

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 25
An Unedited Lecture
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THE PATH: INITIAL STEPS, PREPARATION, AND DECISIONS

Greetings in the name of God and Jesus Christ. I bring blessings for all of you, my friends. By all my preceding lectures, you will have understood one thing clearly: the necessity of self-development on this earth plane -- that self-development is indeed the reason for this earth life, the purpose! And only he who fulfills this purpose can find peace in his soul, no matter how difficult life may be at times. I have promised you, my friends, to start this course of development so that each one of you -- also those who cannot attend private treatment or lectures -- can find his way how to go about it, where to begin, what to do, what it is all about. And I want to tell you, before I begin, that many of the words I will give you in these particular lectures can be treated as a meditation. You should take these words and not reread them just once -- that will not be enough! You should meditate on some of my teachings so that from a superficial and intellectual knowledge, this knowledge may eventually reach deeper regions of your being. For only then will it be really beneficial to you.

Everybody knows that it is important to be a decent person, not to commit so-called sins and to give love, to have faith, and to be kind to others. But this, my friends, is not enough. In the first place, you may know all this, but it is still a different story to be able to do it. Oh, you may be able by a voluntary action to refrain from committing a crime, not to steal, not to kill, and so on. But you cannot possibly force yourself to feel kindly. You may act kindly to another, but to feel kindly, you cannot force yourself. Neither can you force yourself to have love in your heart or to have faith, real faith in God. Everything pertaining to the emotions, to the feelings, is not dependent upon the direct action of your deeds or even of your thoughts. And in order to change feelings, it needs the slow process of self-development and self-recognition. Otherwise your feelings cannot change.

You may realize that perhaps you do not have enough faith, but realizing this and trying to force yourself to have it by telling yourself, "I must have faith," will not bring you one step closer towards it, quite on the contrary. Superficially, you may be able to talk yourself into it, but this does not mean your faith or your ability to love is real -- and that is what the path consists of: change of feelings.

For people of lower spiritual development, it is already a great deal if they can be brought not to commit wrong deeds; but this is certainly not sufficient for anyone of you here. More is expected from you!

Now, how to go about changing your innermost feelings -- that is the question! And that is where we have to begin and where I have to show you the way, how to go about it. In the first place, my friends, you cannot change anything as long as you do not know what is really in you! -- because man tends to fool himself about himself. That is the greatest difficulty. Now I am not only

talking about the subconscious mind, which you all know exists. But I will not even go as far as that, for between the conscious and the subconscious mind, there is another layer which is much more closely related to the conscious mind but about which you are still unaware because you want to be unaware of it. You flee from it, you escape from it although its symptoms and signs may be right in front of your nose. And man flees from it because he mistakenly thinks "what I do not know does not exist." He may not think so in exactly these words, but feelings of this sort go on in him without his quite realizing it. However, it does exist even if you turn away from your own inner reality, temporary reality of this present time, certainly, but this is still part of the reality of your life and the state of your development now.

You may all remember some time ago I have given a lecture about the higher self, the lower self, and the mask self. What I have just discussed is part of the mask self, but it is not only a mask; as a matter of fact, I may call it the exterior self, which does not always correspond to the inner person. Any of you, all of you, know now it is wrong to do or think or feel certain things. Now, if these feelings still exist in your lower self, you turn away from it, thus thinking you have eliminated that which you recognize as being wrong. And that is the greatest mistake a human being can make; and it causes infinitely more trouble, more problems, more inner and outer conflicts than anything you know in your conscious mind.

I have often mentioned the various spiritual laws, and these laws are constantly being violated by man. For instance, this process I have just described violates one of these laws. It is the law of facing life. To face life's reality means to be able to face yourself as you are, with all your imperfections. Without doing this first, you can never develop. And all existing systems that try to teach man a way to jump over this hurdle can never really be successful, for it means a violation of a law.

