

## SHAME

Greetings in the name of the Lord. I bring you blessings, my friends, to each one of you and to all of your dear ones. When we spirits observe human beings, we can always see your bad need of spiritual nourishment. You nourish your body, you nourish your intellect, and you even nourish your emotional nature although the latter one not always with the best possible food. But when it comes to spiritual nourishment, most human beings starve themselves. There is a great confusion about what spiritual nourishment really means. It does not merely mean to read, hear, or learn about spiritual truth or law, about God and His creation. It does not even merely mean prayer and meditation, which, of course, if done in the right way, is also a very important part of spiritual nourishment. But the most important substance of spiritual food is self-development. Your innermost self, your divine spark is constantly crying out for this. And you, your conscious being, is, alas, refusing this food ever so often. When you are sad or depressed, when you are dissatisfied with your life whether you have actual and rational reasons or not, in both cases, it is always because your spirit is starved. And only he who partakes of this most important food -- spiritual development -- can be truly happy and fulfilled. And whenever a human being, a human group, offers the spirits of the divine orders a possibility to manifest, that is what we are most concerned with. For there is no human being alive who has not the possibility to become happy; it is only in your own hands, in your own decisions, my friends. But you so often turn the wrong way; you seek in the wrong direction; you blame others for your misfortunes; you blame fate; you blame God; you blame the alleged injustice of the world. But you do not take the one and only step that brings you to fulfillment, to this deep sense of having lived your life in the way your Creator had in mind for you in this particular incarnation. It varies, of course. Not everyone has to fulfill the same, and as I often say, not the same work or effort is expected of everyone alike. But one thing you should keep in mind, my friends, if you are not quite happy -- in spite of occasional outer difficulties -- you have denied your spirit some of the nourishment it craves, most probably in the right way of self-development, of self-recognition. Anyone hearing or reading these words, has sufficient means to acquire this food.

To continue the series of lectures I have given about self-development, I will discuss tonight a subject I have not gone into yet, at least not in public lectures. I have mentioned several factors in the human soul which are what you might call God-eclipsing. Pride, self-will, and fear are the three factors responsible for all faults, for all unhappiness, and for all untruth that exists in each human soul. They work hand in hand and strengthen one another in different degrees and combinations with each individual. Tonight I will discuss the subject of shame. There is a right kind of shame and a wrong kind of shame. The right kind of shame, differently expressed, would mean true repentance. Without this kind of shame, there could never be the incentive for self-development. No one who does not feel this shame would ever undergo this noble fight, my friends, against one's own lower self; no one would take the path of purification if this shame would not exist within him. True repentance is therefore a constructive and very positive element. But there is also the wrong

kind of shame. You, all human beings, so often confuse these two kinds of shame that I shall devote some time now on this subject. Now what is the wrong kind of shame? Differently expressed we might call it a guilt-complex which of course is entirely destructive and negative. What do your emotions actually say, even though you certainly do not consciously think these thoughts, when you have the wrong kind of shame? You say, "I am so bad, I am hopeless, there is just nothing doing." With this attitude you not only wallow in self-pity, but what is even more important and harmful, this attitude expresses to all intents and purposes the sluggishness that prohibits you from lifting yourself up and working actively on the elimination of that which is wrong in you. Furthermore, this attitude becomes more and more unreasonable and unjust, for you still demand and expect respect and love from others although you do not respect and love yourself -- not, mind you, because of your shortcomings, but in the deepest regions of your being, you cannot respect yourself because of this wrong attitude, this wrong kind of shame that just makes you passive where you should be active. Thus you find yourself in a vicious cycle. The more you deny yourself the constructive kind of shame that would make you lift yourself up and work on yourself with realistic self-recognition, which is the foundation of development, the more you despise yourself; and the more you do that, the more you demand love and respect from others to make up for the lack of self-respect. The blind, unconscious, and immature side of you believes somehow that if you receive sufficient appreciation from others that this will make up for the lack of self-respect you can never truly have unless you fulfill these basic spiritual laws within your own soul, unless you do the maximum of what can be expected of you in self-development, according to your overall spiritual development. Oh, I know, my friends, no one thinks these thoughts consciously, but if you would -- as you should -- test your emotions, their demands, and what they actually mean and express, you would easily find out that this is what you mean in a heretofore hidden part of yourself. So remember, and this is very important, your lack of self-respect is not due to your faults, weaknesses, shortcomings, and sins -- no matter what they may be -- but because of your wrong kind of shame! The moment you exchange the wrong kind for the right kind, I can promise you that in the measure that this change takes place within you, you must develop a true and justified self-respect, long before the faults in you have disappeared. You do not have to be perfect in order to respect yourself; all you have to do is to have a realistic attitude about your imperfections and adopting a constructive attitude in regard to them. The more your self-respect is established, the less you will crave for the respect of others, for you then rest secure within yourself. And this will so change your inner attitude and your emanations that you must have a different effect on others. This will make it so much easier for your surroundings actually to give you the love and the respect you desired in the first place.

