

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 66
An Unedited Lecture
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SHAME OF THE HIGHER SELF

Greetings, I bring you blessings, my dearest friends. Blessed is this hour. Blessed is each one of you and your dear ones.

I have discussed at length man's guilt and shame about his lower self, about his faults and weaknesses, about his misconceptions and deviations. Tonight I should like to discuss another aspect of the human personality, the shame about his higher self, the best and noblest in his heart. This may sound incredible; nevertheless, it is so. I am certain that you will all recognize the truth of these words when you listen carefully.

In a different sense, man is even so ashamed of all the faculties of love, humility, generosity, of the very best he has to offer, as he is ashamed of the small, selfish, and ungiving part of his nature. Let us consider what causes this inner tragedy, this senseless struggle. There is one main factor responsible which varies in every individual as to the details, the extent of its existence, its manifestation in the personality, and the life of the person.

When a child feels rejected -- and you know that each child does, whether this feeling is justified or unjustified makes no difference as far as the child is concerned -- in most instances the child feels more rejected by one particular parent. Again I say that it need not be so in reality. In reality, the very parent who appears so may have more real love for the child than the other parent. But the way the child feels it is what counts in the accumulation of inner depressions which form the images -- the petrified wrong conclusions and the patterns of his subsequent emotional life.

The child would like to be loved and approved of to a much greater extent than is possible, particularly by this one parent who seems to reject the child. When this exclusive tenderness and affection is not forthcoming, the child feels it as a rejection which is followed by a confusion arising in the soul. In vaguely felt emotions, love and acceptance from this particular parent becomes the most desirable aim, all the more desirable because it seems unattainable to the degree that the child wishes. The desirable aim -- exclusive love and acceptance -- is confused with the parent withholding it. Hence, in the confused, immature mind of the child, the rejector becomes desirable, taking the place of that which was originally desirable -- all-exclusive love, approval, and acceptance. A further result of this confusion is that the rejector seems unloving. He is desirable also because that which is wanted from him is desirable. Therefore, to be unloving is a desirable state. The psyche says: "If I am unloving, I will be desirable. My love will be sought. Just as I do not reject my rejector, so will I no longer be rejected." In a certain way, the rejector seems cold, aloof, free of emotions. Therefore this behavior pattern -- imagined or real -- becomes desirable and something to emulate.

When you consider this inner process, you will again find that, although it is not logical when analyzed, when these emotions are translated into clear-cut thoughts, it nevertheless has its own limited logic, quite understandable in the child's mind. No inner conflict that arises is utterly senseless although, even in the adult, the sense of vague semiconscious emotions can be but very limited and faulty when examined closely. A true outlook can be obtained only after understanding the peculiar logic of confused emotions.

Along with this confusion, the personality grows into an otherwise mature being, retaining this particular impression that is bound to color his entire emotional life. Deep in the subconscious mind, it is felt to be undesirable and therefore shameful to demonstrate all that which the child yearned for.

Often, man's withdrawal from and refusal to love is much less determined by his fear of being hurt and disappointed than by the circumstances here described. It is very important for you to recognize this element in you, no matter how hidden and how conflicting is the way it may manifest by contrary drives and compulsions. Heartbreaking problems arise from this conflict. They can be eliminated only by recognizing the existence of the basic wrong conclusion in this respect, with all the resultant chain reactions and ramifications.

There is, on one hand, the guilt of selfishness and self-centeredness, which makes loving an unprofitable, disadvantageous venture. There is, on the other hand, the shame to love. This in itself tears apart the human heart. On one hand, you try to force yourself to love; on the other hand, your natural desire of the higher self, wanting to love, is stopped because you are ashamed of it. Thus you are guilty for not loving and ashamed to love.

You must also consider that the child feels deeply humiliated when he yearns for love and affection but is rejected instead. Therefore the idea forms unconsciously that to love is humiliating. To him, the most desirable person has rejected love and the free giving of emotion. Therefore it must be something shameful that one has to hide. The realization that your fear of loving is often based less on your fear of being hurt and disappointed, and much more on the factors here discussed, is a very important insight you need in your further self-search.

You can find the existence of this conflict by various symptoms. You can find it by self-observation as to how you react in certain situations, or rather how your emotions react and behave! It is often manifested in ways ever so subtle. These subtleties are at work when you are ashamed to ask for something. When you show your heart and thereby expose your innermost need, you detect an acute feeling of shame. Or, for instance, you are ashamed to pray. Does not that which you are ashamed of -- the need of your heart, the demonstration of your true self with all its loving generosity, as well as prayer -- stand for the best in you?