All of you, my friends, all who are in this room and all who are reading my words are doing this harmful process unconsciously all the time even though some of you may have in some respect gained a certain amount of self-knowledge. But there is not one person who has not at least one trend that he or she is not really conscious of what it means -- that the realization of which is not being fled from in the conscious mind. You may even know your shortcomings, but you certainly do not know all your real motives. You do not understand why you have certain opinions, tastes, or idiosyncrasies -- even good qualities may be partly influenced by an unconscious fault or wrong inner current. And you should understand where these trends and tendencies come from about which you have deceived yourself so far, what they are influenced by or connected with. There is nothing in the human soul that comes merely from the higher self or the lower self, because it mixes constantly. Purification means to separate, understand, and rearrange in conscious understanding all these various trends, thus purifying the basic good trends from all masks of self-deception and influences by weaknesses of the character. The trend of the higher self in you says, "I want to be perfect. I know this is the will of God." But it is the ignorance of the lower self that thinks perfection can be attained by turning away from your imperfections by disregarding them. And it is also the lower self that always wants to have everything so comfortable; the lower self also wants to be in a high position but not, as the higher self does, for the love of God by recognition and enlightenment, realizing only when you are perfect will you be truly capable of loving your fellow creatures. But your lower self wants to be perfect in order to have more ego gratification in order to swell its head, to be admired. All of you, my friends, without an exception, also feel this way. So you see, here is an example where both the higher and the lower self want the same thing, but the

motive is an entirely different one, and it is of utmost importance for the purification of your personality, for the sake of a healthy and harmonious soul, to separate these motives, to recognize their "voices." You should not feel blamed by this or blame yourself when you begin to recognize these trends in you. This is a statement of fact, and one of the basic requirements for your path is that you can accept this in you; only from this premise can you go on and change the impurity of your motive.

You must also recognize the reason why the lower self turns away from facing yourself. One reason is, as I said, that it is unpleasant to recognize yourself as imperfect; the other is that the lower self is lazy, it never wants to work. And it means work to face what is in you, to face the unpleasant things. So the first step, my friends, in your decision to walk the path of self-development and purification is to become clear about this. It is the greatest decision man can ever make! It is the noblest of all fights man can ever go into! But you must do so with open eyes, and therefore you should realize what you ought to expect, what you have to go in search for. Do not start to search for perfection right away. This again, would be unrealistic because you cannot attain perfection so quickly and without first having spent much time and effort on the search for all impurities in you. This constitutes the basic, the absolutely fundamental requirement before actual purification can get in. In other words, the search is the first and most important half of the path. If you proceed well on this part of the path, you have won half the battle already, or even more, my friends! If you realize this, you will not be discouraged when you are busy on this first half of the necessary work -- quite on the contrary! You can reach perfection only by going through your imperfections, not by going around them! And this you should meditate on daily until this knowledge becomes part of you, until you are indoctrinated with this truth.

Furthermore, you must prepare yourself that going on this path does not mean a constant and smooth improvement, improvement of yourself and improvement of your life conditions. This, again, is completely unrealistic. It is necessary for you to face these facts: the facts being not only that the path is a long one but also that repercussions, times of testing will not cease as quickly as you would like to believe. Oh, no! And I might say at this point, a great deal of harm is being done when people are taught or led to understand that by following certain rules of metaphysical teachings, their problems will altogether cease, or that if they appear to do so for a time, that this is a sign of success. There are many people who appear to have no outer problems whatsoever. People who are certainly not on the path. They may be creatures of lower development of whom less is expected in this incarnation, and they are given a chance to prove what they can do with an easy life. And if they do not do the best, in a future incarnation they will have more difficult times to perhaps prove themselves then. But to imagine that your troubles or problems will immediately lessen merely by going on this path of purification is very immature and childish. Certainly your outer and inner problems will lessen and finally cease; but only after a long time; only after you first thoroughly understood your inner make-up and rearranged your inner currents, thus dissolving inner wrong images that are directly responsible for your conflicts; only after you have attained victories over yourself in full realization what it is all about. And this must take a long time, years of work in this respect. Then very gradually, the times of trial will lessen in impact and frequency as harmony grows in your soul, as you really control yourself and become aware of yourself -- and by being aware of yourself, I mean knowing your lower self utterly and completely, which does not have to mean that you have overcome it completely.

