

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 53
An Unedited Lecture
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SELF-LOVE

Greetings, my dear friends. God bless all of you, God bless this hour, God bless our work. Now that I will part from you in physical manifestation for a short time, we in our world wish to express our thanks to each one of you who tries so hard, who battles, who overcomes, who is willing, and who constantly summons his strength to overcome inner blocks and resistances. All of you who have the noble courage for this path of light should realize that each of your efforts helps us in turn, and for this we are grateful. For without your good will, we could not execute our task.

I also wish to make a suggestion to all of my friends belonging in the three groups. When you resume your activity in the fall, my suggestion is that, at the first time, you all meet together -- the three groups in one. And then you go on as before with perhaps a few changes that may develop out of this first common group meeting in which you might discuss how best to eliminate frictions, what could be done to do so, what could be done to use these frictions so as to learn from them individually and as a whole, and also what each of the individual participants may be contributing to the friction, no matter how much you may be convinced it is purely another's fault. Try to build your concept of unity of purpose in this group work. Try to become aware of the responsibility and the wonderful obligation that each one has, by participating in this work. Try to become clear, each one of you, what the group work is supposed to be, what it should accomplish, and how you should go about it. Each one should have his say. In this common meeting, every objection should be freely voiced and intelligently discussed, in friendliness, open-mindedness for the other's viewpoint. This is my suggestion to begin the new season after vacation time. Of course, you have your free will and should only take this as a suggestion, no more. After this common discussion, you may perhaps see that one meeting is not sufficient. So you may meet all together for another time until everything is cleared up, and then resume three separate groups again. Work out some plan. You will be inspired if you reach out for it. At this opportunity, I might further suggest that you should try to become more aware of the Holy Spirit, of the inspiration of the divine world. Reach out for it, especially when disagreements and frictions separate you one from another.

Tonight I should like to discuss the subject of self-love. You all know, I have said it again and again, namely that each truth can be distorted into an untruth. This is perhaps the most powerful weapon of evil -- never complete untruth, for that is not dangerous. But the distortion that may be right in some circumstances, but applied where it is not right or is rigidly set up as an inflexible rule -- that is the danger of evil. No matter what subject you take, no matter what concept or idea you can think about, the true meaning of it can be distorted into an extreme, where it is negative. Incidentally, next season this may be a good thing to do in your group work, in addition to other work to be taken up.

It is the same with self-love. There is the healthy kind of self-love existing in the mature soul, but wherever your unconscious attitudes and currents are distorted, healthy self-love will be

distorted as well. Self-love in the wrong way exists in many forms. The crudest form is selfishness -- putting oneself into a better light or position than one's fellow creatures, wanting advantages for oneself that are disadvantageous for your fellow creatures, and also a certain type of self-admiration, in a sickly way. This is obvious. Again, this can exist on various levels of one's being. The most outer level is easily noticed by others and therefore, once self-search has begun, is easily detected by the searcher. But if and when it exists and is hidden in the emotions and not so much in outer deeds and manifestation, perhaps even covered by contrary outer conduct which is thus not genuine, then it is difficult to detect by others or by the self-searcher. It requires the depth-work of such a path. It is needless to say at this point that any right conduct not based on honesty and inner conviction, not sustained by similar emotions, is not only ineffective but even harmful for the personality, at least as long as the person believes his conduct to be an expression of his innermost self. For then self-delusion is the more harmful factor than the best outer conduct or deed.

Therefore, begin to search for your own inner, and possible hidden, currents of distorted self-love. Become clear about the proper concept of it and how it works when twisted. But do not allow this right concept to hide your deviation from it because of guilt; rather you should look for what in you causes this wrong kind of self-love. For there must always be a reason. As long as you have not found the reason, my friends, no matter how much you know it is wrong, it actually does not even "pay." You will not be able to overcome it. So the procedure must always be to first find out in what way you have the wrong kind of self-love. And until you find out all these subtle emotions which are hidden, you cannot go further. But after you become aware of them, you can dig into deeper regions and find out what is the cause of it. You will usually find a lack of proper self-love, in the right way, is the cause of your distorted self-love, in the wrong way. If on the one hand you do not love yourself as you should, you are bound to love yourself too much in another way. In other words, your subconscious seeks the wrong remedy. For your lack of self-respect and therefore proper kind of self-love, you try to substitute this lack by a disproportionate self-love in other areas of your being. Do not forget the unavoidable connection between these two factors. If you would love yourself properly -- that is, by self-respect -- you need not love yourself too much.

