

## WHOSE BLINDNESS? WHOSE OPINION?

Greetings, my dear friends. God bless all of you.

You all seek the kingdom of God, the kingdom of love. Yet you encounter innumerable difficulties, difficulties with other human beings in spite of the fact that you are so full of good will and are aware of the basic spiritual truths and the importance of love. These obstacles arise from your own blindness in which you are encased -- not understanding the blindness of others. This blindness of the other hurts you while you, in your own blindness, are unaware how much you often hurt the other person. If you can keep this in mind, my dear ones, it will constitute the necessary platform, the basic stepping stone from where to proceed further. For with that in mind, you will be aware of the danger of how your own blindness, not the other one's, causes you to remain in your misery, in your hurt, about a real or imagined injustice. True, something may be or seem unjust. But you will view it differently when you realize what I am saying here. Whenever you suffer because of other people, the other is no more blind than you are yourself -- and often even less! With this understanding, you may begin to seek where you are blind. You always make the mistake of battling against the other's blindness -- the lack of understanding of the other person -- instead of trying to eliminate your own blindness. The idea does not occur to you because you see your own case so "clearly," and you continue to strengthen your own case by thoughts in the wrong direction. With this idea in mind, you will automatically begin to cultivate an objectivity which is one of the fundamental requirements of unselfishness and the capacity to love. However, the more you concentrate on how you have been hurt, the more difficult it will be for you to leave your own little ego out and to see the other person's point of view. The more difficult it will be for you to accept that which you cannot alter. The more you battle against all you cannot change -- which is everything and everybody except yourself -- the unhappier you will become, regardless of whether or not you are "right" and regardless of whether or not you find an outlet in a real or supposed wrong done to you.

The unhappier you become because of other people's wrongdoing, the less you accept that which you cannot change. That does not mean you should accept wrongdoing in a sick and masochistic way -- wanting to be tortured or wronged in order to satisfy your guilt feelings -- but in a healthy attitude of realizing that the wrong of another person can never do you any harm in reality, or rather only as long as you prevail in the wrong attitude.

Every crisis, every breakdown is the result of a basic wrong attitude. There never need be a breakdown if the attitude is changed in time. If you truly want to realize this all-important truth, you can protect yourself from all such happenings, such as a crisis or a breakdown. It is never the outer circumstances that lead you to it, but your wrong attitude to such happenings. In reality and in principle, a breakdown is a childish temper tantrum in a stronger degree. Yet the basic attitude is the same. I discussed temper tantrums last time in connection with one of the fundamental vicious

circles in the human being. When a breakdown occurs, the subconscious says "You cannot do this to me; it is too much. I will be well again if the circumstances I abhor will change to my liking." This is really and truly what it amounts to, my friends. But this is the wrong attitude. Self-will prevails to a strong degree when this emotional climate exists. The right attitude would be to turn about inwardly and to seek what can be learned from this painful situation. You all know well enough by now that no painful situation can come into existence from which an important lesson cannot be learned.

An entity going from one incarnation into another with this wrong attitude in which self-will and self-pity prevail tries to force the world to his own liking, and when this cannot be done by power, other means are sought, such as sickness or a breakdown. Such an entity violates his own soul currents to such an extent that finally in the incarnation in which this attitude culminates, a predestination for insanity will be the result. This is one of the basic reasons for insanity. I do not say it is the only one, but I might add that all other conditions creating insanity are, at least to some degree, connected with the condition cited here. We wish that this truth about the background of insanity would be more fully recognized in your world.

The less you adjust to the world around you, to conditions you cannot change, the more your life force goes into the wrong channel, becoming destructive instead of creative and regenerating; and therefore the unhappier, the more disharmonious you are bound to become. It begins with very disharmonious and rebellious moods, encasing you more and more in a wall of separateness, egocenteredness and blindness. This will make you commit deeds and thoughts, bound to bring unfavorable results to you. This in turn might increase this particular vicious circle, and you will rebel even more strongly against the world around you, being blind to the fact how these results were caused by you. The next step might be continuous tantrums in one form or another and finally a breakdown with the hidden hope this will change people and circumstances. And when you come back to the earth plane life after life in order to learn how these results were caused by you, but you do not, insanity will finally be the result.