Now, when you start on this path, my friends, before you do anything further, this ought to be meditated on every day so that you expect this, expect to find sides in yourself you may be shocked about. Expect it, meet it halfway instead of hiding and escaping from it. And expect that tests, the same way as you have had them before you have been on this direct path, will also come your way for quite a time still, perhaps not more, but not necessarily less. The only difference is that the person who is on the path will, after a while of successful work, understand that each testing, each time of woe, means something very particular. It conveys a particular message; there is something quite special to learn about the self by each difficult period, by every hardship you are going through. Only after a considerable time will your mind be so trained in this direction that you will find out quicker and quicker what it is that you have to learn from it. And the moment you will understand the significance, this particular testing will cease. As long as you have not understood it, it will be there, it may recede after a while, but it will come back in the same or a similar form until you have learned the lesson. And that is a great blessing; only he who has experienced what it means to understand the message of a particular hardship, really understands it to its core, will realize what a blessing it is! And what I am saying here will then not be merely words, it will be a deep experience! While the person who is not on the path, or perhaps who has not as yet found into the path completely, who is still in the first stages of it, will be at a loss. He will not know why he has to go through all this. And that, of course, makes it infinitely more difficult to bear. Before you can come to the point in your development that testing periods, times of trouble, will cease, you must first go through the stage of understanding utterly the periods of difficulty and meet them in a spirit of courage and wisdom. When you can do all this, the transition period will be that outer conflicts and problems will begin to touch you no longer. You will remain quite calm and serene inside during outer hardships. And only after this has been accomplished can hardship begin to gradually cease altogether. About this timing, these stages, you ought to be clear. So prepare yourself that trials will not cease, your life will outwardly continue for a while as before until you learn from it what is so necessary for you. Now if you expect it this way, if you go into it this way, you will not be disappointed. If you go into it like a blindfolded, wishful-thinking child, then you will be disappointed, disappointed not only in God and what you have somehow unconsciously expected from Him when you follow this path, but also disappointed in yourself, in your endeavors. This path is not a fairy tale, it is reality of the crassest sort, my friends! It is utter reality. But reality is not only hard and difficult and dark, but there is also nothing as beautiful as reality either! The beauty of reality does not compare with the puny "beauty" of imagination, concocted by first escaping the unpleasant reality. Remember that!

Another thought for meditation: when you go into this path, you must also prepare yourself to abide by another of the spiritual laws. There is a price to be paid for everything. He who tries to avoid this will finally pay much dearer. And every single person is doing this constantly: one in one way, the other in a different way, one more obviously, the other more subtly and more in hiding. Many people are not doing it outwardly, but psychologically you are all doing it, and particularly when this path is approached with half-open eyes. Realize that there is a price! But the price is well worth it! When you buy a house, as I occasionally say, and you wish a beautiful mansion, you are reconciled and prepared to pay an adequate price. You will not expect a mansion, a palace, for the price of a shack. On the material level, you have no quarrel with this, but on the emotional, psychological, and spiritual level, you constantly wish a palace for the price of a hut -- and sometimes not even for any price at all! That is part of your sick soul! The price you pay by going on this path of development is certainly a high one, but there is absolutely no other means on earth or in heaven to gain harmony, love, happiness, and complete inner security where nothing evil can

ever touch you or throw you off balance. The price is no self-pity; no self-delusion; utter severance with the self; time; effort; patience; perseverance; courage. And what you will receive for this price is indeed a hundred times worth it. But do not expect to see the worth right after your start. By start, I mean a period of about two years of work in this manner, at least, provided you do not work halfheartedly. In other words, speaking symbolically, your money must first be paid in full!