It may not have occurred to you that this wrong kind of shame comes from your pride and furthers your pride even more. This may sound paradoxical to you at first, yet it is so. Let me explain it to you in this way: there is your lower self with all its shortcomings. This is a fact that you have to reckon with if you do not want to escape your present reality. The more you try to escape these facts, the sicker your soul must become; that you know, for I have talked about this fact again and again. But by having the wrong kind of shame, you do escape this reality, for your emotions express that you will not accept yourself as you are. The moment you hopelessly despair about the lower side of your nature, you have not accepted yourself as you are. That means you are lacking the humility of courageously facing everything about yourself -- and that is pride. Let me stress once again, intellectually, but not emotionally, you know that you are imperfect. There is often a wide chasm between what you know and think consciously and what your emotions claim and desire. It is not at all difficult to make these emotions conscious if only you take the trouble to translate them

into thought, so to speak. But it needs a little effort in this direction. So, your emotions desire perfection already now while this perfection is not yours as yet. Your emotions place you on a higher point than you have taken efforts to reach. On the other hand, you do know or feel that this place is not yours as yet, but instead of consciously recognizing this and slowly working up to the point where you want to be, you become angry at the world and yourself that you are what you are and refuse to take the inner effort of becoming what you want to be. So the wrong kind of shame means pride, laziness, injustice, and escaping your present reality. And this makes you feel guilty, my friends, not the actual faults you may possess. These would never make you feel guilty, provided you adopt the right kind of shame that accepts yourself in humility as you are at present, not fleeing, not escaping from this reality and that builds up from there, slowly, step by step, as it is the only realistic and constructive way to change and develop.

But the wrong attitude brings further hazards. Because of your pride, because of your need of respect and love from others, you begin to withdraw with what you really think and feel about yourself and hide it behind a wall, so to speak. You dare not stand up for what you really are because your emotions say that if you would be yourself, you would be despised. As I said before, the more you lack self-respect, the more important the respect of others becomes to you. So you create a mask self. In some subtle way, you become a fake. And that in turn makes you even more despondent with yourself, you despise yourself even more. And the vicious cycle continues in full force and brings you into deeper emotional conflicts until you develop the courage and humility to break it. Please do not confuse this: standing up for what you are, including your lower self, does not mean that you should give in to the trends of this latter in your deeds. There is a vast difference between that and simply recognizing and accepting what you are and not building up a different personality for the outside world with which you appear different. Man often establishes a fake of his real self for the very reasons explained here. And that is what I mean.

As long as you feel sad, bitter, defiant, or disharmonious in any way when you encounter your own faults, this means that you have not accepted yourself yet as you are. Again you have to strive for the middle path: accepting does not mean that you wish to stay in that state of imperfection which you first have to learn to accept. Furthermore, you should find out where in your emotions you desire to be cherished by others for your shortcomings, so to speak, as a compensation for your imagined inability to change and thus cherish yourself. When you have made these unreasonable emotions known, then it will be easy for you to direct them into proper channels.

