

THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT OF DESIRE FOR, AND THE FEAR OF, CLOSENESS

Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for this meeting and for every step and every effort in your endeavor toward growth and development. May this lecture again be a steppingstone on your road to selfhood and self-realization.

Man's greatest struggle and greatest conflict is his desire to overcome isolation and loneliness while, at the same time, fearing relationship and close, intimate contact with another being. This struggle is so very fierce because both desire and fear often are equally strong so that man is in the position of pulling and pushing in opposite directions simultaneously. This causes a tremendous strain. His suffering when isolated must always push him toward attempts to overcome isolation. When these attempts seem to succeed, his fear of this success induces him to retract and push away the other. And so it goes on, man erects and destroys the barriers between himself and others.

Let us understand a little more about this struggle, my friends. Each and every individual who finds himself on such a path must sooner or later see his own human predicament in just this respect. All his disturbances, his disharmonies and sufferings can be brought down to this simple common denominator. It finally comes down to this struggle. All man's destructiveness and his insistence on holding on to them not only represent the barriers which keep him separated but, at the same time, serve to maintain the barriers.

What is so fearful about closeness while at the same time is so tempting? This is a very important topic, my friends. Much of it has been discussed before, or rather aspects and isolated fragments of it here and there. The time has now come when it is necessary to understand this human struggle in a more comprehensive and direct way.

His relationship to another individual can be successful only if and when man is motivated by his innermost being, when a relationship is not determined solely by the outer intellect and will. Outer intellect and will cannot solve the problem of the delicate balance of self-expression and yet allow the other person to express himself -- to receive his self-expression. Since no rule can be made about the rhythm and interchange of this mutuality, the outer brain cannot cope with this matter. Nor can the outer intellect find the balance between self-assertion and giving in; of giving and receiving; of active and passive participation. These are delicate balances which cannot possibly be determined in a prescribed way. The outer intellect is an instrument which does just that: prescribing, predetermining, mechanical thinking. It determines rules and laws. It is not by itself sufficiently intuitive and flexible to meet the moment as it comes and to respond to the moment in an adequate fashion. For that, man's core of his being must be activated. Then relationship exists in a spontaneous and adequate way.

When man is not in contact with his innermost being, he can neither function properly regarding any aspect of life which requires creative responses, nor can he be in contact with another person's innermost being. And this, after all, is real relating. This is closeness which eliminates isolation. This is the kind of intimate expression and relationship which swings in the life stream and brings dynamic peace. Everything else is strain, effort, and difficult discipline which is not amenable to the great freedom and joy of intimacy.

As you already know, man is terrified of himself. He does everything possible to avoid looking at himself. Only when he has overcome a specific difficulty and resistance, does he find that his fear was not justified. He then experiences relief. He then experiences moments of aliveness because at that particular moment he has contacted his innermost being. When it is evaded, real contact with others is impossible. And you also know that evasion can exist in all sorts of ways. Man cannot allow himself the freedom and lack of control that is necessary in order to respond from within if he has not first contacted himself, if in every moment he is not aware of what he really wants and what he really feels.

Why is this fear so great, the fear of self and the fear of contacting others? Basically, the fear is due to man's destructive aims, to his aim of refusing himself to life. Now, my friends, again this can be done in numerous ways. In the course of such pathwork, many of my friends have, deep within themselves, encountered exactly this kind of attitude. If man were truly willing to give what he is, not only potentially, but what he already has realized, if he were to offer this best he is, willingly to life, if this were his deliberate aim, he could not be in conflict with himself and therefore with life. For there are so many assets each one of you has, so many wonderful assets which you neglect or only vaguely sense. And even when you do sense them, it does not occur to you to offer these assets to life. Once you deliberately do that, something must begin to happen. A great inner movement takes place. You have no reason to fear this, for it must all happen in beautiful order and harmony.

The moment an individual changes over from being an isolated creature who keeps his assets to himself and for himself (and sometimes not even that, for they are often unused), never intending to give these assets for the benefit of life and evolution. And if only so vaguely he changes over to the new state of deliberately dedicating the best he is to life, then the change within and outside in his life experience would be so drastic that words cannot describe it. What was difficult, laborious, fearful, bleak, strained, and lonely becomes easy, self-perpetuating, relaxed, safe, bright; and man must feel a deep sense of belonging and oneness with the world, with others, with the entire process of creation.