I know, my friends, my words are not what the self-indulgent person likes to hear. There is no easy method, no miracle-formula by which you can obtain that which you are all after: happiness! I cannot promise you the precious gifts of heaven (on earth as in the spiritual world) by merely doing certain prayer exercises. If I would tell you such things, you would be well justified in being suspicious and doubtful even though you might undoubtedly prefer to hear this. But what I am offering you is real and true. And each one of you has the chance to find out for himself merely by trying, merely by following my advice. And my advice to begin with is: meditate on my words, the words I have given you here, what the price must be, what you must expect. And then make the decision. Are you willing to do it? Oh, you may say, "It may take a few more lives. I am too tired." To this I can answer only one thing: this again is very shortsighted. For if you are tired or weak, it is because your inner forces exhaust themselves in the wrong channels so that your strength cannot organically renew itself as it does in a soul that functions well. And if you would only start and not be dismayed by the first struggles, you will finally succeed to set this inner current right, and by doing so, you will set free in yourself a wonderful life force, a spark that will change your life utterly. As I said, I cannot promise you that all your problems will cease, they are necessary on your path to begin with so that you learn to meet these problems properly and maturely. But I can promise you that after certain fundamental conditions have been fulfilled by you, you will not be depressed anymore by your life and your difficulties. I can promise you that your tiredness will cease, that you will have the strength to go through your difficulties, to bear your cross in the right way, knowing why, what it is all about. For the most difficult thing for you is -- the most weakening aspect of your life is -- that you do not know why; you cannot see the reason. But only on this path into yourself will you find out the reason. And this alone will give you the strength you need. And I can promise you further, also after a certain time on the path, that you will enjoy life in spite of your difficulties and before they have actually begun to cease, as you have never been capable of enjoying it before. I can promise you to be vibrantly alive, first at intervals only and later more and more. In the measure that you understand yourself and begin to put order into your soul, this vibrant life force will fill you, and life will be beautiful to you in its reality! So I say to you truly: do not postpone this work into another life. It will not be easier for you then, and you can never get around doing this work. It has to be done. No matter how late you think it is, it is never too late. Whatever you accomplish on this earth will have an eternal value. And when I speak of accomplishment, I do mean, of course, in conquering your lower self.

Another thought, my friends, for this initial decision into which you must go with open eyes -- you must distinguish that there are three necessary types of work in treating yourself on this path. One is your outer behavior: the recognition of your apparent faults and qualities, everything that is on the surface. There is one particular way of going about it which I will go into the next time. Then there is the next phase -- and they often interact -- of treating that layer of yourself that does not directly belong to your subconscious but of which you are unaware because you are escaping it. This layer has to be treated in a different manner, and I will also show you how. And then there is the third layer, your subconscious mind, which is equally important. For do not think what is in the subconscious is something so far away that it has no bearing on you. You are constantly being

dominated by your subconscious without knowing it. And it is indeed possible, slowly but surely, to find out what is in it, at least to some extent. So you must distinguish that you will discover trends in you that stand in direct relationship to your will-directive person and are thus able to be controlled by direct influence by an act of will. And, also, you will discover trends in you that do not fall into this category, trends that are connected with your emotions and cannot be directly forced to respond to your wishes. The world of emotion can only change by organic growth, not by pressure, not by voluntary action -- yes, by a voluntary action, but in a roundabout way, indirectly! In other words, let us assume you find out that deep down you are lacking faith or love. You cannot force yourself to have faith or love no matter how hard you try to accomplish this directly. But what you can force yourself to do is to walk this path on the whole; to follow these various steps; to overcome perhaps a lack of discipline that makes it so hard for you to work diligently on this path; or whatever else stands in your way quite directly, to work daily your quota. And by doing so, you will not work directly on your lack of love or faith, for instance, but you will simply get to know yourself and find out why you lack these attributes. And by gradually understanding this without forcing love or faith directly, by the constant process of self-observation and learning to do this in a detached way, eventually this life force I have mentioned before will fill you and will automatically change these feelings without your direct endeavor in this direction. If your emotions begin to change after a few years, it can be considered a wonderful success. This will happen so naturally that you may not even be fully aware of it at first. About all this you should be clear to begin with. The next time, I will continue from here. Just study these words now, think about them deeply, take them to God, ask Him, if you have doubts. And if your heart is really open, He will answer you, provided your heart is open. Believe me, my friends, all this is neither as difficult as it may seem to you now, nor is the path a miracle to procure you happiness without demanding from you all you have in honesty, will power, and effort.