In the lecture of the general vicious circle, I told you about your guilts, about your revolt against authority, and about your fears of not being accepted and loved. All these factors cause self-contempt and inferiority feelings. You always despise yourself because in some way you wish to shortchange life. You want to get something the easy way, as a child does. That must ultimately be at the root of your self-contempt, your feelings of inferiority. Nothing else really is. All these other things you may find to explain your inferiority feelings are but symptoms and rationalizations. In the measure you feel insecure and inferior, in that measure there must be a side in you, maybe deeply hidden, in which you wish to escape living, in which you hope to get out of life without investment or risk and without "exposure" -- in other words, a desire in you or a belief that you can cheat life in some way. When you find this side, you are at the root of your inferiority feelings and lack of self-respect -- not before. Until then, you will only run around in circles, that is, you cannot break the vicious circle. At this breaking point, once you decide by inner growth and understanding that you no longer wish and expect to shortchange life -- for by wishing and expecting an unreality, you are in for trouble -- you will gain a well-founded self-respect. Therefore you will love yourself in the right and healthy way; therefore you no longer need the wrong kind of self-love that only contributes, in the last analysis, to your self-contempt.

This will purify your inner vision and understanding so that you will fully realize -- not because it is taught, and said -- that an advantage of yours that is at the same time a disadvantage or hurt for another person can never, never be fruitful for you in reality. It may appear to be so for a time, but it actually never is! This is the human blindness on this earth sphere, due to restricted sight, due to the fact that you only see a particle of the whole picture. But such inner self-recognition will reveal more of the picture to you so that you will convince yourself of the falsity of such an assumption. You are still filled with the falsity that the other's disadvantage may be your advantage; every day there are moments where you react that way, at least emotionally. By this road, you will come to understand fully that a possible advantage gained over a brother or sister that suffers a disadvantage by your advantage, demands ultimately a much higher price from you than you lose by giving up such "bargains."

There is also another kind of self-love in the wrong way. It is a factor much more frequent than usually realized by mankind. It is a sickly self-admiration, being in love with oneself. This may manifest in various ways. The most obvious way I do not even discuss. I mean, when a person just loves his personality or where he is just in love with his outer self. This is a very crass form of sickness and comparatively rare. But I want to go into the more subtle regions of the same current, that is much more frequent than in the crass form mentioned here. A person may be in love with certain faults, as I have mentioned before. He is pleased about it. He feels them to be something admirable although he knows intellectually that this is not so. Yet whenever it is brought out, if he were to analyze his reactions, he would come to the conclusion that he feels flattered. Or a person may be in love with his way of life, with his manner of living, or whatever it may be. This is subtle and easily confused with the gratefulness and joy of living, which is purely positive. The borderline between these two emotions is very thin. The slightest deviation from this feeling of gratitude and rejoicing of the life force may bring the reaction of a sickly "being in love with your life." There is no rule where you may deviate and where you may not. Only your complete sincerity and self-honesty, listening into yourself, checking your reactions, analyzing them, trying to feel out your emotions, will furnish you with the answer where you deviate from the healthy and positive. But beware of the opposite extreme -- feeling guilty when you enjoy life and are grateful for the good things -- because you also detect a slight streak of self-love in this particular fashion. Separate the two without stifling the right emotion in the fear and guilt of the possible wrong one that you may find. You can never forcefully tear out the wrong reaction when you have detected it. This could not succeed and would only stifle the rightful joy in living. Rather find then where you lack self-love in the proper way. This will automatically reduce your self-love where it is distorted.