Until this change takes place, you must be eternally in the whirlpool of wanting and fearing the same thing. And this truly is torture. At times, you want more; at other times, you fear more. The outcome must be problematic, painful, fraught with conflict, and peace robbing because you pull and push in opposite directions. The moment you change over in the way I just described, everything falls in its place automatically. This is the real key. The struggle of wanting and fearing closeness with others, as well as wanting and fearing intimate contact with one's innermost self, cannot be settled by "making up one's mind" to give up one of these two alternatives. This can never work. It can be resolved only when negative and destructive aims cease, when the best you are is joyfully offered to life. Only then do you experience that there is nothing to fear from life except your own destructiveness. When this is given up, the key to life is found.

Devote every day, if only for a few minutes, to thoughts such as these: "Whatever I already am, I want to devote to life. I want, deliberately, for life to make use of the best I have and am. I may not be sure at this moment in what way this could be, and even if I have ideas, I will allow for the greater intelligence and wisdom, deep within me, to guide me. I will let life itself decide in what way a fruitful interchange between it and me can take place. For whatever I give to life, I have received from it, and I wish to return it to the great cosmic pool to bring more benefit. This, in turn, must inevitably enrich my own life to the exact extent that I willingly give to it, for, truly, life and I are one. When I withhold from life, I therefore withhold from myself. When I withhold from others, I withhold from myself. Whatever I already am, I want to let go and let it flow into life. And whatever more can be utilized, waiting to be brought to fruition, I request, and I decide, and I desire, that this be put to constructive use so as to enrich the atmosphere around me."

If such thoughts were deliberately pursued and deeply meant, problems must resolve, pain must cease, solutions will appear on the horizon -- solutions to problems which seemed absolutely insoluble. I can promise you that, my friends. This, as well as all other promises I ever made, will be borne out. It will prove to be true.

On the other hand, if you feel that when you pronounce such words, an inner disinclination, a no-current, or a resistance exists, then you know what is responsible for your problems, for your pain of isolation, and for your pain of communication. For they must both be the same. To the degree you suffer from isolation, to that degree interrelationship must be problematic and painful. To the degree that you stem against overcoming isolation, isolation must be painful. The key lies in the desire of offering to life what you already are and what more you can still be. When you follow through this desire, you automatically release and bring to fruition more hidden potentialities than you could possibly visualize in this moment while you are still in your painful seclusion.

The best way to be in this harmony is, in the first place, to deliberately call upon the powers within you. When you know that these powers exist, even before having fully and knowingly experienced them, such knowing the truth and deliberately pronouncing this truth and opening up toward their realization must activate these powers in whatever constructive way you choose.

The second approach to reach this great harmony with the universe, with yourself and others is by cultivating an overall attitude, deep within, which is compatible with these higher powers existing in the kernel of your being. Such a compatible attitude means complete constructiveness in all endeavors, in all desires and aim. If you meet each situation in total honesty and fullness instead of the usual superficiality with which life situations are met, unconscious destructive aims must fall away. It is only by shallow attention to the self in regard to life situations that one can overlook that the aim itself is often treated secondarily, while the primary aim of the personality is destructive. This can be subtle but is nevertheless a frequent factor of great impact. Every issue is fully faced when you meet each issue at hand totally. Through this total meeting, this total paying attention to it, this looking at every aspect of it as well as at your relationship and real feelings and desires in connection with it, you will find what your attitude really is and how it could be more constructive, more sincere, more fair. If this approach is cultivated, then you, the outer you, and the divine powers within you are compatible.

There are those who cultivate only one of these two approaches. Some concentrate only on activating the hidden powers, others concentrate on meeting themselves and their outer destructiveness so as to eliminate the latter. Both approaches have their great value, but if one is pursued without the other, results must be limited, for it is so easy to overlook what exists: in the first case, the negative, in the second approach, the lack of awareness of the positive potentials limits their realization. The most effective is the application of both approaches. If both approaches are cultivated and, simultaneously, you truly desire that your life adds to life; that your being, with all the good that is in you, contributes to life in whatever way possible, you will see a tremendous power at work in you. You will truly experience the peace, the safety, and the aliveness that must result when the inner being is activated. With this, you activate the inner being.