And, oh, yes, something else I want to say to you that still belongs into this phase of preparation and decision: expect to have a fight with yourself -- the fight between the lower self and the higher self. And your conscious self will determine which side will win. It cannot win without such a fight. It must be a long fight. First the fight will manifest perhaps by preventing you from following this path at all. The lower self may send its messages, "I do not believe in it," or "It may not be necessary after all," or "I am too tired" or "I have no time," or this and that and the other thing. It is necessary that you recognize these "messages" as what they are and where they come from and to use them as a starting point to delve deeper into your soul. Try to see clearly what is really in you when you receive these hidden excuses and pretenses. If you expect this beforehand, you will be able to do so, and by doing so, you will have a first victory. And also, you will have already learned to some degree how to go about it, uncovering your masks and wrong motives. For later on the lower self will try to obstruct your path by other means. It will simply try to hold on to individual currents; then you will already know how to deal with it a little better. Do not put the superficial excuses aside. Test them, deal with them, examine them!

Many of you are scared "what may come out of my lower self?" You may not fear this consciously in concise thought, but it is important that you learn on this path to interpret, to translate your feelings into concise thoughts. You may begin with this here. This fear constitutes a very important reason why a person shies away from meeting the real self.

Of course, it is childish to imagine that what you do not cherish in you is nonexistent because you try to avoid facing it, but the lower self is immature and ignorant -- a part of its various faults.

So I say to you: do not shy away from what is in you! Many people go to psychiatrists, and they sometimes suffer a breakdown when they come face to face with their lower self in the course of the treatment. Now, in this case, this cannot be possible because you do know that your lower self is not the ultimate being. And this mistaken idea often leads people in analysis to such self-despising and self-disgust that a breakdown occurs. But all of you know that the lower self is merely a layer, is something temporary. It does not, however, constitute your entire personality. It is here now and has to be dealt with, but it is still temporary, and it is not the real you, at least not entirely. There is your higher self, partly free already, manifest through your good qualities, your generosity, your kindness, or whatever else there is in you belonging to the higher self. But even where it cannot manifest as yet, deeply hidden behind this lower self -- you are at first shocked to encounter where you have not done so already -- is still your higher self, too, in its shining perfection. How can you reach this unless you penetrate the lower self? So do not be afraid, do not be shocked when you first encounter your lower self where you had heretofore no idea of it. It is a necessary procedure, and it never, never represents the ultimate you. As a matter of fact, when you reach that stage of being shocked about some of its facets you had not suspected, this constitutes a sign of improvement. It is a strong implication of your good progress, for without going through this stage, painful as it may be for a while, there can be no further victory and success. This is part of the path, my friends. If you meditate on these words and at the same time try to be aware of your fear -- the fear of your lower self, the shame of it -- you will then conquer it if you indoctrinate yourself with this truth and knowledge. Then your fear will be met realistically instead of hiding from it as you are hiding from a few other things in you. So this is what I have to say to you tonight. And now, my dear friends, I am ready for your questions.

QUESTION: Would you mind telling us what do the spirits do for recreation?

ANSWER: Well my dear friends, it is extremely difficult for man to imagine that spirits live and laugh and enjoy themselves -- and work. Spirits in the higher realms do all that, of course, in perfect harmony. And what their recreation is depends entirely on their personality, on their personal taste, talent, and inclination. There may be one who is intensely interested in music; he may live, at least occasionally, in a sphere where he can enjoy this particular pastime. Another may be drawn to art, another science. Another enjoys just the beauty of the creation. Another will express himself perhaps in dancing, and another creating certain worlds or parts of worlds or spheres or certain forms in accordance with his own particular individuality. So there is all sorts of recreation in the spirit world. There is the art of interchange, of conversation, of play. All that you have here is only a very crude copy of what exists in spirit. I have said that many times. And it applies to this too. But as a rule, I do not like to talk about this too much because particularly the intellectual type of human being will not accept this easily. They will say, "Oh this is childish, it is primitive." They do not realize that the primitive ideas that some primitive people have may be wrong because these primitive people see or imagine it too humanly or too unreal. Yet, in a spiritual way all this is there. Neither the primitive person, tending to superstition, is right, nor the intellectual is right, who denies everything in spirit that he considers "concrete" and accepts only what he considers "abstract," forgetting that "concrete" and "abstract" is one in spirit, as everything is one in spirit, at least in the highest spheres. So I do not like to discuss this too much because, in the first place, words do not exist to express these things or to convey them in a shade of reality. And this may be dangerous. But just for your information, I may say there is such a thing roughly in the way I have just said. But it will not really give you an adequate idea, I realize this.

