: If this bothers you and you have the urge to discuss it, it is necessary, for otherwise you will not be done with it. You should not curtail your discussions by will and intellect. When there is an urge, there is an inner reason and necessity.

QUESTION: You used to give me homework. Can you give me something now?

ANSWER: There are phases on this path when the best homework is to go through your recent work session. Try to apply it and observe yourself, your reactions, and emotions from that point of view. Try to observe your feelings and see what they really say. Translate your emotions. This is always the very best homework.

COMMENT: Thank you.

QUESTION: About self-alienation: Say a young girl has an image of how she would like to be as an adult, which is superimposed. Then, as time goes on, she really grows into this ideal picture. Then, when one works on the path, one no longer knows what is this ideal picture and what is the real self. There is a confusion because part of oneself has grown into this ideal picture, so it is very hard to differentiate between the real self and the superimposed self.

ANSWER: It is not necessary that you approach this decision by asking yourself which is which, because as long as you ask this question, your real self is nowhere around. Once it does come out, there will be no doubt. One of its outstanding characteristics is absolute certainty. When I say absolute certainty, that, of course, does not apply to life. Many people have the wrong concept of maturity because they believe if they were mature, they would always be certain. That, of course, is not true, for life is not always secure and certain. The mature person will accept life's uncertainty and cope with it. The immature person will not. As far as you are concerned, what matters is what you want, think, feel, as well as how you experience others and yourself, concepts, ideas and convictions. It is here that you will have certainty -- not necessarily that your experience is right, but that it is truly you. Until you have reached this state, do not trouble yourself to distinguish with your intellect between the real and the superimposed self. It is a question of feeling and experiencing yourself in relationship to others, to the world, to life, and to yourself. Rather ask yourself: "Why do I feel this way? Why do I want what I want? What productive effect does it have on others and on myself? What unproductive or even destructive effect does it have on others and myself? If it is not genuine, what are the destructive effects?" Ask yourself the motivations of this ideal picture, which might very well be your idealized self-image.

QUESTION: Is a criminal, especially a habitual one, necessarily in a state of low spiritual development?

ANSWER: I am very careful about generalizations. Perhaps; or it might also be a question of an uneven development: one part of the person may have developed to a certain degree, and another has stagnated to a disproportionate extent. If such a disproportionate lag occurs, the resultant inner friction needs an outlet. Sometimes such outlets take the form of antisocial acts. Then the criminality is an outlet to relieve the inner pressure.

QUESTION: Are the members of the same family always on the same level?

ANSWER: Oh, no, not at all! In one human family you may have members of very different spiritual families.

QUESTION: Why is it that all spiritual teachings in past ages speak of sin instead of sickness or neurosis?

ANSWER: Well, my friends, because it does not make any difference. It is the same. Just look back on history and you will see how people despised the sick person as much as the sinner. Sick people were ostracized. It is only rather recently that this has changed. Only since this change has taken place has it become important not to stress sin and evil as much in order to discourage contempt and arrogance. Until only very recently insane people were considered the same as criminals. And it may take some time yet before people stop looking down on others because they are troubled, sick, neurotic, spiritually less developed. So this is a matter of the general development of humanity and its outlook, and not a question of semantics. It is a question of judging and despising others, rather than understanding, loving, and helping. Although sickness and sin are the same, the person with limited perception will look down on both, while the person with a higher capacity of perception will understand and help and not feel superior. Sin and sickness are the same, but what counts is how you react to them, not what word you use. No matter what word you use, it will be distorted if your inner perception is limited. And when your inner perception reaches its highest potential, according to your own capacity, then the word will not be misused. Or rather, regardless of what word you use, the feeling will be right.

QUESTION: Can you give us suggestions for interpreting dreams?

ANSWER: I am giving them constantly, but let me just say a few words here, since this question has come up. One of the most dangerous things in dream interpretation is generalization. Beware of it. Always use the personal, subjective associations -- what you think, feel, and experience in connection with dream events. The tendency to escape from unresolved problems, from conflicts, from that part of you that has remained in illusion and immaturity, makes people sometimes read into dreams a high spiritual meaning that may or may not hold true. You objectify rather than probe the dream for its subjective meaning. Be careful of that, my friends. A dream always contains a special message to you from your own soul. To find this message is infinitely more constructive than looking for a consoling, pleasant message from outside yourself.

