

PRAYER

Greetings in the name of the Lord. Blessings for all of you, my friends; blessed is this hour.

To seek God is the most glorious and the most gratifying of all activities for man or spirit. To find God is, perforce, a slow and gradual process. To seek and to find God means, as you all know, my dear ones, liberation; it means freedom from your own inner chains. And in order to find God, you must go, as we say, "on the path." The path means not that you are walking a path that is already there, for there is no path yet when you first decide on its existence. You have to make it. You are actually a "pathfinder" and act as a guide in the jungle who leads the way through all the wild shrubbery and growth and seeks an opportunity to set one foot down after another wherever this is possible. The soul forms that you constantly create by your thinking, your emotions, as well as by your deeds which are nothing but the outpicturing of your thoughts and emotions, show such pictures when you are about to enter the path or are going through the beginning stages of it. For in the average human soul there is such a veritable jungle without being bad or criminal at all. It is merely the confusion, the error, the lack of self-knowledge, the deviation from divine law, and the ignorance about it that creates all this unruly wilderness through which you have to find your way when you decide that God is your final goal. Your inner stubbornness about certain matters and your prejudices create conflicts in your soul as well as in your outer life. These appear as rocks, stones, and high mountains which you have to dissolve. Your various faults show in your soul as unruly shrubbery and often as poisonous growth. You have to make your way through them instead of turning away from them as you have done before you decided to go on the path. There are rivers to cross, wild waters to manage and rechannel. These are your uncontrolled emotions. Uncontrolled are they because you do not understand their origin and their real meaning. There are precipices to jump, my friends, which are your fears of life as it actually presents itself, your fears of pain and disappointment. Remember that you have to make the jump into the unknown in order to master your life, that you have to go through your fears in order to lose them. That means not to turn away from your self-created precipice that need not be one if you were to understand and take life as it is in the first place. Only after you have made this "jump" will you find that there is no precipice!

All this is not merely an analogy. It is true, and these forms are an actual fact. They exist in subtle matter, and you, on the path, are finding your way through all these difficulties that exist within yourself. That is not easy. It is a long mountain climb, a very long one. At times, the climb is very steep and is shadowed, often even in darkness. At other times, when you have obtained a small victory, the sun comes out and you rest for a while. The scenery becomes a little more friendly, for this brighter picture is the product of this victory. But then it just goes on and on. For a long time, you cannot even see the goal; yet you know what the goal is, but you are far from seeing or sensing it. And for quite a long period at the beginning, it seems as though you are going around in circles, always encountering the same scenery and apparently not moving from the spot you have

started from. This may be discouraging if you would not know that this is an illusion. It just seems that way. Actually when you move in this circle, you are going on what I refer to as "the spiral" which is inevitable on the path. All your faults, errors, ignorances, and the resulting complexities create one big vicious cycle in your soul. This cycle consists of various points, namely these individual faults, etc., which affect and interact with one another and thus cause a chain reaction. In order to break this vicious cycle, you have to understand thoroughly the individual points constituting your vicious cycle. You have to concentrate on one after the other so as to find the link of cause and effect within this cycle. The whole cycle cannot possibly be completely understood after having made the round once, so to speak. When you have completed the first round, you start all over again. But each time you start the cycle anew, you gain a slightly profounder understanding of the various highlights and individual points in the cycle until you clearly see the whole cycle in your mind and understand the interdependence of all your negative qualities. Then you will cease seeing the latter as being unconnected. But until this point, you have to repeat the round quite often. At the beginning, this seems to you like senseless repetition and lack of progress, but it is not! Without going through this most important part on the path, you cannot ever be free and reach the light, for you are chained in this vicious cycle. Only in this way can you break these chains.