This is another universal conflict. It goes without saying that it exists in various forms and degrees. Sometimes it is very obvious; then again it is ever so conflicting, and compounded with so many other conflicts that it is hard to detect. Nevertheless, some of this basic universal conflict exists in every individual.

Other circumstances play a role and determine the strength of this conflict. An important consideration is the parent other than the one who often seems to give freely what you would desire

from the rejector. If the situation is such that the rejector is outwardly the "superior" one, always the winner, while the loving parent is subdued, apparently weaker and under the domination of the rejecting parent, and perhaps even a little bit despised -- whether this is actually so or not makes no difference as long as the child feels it to be so -- this conflict becomes even stronger within the soul. Then, in addition to one's own experience of rejection, the child witnesses the apparent or actual rejection of the loving parent. This creates the impression that the loving parent is weak, while the rejector is strong. Therefore love becomes weakness, and aloofness from love a sign of strength, at least unconsciously. The child's desire is to be as strong as the desirable parent and certainly not as weak as the undesirable one.

Your wrong conclusions in this respect may be manifold. It may be completely wrong that the rejector is strong, while the loving parent is weak. It may be the very opposite. But it could also be the case that the situation between your parents is actually somewhat as you see it. Then the wrong conclusion is that not love makes the giving parent weak, but other attributes. It may be a deviated distortion of love that causes the weakness. Or, to a degree, the capacity for love is relatively real, but other factors cause the weakness and afflict the love capacity. On the other hand, the "strong" rejector may really not be strong. He may have many desirable qualities worthy of emulation, but certainly not the aloofness from love and the inhibition of displaying the best qualities in his personality.

In some cases, a similar situation between the parents exists very crassly in the way described here. In other cases, it is not crass at all, but much more subtle and involved. The situation is complicated if, for instance, due to many other factors, the domineering "strong" parent is the one who gives more love than the weaker parent who is under the dominion of the "strong" one. Each parent may then have "desirable" qualities, but often they conflict with one another. You may unconsciously despise in one parent what you try to emulate in the other, being torn apart by the very fact that you are unaware of what you want and that your aim is unrealizable because it consists of factors which cancel out one another. When the parent situation is not so crass and more complicated by the subtlety and elusiveness of contradicting emotions in them, as well as in yourself, it is harder for you to get to the root of this problem, but is the more important because it causes you all the more hardship.

A further complication is that often the outward appearance does not correspond to the inner situation. In other words, outwardly one parent may be much more domineering than the other. But inwardly it may be just the opposite. Or outwardly neither is domineering and "strong" in the sense now discussed, but inwardly such an imbalance in the relationship exists very strongly, nevertheless. You must not forget that, especially as a child, you absorb the inner situation. You register it very finely, while you retain the outer situation in your intellectual memory. The latter has much less effect on you than the former. No matter how the outer situation appears, you acutely feel the dependent, wanting, needing parent as inferior, while the one who rejects these wants and needs, you regard as strong and superior. Thus, you ally yourself in an ever so subtle way with the rejector, and together with him (or her), you reject the weak parent. You would rather be accepted by the desirable rejector than be identified with the needy, weak, and dependent parent. Again it does not matter, as far as your innermost self is concerned, whether you actually do so in words and deeds or if you merely desire to do so but cannot because of circumstances. The mere inclination is sufficient for you to feel this act as betrayal, and in a sense, it is, of course. The betrayal is aggravated because you abandon the very thing that you yearn for.

Thus you betray the best in you because you prohibit the unfoldment of your love capacity. At the same time, you betray the parent who has actually given you what you desired to receive from the other parent. That very act of giving, you now (unconsciously) consider as a weakness that deserves contempt.

This betrayal is subtle, but it is at the same time the most dominant conflict in your soul. It is necessary in the course of your work that you find in you that part wherein you betray not only the best, the highest, and the noblest in you, but also the one parent who was the weaker one to begin with and who might have loved and cherished you in a much more satisfying way.