Your fear of facing yourself makes you turn away from the constructive messages your soul delivers to you constantly. And you refuse to read these messages. Not only because they are not

always easy to read -- it may take time, effort, patience, and a great deal of real inner will, as well as help from others who are qualified to help -- but also because you like to hear nice, pleasant things. When you perceive a much more constructive and productive voice of love that sometimes says momentarily not so pleasant things, you become so blind that you do not even perceive the love. You are blind to it because deep inside you connect love with what is pleasant and easy -- and, unfortunately, that is not always the truth. Productive love sometimes has to criticize. Whether this applies to another person or to your own dreams, your reaction to both is often the same. You turn away from it.

Your own dreams are messages of love, although they sometimes reveal something to you that, at first, you do not want to know. Go to the trouble of deciphering them, even if at first you cringe away trying to forget them, trying to belittle their meaning because of their apparent "nonsense", or trying to put a very glorious, beautiful, flattering message into the dream from the spirit world. The true message that comes from your soul is instructive rather than flattering. That kind of message is from the real spirit world. It points to what really goes on in you, what is immediate.

To answer your question with rules and regulations would be impossible. There is too much to dream interpretation. I have done this with my medium in a constant training process over the years. The fruits of this training are constantly being used, and this is the only way to learn. You cannot learn something that is constant and alive by learning a few rules, by hearing a few words. That would only be misleading. Were you to ask someone who speaks a foreign tongue to tell you something about it so that you could begin speaking it, what could they say that might be helpful to you? Your dreams are a language, and to learn it takes considerable time. Until you have learned this language, you need a translator. Then little by little you begin to learn it yourself, depending on how much talent you have for this language and how much effort you make.

QUESTION: In our last session, a question was put by one of our friends, now absent, which you characterized as belligerent, but which you answered beautifully. This situation comes up for me repeatedly in different degrees. I find myself, for example, sometimes impatient with people who do not accept the truth as I have found it. And some of us, in our discussions, have shown the same kind of impatience. I wonder if you could tell us how to deal with this sort of situation?

ANSWER: This important and universal issue can be dealt with only by understanding the following: Such impatience may come from a variety of inner sources. One is a distortion of goodwill. With this comes the urgency of the forcing current. Another reason may be the need to convince others because you yourself may not be really convinced. Still another reason may be the feeling, vague and hidden, that one's own happiness depends on everyone else being in truth. Still another is a feeling of inadequacy when not being able to reach or persuade another person. These are the most important underlying reasons. It is up to the individual to find out which, and how many, of these reasons hold true. Only sincere self-probing will furnish the answer and will thus not only relieve the tension but lead to important further insight.

You will sometimes find that you are most impatient when another does not understand what you yourself have not understood only a very short time before. You may often be much more tolerant about secure knowledge that you have had deep down all along. Your hurry to convince another person is often a reflection of your impatience with yourself. Your non-acceptance of the

imperfection of this world, with the slow process of striving, grasping, and drowning, is very much at the core of your impatience.

In order to deal with this condition, as always, it is important not to force such feelings away and deceive yourself into a serenity that is not genuine, but to acknowledge all emotions of pressure, impatience, forcing, intolerance, hurry, and learn from them. Why are they here? What is behind them? What do they signify about an inner condition you may not have fully recognized? If you observe when such pressures exist and when not and analyze the reasons for this, you may make some amazing discoveries about yourself. Why do certain issues bother you and others not?

QUESTION: Isn't it sometimes different with different people? I mean if you feel someone likes you then you're more relaxed, and vice versa?

ANSWER: Yes, of course. There are always a lot of mutual currents involved. In other instances, you may be more relaxed with someone for whom you feel no bond of affection than with someone with whom you feel close. There are so many mutual undercurrents involved, but only as you grow into your real self will you understand them in their true light. But, as you know, the growing into selfhood cannot come unless you are very much aware of the significance of your own emotional reactions.

COMMENT: Often in our discussions topics are touched that we have great difficulty defining and expressing. So emotions enter, and that may also bring a certain lack of control, because we don't express them.

ANSWER: Yes, that is very true. The inability to express is due to the difficulty of communication, which in turn is dependent on your coming from your real self. The more you are estranged from your real self, the less you can express yourself, relate and communicate with others. This we know already. But there is also the fact that spiritual experience cannot be conveyed in words. This inability causes pressure and frustration. You cannot find the right words because spiritual experience is no longer a question of words; it functions on a different level.

Do you recall the lecture I gave some time ago on communication and union?¹ Now add to it my most recent lecture on self-alienation, and you will find the following: The more you relate to your real self and identify with it, the more you will be able to communicate to others what you experience. The words will not matter so much, because in such communication a different level of your being operates. You will be able to convey through being, through your full life-experience, and that will direct itself to the real self of the other person. The words will then become secondary. They will no longer be the exclusive means of communication. The more alienated you are from yourself, the more you need words as the exclusive means of communication. While the more real you become, the more feeling will quite naturally, and without effort, go to the other person and thus convey what you want. Then words will be just one of the faculties of communication, instead of the only one.