I realize this is slippery ground, my friends. Those of you who are not experienced and trained to some degree in the work we are doing can easily misunderstand. Your intellect will never suffice to understand what I mean. Only your emotions will. You should never feel guilty because of such discoveries; rather take them and go on from there to find out what lies underneath -- why do you react or feel that way, what rejection must have caused this self-love, this being in love with yourself or your life in one form or another. For whenever there is such a wrong form of self-love, rejection, imagined or real, must come in. Usually rejection is at the other pole of the current of wrong self-love. Find out this feeling of being rejected. Thus you will not be so severe with yourself. Then find out how you unconsciously tried to counteract this rejection by withdrawing from life, shortchanging it, cheating it in a subtle way in your inner attitude. This is the remedy. This will not cause you to cut off the good and healthy feeling that lies right next to the distorted

reaction. Thus will you be able to retain your gladness, your gratefulness, your joy with whatever good you have, without the element of being in love with it, so to speak.

The proper kind of self-love is the natural result of the healthy soul. In the measure you heal your inner sicknesses, in that measure you will love yourself properly. For a long time, humanity has lived under the delusion that to love yourself at all is sinful. This is just as wrong as the sick kind of self-love. In none of the Holy Scriptures or in any spiritual teaching of truth and value will you ever find that you should not love yourself. By not loving yourself would mean that you do not honor the divine manifestation that you represent. Not loving yourself means self-punishment, masochism, denial of your personality. Not loving yourself prohibits your functioning as you should. It prohibits your capacity to love and to help others. So beware of the misconception that to love yourself is wrong. So distinguish between the sick and the healthy way -- that is, between self-respect and distorted self-love.

Many times man is tortured about the question of making the proper decision when he has to consider himself too. Without being aware of these thoughts, he is filled with the mass image of misconception: that any consideration of the self is selfish and sinful, that this hinders his ability to make a decision at all. Of course, all his personal fears and inferiorities enter into it as well. To make decisions is a prerequisite of healthy living. This distortion in the mind and soul contributes to the inability to make decisions. His lack of proper self-love on the one hand, his overgrown, sick self-love on the other, causes him to fluctuate between the two wrong extremes, and he cannot find a way out as long as he does not realize the breaking point, mentioned before. He is taught that self-consideration is selfishness and is thus completely confused. He assumes that anything advantageous for him is automatically wrong. It may and it may not. Again no rule can be set up. Realize that you are often called upon to make decisions when you cannot choose between obvious right and wrong, good and evil, white and black. Decisions are often involved and have to be weighed. It is unavoidable that someone gets hurt. Realize that this someone does not always have to be you although at times it may; at other times, the wise decision is that it is not you. This may seem to contradict what I said before, namely, no disadvantage of another can possibly be wise and really advantageous for you. But it is no contradiction. Both are true on this earth sphere. If you stand before a decision where anyone has to be hurt, you or another, it is the final outcome of a conglomeration of deviated reactions and chain reactions happening in the past. The past you cannot change, and therefore you cannot avoid facing the issue in the present, least of all if you refrain from making any decision -- neither by being selfish, nor by being masochistic and automatically not considering yourself with healthy self-respect, giving yourself as much right as the next fellow and to the next fellow as much as to yourself. If you weigh all this with honesty and integrity, you will find the right answer which differs in each case.

If you pay yourself the proper respect, you will cease to demand an extra position, as you emotionally do at present. You are off on a tangent, so to speak, by the famous "I do not deserve it" that evolves so often in the image work. As compensation, you do not seek the breaking point mentioned before, but you go to the other extreme by putting yourself on another plane, separated from others, demanding more than you give to others, unconsciously, emotionally, psychologically. You rebel against your own lack of self-love, your self-contempt, and choose the sick overcompensation in the wrong extreme. Actually, your rebellion is never addressed towards others. It may seem so at first, but really, deep down, your rebellion is addressed against your own low opinion of yourself.

Again these words are addressed much less to your intellect where much of what I say seems evident, but they should reach certain of your emotions as they come out in the work. In this way you will understand certain of the emotions coming to the surface, while otherwise you will not know what they really mean. When the subconscious allows them to come out, they seem like a big bundle of confused feelings to you. With words like these, you will be able to make something out of these feelings. Without understanding them, they would completely suffocate you, would depress you more than necessary, and you would see no remedy, see no breaking point. Therefore, read these words carefully again, and try to feel an echo within yourselves.