When you are capable of accepting, really and truly accepting yourself as you are, not wanting to have a higher place, not desiring to appear better than you are, you have fulfilled the basic requirements to be on the path, my friends. Before that, you are not on it as yet, but still in a state of preparing to enter the most important and decisive gate that leads on to it. In other words, as long as there is the wrong kind of shame in you, you cannot advance on the path; you have to exchange it for the right kind of shame.

The wrong kind of shame will create a state of mind that is not only extremely unhealthy, as outlined just now, but it must make you feel more and more alone. Whenever you feel lonely and not understood, please realize that at least to some degree what I am saying here must be responsible for it and not other people, their lack of love or understanding. No matter how incapable of love your surroundings may be, you would never feel lonely if this wrong attitude

would not somehow prevail within you. So do not seek a remedy without, but turn around within, and look at yourself from this point of view.

You, whoever you are, feel ashamed of something. Big or small, grave or unimportant, that is not the point, but you feel ashamed. You know how you react. You cover it up, you hide it, you appear to be without that something you are ashamed of. This is the wall that separates you from others. In this way you can never be sure that you are really loved and appreciated. For always this little voice in you keeps saying, "If they only knew how I really am, what I have done (or whatever it may be), they would not love me." And that makes you alone and suffering and cold. You feel all the affection given to you is destined for the person you appear to be but not for the person you really are. Of course you are uncertain and lonely in that state. But only you can change it, only you. It will be easy for you to see that the only remedy of this constant state of loneliness, of uncertainty, of growing self-despising is the one step that appears hardest to you, namely to break down the shame and stand up for what you really are. The more you try it the other way, the way of deception in some subtle way, the deeper you will be in your dilemma. You have seen that. So it is up to you to take the one courageous step of becoming yourself. Only in this way will you gain true security and the true evaluation of your friends. For he who is a spiritually developed and capable of love will most certainly not love you less, quite on the contrary! And he who is immature and therefore incapable of love in the first place -- his affection you will not have lost, for you have never really owned it. For such a person finds himself in exactly the same spot than you are in now: he is craving for your affection, respect, and love to assuage his own lack of self-respect, lacking because he too does not have the courage to be himself. This kind of love was an illusion in the first place. So the only way to build a secure ground on which to stand in life is to take off the pretense you have laboriously planted all your life. This seems a hard step at first, my friends; and again I want to stress, you are not expected to tell everyone you meet your secrets. Choose the right person to whom you can open up; choose the person who can help you; and then choose the people you are really close with and who have to know you as you really are. Otherwise you can never be really yourself. Besides that, it is not a question of what you say to all the other people you meet in life, it is a question of what you feel, of your inner attitude. And in order to adjust your emotions from the wrong kind of shame to the right kind, all you have to do is delve into your own emotions and, as I say so often, translate them into clear-cut concise thoughts, what your emotions actually say. And then you can sort of readjust them when you see the unreasonableness of the immature side in your soul. Only when you do that, will you be able to take the next step, mentioned just now. And only then will you have security and self-respect. For as long as you hide behind a wall of falsity, you must despise yourself, much more so than a brother or sister of yours who have many more weaknesses but who have the courage to live according to what they really are, without pretense. So it is not a question of how good you are or of how many weaknesses you still have that determines your self-respect, but self-respect -- and as a result of it, also the respect of others -- can only be determined how true you are to yourself, or how much you deceive, how much you escape yourself, how much you hide behind a wall of pretense. I hope I do not have to stress that this wall of pretense is not something easily recognizable from outside. It is something subtle within that you and only you yourself can find out in the manner prescribed, by testing and probing your emotions and their meanings.