QUESTION: I would like to ask whether the Christ spirit is an all-pervading spirit like God or an individual spirit?

ANSWER: It is exactly the same as with God. It must be because I have explained that the substance of Christ is the same substance as God's substance. It is all the divine substance. It is the same substance you have in yourself. Whether you call it divine substance, God's substance, or Christ's substance makes no difference. God has given most of this substance to His first creation, the spirit of Jesus Christ. All other beings have received some of this substance, and it is up to them to unfold it and enlarge it with the power given to them. Do you understand that? Well, what is it you do not understand?

QUESTION: Well....I mean the presence...

ANSWER: The presence you are referring to -- if you develop yourself, you make your higher self free of the shadows and layers of the lower self -- that is the presence you have constantly in you if you can develop it. And this divine spark or higher self is the substance we are referring to. The presence of God or of Jesus Christ as a person -- that is something else again. Christ can be felt in person as a presence -- in His personification. But that is something altogether different than the divine substance that is in you. In order to have this presence in you of your own divine substance, this can only be accomplished by this very path I am leading you onto now. But to feel the presence of God in His personification -- which is almost never the case for a human being, but let us say for spirits -- or to feel the presence of Jesus Christ as a person, that is an occasional grace that can come to a person unexpectedly, without knowing or understanding why. These are two entirely different things. Is that clearer now?

QUESTION: I would like to ask something in connection with the fall of the angels. In Isaiah, it is said that God created good and evil. So God created the evil forces, the luciferic powers too?

ANSWER: That is a great error. And you will readily understand now, when I remind you of one of the last lectures, how this error could have happened. You will remember that I have explained that God has created this power which He has given to each of His created spirits. This power could be used either way, any way, in free will. Now that explains why or how this error could have occurred. It is technically not correct to say that God created evil. It would be more correct to say God created the possibility for evil, if in free will His power is used against divine law. Is that clear?

QUESTION: Yes, but there is always the contrary between two extremes...

ANSWER: Certainly the contrary of divine law exists, but that does not mean that God created evil. There is a great difference between creating evil and giving free will and power to God's creatures that can be used according to divine law or not. I have explained this very thoroughly why God gave to all His beings the possibility to chose freely how to use this force they have been endowed with. This logically includes that the possibility to use it wrongly exists. If this possibility would not exist, there would be no freedom. And if God's creatures are supposed to become Godlike, they must be free, for freedom is one divine aspect. The wrong use of the power ultimately led to evil in a slow process, even if it did not become evil at the first deviation. I have

explained all this very thoroughly. If you reread this, my dear, or I had better say, read it, you will understand. There is no sense that we go into this now because I think it is clear to most of my friends here, and if you read it carefully, you will surely understand it. Or is it unclear to some of you?

QUESTION: No, I believe the passage in Isaiah may be a wrong translation -- that the Lord created evil. In other words, He gives the chance for it, but He does not create it.

ANSWER: Exactly. You see, the omission of one word very often makes a great deal of difference in the meaning of a sentence. If it would have said, instead of "God created evil...," that "God created the possibility of evil...," it would have changed the meaning.

QUESTION: How is it possible that a person on this path can be so strongly affected by environmental influences? Can you help me in this respect?

ANSWER: Well, I can only help you to show you to walk the path properly, and that I am doing. But the reason for this can be manifold, different reasons for different people. It is most of all psychological. As long as the soul is strongly influenced by outer happenings, whatever they are, it is a sign that the soul is not yet free from its own entanglements -- if the inner forces are not used according to divine law. With one person this will manifest in the way it affects you, with another in a different way. Whenever the soul is not healthy and mature, certain occasions will bring this out, and the soul will produce definite symptoms.

QUESTION: But why do these symptoms occur, as in my case, if there is, for instance, a strong humidity in the air?