Some of you may think that you know your faults already. This is true only to a certain extent unless you have been actively on the path for quite a while already. Yes, you know some of your faults. And others you have not yet realized, but you will learn them in a comparatively short time. As I said to you last time, there is a vast degree of difference between knowing and knowing. To what depth do you know? How much can you connect your faults with your qualities and your faults with your faults? How deeply are you aware of your fears? Can you really grasp and understand your fears, insecurities, and complexes from the point of view of your faults in relation to the deviation from the respective divine laws? Until you reach such understanding, you simply have to make the rounds of your main vicious cycle, whatever it may be in individual cases. For it varies with every person. You know by now that all faults originally come from pride, self-will, and fear. But it is not sufficient that you know this principle. It is essential that you clearly see and feel how each and every one of your faults comes from one and all of these three basic faults. Find the common denominator. That is not so easy if it is to be emotionally understood. For that reason, you actually have to go through this cycle step by step, again and again; you have to follow it through until you are able to grasp it well enough that you can break the cycle at one point. Every time you conclude one round of the cycle and start the next round, you follow the upward winding spiral. At the beginning, the upward slant is so slight that you do not even notice it and are under the impression you are repeating the same round. But later on, you will clearly feel that every time you start anew, you have gained a profounder insight into your problems, and you will not be discouraged anymore by an apparent standstill.

However, at the very beginning, you do not even know or feel that there is such a vicious cycle in you. It is all such confusion that you do not even know where to begin. Although you do know some of your faults and all of your outer problems, you cannot as yet connect one with the other. And that is the most difficult part at the very beginning. Everything is still so disorganized within yourself. You do not know where to begin, what to hold on to. The moment you focus your attention on one complexity or problem, other things come up that apparently have nothing to do with it, and you are confused. Only self-discipline and perseverance will get you to the point when you finally can see the picture in such a vicious cycle. One thing is caused by another as a whole chain reaction. When you get to that point, it is a major phase you are moving into. But you must

not get discouraged when first there is such disorganization that you do not know where or how to start. After a while, it will no longer be as though everything were running like sand through your fingers. You will then have something definite to hold on to. That is the clear picture of this cycle. First, it consists of many points, but after a while, they will condense, and these various points will draw together and show you a few major problems that can simply be looked at and worked with from various points of approach. When you progress still further, there will be just one major point that is the key to your entire personality and to all your problems. But you must be the one who finds the key yourself, and you must do it through your own labor. To tell it to you would not do you any good.

So, my friends, these forms do exist. And we, in spirit, can see them clearly. The forms on the path vary with each individual to some extent, for no two people are alike or have the same outer manifestation of their inner problems because it is possible for an infinite variety of good and bad currents to influence one another.

I have promised you that I would speak about prayer tonight. Prayer is one of the most essential requisites in order to develop and advance on the path. Without prayer and the deeds, the following through of your intentions, nothing can be accomplished. Now what is prayer? For many people, this is evident although they may not even really understand it. However, they have no question about it; they just take it for granted. But there are also a number of people who cannot really understand prayer. They say -- in their own way apparently and not without logic -- why should God grant a human being help or grace simply because he prays while another one who may do the works and fails to pray should not receive it? This seems at first sight a logical argument. However, it does not work that way for the simple reason that a person who does not pray will never be able to act and to fulfill himself as can the person who has learned what proper prayer is like. And that this has to be learned, like anything else, is self-evident! I will now try to talk to you about this as best as I can.

God's grace, God's help, and God's light exist all over the universe, and God does not decide to give it or to withhold it, my friends. It is up to the individual man or spirit to overcome the separating wall between his lower self and God's grace, God's strength, God's mercy, and God's love, as well as all the other divine attributes. And prayer is an essential part in order to achieve this goal. How, you may ask? In the first place, prayer is the best exercise to concentrate. We all agree on the necessity of taking the path of purification and self-development. Without the ability to concentrate, you cannot achieve anything in life, not even the most insignificant accomplishment. So you certainly do need the ability to concentrate when you are on the path. Many systems exist in your world that advise separate concentration exercises. However, my advice is that prayer and concentration exercise can be combined. There is no better way of learning concentration than by a systematic way of praying. By concentrating on some object, you will not learn it any better than by concentrating on what you want to pray for. At the same time and simultaneously you derive the benefit of prayer in other respects, which I am going to mention, without losing the time on concentrating on something that is not essential for you. It is part of the path to learn to focus your attention on what is really essential. The concentration on an object is not essential and may merely be considered better than nothing in order that someone who has no belief in God yet may learn concentration. But none of you needs this waste of time. So, daily prayer is important because of the concentration and the discipline that are prerequisites for the process of purification. How can you be on the path if you cannot bring yourself to have the necessary and regular discipline, and if

you cannot concentrate, or if your ability to concentrate is one-sided or used for nonessentials? How can you be on the path if you do not possess the ability to concentrate on the mainstream of your life, namely, your development?

