

IMAGES

Greetings in the name of the Lord. Blessed is this hour; blessings for all of you, my dear friends.

Most of my friends in this group have made serious efforts on their path of development, and therefore it was decided in the spirit world that you are ready for stronger medicine. So I shall go a step further. Many of my friends, in fact most of them, come to a point when the struggle on the path becomes a bit discouraging. You have begun to recognize your faults; you are full of good intent to overcome them; and you may even have succeeded in a small measure. You recognize some of your wrong attitudes, and you wish to change them with all will power at your disposal. Yet you must face the fact that this outer will is insufficient. No matter how hard you try, you seem unable to execute some changes, and you ask yourself why. In ignorance of the facts responsible for this inability, you are often inclined to give up altogether, saying to yourself that it is useless. And that is where your gravest mistake lies. My dear friends, it is important to realize that every personality in the course of a lifetime, usually even in earliest childhood, often even in infancy, forms certain impressions -- impressions due to environmental factors and influences or to sudden unexpected experiences. These impressions or attitudes are usually conclusions formed by the personality. Most of the time they are wrong conclusions. One sees and experiences something unfortunate, one of the unavoidable hardships of life, and the person then generalizes on account of these happenings, thus forming certain preconceived ideas. The conclusions that may at times be formed even in infancy are not thought out; they are more what might be called emotional reactions; general attitudes concerning life in one or several respects. They are not completely bare of a certain kind of logic, logic of its own very limited and erroneous kind. And as the years go by, these conclusions and attitudes sink more and more into the unconscious. Nevertheless, they are molding to some extent the life of the person in question. We call each such conclusion an image since we spirits see the whole thought process as a spiritual form -- or an image. You might say a person can also have a positive, healthy image engraved in his soul. That is true only in some measure because where no wrong image has been produced, all thoughts and feelings are fluctuating, dynamic, and relaxed. They are flexible. You know that the whole universe is penetrated by a number of divine forces, currents, and influxes. Thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that are unconnected with an image flow harmoniously with these divine forces and currents, adapting themselves spontaneously to the immediate need, subject to change according to current necessities. But the thought and feeling forms emanating from wrong images are static and congested. They do not "give" in accordance with different circumstances. Thus they create disorder. The pure currents flowing through a human soul become disturbed and distorted. I might say then that a short circuit is established. This is the way we see it. The way you see and feel it is through unhappiness, anxiety, and puzzlement over many apparently inexplicable things in your life. For instance, the fact that you cannot change what you wish to change or that certain happenings in your life seem to repeat regularly without an obvious reason for it are just two examples. There are many more.

The wrong conclusions that form an image are drawn out of ignorance and out of half-knowledge and therefore cannot remain in the conscious mind. As the personality grows up, the intellectual knowledge contradicts the emotional "knowledge." Therefore the person pushes the emotional knowledge down until it disappears out of conscious sight. The more emotional knowledge that is hidden, the more potent it becomes. This I have said to you many times.

How can you be sure that such an image exists in you? In the first place, the fact that you cannot overcome certain faults, no matter how much you want to do so and how much you have recognized that these faults are wrong and undesirable for you, is an indication of such an image. I have sometimes mentioned the fact that people love some of their faults. How and why should they love them? They do this for the simple reason that according to this image certain faults seem like a defense measure or like a protective covering. This is, of course, unconscious "knowledge" or reasoning. The conscious effort to overcome this fault remains fruitless because the roots are unconscious, and therefore the whole inner reasoning process is hidden from the intellect. So it will remain until the image is recognized.

Another indication of such an image is the repetition of certain incidents in one's life. An image always forms a pattern in one way or another -- a pattern of behavior, or reaction on certain occasions, and also of outer happenings that seem to come to the person without his doing anything to call it forth. In fact, consciously the person may fervently wish something that is the very opposite of the image. But this conscious desire is the weaker of the two since the unconscious is always stronger. The unconscious does not realize that its attitude prohibits the very wish the person consciously has but cannot fulfill, that the price for this unconscious pseudoprotection is the frustration of the legitimate desire. This is very important to understand, my friends. It is of equal importance to understand that outer events can be drawn to a person like a magnet; on account of such inner images: certain people one encounters in life, certain happenings, and so on and so forth. This may be difficult to perceive, nevertheless it is so. The only remedy is to find out what the image is, on what basis it was formed, and what were the wrong conclusions.

