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THE PHENOMENON OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Greetings, my dearest friends. Love, truth and blessings are given to you in rich abundance. Open your innermost channels and let the flow stream from and into you. In this lecture I wish to deal with the phenomenon of consciousness which is so extremely difficult to explain to the human mind -- to the human state of consciousness. For the human state of consciousness is still an extremely limited one. So, by attempting to give you more understanding, that limitation can lessen and you can increase your awareness.

Consciousness permeates all being, all creation, all existence -- everything that is. In your dualistic realm, you speak of consciousness and energy as if they were two separate phenomena. This is incorrect. Consciousness is a creator of energy and energy must contain consciousness -- various aspects of consciousness, perhaps "variations" of consciousness, as well as degrees. There is no physical, biological, electrical or atomic energy that could be anywhere near as potent as the energy of direct consciousness. By this I mean the energy of thought, feeling, intent, attitude, belief.

Every thought is energy. You experience this energy as feeling. There cannot be a thought -- even the most mechanical, dead, sterile, cut-off thought -- that does not also contain feeling. Pure, abstract thought may appear as totally divorced from feeling content. This is not so. As a matter of fact, the more abstract and pure the thought is, the more the feeling must be commensurate with it. You must also differentiate between cut-off thought and abstract thought. Don't confuse them. Cut-off thought is a defense against feelings and undesirable aspects of the self. Abstract thought is a result of a highly integrated, spiritual state. But even the former can never be divorced from feeling -- that is, energy content. The underlying feeling might be fear, apprehension, anxiety about the complexity of what the self suspects to exist and wishes to avoid. Self-hate, and a variety of other feelings which you well know, may coexist with this.

As its underlying energy current, abstract thought contains a feeling of immense peace, of an intrinsic understanding of universal law that is bound to induce joyousness and bliss. A purely abstract thought would create this kind of energetic or feeling experience. The more subjective the thought is, the more tinged with negativity the feeling becomes. A subjective thought is one that is created from personal desire and personal fear, from a state of egotism and separation -- me versus the other. It is therefore never in truth.

Let us, for example, examine desire. In the realm of duality, like everything else, desire fulfills a dual role. Desire, from a spiritual point of view, may be "undesirable," to use a paradox. For too much desire, intense desire, subjective desire -- desire stemming from the ego and its distortions -- alienates you from the core of your being. Such desire often contains pride, selfwill, fear, lack of trust in the universe. It creates a tense, contracted energy system and prevents the flow of the life

force. Hence spiritual teachings often advocate a state of desirelessness as a necessary prerequisite for connecting with the divine self. It is a state to be cherished for spiritual self-realization.

At the same time, it is equally true that if there is no desire, there cannot be expansion. There cannot be venturing out into new ground, into new realizations and states of awareness. There can be no development and no purification. For what would motivate an individual to muster the courage, perseverance and steadfastness necessary to grope one's way out of darkness and suffering? Only desire does. This kind of desire contains faith in the possibility of attaining a better state, courage, patience and commitment.

Here you have a typical example of a dualistic confusion that arises when you say that it is either right or wrong to have desire, depending on which aspect of it you perceive. You can transcend the painful, confusing and limited state of dualistic consciousness only when you see beyond the either/or and see the true and distorted possibilities of both apparent opposites. The moment you see this, opposites exist no longer. You then pass into a deeper and wider state of consciousness, in which you comprehend beyond the limited dualistic state. This applies to many manifestations of your life. Rarely if ever is anything in itself good or bad. It depends on how it manifests, what the true underlying motivations are. Desire must exist in the human heart in order to overcome the hurdles, the temptations to self-deceit, which block the way to the abstract knowledge of the universe. This does not mean, I repeat, abstraction in the sense of mechanical, dead, alienated, superficial, unfeeling or defensive thinking.

How can knowledge, knowing -- which is consciousness -- be unfeeling? Even unfeeling knowing, what you call in this era "intellectual knowledge," must have a feeling content. It stirs up certain chain reactions. And even though such knowledge maybe fragmented, and though people may use it to get away from the energy or feeling aspect of living, it nevertheless contains feeling, as I mentioned before, although they may not recognize these feelings. So, consciousness is always a feeling, an energy manifestation, whether or not you are aware of it. The most mechanical, fragmented and cut-off thought breeds a series of energy chain reactions in your entire psychic system. The power of choosing which thought to think in itself stems from strong energy movements and results in affect. Therefore consciousness must be one with energy.

In the average human state this does not seem to hold true, at first sight. However, when you go deeper, you are bound to see that whatever knowledge you harbor has a definite feeling content. As I said -- and I purposely repeat this, for it cannot be emphasized enough in this context -- dry, cut-off knowledge must also contain feelings. The underlying feeling may be fear. The more superficial energetic state may be boredom. Boredom is also an energetic state, although a negative one -- negative in the sense that the absence of something does not mean that what is absent is not intrinsically and essentially present. It is only temporarily made absent. If you pursue the state of boredom deeper into the recesses of the soul substance, you will find that there is always fear somewhere: fear of knowing all you can know now, about yourself and about your relationship with the universe.