You see, my friends, another barrier toward wanting to add to life with the totality of one's being is the ingrained error that if you add to life, you deprive yourself -- and conversely, that when you grasp and are solely concerned with your own little advantage, only then can you enrich yourself and do justice to your pleasure, your desires, and your advantages. This ingrained conviction governs and motivates all of you, at least to some extent. It is precisely where this conviction exists that you encounter trouble and frustration because the falseness of the conviction makes you behave, act, think, and feel in a way that is damaging to life, to others, and therefore inevitably to yourself. Since you are unaware of the strength of the wrong conviction and, moreover, that it is a wrong conviction, you do not understand why it does not work out. You become more and more involved in confusion, in negative chain reactions whose nature and significance you cannot understand.

Nothing could be further from the truth than this conviction that it is you versus the other person. I therefore recommend a deep meditation in which you primarily set out to determine in what respect and to what extent you hold this erroneous belief. Once you are completely aware of its existence and how much it controls you, I recommend that you think of these words and try to comprehend them on the level that held them to the opposite view. Try to bring this level of your being into the knowledge that only by the desire to add to life can you find and experience that no pleasure you can possibly think of need be denied you. For then your whole psyche will be constructively geared so that the highest pleasure must come because you are activated and moved by constructiveness. You are then activated not by selfishness or any other destructive attitude, nor by isolation, nor by "me versus the other," but by "me and the other." When your psyche is geared to "me and the other," then there is no more conflict between giving and receiving. Then there is no more refusal to add to life, and, consequently, deep sorrow and suffering, isolation and conflict, guilt and frustration must cease. Then there can no longer be the terrible struggle that man goes through in which he suffers in his isolation, in which he wants to reach out, and yet the very minute he reaches, he pushes away. The very moment he eliminates barriers because the suffering of isolation becomes unbearable, he already sets up new barriers because the fear of it overwhelms him. This fear is the result of his negative and false conviction that he must preserve himself if he is not to be annihilated. And he holds this false conviction of life's malignant nature only to the extent that his own innermost aims, at least partially, are destructive and malignant. This vicious circle between life's malignancy and man's need to set himself up against life can be broken only when man wants to contribute generously to life. Then and then only will he find that life is as benign as his innermost self -- no more and no less.

The fear of uniting, of meeting, of reaching, of intimate contact exists as long as the individual's psyche is negatively geared, negatively directed. That long union must be frightening and appear as a question of "me versus the other." As long as the depth of man's own psyche is frightening -- and it will feel frightening when he pursues negative, destructive aims -- free self-expression is dangerous; contact with others is dangerous; giving one's self up to the bliss of union must be desperately avoided because it threatens to eliminate control. Without this control, the destructive aims take over and threaten annihilation. Giving up control must appear as death, as the giving up of selfhood and safety, so long as destructive aims persist and preoccupy the psyche. Therefore, in order to preserve one's individuality, the only way open appears to be the building up of barriers around the self. This seems to keep the self intact. The inherent tragedy lies in the fact that so long as destructive goals exist in the psyche, isolation gives one a sense of identity and seems to preserve one's individuality. Only in negativity does loss of control lead to death, as it seems, or to a loss of power over oneself. In other words, mental disturbance is a result of this conflict.

But when, within your psyche, it is no longer "me versus the other," but rather "me and the other," and you therefore give not only what you have, but also what you are to life, then there is no fear of loss of control because loss of control leads to more control, in a better, fuller, healthier sense. Put into different words, this means that with a completely constructive psyche, the personality can trust its spontaneous, unchecked, free expressions. It can give itself up to the inner powers so that a free flowing, vibrating unity between the self and the life force exists. This appears like an act which relinquishes direct control. And through this act, more constructive powers deep in the core of the self are activated, which make the self forever more adequate and give it more control over life, determining its own fate in the best possible way.

With negativity in the psyche, tight gripping and holding on to the self is necessary, for otherwise the destructive aims not only become exposed to the self and others, but there is fear of their taking over in action. Hence, control seems necessary, and this control prevents union, prevents free self-expression and relaxed, joyful living. The tighter the control, the greater the danger that this false inner movement becomes unbearable in its tightness until the psyche, in exhaustion, really loses itself in a process of extended self-alienation. This explains the apparent paradox that giving up control leads to better control, while tightly holding on to control must finally lead to the loss of control. All great spiritual truths seem contradictory on the surface. In order to perceive the unity behind such contradictions, it is necessary that you listen with your inner being and not try to comprehend merely with your intellect. The best way to verify such statements is by living their truth -- and this can be done only through following through these steps on your path.