¹ Lecture #80

Now you will increasingly understand my insistence on the necessity of letting your emotions come to the surface. If and when, in spite of all your resistance and rationalization, you finally allow repressed emotions to reach your awareness, you will see that the first negative flow has to dissipate itself through understanding your emotions' origin, before the positive feelings, coming from your real self, follow suit.

Here is another link: the connection between the lecture on the necessity of bringing out emotions and self-alienation. When much of the past material is forgotten and thus cannot be linked with the current material, so much understanding is lost.

How can you communicate if your emotions are not functioning? And how can they function if the negative emotions are repressed and you barricade behind a solid wall many of your productive, genuine feelings whose guidance you need in order to fully participate in life? The shallow artificiality of superimposed positive emotions lacks real substance and is therefore untrustworthy. You cannot communicate from within if this process has not been gone through.

QUESTION: You said, when we reach the state of finding our real self, we will know when to use activity and passivity, also action and inaction. Could you clarify that?

ANSWER: I believe, my dear friend, that this is already answered, not only by the lecture, if you understand it better, but also by the additional words I spoke tonight. I do not want to repeat too much. I can only summarize here that the lack of functioning on the emotional level breeds an uncertainty so that one is sometimes too active when one should be more passive, and vice versa. Harmonious blending of activity and passivity is not brought about by intellectual evaluation and leaning on rigid rules. Intuition alone follows the constant flux of life.

QUESTION: I understand that part, but the part about action and inaction?

COMMENT: What is unclear about that?

QUESTION: Well, superficially they seem the same to me.

ANSWER: You see, your soul can be in an active state and yet not commit an outer action. And you can commit an outer action, yet your soul may be in a passive state. Activity and passivity are not necessarily manifested outwardly. But action is.

QUESTION: But what does inaction mean?

ANSWER: Inaction means no action.

COMMENT: Oh, now I see.

QUESTION: When you achieve the real self we are all talking about, you have an intuitive knowledge from within. You act in truth without fear. When you reach this, you suddenly know that there is no death, there is no evil, there is no pain, you accept what we experience due to our own inadequacy and fears. When one achieves this feeling, there is still the human body one is in and the human fear one recognizes. You cannot chase it away and say it isn't there.

ANSWER: No. Do not expect, my dear, to become superhuman. Of course, you have to deal with the difficulties of life that accrue from being in matter. I said just before, in another connection, if you are your real self, it does not mean you are never insecure, afraid, frustrated, that you are never unhappy. But you can deal with the unhappiness. You can come to terms with it in reality. You can accept it. You can accept frustration. Your life is not at stake because you do not get your will. In your state of illusion, however, there is so much more at stake than the lack of a wish-fulfillment. Your value and worth as a person is at stake and therefore you experience life in a distorted way. That is why frustration cannot be borne by the person who is still embroiled in immaturity and pseudo-solutions.

Once you are real, your own value will not be mixed up with your issues. Certainly you will at times be frustrated, uncertain, sad. In fact, if you were never sad, you would not be your real self. Sadness is healthy; it is a result of feeling and responding to aspects of reality. But self-pity and depression are not. Boredom is not. Life is joy and sadness; happiness and tragedy; fulfillment and frustration. The real self can deal with both, the false self with neither.

Why is it easier for so many people to go through a real tragedy only to break down from their imaginary little ailments, coming from their distortions, connected with the little ego? The healthy part responds to real life, while the unhealthy part in you responds to illusion with illusion. But beware of believing that your self-pity, bitterness, futility due to shallow living -- no emotional depth and not owning up to your real feelings -- with its resultant boredom is sadness. Be clear about the very decided difference between these entirely contrary feelings: sadness, and self-pity mixed with futility. When you cringe away from sadness, you wind up in shallow living with all its byproducts.

Do not expect an impossibility of yourself. You do live on earth. Of course, you will be insecure, afraid, sad and unhappy at times, but you will not feel insecure, victimized and uncertain about yourself. That is a difference. Live life fully with all that it brings, without cringing from your feelings. Please, let us go into whatever is not clear about this at our next meeting.

My dearest friends, each one of you, and all your dear ones, and all my friends not present here, divine blessings go to each one of you. If only you knew that the realities of life, in happiness, in joy, in sadness and sorrow, in temporary struggle and crisis, are all glorious and wonderful. Live life fully and you will become strong and whole.

Be in peace. Be blessed. Be in God!

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