True repentance in the positive sense will therefore simply take stock of the self and accept the weaknesses in their present state, deeply desiring to change them, but realistically recognizing that the change can only come by forever and ever anew recognizing the deeply ingrained fault and

comparing the faulty reaction to the ideal state. Thus humility is learned while the fault lingers on by necessity, for it cannot be overcome so quickly. The moment you will not want to appear better or more than you are, even in your own eyes, you will have taken yourself down from the high place you have put yourself. Then, and only then, can you start rebuilding, after having torn down the false house. If you have the courage to stumble one hundred thousand times over the same faults and forever again lift yourself up and try again, recognizing your weakness, then you pay God the debt you owe Him, then you are worthy of His grace; then you are truly on the path. Then you rid yourself of pride and falsity long before you are perfect in the many details of your character, and thus approach perfection much faster than you think, in spite of the lingering on of some of your stubborn shortcomings. When you will have that courage and conduct your emotions in that way, you must win. But if every time after you stumble again over a recognized fault, you become so despondent and depressed that you despair with yourself, that you even want to give up and say "this is senseless," you have the wrong kind of shame, the destructive and weakening kind that is not pleasing to God and that will never get you anywhere. For as long as you despair so easily, there is too much pride in you; and the healing, curative action of being able to observe your own weaknesses in the true light of what they are -- not exaggerating them and not diminishing them either -- will not be able to affect your soul. So my friends, do not despair if you have no success for quite a while with overcoming your weaknesses. Now, perhaps, you may better understand that in the very fact that you are unsuccessful for a time lies a great curative agent for something that is even more important than the actual weakness you are treating, namely the learning of the right kind of shame, the acceptance of yourself, thus learning humility, overcoming pride, and living in your own reality. If you were very successful in overcoming your individual faults, it might make you even prouder, and this is more harmful than many other faults. Besides that, the faults you are battling against are often ingrained in you for many, many incarnations, so you cannot expect to get rid of them within a few years. But if you are capable of meeting these weaknesses and your inability to change them immediately in spite of your best will and hard work, and if you meet them with open eyes and a healthy attitude and, while you are still stumbling over them, learn humility and to place yourself on the height you really belong on -- not too low, not too high -- then, even while you are still imperfect in one or the other respect, you contribute the ground stones to this very healthy and normal inner make-up you need. Think about this well, my friends. Meditate on these words. Again I have to stress the fact that it is not sufficient to just hear or read them once, for that will not be spiritual food. It will be spiritual food when you try to compare where your feelings still deviate from the ideal state I have explained here and where you can find an echo in you to go on from there in your daily strivings, in your daily spiritual work. When you do that, you will give yourself the food your spirit needs.

And therefore, you will perhaps begin to understand or sense why it is so necessary on the path, at one time or another, to be able to talk openly about yourself to the qualified person -- and then to the people you are really close with. For, as long as you keep things hidden within you, it puts everything out of proportion. You may exaggerate one thing and underestimate another, while another person who is detached from your problem and your own inner struggles may see the things in the right light. But that is not the only reason not to keep things hidden. As I have often said, particularly in private lectures, there is a spiritual law; and the same spiritual law holds true when humanity invented, so to speak, psychoanalysis or, for that matter, confession. The same idea is behind both. It is the law of brotherhood. The moment you open up to another person, this indicates an act of humility, at least towards that one person. You do not want to appear more perfect than you are at that moment with that person. And this is one of the most harmful things in

the laws of the soul, my friends, harmful for you! So, to that one person, you show yourself as you are, or to some degree, perhaps, to begin with. Even if that person does not give you one piece of advice, you will instantly feel relief, the relief your spirit has cried for. Your spirit suffers when you act against its laws. And you feel better, all of a sudden you see things differently; it is the law of brotherhood. Something in you says, "At that moment I do not want to appear better than I am, I show myself as I am; I do not strive for respect and love that I think is not really due me because of these things I am ashamed of." Because you are wrong in that too -- love and respect is due every living creature, but you think it is not due you because of something or other you keep in hiding. And in this distorted view, you suffer in loneliness, and you go on pretending in some subtle way. So you can see that the wrong kind of shame also violates the law of brotherhood, in addition to the aforementioned violations. Thus you may incidentally see once again how every emotion, every inner feeling can be right and coming from God; but the same can be distorted by the luciferic powers. Thus it is also with shame.