Often you do not notice the repetition and the pattern in your life, my friends. You just pass over that which is obvious. You are so used to the assumption that certain things are coincidence or some fate testing you arbitrarily, or merely that other people in your surroundings are responsible for your repeated mishaps. Therefore you pay much more attention to the slight variations of each incident than to its basic character, the common denominator of all the happenings due to your image.

Most human psychologists have found this to be a fact. But what they often do not know is the fact that these images have seldom been started in this life, no matter how early they were formed. Most of the time, an image is of old standing and carried over from one lifetime to another. That is why incidents that will not form an image in a child or a person who is free of that particular conflict will help form an image in an entity who has brought that image into this life. Although the essential thing is to find the image and its formation and origin in the present life so that it can be adequately dissolved, there are nevertheless cases where the knowledge of all the complete facts would be very useful to the physician. In other words, such an image can often be successfully treated without the knowledge of the previous life origin. But there are cases where the mere knowledge of the "carry-over" principle would be of invaluable help.

In one lecture, I gave an explanation of how an entity is prepared for life on earth; how plans are made according to previous existences and according to what should be accomplished and overcome in the next incarnation; how the subtle bodies are prepared according to these considerations so that the conflicts are arranged in such a way as to bring the problems to the surface. For that purpose, families and other life circumstances are chosen. When an image exists from previous lives, the incarnation takes place in an environment where provocations to the existing images are bound to occur, perhaps due to similar corresponding images in the parents or others around the growing child. Only in that way will the image bring out the problem. And only if it becomes a problem will the person pay attention to it instead of looking away from it. If the latter occurs, circumstances will be much more difficult in the following life on earth until the conflicts become so overwhelming that no outside factors can be blamed any longer. This is the time when the person begins to turn upward and inward.

As I said, the only solution is to make these images conscious. I can give you certain advice and hints on how to begin, but you will not be able to execute it completely by yourself. You will need help. But if you are serious in your desire to find and dissolve the images that are in your soul (for your life is not without problems), then pray to God, and He will give you further guidance and help and lead you to the proper person with whom you can form a cooperation and work in that direction. To do that needs, among other things, humility. And we all know that humility is a very important asset for your spiritual development. He who is constantly reluctant to work with another person must lack humility even if it is only in this one respect. And perhaps there is also a fear involved of facing the images. But how short-sighted this is, my friends! It is this very image that causes you so much trouble although subconsciously you do not think so. Subconsciously you are convinced that it is a protection for you. Let me give you a very primitive example. A child has taken a bath; the water was boiling hot and therefore has injured the child. This child may then come to the conclusion that to take a bath is dangerous. The child will never take another bath if it can be avoided. Out of this, conflicts will arise. In youth, the parents force the child to take a bath, and every time this happens the child will go through untold and quite unnecessary misery. In later life, other conflicts will come up. Either the person will actually go through with the inner conclusion, even though by that time the reasoning process is not conscious any more; or perhaps more rational explanations may be found. But the fact that the person remains unclean will create new conflicts. Rejection from other people will set a new chain reaction in motion. Or the person has realized intellectually that his resistance to bathing is unreasonable, not knowing about the incident in childhood. Having pushed it out of sight, he forces himself to take a bath in spite of the strong emotional repulsion. Thus, he will develop certain symptoms in connection with bathing that he cannot explain. The mystery of such "unreasonable" reactions and the anxiety connected with it will present difficulties to the personality that cannot be overcome unless the image is found.

Now, this is a very primitive example. Most of the time, there are much more subtle and complicated emotional reactions involved. This occurs when an image is formed, along with emotional reactions responsible for many a deprivation of fulfillment in later life. It cannot be stressed enough that the person is no longer aware of the original reasoning behind such conclusions. If he were confronted with the facts within his soul, he would laugh. He would say that it is entirely untrue and the person telling him so is having a wild fantasy. It is also important to understand that the chain reaction and consequences resulting from the original impression will create certain mishaps and hardships. These will be even harder for the unconscious to understand

because it was so convinced that to avoid certain actions and reactions would be a protection against the hurts of life.