ANSWER: Because everybody has different odic forces; the odic force is composed differently with each individual and thus responds to different outer challenges. With one person, the cosmic influences affect the soul stronger; with others, human influences, and so on, and so forth. If you have this particular sensitivity, it is because in your own way there is something wrong in your soul which tends, perhaps, to sluggishness and takes the first opportunity to react in this way. The soul is such a complicated machinery, there are not two souls alike. Certain basic problems are alike, but how all these various characteristics work and what plays into the lower self, or what the lower self picks up to use as an excuse, so to speak, or where the higher self is diluted by currents of the lower self, and what is mask or subterfuge, all this varies with each person. The possibilities are infinite. So, no two people react the same way. But the fact remains that this is a sign of a disturbance of the soul. The only remedy is to continue this path of perfection to the very end, to follow this course I have started now. For if you were entirely purified and healthy, you would not be sensitive to weather or anything else that may come your way from outside!

QUESTION: Then I would not be here, I suppose.

ANSWER: That is right.

QUESTION: Can you tell me, is there any spiritual significance or reason for the different races?

ANSWER: Oh, yes, indeed. There is no such a thing as coincidence. And I might say here as briefly as I possibly can at this time -- perhaps at another time I will go into this more thoroughly -- it is this way: you all know that human beings have to go through karmas. And if, for instance, a person is born into a certain race where certain suffering arises, it is of course due to this particular karma that this person deserves. And not only an individual has a karma, but groups have karma. The more unified mankind becomes through spiritual development, the more different races will cease. You can begin to see, even at this time already, the slow but sure development in this direction that differences begin to be eliminated. Nations, religions, races in a few thousand years from now -- perhaps even in about 1500 years, the effect will be very noticeable -- you will have very little left of these differences. And this will be a sign of unification, of spiritual improvement. But until such time, there must be differences; for, as you know, by the obstacles alone can you grow. This holds true in the individual's life, and it certainly applies also in the development of groups. You may wonder about the fact that certain races do not suffer by their just being different than others, and so you might ask what can they learn from this? In the first place, they have something to learn from that too -- perhaps the responsibility that arises from being spared sufferings that other peoples may have. Besides, this angle is not the only one to be considered: a spirit is being born into a race or nation because spiritually, emotionally, characteristically, and psychologically, he belongs into this group and has the best possibility to unfold there. The differences will exist as long as disunification exists on earth, as long as mankind has not learned to overcome it. As any difficulty or apparent disadvantage can be a cure -- it must be the cure if a person is really on the right path -- so can this be. And mankind, by the differences of races, religions, nations, or various other groups, can become stronger and advance faster in spiritual development because these frictions exist. Without friction, development can never proceed. It is only a question of how it is met -- always! Individually and collectively -- is that clear?

QUESTION: But is not part of the beauty of life the variety of different races and their trends?

ANSWER: Yes, the variety is fine, but variety on your earth means friction and hostility. In spirit there is infinite variety in everything, but it is not like on your earth, where you have "better races" and "inferior races." And that, of course, is karmic. For both, not only for the sometimes persecuted ones. And that is also a thought you can meditate on."

QUESTION: Along on this path of development, if you know that there is one particular fault you have, and you are trying to overcome it through meditation and prayer, and you don't seem to get further along, is there something wrong?

ANSWER: I will not say that there is something wrong, but I would say that there is some method or some key lacking that you need. You try hard again and again in one particular direction and forcefully, perhaps too forcefully. And your lower self resists that. I might perhaps help you by saying this: my dear friend, you must realize one thing. Just before, I talked about the fight, and when I said fight, I meant just that. The lower self is not ready to give up its faults, its resentments, its own sluggish ways, and so on for a long time. For a long time, you must realize that. You must realize that this lower self lives in you strongly even though you are not aware of it consciously in its significance because you consciously know only about your good will in the right direction. This realization is the first and essential step! Without this realization, you can get nowhere really, no matter how good the will of your conscious being is. What most people do not realize, at least not