You learn to concentrate when you pray, for instance, for your dear and loved ones -- first, by the mental process of thinking of them. And then you learn to concentrate so that from the mental process you bring your feelings and the depths of your soul into your wishes. So there are layers of concentration, or levels, just as in anything else. The same should be practiced with your enemies. Here the mental process may not be so difficult, but in order to unite your feelings, it may be a lengthier task. Pray for individuals you know, as well as for mankind and all spirits in the universe as a whole. Pray for peace, the spreading of truth, and the fulfillment of the plan of salvation. Pray for all the blind creatures who are still in darkness. Pray for the purification process of more and more individuals. Put up the thought-forms of everything you have learned: the necessity for self-unfoldment through self-recognition; the overcoming of the lower self; the rechanneling of wrong currents; the attainment of love, brotherhood, humility, and union of all beings, as well as their respective development which makes this possible. All these thoughts create clear, light, and good forms that will definitely have their affect. Aside from this most creative activity, it will strengthen your mind if it does nothing else. Of course, your thoughts will sway at the beginning. Of course, you will have difficulties to focus your attention, but that is the work to be done. If you do not let yourself become discouraged by these inevitable and initial hurdles, eventually, little by little, you will learn it better. Do not become upset when you find your thoughts wandering; just start where you have left off without any self-reproach, mentally and emotionally as relaxed as possible. It is a training that is part of your development.

Aside from the benefit of concentration and discipline that prayer helps you to achieve, another very important reason is that during prayer your frame of mind will automatically be different than when you do not pray. And this will occur in more ways than one. In the first place, by the mere fact that you decide to and follow through on devoting every day a certain period and a certain amount of effort on concentrating on others by uttering unselfish desires in your prayer -- that already creates a definite change in the organism of your subtle bodies as well as eventually in your physical body. Furthermore, the majority of people are not capable of cultivating compassionate and good thoughts throughout their daily lives. While they do succeed in prayer, outside of it, they fall back into the bad habits of their erring souls. Love, well-meaning and unselfish good will can be expressed in prayer, but only part of the time outside of it. When something goes wrong, they are unable to feel what they can sincerely feel in the period of prayer. This again is sort of a training. So the importance of prayer is not only in the fact, as outlined above, that you train your ability to concentrate and to discipline yourself, but you also learn to cultivate thoughts that you are unable to cultivate when you do not pray. In prayer, you may be sincerely able to wish well for those who have hurt you. Outside of prayer, you cannot do so as yet. At the beginning, this is even difficult in prayer for some people, but eventually they will succeed if they try again and again. Prayer in that sense has a wonderfully cleansing effect on your soul. Of course, the ultimate aim is that your whole life will be a prayer. You will think and feel at all times in prayer now. But that is a long way off. None of my friends are far enough advanced yet to seriously live a prayer. When you are that far, you will not have to sit down anymore at a certain time each day and pray because you will then actually emanate prayer by every breath you take, by every thought passing through your mind, by every deep and subconscious emotion. Oh, I know there are many people, particularly nowadays, who force themselves to think positive thoughts. But that is not what

I mean. Because if it does not come from the heart, from the innermost recesses of the subconscious mind, if the emotional currents do not follow suit with these positive thoughts, then there is merely a self-deception that may bring greater repercussions than being at least clear in one's own mind where one stands. And prayer is all the more necessary to find out the real truth about yourself: the chasm that exists between your world of thoughts and your world of feelings.