Many of you, my friends, are quite close to this threshold, to this all-important transition, when you leave the isolated life of self-centeredness and egocentricity, of greed and graspingness, while demanding the most of others and simultaneously fearing that others will not comply with your demands, as well as fearing that they demand from you what you believe is dangerous to give. When man is still in this state, he must be deeply troubled. But the threshold to pass over this state into the new state described in this lecture is so near, my friends, so very near, so very easy if only you begin to feel and open yourself wholly to these words. If you allow these words not only to fill your intellect but also to fill your inner being, and if then you are sincere in your good will to want to find the truth of "me and the other," you will experience the truth of these words. You will experience how safe, easy, and joyful life can be when you dispense with the pseudonecessity of pursuing

negative aims; of almost spitefully defeating life, others, and yourself; of withholding the best you are from life for the questionable "safety" and "satisfaction" of your negative aims. These negative aims have to become conscious so that they stare you in the face. Only then can their futility be comprehended, and the personality will dispense with them. Then you will no longer need to fight and obstruct what you want most, namely the deep satisfaction of being wholly yourself and being accepted by another person as being wholly yourself, without masks and pretenses, without barriers and separating mechanisms you think you have to use. When you dispense with the masks and barricades you so ardently put up all your life, you will be free and know that what you are is good. But this knowledge can come only when that which already is good in you is offered to life.

"Me versus the other" is the whole human struggle. As simple as this is, an individual cannot understand these words unless he has made some progress in a path leading within himself. Then he will know what these words mean. Knowing and grasping these words, he will come closer to passing over on this threshold. All of you, or most of you who are here, can make the first step as of now, in a very simple meditation, that says "I decide to give up the error of 'me versus the other.' There is no conflict, so I can give all of myself. I decide -- not only request from deep within, but I decide -- to give the best I am to life, without fear. Any fear that lurks within is error, and I decide and wish to rid myself of this error and to give myself over to the divine powers to which I open myself totally, in the desire deeply to understand the truth of 'I and others are one' so that there is no conflict, so that I can give of myself, the best that I am. I leave it to those higher forces that this occur in harmony, in righteousness, without strain and effort."

Anyone meditating in such a way will increase the power within and the life, the peace, and the light within. All struggle and pain must then, sooner or later, fall away in exact proportion as this attitude is truly felt and lived. Use this key, my friends, and all else will be added unto you. It is the greatest key that many of you are truly ready to use, if you will only not use it for superficial words which have no inner meaning. Many of you are now at the point when you can really mean these words, this new attitude. And life for you will begin, will truly begin.

The first steps may be that this simple, beautiful formula is used as a general attitude toward life, as a general way of meeting life. As this is first tasted and tested as a fundamental approach to life, you will then be able to apply it to specific problems. Every problem, when you look at it closely, can finally be brought down to the simple common denominator of fearing to give of yourself and of cultivating a negative, destructive, or, at least, denying attitude toward life. That is why you have the problem, and as long as this prevails, the particular problem must remain. You cannot cope with certain life situations because you withhold yourself and because you believe in "me versus the other." The consequences are that, through a series of negative chain reactions, you actually are being damaged so that it appears as though "me versus the other" were a correct assumption. The more you adhere to this assumption, the more shortchanged you must be in the particular problem areas.

The peculiar fact is that people may be perfectly aware of the truth and have a positive, constructive attitude toward life in certain areas. Hence, they are fulfilled and happy in these areas. There is no struggle and no conflict; everything goes easily; and positive chain reactions are self-perpetuating, (just as negative ones are). At the same time, in their problem areas, they respond to life in a totally opposite way -- and they are never aware of the difference of their response to life and that this is the reason for their "good luck" or "bad luck," for fulfillment and frustration. This is

why self-confrontation and seeing what one actually thinks, feels, and does is of such tremendous importance.

When you discover the difference in your attitude to life in various aspects of life and see the difference of manifestation and experience, it will be easier for you to change over in the problem area from "me versus the other" to "me and the other." It will then be easier to give up the resistance to using the key, to want to give keenly of the best you are to life.

Are there any questions now in connection with this topic?

QUESTION: Can you elaborate on the subject of holding on to control leading to loss of control?