The principle of the mild tantrum is the same as insanity. The basic attitude is the same in both from a spiritual and psychological viewpoint. Only the degree varies, but the direction of the soul currents, the thoughts, emotions, and mentality are the same in essence. Sanity and emotional health depend largely on the ability and the willingness to take any undesired condition and adjust to it by finding out what can be learned from it, by giving up the battle against it and relaxing inwardly, but concentrating on the cause in you that has brought the unwelcome condition about. This requires a certain humility and flexibility. It dissolves rigid self-love that cannot take life as it is and ignores the fact that you have molded your life. You often seek the answer in yourself too in spite of the fact that, at the same time, you still do not adjust in the right way. This is because you seek in the wrong way. Subtly you seek self-justification, and you go too far in looking for the answer. The real answer is much closer than you think or are willing to look for.

So the only solution is a turnabout and the basic realization that first you change before you expect life to change for you. If you are truly willing, the answer will come to you. And perhaps the best answer will be given to you by the very people who have hurt you. If you, my dear friends, who are all so sincere, try this whenever these words seem to apply, you will reach the inner freedom you are striving for. You must reach it in that way. If you can give up the slight satisfaction in being hurt and wronged -- yes, there is a satisfaction in it, added to the pain -- exchanging it for the

attitude described above, a much greater, fuller, and more durable satisfaction will be yours without the pain and disharmony. Thus you will have freed yourself of the chains of blindness. In this way, you will automatically increase your understanding of others, and this must eliminate your pain and hurt! Such words have been said many times. But they need repetition for many of my dear friends. I say them with all the love I have for each one of you. I can promise you relief, clarification, liberation if you try.

We shall now discuss the subject of your opinions. It becomes increasingly important on this path to find out just what your true opinions are. Many of you are completely unaware that you have opinions which you accepted at one time "ready-made," so to speak. You have accepted them without asking yourself whether they are really yours and why. The human personality is often so blind, so involved in his own emotional problems that he is unaware that he holds opinions not his own and why he does so. In the first place, it is beside the point that the opinion you hold may be valid in itself according to objective truth. If it is not your own, arrived at through mature deliberation, it is more harmful than a wrong opinion you have honestly gotten to. This may surprise you, but I will try to show you why it is better to have a wrong opinion if it is really your own, than a right one if it is not. In the first case you may be mistaken. Why not? You are a human being and therefore fallible in judgment. An honest mistake, as I always say, is much better than a lack of courage and all the other sick and weak reasons that make you hold on to an opinion not honestly arrived at.

There are various possibilities why you have opinions not your own. One possibility is simple laziness and inertia. Anything that does not touch you personally is not important enough to make an effort for -- in this case the effort to think independently for the sake of truth. Hence you adopt opinions of others quickly. It is one thing not to have an opinion at all about a subject that is neither important nor interesting to you, but another if you hold other people's opinions.

Another reason for not having your own opinion is inferiority feelings. You are so certain that other people know better than you that you rely on their opinions rather than on your own. You do not realize that by going on in this way, you can never break this particular vicious circle. The more you hold on to opinions not your own, the more you despise yourself for it unconsciously. And the more you despise yourself, the greater the "need" to adopt other people's opinions. Thus you see how every wrong inner condition creates a vicious circle, apart from the great vicious circle I discussed last time. The only way to break this circle is to have the courage to examine the subject, to review it freely and independently. If you then arrive at a different view and have the courage to live up to it at the price of differing from your environment, you will automatically respect yourself a lot more and thus begin to break this particular vicious circle. On the other hand, if you arrive at the same opinion all over again, but this time it has really become your own, the same effect will result out of the labor and courage to make yourself free from the yoke of influence, not of others, but of your own weakness.

Another motive or reason for holding opinions not your own is a desire to conform. This also holds true to the above, but often something else enters into it. There are a few subdivisions for this desire for conformity. For instance, the child or the immature person feels different from his surroundings; there is always this feeling of not belonging, of being isolated and being unique in a negative sense. This is why all children want to be like other children in many respects and feel

deeply ashamed about their imagined "difference." The general maturity process of the soul will change this. Due to this circumstance, a person will be inclined to hold on to opinions not his own.

Another motive for conforming and therefore not daring to seek one's own opinions is the areas where you still rebel against authority; this we discussed already. Since you still crave to belong and your rebellion is not only hidden but does not concern all realms of your life, you want to make up for this rebellion by conforming to your environment in other ways.

Another motive for opinions not your own is often that thereby you cover up the exact wish you deny yourself in the opposite opinion you adopt. Because your desire does not conform to public opinion, you are convinced of the wickedness of your desire. Added on to this is your general guilt feeling, resulting from the main vicious circle. Hence, you are compelled to have an opinion that is not in harmony with your emotions and unconscious desires. Whether these emotions and unconscious wishes are in your opinion desirable or undesirable is not under discussion here. But under no circumstances are possible wrong desires eliminated by adopting the opposite opinion out of fear and weakness, conforming outwardly. In such a case, opinions are often particularly rigid, and even violent.