Furthermore, and this is perhaps the most important element of prayer, it is so necessary that you learn to focus your attention on yourself. Your attention should be focused not selfishly but constructively on yourself as well as on your problems from a spiritual point of view. This is necessary if you want to advance on your path. In prayer, you will automatically tend to view yourself, your faults, your problems, and your experiences in a different light than you would ordinarily have done were you still affected by the often very unspiritual influences of your surroundings. To develop a concise understanding of yourself with regard to your problems is another prerequisite. It brings an order into your soul that cannot be created without your unceasing efforts in this direction. You will then learn to realize deeply that your outer problems are nothing else than the manifestation of your shortcomings. It is not easy to reach this understanding, and only by the clear-cut and concise expression -- at least in thought-forms -- will you reach this point. How many of you still separate your problems from your shortcomings even if you do know in theory and in principle that this connection exists? How much work does it require to find this connecting line between the two? That is part of the work that should be done in prayer, or if you prefer, call it meditation. It is the same. Only through such meditation will you take the trouble to clarify and to concisely present your problems to God and to yourself. You do so to yourself in the sense that you must know God wants you to find out the truth within yourself. No one can do so and find the answers and develop without this daily prayer in the right direction, as shown here. Ordinarily your thoughts run wild, and you concentrate perhaps on a minor detail too much, even overemphasizing the effect instead of going to the cause within yourself. What is of real importance you do not bring into focus unless you are in prayer. By that, I do not mean to say that everyone who prays is doing that, for there are many who pray daily in certain ways -- perhaps "ready-made" prayers or even self-made ones -- but without doing that which is most essential for their purification. However, he who wants to be on the path will often find the strength and the desire to do so in prayer because he then feels he has the duty before God to do what is certainly God's will, while otherwise he will still be tempted to follow his old line of thinking and reacting, shirking the real issues. You have to learn to centralize your problems.

Another element of prayer that is of utmost importance to your frame of mind is that anyone who approaches God in prayer will automatically have a more humble attitude. Even people who have otherwise not learned as yet to be humble, who constantly accuse others and the world, the fates and the gods, etc., for their own miseries, at least during the time of prayer will change their way of thinking and become more humble. And gradually but surely, this attitude will really become their own at all times. And people who feel very strongly, although they know better and may not be consciously aware of these feelings, that the whole world revolves around their own ego, that they are the most important beings, in prayer will learn to feel differently by cultivating the thoughts that will gradually affect their emotional currents and their entire outlook on life. People who feel themselves to be the center of the world tend to judge everything subjectively from their own point of view. They will, little by little, learn to feel differently if they pray regularly in the right way. People of that type -- and there are many who, at the same time, display good will towards self-development -- have an inner image in which they feel themselves to be the highest, most

important creatures in the universe, and even their conception of God is cut to order to suit their own unpurified needs. There are many who are too proud to ask for a favor. Yet when they pray, they have to learn that. There also lies a special kind of humility in asking and accepting a favor of someone more powerful. How many feel ashamed to do so and are even proud of this reaction? Isn't that a sign of pride? In prayer you learn to do that, for this is another very healthy medicine for your soul. It is another element that is cleansing. This too will help to thin the wall between you and the divine forces waiting to stream into your soul. But you have to make this possible through your own efforts. Just as your negative reactions and thoughts create the forms of confusion I have mentioned, so too the thoughts and feelings you cultivate in prayer create good, clean, and harmonious forms. These forms will eventually help you change your innermost and often unconscious attitudes that are wrong, proud, self-willed, and fearful. These forms represent the equipment you need in order to be your own pathfinder through your own jungle and wilderness. So I say to you, my friends, do not tell me, "I love God and I try to be a good person; I do not need to pray unless I feel particularly inspired." This is utterly wrong, my friends. The further you are developed, the more that is expected of you, and the greater a duty you have to overcome exactly that which is most difficult for you. Therefore God will not make it easier for you to arrive at this daily discipline by sending you the necessary inspiration and "mood." You have to learn the difficulties of making this daily cleansing process second nature to your personality. The more difficult it is to summon the discipline for this daily prayer, the more you need it! It is a well-known fact that whatever you neglect on your path, wherever you deviate from your life plan, the stronger the repercussions in your life!