So I say to you, my friends, to him who really and truly desires to develop on this path, guidance will come at a certain point, in such a way that you are almost pushed into a corner, where you have to open up for your own benefit, for your own salvation. Of course you always have your free will, and this we spirits will respect at all times and never violate it even if we do know what seems so difficult for you to express. But you have to do the talking, we will not do it for you. You are always free, therefore, to refuse, to back up and retire deeper into this corner -- and resent it that you are pushed in this way. But you can also refrain from backing up and step out of your hiding place if you only wish to recognize God's grace in such guidance, if you only wish to open your eyes that herein lies your own salvation. That is up to you. Such guidance, which appears at first like a test in the form of unpleasantness that you cannot fully understand, is to help you to do what is necessary. You yourself do not understand the necessity, the healing of such opening up of your personality; therefore you would not do it unless such guidance comes. And because you do not understand it yet, you think of these happenings as an unpleasant hardship. Once you have understood, you will cease to see it in that way. In that respect you are all like children; you do not know what is good for you. And God's helpers, who are all around you constantly, particularly with the person who is willing to take this path of purification, manage to guide and inspire people around you in such a way as to create a certain situation in order to afford you this possibility; but you have to decide with your free will whether or not you want to do it or not. You can then open your eyes to the significance of the situation viewed in that light, or you can shirk the issue and refuse to recognize the call, for a call it is! Decide, my friends, do you want to take your courage into your hands or do you want to hide in cowardice?

Do you think, after hearing this, you can advance on this path by not having the courage to do that? But I can promise one thing: after it is done, there will already be a foretaste of that spiritual new birth that must come sooner or later when a certain phase is reached on this path. The greater the effort and the apparent difficulty to do it, the more relief, the more victory, the more happiness, the more self-respect, the more inner joy and peace you will feel after it is over and after you have fully understood how to go on from there. And this, my friends, I beg you to remember very well. Do not choose to forget these words merely because you want to evade the issue, thus thinking in your innermost self that by evasion the situation does not exist. And read them every day, if and when you stand before such a decision.

We deal not only with what you consciously know and hide; that is comparatively easy. Once this consciously hidden thing comes out, you have to try, with our help, to find what unconscious currents lie behind these conscious actions you may be ashamed of. That, then, is the work to be done. And of course you cannot do so alone; you cannot do so unless you have displayed the courage to bring into the open what you do know. But with many people there are unconscious factors that are hidden in the same manner as the conscious ones. And that is a little more complicated to find. It goes without saying that the first preliminary is to be free and open enough to be able to talk about everything pertaining to your person. As long as that is not done, you can never reach the hidden motives, currents, and emotions. If you fulfill the necessary requirements, help will be given to you -- that you can be sure of. This help you need. This help is the grace of God. Without it you cannot reach your unconscious and stubbornly hidden shames that block the way at times. But if you wait for this grace of God in defiance and anger, saying to yourself, "Why can't I have it? Why someone else and not me? I have suffered so much; I am due for it now; I have tried so hard"; then you push away the time of grace because your attitude is not a humble one. You take it upon yourself to judge, and you cannot judge. You have no way of judging how much you have suffered and when the grace is due and how hard you have tried, especially in comparison with others. You lack this possibility of comparison, you even lack complete self-recognition. For as long as you cannot delve into what your subconscious hides, you do not know yourself; and not even knowing yourself, how can you, how dare you, judge and compare? But when you nurse a spirit of humility, of true humility and patience, then the grace, my dear ones, will be much nearer. So if you have difficulties, try to concentrate on this. If you cannot advance, although you are working and doing your best (and many do not advance because they are not working as they could, so it is not the lack of grace), and if there are these blocks you cannot seem to penetrate, ask yourself, "How humble is my attitude?" And nurse this instead of turning away from God the moment things become difficult for you. So this also is my advice for some of my dear, beloved friends.