I would also like to discuss the element of punishment in the human personality. I discussed self-punishment at length previously. I discussed your need of it, and its connections. So I do not have to go into this again. In the child as well as in the immature adult person, there exists another form of punishment, and that is the wish to punish another. If the other person does not do what you wish, you often have a desire to punish them for it. This can happen in very hidden and subtle ways. It need not happen in deeds -- in what you do or another person does towards you or refrains from doing for you. It is more an inner attitude. It is a well-known fact that each human being, as a child and at times also later, occasionally when experiencing a hurt, a disappointment, a frustration, rejection, wishes to die. When analyzing this wish thoroughly, it is seldom that the hurt is so deep that the wish to die is genuine. It is much more often the case that the child desires this in order to punish those who have slighted him. The child feels and thinks somewhat like this: "Now they will be sorry, now they will see what they have lost. They will cry at my funeral, at my deathbed." You all know these are childish reactions, often occurring even in quite adult people. But even if you do not indulge in such fantasies anymore, when you are slighted, don't you still carry the same germ with you, manifesting in other ways? Don't you live it just the same in other subtle little reactions? There are many other ways the same trend can manifest. It does not always have to be death fantasies. You can punish your fellow creatures in many other, subtle ways. Whenever you feel rejected or slighted, check your innermost reactions where the element of punishment may come in. When you have found it, it is again a victory for you. View these reactions without guilt, with the wise distance you should have for the childishness still living in your soul. There is no human being who does not carry the child he once was, through his life in one respect or another. Gain this distance from yourself, smile at it, do not get involved with this part of your being, but see it objectively, judge it, this part of your being. There are many ways of punishing those you love -- for instance, sickness. How many people develop sicknesses in order to punish their loved ones, in order to force them to be tender, sympathetic, considerate. And many other forms exist as well. Find them if you can recognize yourself from this viewpoint too, for this will bring light and fresh air into your soul. Nothing but the realization, the ability to recognize such hidden reactions with the proper spirit, will contribute to your mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Are there any questions in connection with what I said tonight?

QUESTION: In connection with self-love, the right kind, would you care to elaborate on self-pity and egocentricity?

ANSWER: It goes without saying that both are the result of the wrong form of self-love. As far as egocentricity is concerned, I believe this is answered by what I have said although I did not use this particular word. As far as self-pity is concerned, let us examine what such pity of the self expresses. What does the soul say with such an emotion? It says: "I do not recognize that I can

change anything. Therefore I want the world, my surroundings, my loved ones, God, to see how much I suffer and how little I am at fault, how much I became the prey of circumstances over which I have no control. I want others to change. If I make my suffering clear, they might." No one who truly realizes that nothing happens that is not caused by himself (no matter how obviously outer circumstances may point to the opposite) and that cannot be changed by changing yourself will ever indulge in self-pity! If you are sorry for yourself, in one way or another, you have not accepted the truth that you, and you alone, are the master of your life. This truth is an uncomfortable one and often shied away from, but it is the only one that will truly make you free and independent. Self-pity is a complete rejection of self-responsibility. It expresses further the hidden desire to force others, be it people, be it God, be it life, to do the necessary changing instead of the self.

QUESTION: Could you please elaborate on the topic of healthy and unhealthy self-love? Where can one draw the line between healthy and unhealthy self-love? What would you call unhealthy?

ANSWER: I think, my dear, that this was discussed in this lecture. Does anyone else feel that it was not sufficiently explained? If others feel that my words were not clear, I will be glad to repeat and elaborate further, perhaps in a clearer way. But if it is just you who did not quite understand, perhaps you have missed some of my words, perhaps your mind was wandering at times, and when you reread it, it will become clearer. Do you all understand? Well, then, my dear, I am sure by rereading it, you will see that the entire lecture dealt with just that. If you then still have difficulty in understanding, I shall be glad to help you personally. As I said, you cannot establish a rule as to where the line can be drawn. You can find the line only by asking yourself, in checking your emotions, in analyzing them for their meaning, for what they express. The borderline lies within the individual; it is the inner truth of each person. It is different with each human being.

QUESTION: Perhaps it might be clarified a little bit if we say in what way does self-hate keep one from accepting and loving?