On the other hand, the person who has reached the point already of making prayer a daily discipline without which one cannot live anymore must be careful of another opposite extreme, namely, the extreme of routine. This habit and routine is always the pitfall of many good things. You also know that one of the difficulties in finding the perfection of divine harmony is to find the happy medium in everything and to resist the extremes that always lurk on the way as temptations of a sort! Only you, yourself, have to find the proper balance. When I say routine, I mean that you go on praying for the same things and it gives you a certain satisfaction of "a duty done." As long as the daily discipline is difficult to muster, you have to fight to attain it. But once it does become "second nature," by all means keep up the daily prayer. Do not cease praying, but be wakeful that your prayer remains alive. Be mindful and wary that you do not just say words that have become a habit, that, though they are good words as such, you do not feel as strongly about them anymore as when they were new. Furthermore, pray according to your daily needs. You do not remain on the same point, particularly now when you are on the path. Your phases change, as I have explained at the beginning of this lecture. You go on from one point to the other in your own vicious cycle. And life will bring challenges and experiences for you -- big or small -- according to the present needs of your development. So different problems come to the surface at different times. For this, you have to be watchful and adjust your prayer accordingly. In this way, your prayer will be forever new and alive. All the various points your vicious cycle consist of will come up alternately as time goes by. Each point may be at the surface for a certain period, some lasting a few weeks, others even a few months at a time. You cannot possibly concentrate with equal strength on all the points in the cycle, particularly when you have not yet attained the phase where you can centralize a few major issues in this cycle. This concentration on the overall picture can be done occasionally when you have discovered a major recognition regarding this cycle -- but these are exceptions.

So in order to adjust your prayer to the phases your development asks you to concentrate mainly on at any given time, you have to be wakeful from that standpoint in your daily life and think what the happenings and your reactions mean with regard to your inner vicious cycle. In that way, you will resist the temptation of making a routine of your prayer. It will remain alive in this way, by ever changing it according to your changing path. Not only that, but you will be able to concentrate better on what is to be needed each day, and you will not disperse yourself. You may keep certain highlights that you want to remember, in order not to neglect the many things for which you pray that have nothing to do with yourself directly. Even in this respect, be careful that you keep your feelings alive, which is easier done if you change the wording and, most of all, if you listen to the strength of your feelings. In order to keep your prayer alive, it is necessary that you take your daily needs (not material ones) into it and consider all happenings from your spiritual development, asking God for help and understanding. As much as you have to fight for this understanding, so much so is it necessary that you then penetrate your subconscious with these thoughts of new insight by forming the thought-form from various angles. As a matter of fact, it is a substantial part of good prayer that you say to God each day what you know you have to learn and ask for His help. This will gradually impress your subconscious mind so that a good image can form within yourself. That amounts to an instruction of your subconscious. It keeps the idea clear in front of your mind's eye what your immediate goal is -- the goal you can see now. And it will give you a better knowledge of how much you still deviate from this goal when you observe yourself in your daily review.

He who works in such a way is gradually removing the separating wall around his soul, and divine strength and help cannot fail but to flow into him. It just cannot be different, and you will feel and know it to be so! But you have to do it first, my dear ones.

And now, my friends, I'm ready for your questions.

QUESTION: Isn't prayer also a confirmation of faith in God?

ANSWER: Of course it is. This is part of what I have been saying although I did not express it exactly this way.

QUESTION: Could you give us three or four highlights of what should be part of every prayer every day?

ANSWER: Well, I have already mentioned a few of these highlights. However, let me say this now: the spreading of truth among mankind, praying for unhappy souls and human beings generally -- praying for loved ones is easy, but your prayers should also be for those whom you do not like. The more you dislike them, the more you should pray for them. Then try to observe your own feelings when you wish them happiness. Do not deceive yourself. Say to yourself, "A part of me wants this; another part of me is still struggling against these good wishes for certain people." In this way, you will not be living a lie. Try it, and ask God to help you to really feel wholeheartedly within yourself this love for everyone, at least while you pray.

Then everyone should pray for peace, for love, brotherhood, justice, and the spreading of divine law. But you can only be a great contributing factor to all this if you cultivate these elements within yourself. As long as hatred, resentment, and intolerance exist in you, you are contributing to the opposite of all that. Your realization that you are a part of the universe and can further or

hinder divine truth, peace, love, and so on will make you feel more responsible, and your prayer for all these general good things will not be divorced quite so much anymore from your own development and your sense of participation with every other creature in existence.