One more subject before we turn to your questions -- I have mentioned that you are ashamed of your faults. This is true in many instances. Some faults you are really ashamed of. Some faults you really do not want to have. But there is also another category of faults in you, my friends, and the time has come when it is important to mention this so that you may look upon this from this point of view which will help you a great deal. It will explain to you why you cannot get ahead in some particular way of your development. In each one of you, there is a certain number of faults you are in love with. Yes, you do not admit it, but you are actually quite proud of them. And of course as long as this is the case, you cannot possibly overcome it. The only way to go about it is that you find out where this truth applies in you. Once you are aware of the fact that you actually like some of your faults emotionally, you can pray that God may help you to recognize why this is so, what lies behind it, and that you can see it in the true and objective light so as to develop the right kind of shame in this respect. Check all your faults, and then check your emotional reaction to them in all honesty. You will see, by going through your list, there are some faults you really do not like; but others you cherish in some way. And then, when you feel that, ask yourself, "How would I react if another person displays the same fault, either in the same way or perhaps in a slightly different way?" -- because you are actually often quite irritated when another human being displays the same fault you are somewhat proud of in yourself. Once you approach it from this point of view, you will lose that certain feeling of pride or liking for some of your faults. As long as this feeling persists, you cannot possibly get over the fault.

In the following lectures, I will be very happy to let you bring up any fault you choose at random and present it to me for analysis. I will show you how every fault you can think of is connected with pride, self-will, and fear. Further, I will show you how to analyze this fault, how it leads to other faults, what it is connected with, so as to give you better help for self-understanding. I will show you how to meditate about it, how to proceed particularly in your spiritual work on your path. I will then also show you how every single fault or weakness or imperfection or shortcoming is a direct hindrance to love, and therefore to God. And, further, I will show you in some instances what the underlying good quality is behind each fault, for there is no fault that is not a distortion of something that was once good and pure. Try it as an exercise yourself, with your own faults, of course; for your spiritual work is useless if it is abstract and impersonal. And where you cannot do so, bring these faults here as general questions, so to speak. By this, I mean that I will treat it here entirely generally, of course. Now are there any questions in connection with the subject I just talked about, before we turn to your other questions?

QUESTION: You touched in this lecture on the fact that this opening up has to be done to a qualified person. Now could you elaborate on the problem of a person who has the desire to open up and to be humble, but does so indiscriminately, and therefore there is no good coming from it but harm and repercussions?

ANSWER: Yes, you see, this is of course the opposite extreme, and you know that all extremes are bad and wrong. In such a person this is a deep need the spirit cries for, but consciously it is not exactly recognized for what it really means, and therefore the wrong means are sought. But I may say that the case you mentioned is not as much of an extreme as you think. For it is often possible for a human being to open up about many things, little things, even actual shortcomings, as a sort of warding off to keep the real thing hidden. And that is true also in the case you are thinking of.

QUESTION: Yes, I was going to ask that, but what if that same person actually masks the true faults and invents artificial guilts he wishes to divulge?

ANSWER: That is right. You see, it will not do any good to tell such a person to choose the right people to open up towards because he will never know who the right people are. The intuition is lacking, and even sound intellectual judgment. Both cannot really function well as long as one rationalizes and covers up the reasons. So a person like this has to be brought to understand how to recognize this fact in the first place. But that, of course, can only be done very slowly, and it cannot be done at all, of course, if the desire is not there. But the desire can grow. In this case, the desire will come eventually.

QUESTION: Do underdeveloped spirits see higher developed human beings, and if so, in what shape and form?

ANSWER: Of course they see them. They see matter as you see it, but the spirit also shows. A great light penetrates out of the body of such a highly developed human being. The higher the development, the brighter the light. And the lower the development of the spirit, the more this light hurts. You know that you emanate forces and vibrations. The more love and harmony and perfection is in the human person, the lighter these vibrations become and the faster their frequencies. This is actually like a physical pain for a lowly developed spirit. And that is the reason

why a highly developed person is safe and protected from evil and impure spirits. They cannot get near him, they cannot stand it. Therefore, as long as the imperfections are within you, you draw the respective spirits towards you. But the more you overcome the imperfections, the freer your light shines, and that is like an armor you carry against all impure spirits who shy away from such human beings. Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: Yes, but here I would like to ask another question. For instance in the case of a father and a son, the father might be in the beyond and lower in development than the son who is still on earth. Now the father loves his son and would like to be with him.