ANSWER: I did not use the word self-hate, I used self-contempt. I explicitly said that in the measure you despise yourself, in the measure you feel inferior because in some way you are dishonest with yourself and life, in that measure you do not love yourself properly and then overcompensate for it in self-love in another direction.

QUESTION: What about narcissism?

ANSWER: That is a form of self-love. It can manifest in various ways. It need not always manifest in the obvious physical sense, being in love with one's outer person. Again I spoke about it without using this particular expression. Self-love is distorted when the life force is directed towards the self instead of being outgoing, finding the bridge to the next person.

QUESTION: Is there any possible connection between excessive self-love and homosexuality?

ANSWER: There may be. It cannot be generalized. Homosexuality has so many different origins. To say homosexuality comes from this or that is very shortsighted. Spiritually speaking, as far as the law of karma is concerned, the possibilities are as varied and manifold as the psychological

factors. The spiritual factors never contradict the psychological ones. They are only an extension. The difference lies only in the fact that you cannot find the origin in the karmic law (as a rule), while you can always find, in this life, the psychological roots and origins. This, incidentally, applies to everything, not merely homosexuality. As for cause and effect of this life, regarding homosexuality, the possibilities are manifold. One of the possibilities is, as you say, an excessive form of self-love. But even this does not suffice to explain it. Other factors have to enter into it.

Another reason for homosexuality may be an excessive fear of women in a man, or of men in a woman. Still another reason or possibility may be exactly the opposite. In other words, if a boy loves his mother very much and despises and fears his father, this, too, may cause homosexuality because he wants to emulate and imitate his mother. He wants to identify with her, while in another personality, with different characteristics, the exact opposite may lead to homosexuality -- in other words, a fear and hatred of the mother or female mother-substitute, rather than love for her and identification with her. So no generalization can be made here either. This is always dangerous. Of course, one should also keep in mind that not only one factor accounts for it. Various reasons may prevail, the most seemingly contradictory factors may all play a role simultaneously.

Excessive self-love, leading to homosexuality or at least partly being responsible for it, would work this way: identification with the beloved self, which is substituted by another human being, because the unquenchable desire of the soul to find the bridge to the other self cannot entirely be eradicated, no matter how sick the psyche may be in other ways. Thus these two currents work together, expressing themselves in choosing a partner of the same sex.

QUESTION: The higher self has a desire for femininity, the state of being. Couldn't that also be the reason? I mean the misunderstood current of this longing?

ANSWER: You mean in male homosexuality? Yes, it could enter into it. But then how would you interpret female homosexuality?

QUESTION: It may be just the opposite?

ANSWER: Yes, because, you see, the higher self is male and female, or contains masculine and feminine currents and traits. Of course, this enters into it, but it is not an additional factor but rather an explanation of the deviations. The misinterpretation of these soul forces causes emotions to deviate. We know that in every other respect as well. Such a misinterpretation is caused by the psychological twists. In other words, if a man rejects decisions, activity, everything that is part of the active life, the feminine side of his nature grows disproportionately. On the other hand, if a woman fears the passive and submissive state that, in a healthy way, is part of her nature, she becomes overactive, and above a certain degree of such over-activity, homosexuality may be the result. All this is to be considered, too. As I said, usually many factors play a role, not just one.

In the question of homosexuality, you also have to distinguish another factor, and that is the degree of it. Again, the degree of homosexual leanings is determined by many factors. If the degree is a comparatively small one, it may be heightened by guilt and suppression. But by facing it, it will lose much of its proportion. Thus one is open for further investigation in order to understand the various factors. If the degree is stronger, in other words karmically stronger, then the inner desire to change may be lacking. Every individual case is a different one. I only show you the broad outlines,

the many possibilities, and how dangerous it is to say homosexuality comes from this or that, making a statement for all cases that does not exist.

QUESTION: What about people who are bisexual?