The relationship between you and the universe becomes increasingly obvious as you discover yourself, as you become more honest with yourself, as you stop acting out. States of consciousness can roughly be differentiated into the following three groups:

The first and least developed is the state of slumber, where a being does not know it exists. It has no self-awareness. It can feel and move and grow, and even, to an extent, think, but below the threshold of self-awareness, like a mineral or a plant. The organisms beneath the state of self-awareness have nevertheless in-built patterns of creation, self-creation, which that particular organism follows through in a deeply meaningful, purposeful way, always compatible with its particular lawfulness. These states are states of consciousness, but not states of self-consciousness. Take for example the life of a plant: it follows its own in-built plan. Only its now slumbering consciousness could create that plan, could create the imprint with all its own lawful cycles by which the organism lives, expands, dies, reincorporates itself, gives birth to itself, expresses itself and goes on in that same cycle. This requires an immensely intelligent plan that only consciousness could fabricate. Something like this cannot happen "by itself," cannot be a dead, disconnected process.

The apparent disconnection of inanimate matter is only temporarily frozen consciousness, as I explained in a recent lecture on the processes of creation and the psychic nuclear points. When consciousness creates in a certain direction, the life spark slows down and down, until the energetic stream petrifies. It condenses into such a thick crust that the underlying energy is invisible, that is, not perceivable with the human eye. However, beings whose expanded state of consciousness makes them capable of perceiving more than the surface, can observe very clearly the highly potent energy aspect within inanimate matter which has no manifest consciousness. But such beings can also perceive the consciousness content within this potent energy, the consciousness contained within the outwardly "dead" material.

What does such consciousness "say" when it is aslumber? It may say, "I do not want to know; I do not want to know me -- me in relationship to the world around me." This statement is a creative nucleus -- a statement made by consciousness, by deliberate choice and disposition. This statement brings forth an inexorable chain of events, leading gradually but surely to the condensed, slowed-down state that finally becomes a "crust," hardened and apparently dead. This is what matter is composed of. The sequence of events leading to the state of hardened, inanimate matter stems from a negative, life and truth-negating statement. Nevertheless, once the hardening process is in action, matter itself can be used by consciousness for life-affirming and positive purposes. Free consciousness can thus "communicate" with the life-substance and consciousness within the hardened matter.

I give you this very brief explanation so that you can gain some concept about the fact that consciousness exists even within inanimate objects. Your scientists today have already ascertained that energy exists within matter, so that part is hardly news to you. You have yet to ascertain that the same holds true about consciousness.

Consciousness within inanimate objects is reachable by the much stronger and more active consciousness of the human mind, though to a lesser degree than the consciousness within plants, animals, or other human beings. Matter is still malleable and can be impressed by human consciousness. Since consciousness is capable of inventing and creating, it can mold, shape, and form out of the substances within matter. Take, for example, the need to have a piece of furniture, or a plate, or a glass, or a piece of jewelry, or whatever the inanimate object may be. That need -- that desire to create these objects -- molds the energy, and contained consciousness, like inanimate matter, receives the imprints of a directing, stronger, and more connected consciousness, and fuses with it in certain definite ways. Thus an object is created.

So every object you use, enjoy, or need fulfills its task. Its innermost nucleus of consciousness that always seeks expression toward the divine, toward service, toward truth, toward love, toward being -- even in this separated deadened state -- "replies" to the creation of mind and thus fulfills a purpose in the great plan of evolution. Even the deadest of all dead matter is not really dead. Spiritual beings who are in greater possession of their innate divine faculties and not bound to the purely outer manifestation as human beings are, can perceive the energy form and the consciousness expression of the most inanimate objects. Such an object also contains an energy field, which is its antenna, its receiving station, so that it must become a reactor. Its consciousness content is still too limited to be more than a reactor. It cannot be as yet an initiator and creator as the human state is, but it is definitely a reactor.

You may often find that you have certain relationships with objects. There are some objects you cherish, need and enjoy. They perform well for you. You may think that you love them because they perform well and give you good service, or beauty, or joy. But it is one of those benign circles working where it is hard to say what or who started it going. Take, for example, a motor car, or a machine you use, like a record player, or whatever it may be. You love that machine. You may even use it for your spiritual growth in one manner or another, so the purely utilitarian object is really not so utilitarian after all. You give it care. Your appreciation makes the machine respond, even with its extremely limited, small inner nucleus of consciousness that is just geared to respond and react, to be impressed and molded. Its energy field will be affected. With other objects it is the other way round. They never work out well. You hate them, are annoyed with them, and they respond accordingly.