Now how can you find your personal image? It is done not by working on symptoms, whatever they may be, but rather by working with the symptoms. These symptoms are your inability to overcome certain faults and attitudes; your lack of control over certain happenings in your life that come to you regularly and create a pattern; fears and resistances at specific occasions, etc. The harder you try to eliminate the symptoms without having understood the roots and origin, the more will you exhaust yourself in useless efforts. The symptoms are merely one part of the price you pay for your wrong and ignorant inner conclusions.

The way to start searching for the image is by thinking back in your life and finding all the problems. Write them down. Include problems of all sorts. You cannot do it unless you take the trouble to put it down black on white, concisely. For if you merely think about it, you will not have the overall view necessary for comparison. This written work is essential. It is certainly not too much to ask. You do not have to do it in one day. Take your time even if it takes a few months. It is better to do this than not to start at all. Then when you think of all the big and small troubles, even the most nonsensical, the most insignificant ones, start to look for the common denominator. You will find in most instances the existence of one common denominator, sometimes even more than one. I do not say that a difficulty cannot occur only once in your life, independent of any inner image. This is possible. This, too, is based on cause and effect as everything in the universe is, but it may not be connected with your image. But be careful, my friends. Do not put an occurrence aside superficially, designating it as being unconnected with your personal image merely because it appears that way at first sight. It is very possible, and even probable, that there are no such happenings in your life. All unpleasant experiences are probably due to your image and connected with it at least in some remote way.

The common denominator may not be easy to find. Only after you have thoughtfully grasped your image will you be in a position to judge which of your experiences, if any, have something to do with it. Until then, you must keep all happenings in reserve, so to speak. In meditation, in serious self probing, in checking your emotional reactions in the past and present, and with the help of prayer, you will find, after a long and arduous search, what the common denominator is. It is pride. In self-will, something says in you: "I do not want the risk of life; I do not want the pain of life; therefore I draw this conclusion which seems to me to be a safeguard against it." That is not a safeguard, for it will bring you in fact infinitely more trouble, the very trouble you are trying to escape from, for life cannot be cheated. This is the merciful law of God. How merciful you have no way of knowing yet. For otherwise you could never come out of the misery of the lower planes with their darkness. Only when you begin to face what your own wrong conclusions and fears are and you are ready to accept life for what it is, will you be able to cure your soul. Only then will you have given up some of your self-will that wishes to deny life in its present form, the form that is necessary for your development. Only then will you have acquired the humility not to wish to be protected from these risks and hardships of life. They will cease to be necessary only after you can fearlessly accept and shoulder them.

Therefore it is a good beginning to make a review of your life concisely enumerating all your troubles. And then go on to search for the common denominator. Do not turn away from it hastily if something appears to be unconnected. Probe and you may experience a surprise. The most

apparently unconnected happenings turn out to have one common denominator. When you have found that, you have made a major step forward in your search, for then you possess a clue to the image. But the common denominator by itself is not yet the key to the image. It is a strong directive, but by no means does it open the door that will make you fully understand your whole life. In order to get to the image itself, to all the devious ways in which it was formed, and to the understanding of the processes of your reaction when you formed it, you will have to explore your subconscious more thoroughly.

There are various ways and methods in which this can be done. You cannot do it by yourself. That is impossible. But if you make the beginning as I have suggested here and then pray for guidance, being ready to overcome your pride so that you can be open with another person who will be chosen by the spirit world to help you, then God will guide you and lead you to further victory.

Do not let yourself be dissuaded by your own inner resistance. For that resistance is just as erroneous, ignorant, and shortsighted as the image itself. In fact, the very same quality that makes you resist is the one that has created the image in the first place, without your knowing it has created and will continue to create untold misery for you and will counteract your conscious wishes. Indeed, it causes you to lose or never to gain what could be rightfully yours. So, have enough wisdom to see through this and to evaluate your own resistance for what it is worth. Do not let yourself be governed by it. How can you be a spiritual person who is developed and detached in the right sense if you remain governed by your unconscious forces and by the illogical, erroneous, and ignorant conclusions that have formed such a painful image within you. This image is the one factor in your life that is responsible for every unhappiness. No one else is responsible for it, only you yourself. True, you did not know any better but you do now. Therefore you are now equipped to eliminate the source of your unhappiness. And please do not say, "How can I be responsible for other people acting in certain ways again and again towards me?" As I said before, it is your image that draws these happenings to you as inevitably as night must follow day on this earth plane. It is like a magnet, like a chemical law, like the law of gravity. The components of your reactions forming the image influence the universal current entering your personal sphere of life in such a way that certain effects must occur, following the causes that you have thus set in motion.