until a pretty far point on this path is reached, is the discrepancy in themselves: how one part of them wants one thing, and the other exactly the opposite. This opposite desire, which is always first subconscious, must be taken out and brought into consciousness. This is the essential step without which there can be no further success. Therefore, my advice is this: do not try for the moment to force yourself to feel as you are so far incapable of feeling. Instead, use your efforts in the direction of making that part of you conscious that is responsible for your lack of success so far. Relax completely, not only physically but also emotionally. And then try to let your lower self come to the surface so that you actually become aware of it. Then, when your enemy becomes visible, you can fight successfully. As long as your enemy is invisible, you cannot succeed. So do not be afraid to let out what is in you. Very quietly say to yourself, and in your meditations to God, "This is the way I am now. At least a part of me is this way I do not like or cherish. I want to accept this as being part of my being, knowing that I cannot change anything without doing so freely. I realize that what will come out is not my whole being. But there are two contradictory forces in me, and I have to become aware of both, including the one I have ignored so far. In order to become what I would like to be, I must first, without fear of shame and vanity, face what is in me." Ask God to help you to that end. And then let it come out. Listen into your feelings in connection with incidents or feelings that have always brought out this trend in you. Then try to translate these feelings into words, concise thoughts. Do this constantly, and you will be successful in this respect. You will then come to the point when you can quietly realize these two contradictory currents in you: the one in which you see your imperfection, and the one opposite in this respect, where you know in theory how you would like to feel and react but cannot as yet do so. Compare these two currents, and learn first of all to accept for the time being your present imperfection in comparison with the perfection you know to be right. Accept this imperfection in humility. If you do that constantly, then your feelings will change. This constant self-observation and self-honesty will have a surprising effect on you. By this procedure, first you will learn to follow the law of reality, accepting yourself as you are and learning true humility by this. This will regenerate a new strength in you even before you have attained perfection in this respect. And very gradually your feelings will begin to change after a period of this type of training. This is the only way, my dear. As a matter of fact, I meant to discuss this in one of the following lectures, but since your question came up, it was a good opportunity to have discussed this now. But I will come back to this because this constitutes the method of purification of emotions that are not influenced by an act of direct will power. This cannot be emphasized enough. It often takes some time until this method is clearly understood, but once it is, it cannot fail to bring results. Some of you may get bored to hear this again and again, especially those of my friends who have heard this in my private sessions, but I cannot say it often enough because many of you have understood this, but only in your brain. Your inner self has not perceived this or understood this process entirely. Do you understand?

QUESTION: Yes. How do you get your inner self to understand the emotional self?

ANSWER: Do not try to make it understand, to begin with. Let it out first. That is the first half. You cannot educate, or re-educate, it before it is utterly on the surface. To be in a hurry to change these emotions is not only impossible to accomplish, and therefore the hurry is futile and unrealistic, but this period of constant self-recognition and comparison of your conflicting emotions with what you have recognized as being right teaches you humility -- the very necessary humility of accepting yourself as an imperfect being and accepting yourself thus in the right way. This is something to be learned in itself. Not with guilt feelings and self-abuse. This is unhealthy and unproductive. You must learn to take yourself realistically: "In so many respects I am still imperfect,

in so many others I have reached perfection, if in the course of this path I should find out that I am less perfect than I thought, I will accept this in order to be able to change it." Realize that before your imperfections can change, you have so many other things to learn from this very imperfection in you. You must learn the proper attitude to meet your lower self, your inability to change something by a mere effort of will, and a number of other things. All this is necessary on your path, and therefore the still existing imperfections can fulfill a definite purpose. This does not mean that you should nurse them or justify their existence or, worse, become lazy and not do anything about them. This would be the wrong opposite extreme. To find the right middle path in everything, so also in this, is part of the path. You have to learn to accept yourself without fear, without shame, without pride. And where you still discover these trends, you must examine what is behind them and thus gain further understanding about yourself. If you follow this system for awhile and ask at the same time for God's grace to help you, you will get further and further -- not immediately in changing these currents, but in self-recognition and self-understanding, and this is fundamental. The proper spirit of accepting the lower self is of much greater importance than any of you realizes as yet. You mistakenly want to skip this phase altogether, and by doing so, you will, you must, eventually get discouraged because your endeavors will always wind up in a deadend street.

And now I will retire, my dear friends. God's blessings go to all of my dear friends far away and to all of my dear friends in this room, as well as to those here who have found their way here for the first time tonight. May this be a turning point in their lives. Peace be with you, be in God!

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