Another important item is that the self-will, pride, and fear inherent in every human being will make way to humility, love, and the willingness to have God's will done in all respects. But do not only pray for this in general, try to observe in yourself exactly where you react, think, and feel differently than that which must be pleasing to God. Pray that you find out specifically what your fears are! And once this prayer has been answered and you are utterly aware of what they are, pray that you can overcome them in the only way fear can be mastered, namely by being able to accept that which you fear, provided it is God's will for you and it is good for your development and for your spiritual growth. Pray that you have the ability to embrace pain as well as happiness. Pray that you do not love your ego so much that you shirk the healing agent of occasional pain taken in the right manner. Pray for the courage to do so. Pain, in the ultimate sense, must be one with happiness. When you reach a pretty far advanced point on your road to God, you will not know the difference between pain and pleasure. Pain will be happiness, and happiness will be pain in a blissful sense, not in a sickly one. For all is one, in the end. I realize, my friends, that these are merely words just now -- perhaps even dangerous words for some of you. For you should not try to force this state of being which I am explaining here. For this is part of the state of being; you cannot force it. By forcing any part of the natural result of the goal, unhealthy deviations happen that are always close at hand to the truth. Anything can be perverted, especially when it is forced. So beware of forcing these states which I am describing here. You should just continue on your path step by step, and every day you will accomplish something. And that is good. Do not hurry any particular result that can only come about when the results develop organically out of the immediate efforts and needs one can grasp at the time. If you pray for all this and take, in addition to that, your changing personal problems into it, as outlined before, you will reap the fruits.

QUESTION: There are some theories that say that in order to achieve the discipline of daily prayer, one should set aside the same time every day. I feel that this leads rather to the routine against which you warned us. Which is right?

ANSWER: You cannot generalize that. For some people, it is right to do it one way; for others, another way. I would say that if a person still has the difficulty in mastering his discipline in this respect, then the same time and the same place every day may be helpful in such cases. Although there are also cases when the discipline can be just as well, or even better, developed if one does not bind himself pedantically, this depends on many circumstances, on the way of life of a person, on his character, and so on. One cannot make a rule for it; it is so very individual.

QUESTION: But to start the day with prayer gives a spiritual touch to the day, and again the evening should be good for peace, is this not so?

ANSWER: Oh yes, I should say that every person can devote at least two or three minutes to prayer when they get up and when they go to bed. But that does not necessarily have to be the time when prayer is so essential to one's spiritual work. Some people may find another time of the day better for that, but they should still rise and retire in God and with God. This does not take more than a few minutes and should be done in addition to the long prayer that will take at least half an hour. For some people, the best time for that may coincide with their rising or their retiring, but

this is not so with everyone. The important thing for the long prayer is that you should know you have sufficient time and that no one is going to disturb you so that you can be wholly relaxed. When that differs with each person. As long as it is done regularly, it does not matter when or if it is done one day at a different time than on another day. With some people, however, it is better regularly. Each person must find out his own rhythm and reaction.

QUESTION: Since we are starting with the Gita, I want to come for a moment to what you said with regard to pain and pleasure. Is that what you meant beyond the pairs of opposites?

ANSWER: Yes, exactly.

QUESTION: Last time, you said this question should be asked first tonight about the overactivity of the soul.