To find and to stop this inner betrayal is important not because of the parent in question, but mostly because you suffer from it much more than you realize. This betrayal weighs you down with guilt. It is the deepest of your guilts. Only the other day we discussed guilt feelings, and I spoke about how often man creates imaginary guilts or blames himself for guilts that are really very unimportant in order not to face his main guilt. This, in most cases, is your main guilt which you keep locked away from consciousness. As long as you do not find, face, and become aware of all the ramifications and aspects of this betrayal of the one who has loved you most for the one who has given you less (at least, according to your feelings), that betrayal darkens your outlook on life. It eliminates your self-assurance, your self-confidence, your self-respect. This betrayal is responsible for the deepest roots of your inferiority feelings. You do not trust yourself with this betrayal locked in your soul. Your psyche says: "How can I trust myself, knowing that I am a traitor, knowing that I go on constantly betraying the best in me. If I cannot trust myself, I cannot trust anyone else." That is the natural result, a further chain reaction. If you do not trust people, you are bound to attract those who will constantly confirm to you that you have no reason to trust them. But if you genuinely trust others, you will have the proper discrimination and judgment, and you will attract a good many who will warrant your trust in mankind. But this can only happen if you first establish the reason for trusting yourself. And this, in turn, can only happen if you find and eliminate the basic betrayal I have indicated.

So, my friends, find in yourself this betrayal which you have been carrying. Follow it through even if you no longer have the opportunity with your parents. You may be transferring these same feelings to other people who in some remote way replace them psychologically. It may be a friend, a husband, a wife, a relative, an associate -- someone who is near and dear and important to you, important in some way. You go on with this betrayal in the same subtle way as you betrayed the parent. Whenever you find yourself in a situation in which you reject a person who is ready to offer you genuine love and affection or friendship or help in some way, and for one reason or another you feel (it need not actually be so) that this person is helpless or weak or dependent in some way, he or she takes on the role of the "weak" parent. On the other hand, there may be a person who is not so ready to give you what you wish. It need not be love; it may be respect, admiration, acceptance. Then this person takes on the role of the rejecting parent. Examine your most subtle and elusive emotions. Go behind the sometimes valid factors which may still be rationalizations for the inner betrayal you commit all over again against the one parent as well as against your innermost self.

This act of betrayal is so very subtle, my dear friends, that you cannot put your finger on it by any outer acts you commit. No deeds are to be found (at least in most cases) which may prove the act of betrayal. If you are not truly desirous of examining your innermost reactions and emotions in

this respect, no one could convince you. Your arguments proving that it is not so would always sound most convincing. But your heart will never be convinced, and that is what really matters.

To present the problem in its simplest terms, we may say that it is based on the following wrong conclusion. Love is weakness; withholding love and affection is strength. Since you do not wish to be weak and needy, you not only emulate the person who corresponds to your wrong concept of strength, but you also betray the one who seems weak to you. Once you find your emotions, your reactions, and attitudes that correspond to this misconception, you can then reconsider these concepts and form new ones according to truth. You will then see that many confusions and errors exist in you, causing you to commit acts of betrayal which have many further negative results in your inner and outer life. This realization and discrimination will give you strength by enabling you to approach reality. It is of utmost importance that you begin to search in this direction. Find the part in your emotions wherein you ascribe actual or imagined weakness to love and humility that is tendered in the healthy and real sense. Find in you the part which believes that strength is aloofness or a kind of coldness. When you find that, you will find your self-betrayal.

Finding the wrong concepts and then, little by little, adopting the right concepts, you will no longer fear that love is humiliating, that humility, generosity, affection, and a demonstration of your true self are signs of weakness. Your true self is very often hidden behind a wall of stone. This wall of stone is not wickedness nor even selfishness. Neither is it the fear of being hurt and disappointed. Yes, all these also contribute, but to a lesser degree. The main components of this wall behind which you hide the real you is the shame of imagined weakness, of being yourself with all the tenderness and understanding, with all the sympathy and vulnerability of your loving heart.

There are many people who may say, "This does not apply to me because I am a very demonstrative person. I give my love fully and freely." In such cases, it may be partly true that the real self comes out of hiding. But in the very rarest of instances -- only in an entity very far advanced in his purification -- is this entirely so. Part of the real self manifests, but another part remains hidden. Yes, you may have this generous heart that wants to give of the utmost. It may penetrate these many layers of error and misconception. Yet, you also withdraw behind your shell or your wall. A part of what you display of love and the giving of yourself may not come from out of your real self, but is "borrowed," so to speak. It is not really of your own. Again, this is a subtle thing. Separately, each one of you, only in your own work, can feel whether or not this is so and to what extent.