The separation of consciousness that you experience is therefore a very debatable one. When we speak of the fact that the whole universe is permeated with consciousness, this is indeed a truth. Separated organisms, objects and entities are separated only on the surface level. But within and beneath that surface level there is a constant interaction.

I started to speak about the three stages of consciousness. I dwelled for a long time on the first state: consciousness without self-awareness. Animals, plants, minerals, and inanimate matter fall under this category. I wanted to show that nothing exists that does not contain consciousness. It is of course much easier to see this with animals, plants and even minerals, which have their growth and change processes, though much slower ones than the other categories.

The second state is self-awareness, which begins at the human level. What does self-awareness mean? Awareness of "I am," "I exist," "I can think," "I can make a decision," "My decisions have impact," "My thoughts have effect," "My feelings reach other beings." This will be roughly the second state. In this state self-responsibility begins. The awareness of having an effect on the world around the self must result in accountability and the seriousness of choosing thoughts, attitudes, actions and responses. This state of consciousness, by virtue of its expanded awareness, finds many new alternatives which are lacking in the blind and more limited state. The state of consciousness below the threshold of self-awareness cannot make choices. It blindly follows the in-built pattern implanted in its substance. The human state is capable of re-creating the plan, and may increasingly avail itself of wider possibilities of self-expression, commensurate with its own growth.

It is very obvious that within the human state of consciousness, of self-awareness, there are many, many degrees and variations. You have human beings who are as yet unaware of themselves, of their power to create, change and affect. Their ability to differentiate is as yet limited, their power to think and act independently is equally limited. To them words such as these could hardly make more sense than to an animal. They would be meaningless to them. There are other human beings whose consciousness is already far more developed. They know quite well that they have the power to choose, to create and to affect. They are self-responsible and accountable for their decisions to think one way rather than another. To them such words make sense and are an inspiration and encouragement. There are of course many degrees of consciousness in-between these two categories.

However, even those human beings whose consciousness is least developed are aware that they exist. They know that they have needs and can, up to a degree, figure out how to fulfill these needs. They know that they can act. Maybe their scope is more limited than the scope and power to affect of a more highly developed human personality, but nevertheless there is an immense difference between them and the highest-developed animal state of consciousness. The latter may have some awakening power of thinking, but self-consciousness, in the sense I have described, is completely lacking.

The human state of self-awareness lives within its self-created dimension of time. Thus the sense of past, present, and future awakens in the human mind, but does not exist in the lower states of consciousness. As in many areas of development, there is a similarity between the lowest and the highest point of the curve, which in this case is the state of being. Inanimate matter, minerals, plants, and animals do not live within time. They exist in a timeless state of being, but they are without self-consciousness, self-determination, a self-propelling initiative. The human state of consciousness is in time. It is therefore not in the state of being, but in the state of becoming, though it is already fully in possession of self-awareness. On the highest rise of the curve we return to the timeless state of being, but with a high degree of consciousness.

This third state is the highest state of the three. We might call it universal consciousness, or perhaps cosmic consciousness. That is beyond the human state. In that state all is one, there is no separation. In that state of consciousness all is known. The innermost self is known, the God-self is known. The God-self of the personal entity, as well as that of other entities is known. The truth of being is known. In that state of consciousness you live in a state of being. But on this level of development the state of being surpasses self-awareness. It has reached universal awareness. To put this differently, and possibly more accurately: the self is recognized as being in all that exists.

If you ponder and meditate about the deeper meaning of these three states, you will see a great deal and understand much more about the greater life of which you form a part. The "innocent" state of being can exist in purity only. This purity can exist in one who is still blindly unaware, unconscious, powerless, or in one who has regained the state of innocence through the laborious descent and simultaneous ascent of self-purification. Then power can merge with the timeless state of the eternal now.

There is a self-protective lawfulness in the lack of awareness of the innate potency of consciousness as long as the soul is not purified. As you can all so clearly observe on your path, this power increases in exact proportion to your ability to be in truth with yourself and others. If you

could be aware of the potency to create while there is evil intent in you, you could harm, wreak havoc and destruction to a much stronger degree than what now must exist for the purpose of the self-activating principle in which the negative result becomes the medicine.

However unjust an evil manifestation may now appear to you, it only appears that way because in your limited time-bound state you are not in possession of the connections. Were you thus aware, you would see that all negative manifestations, no matter how cruel or unjust they may seem, are self-created medicine for the purpose of ultimate purification and ultimate bliss. Evil does not and cannot destroy -- it can do so only temporarily and within the framework of what I just mentioned. If consciousness could expand without the simultaneous expansion of the self-purifying agents, evil could destroy the divine. So, as an in-built protective mechanism, negativity closes the perceptive organs: blindness, deafness, dumbness, and numbness set in. The only way to come out of this state of ignorance, limitation, powerlessness, of being severed from the nucleus where there is all-connecting life, is by the consistent attempt to know yourself where you are now -- not to know the universe or anything outside you. That comes later -- gratuitously, as it were. To concentrate on that would be pursuing a delusion.