ANSWER: You all know, by my previous lectures, there are basic active and passive currents in the human soul, in the entire universe. And I have explained that the disharmony in the human soul is greatly due to the fact that many currents which are supposed to be active are passive and vice versa. Now what are these wrong active currents? Active currents that should not be active come out of self-will. Self-will does not always mean to want something bad or wicked. All of my friends here certainly would not desire consciously something that is wrong or bad or harmful for anyone. But where your self-will I am speaking generally always manifests is, for instance, in the fact that you cannot accept the imperfections of the world around you and even of yourself. In a wrong way, you do not accept your lower nature. Your self-will says, I want it differently. There should not be any injustice. This person is wrong, and this should not be. I do not accept it. There is a very fine though definite difference between knowing the wrong and, in humility, accepting the world God has put you into. In theory, you all know that, but you do not apply it in practice. Every single one of my dear friends has times when he pushes inside against the facts that this life is an imperfect one. The idea does not occur to you that it is good for you to be placed in the middle of imperfection often similar but often different from your own. This is the very possibility for you to grow and develop. The idea does not occur to you either that you are quarreling with God, really, when you push against conditions such as they are. Your overactive currents will gradually run in the channels destined for them when you learn to accept in humility the world as it is and if you allow emotionally other people to be wrong. In fact, you cannot change it, but in your emotions you constantly press against it. When I say you should allow other people to make their mistakes, I do not refer to instances where you should stand up and perhaps defend a weaker brother or sister. This kind of allowing would mean the opposite wrong extreme of being passive where activity is supposed to exist. When one instance is right and the other wrong, again it cannot be set down in fixed rules. Every case differs, and only by your proper efforts in self-development will you find the truth in every given case. It is significant that the very people who are active where they should be passive, meaning that they struggle emotionally against that which they should accept, lack the courage to stand up and prohibit the lower nature of another person to take advantage of their surroundings.

So when I speak about struggling against acceptance that should cease, I mean the instances when you are supposed to accept that which you have neither power nor right to change. The conflict arises all the stronger by the fact that outwardly you cannot do anything because your common sense tells you it is not possible, while inwardly you are writhing, you are revolting. This

revolt is an overactivity. This is the most common and frequent example of overactivity, and I might safely say that all other instances of overactivity are derivations from this main theme. This waste of strength for every activity needs strength then diminishes your strength where you should be active. If you are active where you are supposed to be, it will never exhaust your resources of inner strength, but rather only if you are active where you are not supposed to be. For instance, you need strength to love, to have courage, and so on and so forth. But if your strength is wasted by your wrong currents, not enough remains where you should have it, where you need it, and thus your soul gets out of order. Knowing all this, you will be able to begin rearranging your wrong currents. View your inner feelings of pressure and revolt. Analyze them from this point of view, and you will understand their meaning better. The better you understand, the better you will be able to change these currents. The pressure people feel within themselves is in many instances due to their inability to accept what they should accept or, put differently, to an overactivity of the soul. Is that clear?

QUESTION: What is the psychological and spiritual meaning of the death wish?

ANSWER: The spiritual meaning is the desire of the lower self to reject life in the spiritual sense. Life in the spiritual sense means the struggle, the effort, and all the other many requisites necessary to come out of the darkness or out of spiritual death. To reach light and freedom, to reach eternal light cannot be accomplished without the struggle on the path. It can only be done by your own efforts. No one can or will do it for you. God is not going to do it for you! He will help you if you have the serious desire to do it. If you do not want to shirk it or postpone it, he will give you untold help. But he will not do it for you. This cannot be! Your postponement, your procrastination, your wishful thinking that it may not be necessary after all are all symptoms of the death wish that arises out of the sluggishness of the soul. The hidden thought that this is unnecessary and that circumstances after death are perhaps quite different are the death wish. Because if what you wish in that part of your nature were true, there would be no eternal bliss and light and life, my friends. You wish it, of course, only because you do not want the work to be done by your proper efforts. If it could be done without you, you would not have this death wish. An atheist is the most typical and the strongest example of a person having the death wish. Why does an atheist stubbornly hold on to his brand of superstition, namely that there is nothing after death? The atheists say that the religious person is a wishful thinker, a dreamer, and an idealist. And I say, my friends, it is just the opposite. The atheist is the wishful thinker. He hopes when he dies everything will be over and he will have eternal unconsciousness and sleep and that he will not be made responsible. That is the strongest form of wishful thinking! And every atheist should think about it in this way. And whenever my friends have recurrent doubts, it is their death wish speaking that makes them wishfully thinking that it may not be necessary to overcome their own inner hurdles. That the death wish has been differently interpreted in various psychological schools of thought, we will not discuss here, but basically the death wish is what I just said.

QUESTION: And then I would like to know why are most people afraid of death? It cannot merely be fear of the unknown. There must be something else?