In all these instances, you violate your personality, you lack the courage to be yourself, to arrive at your own conclusions. And you sell truth for an imagined personal advantage. In all these cases, it amounts to just that, if you look at the problem from this angle. This increases your self-contempt even though this is usually quite unconscious.

I might add that often you have opinions only because they represent the exact opposite of a hated and rejected authority, be it parent or others. In this case it is not conformity, but the exact opposite. It is defiance, rebellion, and hate -- subjective emotional reasons -- instead of mature judgment that make you hold an opinion. Thus you are just as much in bondage as by conforming. You are just as dependent.

You can surely see how harmful it is to hold opinions that you did not arrive at independently, free from your emotional involvement. It is therefore of utmost importance to examine your opinions from this point of view in the work you are doing on this path. Find out where you are thus bound, which of these motives apply to you. It may be that a combination of all these motives apply to you. In some instances one of these motives may be predominant, but the others may still be present.

The danger is that your intellectual rationalizations, the way you may succeed in justifying the validity of your opinion, may hide the weak and dependent motives. Do not forget that the validity of the opinion is not the point here. What you expound may be right, but why do you really have this opinion? How did you get it? What are the inner motives? This is the difficulty in the work. The validity of the opinion may be so strong that you cannot find the emotional, subjective, and personal reasons behind it. It requires the utmost self-honesty. And a little more than that. It also requires an understanding of all these subtleties and a deep-rooted good will to apply them to yourself, to detect in yourself the slight emotional flavor about how you react to certain of your opinions. By "listening to" or feeling your reactions, you will be able to get to the roots of this question. Beware of your good reasoning capacity. The more successful you are, the graver the danger that you hide your true motives.

My suggestion is that you take certain general subjects on which you have strongly formed opinions and examine them in the work you are doing -- by yourself and with your co-worker. Take politics, religion, your idea about love and sex, or whatever it is that regards everyone to some extent. What do you really think about it? Why? Think whether you would have the same opinion if you had grown up in a different environment. Would you have the same opinion if different influences around you had prevailed; if your personal circumstances in life would be different? All this is healthy because it will give you a more objective outlook. One can always find justifications for almost any viewpoint. There is always a point in the opposite view. Try to see it. And then try to detect how subjective you may have been so far. It will already be a great progress if you succeed in admitting that you have a personal reason at stake by holding on to your opinion, that your reason for it is not solely based on objective deliberations. This self-honesty is of great benefit to the soul. Are there any questions with regard to this subject?

QUESTION: Yes, there is something I don't fully understand. It seems to me that time is so extremely limited that one could not collect sufficient data and analyze it sufficiently to arrive at an adequate opinion on many subjects. And therefore one is compelled, consciously, to adopt an opinion on an emotional basis.

ANSWER: In the first place, my dear, let me ask you this question. Are you really aware when you have adopted an opinion on an emotional basis? I doubt this very much.

QUESTION: Well, I am sure that there are many occasions when one isn't aware. But there are others when one is fully aware, for instance when the subject is not of sufficient interest to devote what little time there is.

ANSWER: The moment you are emotionally influenced, the subject is of importance. It is unimportant only when you cannot be emotionally touched. There are many questions that cannot touch you emotionally. If it is not important for you, you can say, "I do not know." Therefore you will have no opinion. Let us say, for instance, any scientific subject. In such a case, it will not be difficult for you to say that you do not know. It does not touch you personally. However, the scientist working in this particular field may be emotionally involved. But he may not, yet the subject is important for him. Therefore he has to study it. But you may say that you hold no particular opinion on the subject, except when you are too proud to admit that there is a subject that you know nothing about. In that instance, you become emotionally involved. And this would lead you to adopt an opinion you know nothing or too little about. For it is perfectly true that you cannot possibly study all subjects in existence. I did not say that it is necessary to have opinions on all subjects. I merely said that where you have opinions, they should be your own.