Knowing yourself is a slow, step-by-step process. It doesn't ever require an impossible feat of you. It only demands what is indeed possible, to deal with something right there in front of your eyes, if only you choose to see it. You can use your best will and intent to find out what you ought to know about yourself at every step of the way. There is no fraction of time in your life, my friends, where this is not possible. You can be sure that when you are in a disharmonious state, you are not as aware as you could be. To become more aware often requires intense groping and searching. And that is indeed part of your life task. You may often look in the wrong direction for the answer to the present disharmony. Indeed, you often resist because you fear something much "worse" than what actually exists. You would find this out if only you had the courage and determination to go all the way, at all times.

The disharmonious state, the anxious state, the unhappy state, the depressed state, the state of unrest and fear and negative, contracted pain is always a reflection of something you might know right now, but choose -- yes, literally choose -- not to know. That choice creates a very potent negative energy field. This path helps you to deactivate these negative energy fields by changing the consciousness content in them. The first vital step here would be to transform the "I do not want to know" into an "I want to know," and follow it through. You can give yourself this adventure of discovery.

In the preliminary stages of this phase of evolutionary development, you must eliminate the blind spots about the self, so that the self can find out the answers about itself. You cannot awaken into a higher state as long as you do not know what you choose, what you think, what you feel, what you need, what you desire. Once you do know, you have increased your power to change what is destructive and undesirable.

As you go on in this way, there will come a period in which you know yourself fairly well, but you are not yet fully aware of others. Thus you grope with the manifestation of others. In your blindness to another person's negativity, or its exact nature, you may often lose yourself in confusion and disturbance. Further honest work will lead you to a clear awareness of others. This will bring you peace and show the way to deal with situations. Along the way, you will discover new aspects,

often very positive ones, about yourself. Often only a crisis with others can bring forth such previously ignored aspects.

The first phase, in this regard, is purely self-explorative. The second phase -- often overlapping with the first -- expands into knowledge of others. The third phase leads to universal knowledge beyond the human state. That is the organic development of this path. When I say knowledge, my friends, remember that there are different ways of interpreting this word. You may have knowledge on a purely mechanical level. Such knowledge is not insight, wisdom, true perception. It does not give you a sense of wonder and awe, nor does it fill you with peace and joy. It is dry, cut-off knowledge. I am talking about a different kind of knowledge, in which a kind of comprehension takes place that unites fragmented understanding. It is a deep and feeling knowledge that indeed brings peace and joy, awe and excitement. A revelation fills you that removes all dissension. You experience and relate in a new way. But this comes only much later on the path, my friends. At first you will experience the beginnings of this kind of knowledge only occasionally. It manifests much more when you are, for instance, in a helper position.

The more you expand, the more this kind of knowledge will fill you. And as that goes on, little by little, cosmic knowledge occurs. It comes from something deep within you. It transcends the personal. It is timeless and it gives you a deep awareness of the ongoing, ever-present life that you are and that everything is. This fills you with indescribable joy, peace, security and gratitude for what exists. You must earn this awareness, my friends, for you cannot aim directly at cosmic consciousness. It is the final state of expanded self-awareness that you cultivate on a path such as this.

What I told you in this lecture is specifically designed to make you aware of the potency of your thoughts, of the potency of each thought that you decide to think, each attitude you decide to adopt. Thought will create experiences and responses, and will also create within you. There it will either create a new energy field or it will enforce, reaffirm and fasten an old one, depending on whether the thought or intent is new or is a repetition of the old. Obviously, both alternatives can apply to either real or false, constructive or destructive energy fields. When you are truly conscious of this potency, you become more responsible and more capable of creating. You then approach the state in which you know that God-consciousness is within everything. The ego only decides which way to turn. Right now, within your thinking mind is the potentiality to express God's consciousness any way you choose. And when your experience is negative, make sure to find out what created it and how it was created.

You can all discover the truth of the power of your consciousness by making the commitment now, again and again, to be in truth with yourself in your daily concerns, in your reactions, in experiences that leave you puzzled, confused or disturbed. When you feel resistance, admit the resistance, rather than glossing over it, as you may be tempted to do. Admit it anyway, in spite of the resistance. Have faith in the truth. More and more, you will become free and joyous and will liberate yourself of the shackles that now still keep you confined in a state less than your birthright. Make the commitment to truth in every possible situation, about any conceivable incident.

With this message and suggestion I bless you all with deep love -- the love of the universe -- for all of you, my most beloved friends. Be in peace.

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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