ANSWER: You see, the case I just mentioned for illustration is of course a very crass one. It is very seldom that in one family two people are incarnated together who are so far apart in development. And if so, if a spirit is so low that the light of perfection hurts him, he would not be able to love at all. But if the difference in development is just a few grades, so to speak, then it is of course very easily possible that a lower-developed spirit can approach and love a higher-developed human being. There are sufficient contact points because neither one is so low or so high that they cannot get together. Each and every human being carries a great number of spirits in his wake. You may not realize it, but this is the case. You have your guardian angels and spirits who are part of the world of God. You have evil spirits following you, exactly fitting your negative qualities; and you have all these spirits in between, fitting your in-between qualities, your mixed up emotions where your motives are twofold or manifold. Thus a lower-developed spirit sees a higher-developed human being in his or her respective light, the colors of the aura, the subtle bodies; he sees the thoughts and emotions in forms of various shapes. It is then just a question of seeing lighter shades and more harmonious forms, or darker shades and disharmonious forms. Is that clear?

QUESTION: Is euthanasia pardoned under certain circumstances?

ANSWER: The spirit world of God says no. It is not right. There may be an exception as far as an excuse or extenuating circumstances are concerned from your human point of view. But as a law it should be absolutely prohibited. Even if you seem to think in your human mind a case is utterly hopeless, a person cannot be helped anymore and is only suffering, there are two very good reasons why, under any circumstances, it is wrong from our point of view, which does not mean that a human doctor who is doing it in ignorance of the spiritual law and out of love and mercy in his heart will be condemned. One reason is entirely spiritual. It is this: if a person suffers in a disease for which no remedy has been found, it means there is a karma, there is this suffering to go through. And by prohibiting the suffering, you do not eliminate for that spirit any suffering. In one form or another, either as a spirit or in another incarnation, the suffering will have to go on until the quota is filled, so to speak. The spirit of the suffering human being will not be happy for the relief, once the picture is clear in the spirit world, because he wants it to get it over with, knowing the necessity for the suffering, which he ignores as a human. Mercy-killing would only make sense if the truth were what your atheists say, namely that creation is senseless, you live just once, there is no reason for anything, no order, no system, no continuation. If this were the truth, mercy-killing would indeed be right. But since that is not so, since you do live on, since there is a great system of justice, order, and sense in every minutest detail, so much greater than you can only vaguely perceive, there is nothing coincidental; there is nothing unjust; it all has its reasons. This does not mean humanity should not go on striving to find remedies to relieve suffering. For it is up to humanity not to judge, but to love, help, and be compassionate. But no matter how much your science will find, if

suffering has to be gone through for a particular person, there will always be ways and means to be found. If a person takes the judgment upon himself, even with the best intentions, when there should be life and when not, he somehow denies God with that. And that is wrong. He denies God's justice because of his blind and limited outlook. He certainly has the duty to help to the best of his abilities, but that does not mean to interfere with life. And then, as the second reason, which is even quite materialistic, your common sense will tell you that one day a remedy might be found that has not been found yesterday. But that is merely an aside.

QUESTION: Does it apply only to human beings or to animals too?

ANSWER: With animals it is different. You are quite right there. The animal is not yet on the level of having free will. And therefore it cannot judge. It has no possibility to adjust its attitude with regard to God, justice, accepting suffering in humility or in bitterness and defiance. In other words, an animal cannot be tested in this respect as a human being can. Therefore, if an animal is incurably ill, that is a different story. Then his suffering can and should be shortened. As an aside, I may say even the unavoidable suffering of animals, where humanity has not yet control over that, has sense in the creation. It is up to man to do all he possibly can to avoid it, but beyond that, he has to accept that God knows in this respect too what He is doing. It would be much too long to go into this now. Perhaps at another time.

QUESTION: Can you please interpret the phrase "If thine eye offends thee . . . cast it from thee, and if thine arm offends thee . . . break it from thee?"