Furthermore, the moment one realizes that one's opinion is based on emotion and therefore subjective -- even if it should happen to be objectively true as well -- this is already a great deal! Many people are utterly unaware of this. In fact, this is the reason I spoke on the subject tonight so that you find out just that. For a long time, this will perhaps be the best you can do. You cannot become completely objective all at once. In order to reach this detachment, you have to go through the stage where you realize that you cannot be objective in certain areas of life. It is healthy to say, "Here I am not objective for I am emotionally involved. For the moment, my opinion is such and such, but I realize it is subjective, and therefore I take it with a grain of salt. I do not take it too

seriously." The danger is when you are convinced that your opinion is completely objective, and you expound it with very good arguments while you are utterly unaware that notwithstanding all the good arguments, you are deeply and subjectively involved.

QUESTION: Did I misunderstand you then in interpreting what you said that one should have opinions on subjects one is not qualified on?

ANSWER: You certainly did misunderstand. There is nothing wrong with saying about as many subjects as you wish that you do not know. On the contrary, that is fine. What I meant is that you examine all subjects where you do hold strong opinions. You do not have to consider subjects that are of no importance or interest to you and you honestly admit that you cannot know. However, when you feel disharmonious whenever a contrary opinion is offered, when you feel angry inwardly, or when you feel the great need to convince others that your opinion is right, then you should examine yourself as to where and how you are involved. It would be very foolish if I were to advise you to have an opinion about every conceivable subject. Is that clear, do you understand it now?

QUESTION: What about the problem about being unable to form an opinion on a subject on which the majority seems to have an opinion?

ANSWER: That does not matter. The fact that many people have opinions -- often not their own -- is no reason that you must have opinions on subjects that you did not study. There is nothing wrong in that. Only if it becomes a pattern, when a subject that is of importance to you and you cannot form an opinion, then you should look into it. If you examine the pattern, it will reveal something to you. You will find out why you are unable to form an opinion. What are the psychological reasons behind it? It could be a fear of committing yourself. It could be that a person constantly refrains from having opinions in order to avoid friction, or so as to be liked and respected, or in order never to differ from other people, or in order to avoid a certain responsibility. For, the moment you have a conviction, it entails a certain responsibility -- that may be behind your being unable to form an opinion. And by a little and seemingly unimportant symptom, you may find something infinitely more important behind it. By doing this work and reviewing your life from this particular viewpoint, you will find certain clues, whether you hold opinions not your own or whether you are incapable -- or I should rather say, unwilling -- to form an opinion for psychological and emotionally involved reasons that are still hidden. Is that clear? Well, this is the purpose of this evening, my dear friends. Particularly those friends who do not have the regular opportunity to come for private sessions should have the possibility to ask questions here freely. There should not be any shyness even if a question has to be asked three or four times if it is not clear. Please, you should all feel free enough of all shyness to ask as much as you like.

QUESTION: After death, the physical body disintegrates. And after that, one of the subtle bodies does. Is that the etheric or the astral?

ANSWER: Well, my dear, this is unnecessary to go into here. There is enough data written about it in occult and esoteric literature. Besides, it is really not important.

QUESTION: That was just part of the question I had in mind. When the spiritual body is just one body, does that have any feeling and emotional personality?

ANSWER: Yes, but in a very different way. Certainly every spiritual entity, as created by God, is a personality and therefore has feelings, reactions, and opinions. But they differ greatly from the unpurified ones of the human personality. Your own higher self, the divine being living within yourself, registers, feels, and sees, but as differently as you feel from a child. Your reaction would be quite different from the reaction of a child in certain circumstances. If the child's favorite doll is broken, it will think the world has come to an end. The child cannot see that this is no tragedy. You, as an adult, will sympathize with the child. You will understand its sorrow, but you will not be affected by this loss in the same way. A similar relationship exists between your unpurified personality and your divine personality. The latter is watching and observing your outer personality. It often differs in the opinion of what is good for you. It tries to lead you on the right way; sometimes you let yourself be guided, but sometimes you do not. Your self-will and blindness stand in the way.

The fact that your divine personality does not feel and react in the same way as your outer personality does, does not mean, however, that it does not feel and react, too. But the feelings are refined and much wiser. The aim is much higher. It has an infinitely wider outlook with a longer range.

QUESTION: This question deals with the subject of love. We are told that love is something that grows. However, if we don't possess too much of it and we still wonder sometimes what is the right thing to do, we still feel we must do the right thing even if we are not quite ready to do it, we should do it because of love. Is it then right for us to do it as a "must."