ANSWER: A person who is not fulfilling the utmost according to his personal plan will be afraid of returning to the spirit world. Unconsciously he knows this, but the feeling cannot come to the surface with the true reasons, but only manifests as a fear of death generally. Everyone who is not doing all he can will dread the moment when he has to review his life and see that he has to

come again for the same reasons and encounter the same difficulties, and perhaps even worse ones. A person who is really 100 percent fulfilling will not fear death. Do you understand?

QUESTION: Inasmuch as fear is the opposite of love and most people are afraid to die, doesn't that show that most people don't know what love is?

ANSWER: Of course! Oh, I say that again and again. The attainment of love specifically, just like the attainment of perfection generally, is something that comes about in slow stages. You reach it by gradual stages and not from one day to the other. Therefore the degree of capacity to love varies in each individual. The more capacity to love a person has, the less fear he must have even though some fears do not seem to be directly connected with their lack of love. Also, the more overly strong the ego, the smaller the capacity to love, and therefore again the more fear is present.

QUESTION: Isn't a fear of death also in a physical/psychological sense given to us in order to preserve our lives the life instinct?

ANSWER: Oh yes. That is quite true up to a certain degree. Let us put it this way. For the person who is still not very far in spiritual development to understand what you are learning, to know what you know, this instinct to live is an essential. For you, that is not necessary anymore, at least not in general. But even for you, this instinct may be important when you pass times of great crisis, when all your knowledge is paralyzed. But in general, you know what is what, and you do not fear death anymore in order to hold on to your life. So here it is a question of development. A child in the actual sense as well as in the spiritual sense needs this fear of death as a preserving instinct. But as maturity grows, this instinct gradually turns into a different channel.

QUESTION: This is similar to objective fear?

ANSWER: Yes, exactly.

QUESTION: May I ask a question in connection with mental disease? What is the spiritual background of schizophrenia?

ANSWER: There are so many possibilities there that I could not possibly give one answer. As far as it can be generalized, I may say this. An extreme case of the wall of separateness will cause such a disease, an extreme disability to love, an extreme egocentricity. That would be, broadly speaking, the origin of any mental disease.

QUESTION: In other words, a complete separation between the higher and lower self?

ANSWER: Yes, but not only between the higher and lower self, but also between the self and others, as well as the self and reality.

QUESTION: Complete lack of love then?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Most people who love life immensely are more afraid of death than those who don't love life. How is that?

ANSWER: No, that is an error. That is not true at all. For people who live in the real sense will never be afraid of death, but those who love life in the wrong sense will. You see, as I always say, all depends on the how. In this case, how does a person love life?

QUESTION: It is the difference between the infinite life and the finite life?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: It is the sort of loving life where we want to grasp everything within a short time?

ANSWER: Exactly. That is the wrong kind of love for life.

QUESTION: I would like to ask this. You spoke about blessings in the last lecture. I found that very interesting, but there was something I did not quite follow through on. There is a certain degree of blessing that we receive when you give it to us here in person. How does that compare to the blessings that you give to us when we hear it then on our tape, and we are not in your presence, or when we read blessings in print?

ANSWER: Again the principle is the same that I outlined in prayer. The blessing is always here, and it depends on your ability to receive it. In theory, it would be just as easy to receive a blessing through a radio, through a book, or in any other way by long distance. But the fact is that it is much more likely that you will not be receptive without certain stimulants in order to be open and receptive. In the beauty of nature or when you hear beautiful music or after a lecture like this, your heart and your soul will be open and receptive and the blessing I can give or bring can flow into you. You know that there is no distance in spirit, just as there is no time. So the distance makes no difference. Our friends in Switzerland, for instance, could at this very instant receive these blessings just as much as you can, provided they are just as open for it as you are. That is the point.

QUESTION: It is a question of tuning in?

ANSWER: Exactly.

My dear ones, I will retire again into my world, and I want to say to each one of you, each of your tiniest efforts is recognized. Do not think for a moment if a good thought or the following through of a good intention of yours is not known by your fellow creatures, that this means it is lost. I say this to some of my friends. On the contrary, God knows it, God sees it, and the fruits for it will come without a doubt, even more if no one but you knows it. And so, my dear ones, receive this strong ray of love coming to each one of you, you who are here and you who are away. Take this love into your hearts, go in peace, be in God!

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