ANSWER: Again the reasons are manifold. The same origins may prevail as for straight homosexuality, only weakened only by the healthy opposite force, which may be stronger. Another reason, not excluding any of the aforementioned ones, may be that the personality is so cramped, so unfree, that he cannot give himself completely. Therefore, a flatness of feeling will set in after the first period of newness and excitement has passed. If this happens continuously even when new partners of the opposite sex do not bring the desired release and fulfillment, for the sake of something entirely different, a partner of the same sex is sought just as other forms of perversity are sought for the same reason. Here we have again a case of seeking the wrong remedy. For such artificial means, sought in ignorance, will eventually cause a complete stalemate in experiencing fulfillment. No matter how different the stimulation is, it will cease to be a stimulation. The remedy is to be sought in the inner fear to let go, to give oneself, to reveal the self, and seek the other self. This always seems to entail a risk, the risk of living and loving. In the measure this risk is not taken, in that measure, sexual flatness may set in. This may then be lived out by so-called perversions of all sorts. Or, in a different type of character, it may be made a virtue of, under religious or spiritual masks, and all sexual experience is denied.

QUESTION: Homosexuality seems to be gaining rather wider acceptance and understanding. Would you agree with this, and is this good? Should it be brought out into the open? If it is brought out into the open as it happens now, doesn't it make people tend to think that they can go into this sort of thing, that it is a good excuse?

ANSWER: Yes, that is very true. Of course, suppression is bad. Of course, moral self-righteous judgment of another person's sickness is wrong. Yet, the other extreme is always so close at hand, and it is difficult to find the correct balance. Today's trend also has its drawbacks, as you so rightly say. It causes many young people to make an asset out of something that should be looked into and considered a sickness. If a young person looks up to and is influenced by someone who happens to be a homosexual, due to various psychological factors in his inner and outer life, and is through such a person drawn into an environment where a mass image exists, that it is better and even quite "smart" to be homosexual, he will find it much more difficult to desire a change and a cure of his sick psyche. Homosexuality is, by the way, also one of the many forms of rebellion against authority. One might also say that if there is no leaning at all, a person will not be influenced by it. That is quite true. But the point is that, by existing conditions, a comparatively small inclination will not be considered as a sickness. It will be strengthened and justified by gradually growing mass images in certain groups, regarding this particular subject.

There are comparatively few human beings where not at least a small degree of homosexual leanings exist during the process of maturing. Such growing, outer influences may encourage this inclination and tendency unnecessarily, while otherwise the personality may grow out of it. This is the negative side of the issue. It always takes many extremes until the healthy middle road is found. This applies to any issue. We have the same problem in the concept of educating the young.

QUESTION: I read recently that the spirit or the soul must be both male and female to be complete. Consequently, for four or five incarnations one might be male, and then one might be female for four or five incarnations. Consequently, one might be a homosexual in the first changeover. Is that possible?

ANSWER: It can be; it does not have to be that way. Besides, we cannot say four or five. This may apply in some cases, in other cases it is not so. Again, generalizations may lead to error. You see, the original spiritual entity is one being consisting of male and female qualities. Only after the fall, the split occurred. This split does not always happen evenly so that one part of the complete entity has all the male qualities and the other part all the female ones. Since the fall was the product of chaos, the split in the individual entities was also a chaotic one; that is, it occurred at random, according to the attitude and emotions governing the entity when he fell. Thus in some beings, the split is much more uneven, combining male and female qualities in both halves in some instances. In other instances, the split happened more closely to a male/female division, although never exact, of course. According to the evenness or unevenness of the split, the incarnations change from one sex to another. If one part of the split entity is more predominantly male or female, the other part will correspond, and changes of sex will less often occur in the cycle of incarnations. In cases where the change has to occur more often due to a greater unevenness in the split, homosexuality can result the first time one is born into the opposite sex of the previous incarnation. But this does not alter the psychological factors in the least. In fact, all incarnations exist for you to become more healthy and whole. If an entity does not eliminate the wrong psychological factors, he may again go through a life where he finds it even more difficult to overcome homosexuality. So the roots always have to be found, no matter what the truth is about karmic laws. One never excludes another.

I will leave you for a short while but only in manifestation. But that does not mean that all your spirit friends are not just as much with you and near you. Remember that. May all of you during this period of rest find new strength in your soul, new will power, new understanding, and new desire for your inner growth, your inner change. Nothing can be more fruitful, more permanently satisfying and fulfilling than this. God's blessings go with each one of you and wait for you if you open your soul for it and let it penetrate your inner being. Be in peace, my dearest friends, be in God!

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