ANSWER: That depends. It cannot be generalized with a "yes" or "no." It depends what the case is and how the "must" is executed. A "must" out of a compulsion is of course not advisable. But let us say on this path, in the course of your progress in self-recognition, you realize that a certain behavior on your part, being good and right in itself, was done without the feeling sustaining it. You have actually done the right thing out of weak and sick motives, bargaining for a reward, pacifying a guilt feeling, nurturing a desire for self-destruction. All this adds up to compulsion. Now, depending on the issue, in one instance it may be right not to continue doing this right thing until you are ready to do the right thing wholeheartedly. But in other instances, your desire is still so crude that to give vent to it might bring harm to others and, of course, to yourself. This you recognize. A part of your personality wishes to avoid this. Another part does not. So far, you have done the right thing out of mixed motives, partly out of the good ones, but partly you were afraid of the sick and weak motives, covering them up with the right action. By recognizing these facts, you will, of course, continue to do the right thing, but now you will be aware of your inner motives, not deceiving yourself into believing your motives are all good and pure. In that instance, compulsion will be gone. The act will remain the same, but the motive will have changed by the recognition even though you are still incapable of having a pure motive of love.

There is the danger when a person discovers that the former motives were compulsive and not entirely genuine, that he falls into the opposite extreme to give vent to the crude feelings. He had committed a right act out of wrong motives, and he thinks the proper change is the wrong act out of the "right" motive, so to speak. When he thinks in that way, he is at least honest. You do not have to commit a harmful and selfish act in order to be honest. It is sufficient that you recognize that your motives are not yet pure, that you are incapable of having a pure motive of love. Besides,

it is never your whole personality that wishes to commit the selfish act. It can only be a part of you. In the interim stage, after you cease acting in self-deception and compulsion and before you are capable of being one with your divine self, you may continue to do the right act, but with realizing how you feel, realizing that your bargaining for certain results should stop. This will bridge over the gap until you reach the perfection of letting your divine self manifest. That is the way to learn love. First, honesty with yourself and about your past and present motives, then the second stage is to continue the right act for itself even though you cannot yet love. To do the wrong act is no more true to yourself than to do the right act you do so far. Because as long as you are not pure in this respect, your personality is always divided. When you are one with yourself, you will be completely loving. Until such time, you should recognize where you fall short of this aim, but that does not mean to give up the right act. In this way, gradually something will grow and bloom in you. By doing the right act without self-deception, in the hope that one day you will be capable of feeling entirely at one with yourself in doing the act -- this will develop the force of light and love in your soul. Do you understand?

QUESTION: Yes, that is very clear insofar as it goes from one to the other. We are told in one of the past lectures that no human being can love completely, nor can he be perfect. Then how much love can a person expect to receive from another person? Can he expect to be loved with all his faults?

ANSWER: The expectancy of love may be a basic key to the hindrance of having it. For what does that mean? It means that there is still a bargaining going on in the person. It means that deep down you actually say, "Yes, I would be willing to love, provided that it is safe. And it would only be safe if I am sure to be loved as much as I love." It takes a great deal of searching until one comes to understand that many people are capable of many different kinds of love. By understanding this, you will come to the point when you can love without expecting it back from the same source and when you can recognize that a little gesture may have a greater meaning in one person than a great gesture in another. It is so relative, and your sense of this relativity will be cultivated. You mentioned "can we expect to be loved with our faults?" Perhaps the best attitude to take would be that you expect to be loved with your faults as much as you love others with their faults. This is the way it will be, my friends, just exactly that way. This may sound disciplinarian. But it is not. This is the way the magnetism of the soul currents work. In the measure that you are intolerant of the other person's faults, in that measure you will be judged yourself -- and reap love to exactly that degree. There is no other way.

QUESTION: On the subject of right action, how can a person who is so bound that he or she is compulsive know a right action from a wrong one?

ANSWER: In many instances he cannot. In many he can. There are many instances when it is quite clear that one alternative is right and the other is selfish.

QUESTION: We have learned by now that very often what we think of as love, in our terminology on earth, amounts in actuality to hatred.

ANSWER: In cases where the alternative is not so clear, when a person is in that stage, he cannot and should not take any major decisions anyway until he becomes much more clear about himself. I was speaking of the little acts of every day where a person is confronted with the

alternative of an obviously selfish or unselfish act. In this sense, I discussed the problem. The other problem you bring up is a different subject altogether. I suggest that we take it up next time. I would like to go into that more extensively. They are two different questions.

And now, my friends, be all blessed in the name of God. Go on your path, continue and God's strength and light must always come to you even though at times things may look hopeless and bleak. But do not ever forget that as long as you are willing, God's light comes to you again. The sun will shine again. So I bless all of you here. Be in peace, my friends, be in God!

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