Why is it that you hold the best in you encased, while you "borrow" a similar behavior pattern and use it as a substitute for the real? The loving, giving, outgoing personality you may be at times might very well be only a part of your true self. Why? As I just explained, the shame of love and giving causes you to hide your true self behind a wall. The inevitable effect must be the realization that you are condemned and left alone. This in no way leads you to reconsider the first impression that love is shameful. In the first place, this conclusion is no longer conscious; therefore you cannot change it. You know very well that nothing can be changed so long as it is hidden from consciousness. In the second place, the first impression, causing the wrong conclusion, is much stronger, infinitely more powerful than all subsequent impressions and experiences. Hence, you make a compromise by retaining the original wrong conclusion, "I must not love, I must not expose my real self," and the newer experience that remaining aloof brings you censure and loneliness. The

latter causes you to assume a layer of outgoingness, of expressing your emotions and love that is not quite real. You still do not display your real self.

This is not to be taken to mean that this substitute outgoing personality is an affectation or what you may term "phony." No, it is again much more subtle than that. It is a part of your being, but is not the real self. However, some emotions of the real self are components of this superimposed layer. But many other currents stemming from these conflicts dilute the purity of the original and real personality. Thus, in a subtle way, you dramatize yourself and your love all the more because you do not dare to show that which is real.

This happens in many facets of life. It is most easily found in the love relationship between the sexes. It can also be found in other aspects of life, in other relationships.

Thus you can see where this particular phase of the work will lead you. By finding and understanding the betrayal, how it applies in your own individual case, you will also find that you keep your real self hidden most of the time. By this realization, you prepare the ground to allow it to evolve, to come out into the open. This work is not as easy as it may seem, nor is it as difficult as it may appear to some of you. This is such a fundamental and universal conflict that no one, absolutely no one, is entirely free of it.

How much it means, you may already sense at this point. For, the goal of purification is to free your true personality. That is the real meaning of freedom and the only possible way to live happily, to be strong in the healthy and real sense. The very fact of becoming aware of this conflict, of beginning to feel how it exists in you personally, even long before you are able to open the prison door and let your real self out, will cause you to experience a wonderful new inner strength. Nothing but the awareness that this exists in you and the constant observation of how it manifests in your emotional reactions, each day a little in one way or another, will bring you nearer to the removal of your prison bars so that you can liberate the real you. This real you will rejoice. You will then see clearly and without a doubt that it was wrong to have thought you have to hide the best in you, that it is something shameful. You will see what a burden, what an unnecessary burden it was to hide your real self. One person will hide it behind a mask of aloofness and pseudostrength. The other person will hide it behind a superimposed layer of something that resembles the real self in all its best aspects, but is not quite it. In both cases, you have to remove this layer and look where your real self is. Allow it to step out even if at the beginning it does so only on rare occasions ever so cautiously. But then the real you will see that it was all wrong, that you really do not have to fear, you do not have to be ashamed. The fear comes mostly as a consequence of the shame, of the exposure. By this process, you will remove the phantom world you have created out of these false impressions of your childhood. You have no idea what a tremendous relief it is to remove this phantom world and live in reality. Only the real you can live in it; the superimposed layers, created out of unreal concepts, cannot live in a world of reality. You will live in freedom, you will find it no longer necessary to betray the best in you or in another.

Are there any questions on this subject, my friends?

QUESTION: How is all this related to the Oedipus complex?

ANSWER: When the condition exists which is called the Oedipus complex, the connection between it and the conflict I have discussed is as follows. The awakening sex instinct mingles with the longing to be loved by the rejecting parent. Whenever this is the case, the conflict is aggravated. When the awakening sex instinct turns to the other parent however, the one who does not reject or rejects much less, the problem under discussion tonight may not be as strong, but the soul condition may then be much more complicated and conflicting. So you see, it is impossible to generalize. Each individual case varies and has to be investigated. Then one can see how it all connects.

QUESTION: I read a book called, Cosmic Consciousness. In this book, it says, "The loss of the sense of sin is one of the most striking characteristics of the state of cosmic consciousness." What does this mean?

ANSWER: Your world on earth, as you all know by the lectures and teachings you have received, is a world of unreality. You may term it a temporary reality. The things you experience, the deductions you make with the surface logic of the intellect, which ignores spiritual and absolute truth, are faulty. They have a limited value just as, for instance, the wrong conclusions of the soul. When these wrong conclusions are made by the child, they have their limited value and truth, applying correctly to a particular situation. As I said in another connection, they are not without their own peculiar logic, limited as it may be. Nevertheless, in spite of the correctness befitting one particular situation or circumstance, these conclusions are wrong and unrealistic if applied as a general truth for life. The same relationship exists between the conclusions and deductions the intellect correctly forms as applied to the temporary circumstances of certain conditions in this life on the earth plane and the spiritual laws of absolute reality where these same deductions and conclusions are wrong.