If you do not have the courage to delve into your subconscious, to face your image, to dissolve it and thus to make a really new person out of yourself, you will never be free in this life; you will always be chained and bound. The price for freedom is your courage and humility to face up to things. When you have taken all the necessary steps, the victory of freedom is such joy that no matter what happens outside of yourself, nothing can mar your happiness. Furthermore, you can be quite sure that the images you do not dissolve in this life will have to be dissolved in a future one. This should not be taken as a threat, my friends. It is just a logical consequence. And how can anything be a threat that is supposed to liberate you from your own chains? No, you must not take it that way. You must merely see realistically that the sooner you find your images of your own accord, and not because life has become too much for you due to the increased twists your image keeps acquiring, the easier it will be. That you may safely believe.

You may say in certain moments of your life: "All this about being born again with the same problems and so on may be speculation. There may not be another life after all. Why should I go through all the trouble now?" But I say to you that you should then do it for the sake of this life! For it is never too late and always well worth the effort! The remaining years will represent a

different kind of life for you, a life of being a free person instead of a chained one. And he who has no more doubts about the reality of reincarnation should consider this as an additional incentive. Actually, it may be a very good exercise for meditation to think about what your next karma may be. You are always extremely concerned with your previous incarnations. It might be even more beneficial to be concerned with your next one. With some spiritual knowledge and some intuition about yourself, you shall be able to reap more benefits. In addition, by finding your image, even to some degree, you may form a pretty accurate idea of what your next life may be, perhaps not in detail, but a basic idea of what you have yet to fulfill. And in order to fulfill it, consider what the conditions must be so that you will realize your conflicts. Of course, the actual next existence will depend on your development during the rest of this life too.

Do not forget an aspect of the law of cause and effect or the law of karma whereby every entity is always given the chance to solve his problems, conflicts, and disharmonies in the easiest circumstances possible. When not enough courage and will power is mustered in these circumstances, the life that follows must of necessity be a little more difficult. And if again the courage, humility, and will-power are not mustered, the life afterward will be more difficult still. When the time comes that the going gets really hard, you cannot help but face it instead of fleeing from it. So, by law, the increasingly difficult lives arrange themselves. As a result of a violation of the divinity, the violation of escaping from oneself replaces the facing of oneself.

This should also bring into clearer focus a controversial subject among people interested in the spiritual life. There is so much uncertainty and confusion among human beings about how to take and react to tests, trials, and hardship. One school of thought claims God does not send tests. God is love; how could He want us to be unhappy. This is true, my friends. And there is the other school of thought saying that it is necessary that we experience tests, and therefore it is God's will. As tests come, we should accept them in humility and thus prove our worthiness of God's mercy and bliss. This is equally correct, my friends. But the full truth lies in the middle or, rather, in an extension of these two concepts. God has made perfect laws, and God has given His children free will. If, with this free will the laws could not be violated, then free will would not exist. And the perfection of the law is that the remedy therein contained in the long run is an affectation of these very violations. For the more you twist these laws, consciously or unconsciously, the more they work against your interests until you finally reach a point where you cannot twist further, and therefore you must eventually change your vocation. For only in God lies infinity. Therefore only the divine and strict adherence to it can be infinite. Violation of anything divine must therefore, perforce, be finite. Thus you cannot infinitely twist the law. So your violation of divine law finally reaches a point where automatically you again work for the good.