ANSWER: When the conflict exists of "me versus the other," a strong control must be exerted. This control says, "I must hold on to myself, for otherwise I will be damaged." This control is based on a wrong conclusion, comes out of a dualistic concept of life, and therefore must be a damaging and limiting control. It puts shackles on your best faculties and prevents the best faculties of others to reach and affect you. The best in you cannot come out and reach others. The best in others cannot reach you. (I speak here to everyone.)

This control is a tight wall consisting of fear and of a belief of duality wherein man must defend himself against life by withholding the best he is and the best he can be. This erects an impenetrable wall of errors and defenses. Therefore, the stronger the control, the greater the wall, the further man is alienated from the best in himself and others, from all that is true, real, constructive, alive, and blissful. Behind the wall, he suffers separation from the best of life, which includes the best of himself.

When energy is constantly being used in a fruitless and futile way, such as building up walls that prohibit the best of life, the moment must come when the entity loses control and is therefore not capable of coping with life as it unrolls itself for him. He is unable to make use of his assets because he is almost frightened to find them. Finding them, being aware of them leads to a natural flow of union, of letting others partake of them. This is the nature of anything good. Good cannot exist by itself. It must communicate itself to others. It always includes others. Hence, when a person fears such inclusion with and by others, he is forced to deny the best in himself. This can be verified by all of you when you detect a slight feeling of anxiety and discomfort at the very idea of allowing the best in you to unfold. There is a mechanism which holds this back, which makes it appear "safer" to be barren, unproductive of aspects which are naturally bent to include and unite with life and with others. The irony, of course, is that without these assets man cannot adequately live and cope with anything he encounters. Therefore the control, prohibiting himself and guarding himself from life, must lead to a loss of control (inability to cope, in whatever fashion this may manifest for an individual).

When man is in the unity of being, where there is no either/or, where it is "me and the other," then no conflict exists between giving and receiving. There can be no conflict of control. If you do not fear giving, you can fully receive, you can never be shortchanged. When you fear giving, you cannot be open to receive. It is impossible. Therefore you are constantly being shortchanged. Therefore the wrong conclusion is strengthened so that you will close yourself up even more. But

when you are in the truth of unity, your freedom to offer what you are to life, to want to enrich life will make you completely comfortable about receiving. You can easily determine this fact, all of you. To exactly the extent you fear giving of yourself, you must be uncomfortable when you receive even though you want to receive. So you subtly push aside what is given you. Even though your childish, selfish aim is to receive as much as possible and give as little as possible, it cannot be, not only because others refuse such an unfair deal, but because you yourself close yourself up against it. Your psyche cannot respond to the truth and the law -- hence it cannot open itself to receive when it refuses to give. It is more than guilt, more than the deep knowledge that you do not deserve to receive when you refuse to give, more than atonement for this guilt that makes you refuse to receive. It is a simple question of a mathematical equation or like a law of physics. These laws cannot be broken; they contain their own order. It is a question of psychic compatibility. Only the psyche that is in truth and can therefore comfortably and painlessly give the best it is (there is a difference between giving what one has, even one's assets, and giving what one is) will experience the great safety and joy of this act and can consequently, in exact proportion, comfortably, painlessly, and joyfully receive -- until the aspects of giving and receiving truly become one. When there is no effort about giving of oneself, there will be no effort in receiving and no frustration. The person will no longer feel cheated because he does not cheat life by withholding from it what he is. Hence, tight, anxious control becomes utterly superfluous.

The control which prohibits one's best must, perforce, also prevent the individual from using these best, highest powers for his advantage. These powers remain unused; they are covered up to a degree that their existence is ignored. That aspect of man which alone is competent to guide and inspire him cannot activate him as long as man remains in this condition.

I will leave you for tonight with the request and the wish and the hope that all of you present here and those who read these words use the formula I gave you. Use it as much as you can. Want to use it! It will be such a healing power. It will change what is dull and dead into a dynamic life stream. It will change what is hopeless into bright hope, what is fearful into deep security and confidence. It will change your life from constriction into limitless possibilities. It will change darkness and isolation into light, union, companionship, intimacy, and the knowledge that you are loved as you are because you love as you are. It will change from aloneness and emptiness to abundance in every respect. My friends, these are not mere words or theory you can vaguely believe in for a distant future. It is verifiable for each one of you whenever you choose to test the truth of these words.

Be in peace, be in yourself in God!

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