Sin, as you all know, is nothing but ignorance. It is distortion. No one is wicked or bad or malicious because he enjoys it of itself. He may be all that because he mistakenly thinks it serves him as a protection. The more you analyze and understand yourself, the more will you find this to be true in your own case, and therefore it holds true as well for the other. Therefore when people are bad, you will no longer feel frightened or personally involved. It will no longer cause you hardship. This may sound impossible, but it is true.

When a person has raised his consciousness and perceives inklings of absolute truth, he then realizes that there is no such thing as evil, badness, sin, malice. All this prevails only so long as you live in this earth sphere with the limited outlook caused by your own distortions. Once you raise yourself above this state of error, you will see that all existing evil on this plane is nothing but a defensive weapon, or rather a pseudodefensive weapon, for in reality it actually has the very opposite effect. Once you understand the motive of evil and sin, you no longer fear it, you no longer feel personally at stake, and therefore you lose the sense of its reality. You are all on the way toward experiencing this truth, at least in some degree.

When you find and dissolve your own wrong conclusion, nothing will any longer stand in your way to love and to be free. Thereby you remove that part in you that was in darkness, that was selfish and unloving out of these wrong conclusions. Where you have found and removed the error, you live in true concepts of reality, you can love without fear, and therefore you live without sin, if you want to use this expression. Therefore evil and sin are only products of an illusory world that exists only while you live in this illusion, but it has no absolute reality. The moment you raise your

consciousness, you are free of it; it no longer has any reality whatsoever. Even when you see it in others, with this raised consciousness you will see through it, you will understand its significance, its origin, and therefore you will realize its very temporary effect. Actually it has no effect on reality at all. It only affects him who still lives in unreality while he lives in it.

QUESTION: I would like to ask a question about Genesis about the Garden of Eden and the two trees. I understand why the fruit of the tree of knowledge was forbidden, because we have to get it slowly by ourselves instead of having it served to us on a silver platter. But I don't understand the other, the tree of immortality. After all, as spirits, we are immortal anyway, so we have already eaten the fruit. Why is it forbidden?

ANSWER: It refers to your life on earth, of course. It applies, just like the tree of knowledge, to the incarnated spirit. The meaning of both trees could not possibly apply to the liberated spirit who lives in the absolute reality of the spirit world. If man were born with the inner conviction, the inner certainty not brought about by the labor of self-development, that he is immortal in spirit while he is as yet not purified, his instinct for survival would be too weak. He has to have this uncertainty in the measure that he still has to solve his inner problems and confusions. This is for his own protection. He would not undertake the difficulty of earth life; he would be lazy. He might prefer to develop in a slower way or be satisfied with a slightly raised consciousness, affording him better conditions, but he would lack the incentive of freeing himself completely so as to enter into a state of unity. The entire plan of salvation would come to fruition so much later if man would not hold on to earth life because he has no certainty yet. The prohibition of this knowledge speeds development.

On the other hand, if the inner sense and conviction of immortality comes as a result of the hard labor of development, it will not reduce the will to live on earth. On the contrary, he will then welcome life on earth in another sense and even more than before, when he simply held on because he was uncertain. The joy of life on earth in the knowledge that there exists a much better state is a by-product of spiritual development, of a higher state of consciousness. He who has succeeded in working himself through to a higher consciousness knows he is immortal. He knows so because in the sweat of his labor, he has freed himself of error. He will then find beauty in earth life not because he thinks this is the only form of life and he has to hold on to it, but just because he knows there is more. The lack of this raised state of consciousness may make life on earth difficult; the outlook is rather gloomy because you still live in the illusion of evil and sin, of error and misconception. But no matter how hard you find it, if self-destructiveness is not abnormally strong, you will hold on to this life -- and this is good and important. However, without the organically grown self-development, the inner conviction of immortality (I do not speak of the belief that it may or may not be so), if it were given to him "on a silver platter," as you put it, he would not hold on to life. I do not say that such a person would necessarily commit suicide, but his struggle to keep alive, his joy in life, even if it manifests on rare occasions, his capacity to see beauty in it, would not be awakened. Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: Not quite.

ANSWER: Let us go into it next time, when we have a session for questions and answers. Whatever you do not understand about my answer, please ask for clarification next time.

My dearest friends, I will withdraw into my world and leave you again with divine blessings, with love and strength, with all the help we can give each one of you who is on this path. May this will of yours to work yourself through to real freedom bring you the joy you are entitled to have and which you can have by your self-liberation. Be blessed, my dear ones. Be in peace, be in God!

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