It is very true that to take a test in a spirit of humility with the attitude of "Father, Thy will be done" is the right thing. But this is not enough if you want to attain a higher level. The highest and the best you can do is that you take it that way and, in addition to it, search for your own images. Your own subconscious wrong conclusions are directly responsible for the tests you are experiencing at any given time. And in order to be able to do that, you cannot be impatient with yourself, for it is utterly impossible to find, to comprehend, and to dissolve this image in a short time. It is a long, drawn-out process. And even after you have understood it, the re-education of emotional currents and reactions that have long been conditioned in one direction takes time, effort, and patience. So as this one school of thought says, patience and humility are absolutely necessary. You may revolt very much against unhappiness, yet when you realize that not God and the fates are

to blame, but you yourself, your revolt may turn against yourself, and you thus will also become impatient with yourself. With such currents, you will never, never succeed in finding and dissolving your image. You must be in a relaxed state of mind, and such a state of mind can be yours only if you understand and accept the length of the search. And, also, if you accept your inability to become perfect quickly, thus you are accepting temporary unhappiness humbly.

There is a vast difference in accepting unhappiness resignedly, without understanding why, and the course I have shown you here. You accept the tests without understanding their underlying roots, but nevertheless in a spirit of devotion. This is already a great deal for some. This attitude also conditions the entity for the patience and humble attitude that is so necessary in order to do the work here outlined whenever he or she is ready to do it. It is certainly healthier for the soul not to revolt against God and creation. However, the last, best, and highest stage of this earth plane is the procedure I have outlined here, my friends. Purification cannot come cheaply, and it would indeed be cheap if merely a list of faults and attempts to overcome them were all that comprise it. Purification is more than that. You cannot purify or become purified unless you understand and control your own subconscious. And that must be a long journey. However, you will receive the help if you are willing to do it. And you should understand that you are doing it for God and for yourself. What God wants for you must be your own best interest, so you are not really making a sacrifice to God since God and the true you are one! Think about that, my friends!

There are some people who are so selfish that they do not want to do anything for God that inconveniences them. At the same time, they are still so blind, believing that what God wants for them is contrary to their own happiness. And there are others who are willing to sacrifice anything for God -- although without an understanding of their images, they will never truly succeed. The more happiness that results out of it, the worse their guilt feelings become. Or rather, this is the way they feel before true inner happiness is conceived; this is the way they feel theoretically about it. For such guilt feelings are always a twist of the emotions connected with the image. Actually, happiness cannot come before the image and the guilt feelings are understood and dissolved. But in their present state of mind, this is the way they feel. And they feel very heroic if their guilt feelings mingle with their devotional capacity.

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

QUESTION: You mentioned twice tonight that which concerns will power and courage. Are the batteries of both recharged by prayer?

ANSWER: Of course! Certainly! If you pray specifically for willpower and courage for a good purpose -- just as the one outlined in this lecture -- the prayer will absolutely be answered. If you pray for something else, you will get something else, provided it is good and according to law. That is why it is so very important to know what to pray for at any given time of your development. It is seldom that a person knows that he needs such and such more in order to get ahead, so as to pray for it. Often you are not sure as to what you need most at various phases of your development. You may put more emphasis on something else that may be worthy too. But though it may have been more essential two months ago, it is not that way now. As Jesus Christ said, "Knock and it will be opened unto you." The knocking indicates that you are alert and interested enough to figure out what you need most at various stages of your path. This path changes constantly. And you surely cannot pray with equal concentration on everything at once.

QUESTION: Are all our limitations a result of this image?

ANSWER: Most of them are a result of this image, but not entirely. I might say that you must have limitations so long as you are still in the cycle of incarnations and so long as you have not reached the state of divinity. You cannot be a universal genius. Limitations on a broader scale have nothing to do with the image. But if there are limitations where you have a talent and cannot make sufficient use of it or you run against a wall with that talent, then it certainly has something to do with your image.

I will retire now with blessings of a special kind that are coming to each one of you, my dear ones. It is the blessing of courage that you all so badly need. And I beg of you to use it in the right way. For, if you open yourself, your heart and soul, to the strength that is in this room now, flowing to each one of you, you will feel courage. And if you keep that strength, you can make it last for a while. But use it where it does the most real good for you. Do not use it for nonessentials! It is up to you how you use it. You receive it, and you have your free will to open yourself to it, and you should know what to do with it. It will be a test as to how you use that strength if you accept it now willingly. The love of God touches all of you, my dear ones. Be in peace, be in God.

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