ANSWER: Of course this is to be understood merely symbolically. It is not actually meant that you should do this to the letter. It means whenever there is something that prevents you from your spiritual development, you must cast it out of your life. Let us say a person has very good will and very good intentions to develop, but he is addicted in one way or another to something that always keeps him from his spiritual development. Then that must go out of that person's life. It may be an inner attitude, an emotional reaction, laziness, pride, whatever it may be. This must go first. It is what I call your key faults that prevent you from going on the path in the first place. Or if you are attached to a human being who hinders you in your spiritual development, and you are so dependent on that human being that you will neglect your development because of him, such a relationship should be broken. Because as Jesus said at another occasion, "He who prefers his mother or his father, (or whomever it may be) to me is not worthy of me." For He also said that He is the way, this path of self-development and perfection. That is the same meaning. In other words, whatever stands in your way between you and God -- which means your spiritual development -- that, you should cast out of your life. That is the meaning.

QUESTION: Is there any spiritual significance why people resemble each other facially although they are not related to one another?

ANSWER: Yes, there may be certain factors responsible for that. There may be certain spiritual and emotional traits that are similar. These traits also influence under certain conditions the bone structure. You should not think that the bone structure is entirely independent of spiritual factors and only due to heredity, although the latter plays a role too but not as an additional factor but as part of the spiritual factors involved.

QUESTION: In connection with the last chapter of the "Pistis Sophia," I would like to ask the question, what did Jesus mean by the "several pardons" or forgiveness and then coming to a point where no pardon can be given except by the Ineffable?

ANSWER: You know, as I have explained to you often, there is this wonderful order of the hierarchy of the angels, of the pure spirits, and the spirits developing upwards, who all work together in the plan of salvation. Now, each has his own function. There are for certain instances spirits endowed with the authority to, you may say, pardon -- in other words, to judge. For instance, if a spirit comes into the spirit world, everything is considered -- his whole book of life, his last incarnation, his previous ones are considered. In consideration of all these factors, the next incarnation is planned, the task and schooling in the spirit world before that, and so on. There is a particular spirit whose task it is to judge and plan in this manner. But if there are certain guilts and misdeeds that a person has done that are way out of line, way out of expectancy, considering his development and all the factors of his life put together, then this spirit has no authority to judge, but he has to ask a spirit higher up in authority. Otherwise he would be qualified to pass judgement, but because of this unexpected happening, he has to go a step higher, so to speak. The next highest in line will have to be consulted; he will then have the authority and will judge according to all circumstances, to the minutest details, how this is to be evaluated. Now, if the same case repeats itself, if this goes on and on, there comes a point when no other spirit has authority anymore, but only God.

QUESTION: There is in some way a similar order like in our courts?

ANSWER: Yes, whatever you have on earth is only a limited and poor imitation of what exists in spirit.

QUESTION: What does the "Pistis Sophia" mean by "sealing of the soul" and by "the Virgin of Light?"

ANSWER: "The Virgin of Light" means the pure light. Virgin must not be understood in the verbal sense you have on this earth. Incidentally, that is where a great error has come into your religious history. For instance, you use the expression "virgin snow" to mean something that is entirely pure, something fresh and new and clean. "Virgin Light" means the pure light as it was first created, still unused or unexploited, in which all the forces are gathered. For your information, where there is this pure light, there is at the same time, for the impure eye, utter darkness. In that connection you will understand the expression "sealed off." For if the impure eye should for one reason or another see the pure light, it will appear like utter darkness, sealed off like in a vacuum. And only as the eye purifies -- and when I say the eye, of course you realize I mean the whole being -- then the light will become bright and pure, as it really is. And therefore darkness and light could appear as the same thing. I realize this is extremely hard for you to understand, for these are purely philosophical and abstract ideas for you that cannot as yet bear any personal sense or meaning. You cannot grasp these concepts with your intellect, you can only sense them. Of course the darkness of the pure light is of a very different caliber than the darkness of the luciferic world.

QUESTION: In other words, like the sun?

ANSWER: Yes.

And now, my friends, I will retire. I leave you again with God's blessings for each one of you here, for each one of my friends over the waters, for each one of you who reads these words. Rejoice in the knowledge that God loves you and helps you. All your efforts are known to us, do not give up, do not despair, continue your valiant fight. You must become happy and fulfilled under all circumstances if you do not give up. Be in peace, be in God!

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