

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

Greetings, my dearest, dearest friends here. Blessings for every one of you, blessed be your very life, your every breath you take, your thoughts, and your feelings.

Many of my friends are indeed progressing. Sometimes this progress manifests, at least temporarily, as crisis. Now you know this as a principle, but it is easy to forget this rule or spiritual law, as it were, when you are submerged in it. And it is all the more important to remember that there is a deep significance in the crisis you experience. Your attempt to understand it at its depth will bring you liberation and joyous living all the quicker, all the sooner, all the more real and permanent.

Tonight's topic deals with relationships between human beings and its tremendous significance from the spiritual point of view -- from the point of view of individual growth and unification. First of all, I would like to point out once again that on the level of manifestation in human life, individual units of consciousness exist which sometimes harmonize but very often conflict with one another and create friction and crisis. Yet behind this level of manifestation, there are no different, fragmented units of consciousness. There is this one consciousness of which every single created entity is but a different expression. When one comes into one's own, one experiences this truth without, however, losing a sense of individuality. This can be felt very distinctly when you deal with your own inner disharmonies, my friends. For there, too, exactly the same principle applies.

In your present state, a part of your innermost being is developed and governs your thinking, feeling, willing, and acting. There are other parts still in a lower state of development, which also govern and influence your thinking, feeling, will, and acting. Thus you find yourself divided, and this always creates tension, pain, anxiety, and inner and outer difficulties. Some aspects of your personality are in truth, others in error and distortion. The resulting confusion causes grave disturbance. What man usually does is to push one side out of the way, identifying with the other. Yet this superficial denial of part of what exists cannot bring unification. Quite on the contrary, it widens the split. What must be done is to bring out the deviating, conflicting side and face it -- face the entire ambivalence. Only then do you find the ultimate reality of your undivided, unified self. As you know, unification and peace emerge to the degree you recognize, accept, and understand the nature of the inner conflict and split.

It is exactly the same law and principle when it comes to the unity or, respectively, to the dissension between outwardly separated and totally different entities. They, too, are but one level behind the level of appearance. The dissension is not caused by actual different units of consciousness but, just as in the inner dissensions of one person, by different aspects of development of the manifesting universal consciousness. The principle of unification is exactly the

same. Yet this principle cannot be executed with another human being unless it has first been applied to one's inner self. If the divergent parts of a self are not approached according to this truth and ambivalence not faced, accepted, and understood within a self, the process of unification cannot be put into practice with another person. This is a very important fact which explains the great emphasis of this pathwork on the primary approach to oneself. Only then can relationship be cultivated in a meaningful and effective way.

In this lecture I shall try to outline some elements of dissension and unification between human beings and show how these parallel the individual process. Before doing so, I should like to say that relationship represents the greatest challenge for the individual. For it is only in relationship with others that unresolved problems, the difficulties, and conflicts that still exist within the individual psyche are affected and activated. It is because of this that many individuals withdraw from contact with others, from interaction with others. The illusion can sometimes be maintained that the problems arise from the other person when one feels disturbance only in their presence and not when by oneself.

Being alone elicits the inner call for contact, and the less contact is cultivated, the more acute the longing becomes. So, this is a different kind of pain -- the pain of loneliness and frustration. But contact makes it difficult to maintain the illusion for too long that the inner self is faultless and harmonious. It requires mental aberration to claim for too long that it is due only to all others and not to the self when problems arise in relationships with others. This is why relationships are at one and the same time a fulfillment, a challenge, and a gauge to one's inner state. The friction that arises out of relating with others is a sharp instrument of purification and self-recognition, if the self is so inclined.

By withdrawing from this challenge and sacrificing the fulfillment that intimate contact is, many aspects of inner problems are never called into play. The thus resulting illusion of inner peace and unity has even led to concepts that spiritual growth is being furthered by isolation. Nothing could be further from the truth. However, my statement must not be confused with the fact that intervals of seclusion are a necessity for inner concentration and self-confrontation. But these periods should always alternate with contact, and the more intimate such contact is, the more it bespeaks of spiritual maturity.

Contact and lack of contact with others can be observed in various stages. There are many degrees of contact between the crass extremes of total outer and inner isolation on one end of the pole and at the other end with the deepest, most intimate relatedness, capacity to love and to accept others, to deal with them and the mutually arising problems, to find balance between self-assertion and giving in, to give and receive, to be acutely aware of the interacting levels between the selves. There are those who have obtained a certain superficial ability to relate but who still withdraw from a more meaningful, open, unmasked inner mutual revealing and contacting. I might say that the average human being of present-day humanity fluctuates somewhere in between the two ends of the pole.

It is also possible to measure one's personal sense of fulfillment or frustration by the depth of relatedness and intimate contact, by the strength of one's feelings one permits oneself to experience, and by the openness and willingness to give and receive. The degree of frustration indicates an absence of contact which in turn is a precise indicator that the self withdraws from the challenge

that relationship is, thereby sacrificing personal fulfillment, pleasure, love, and joy. When sharing is wanted on the basis of receiving only according to one's own terms while the self is really (although secretly) unwilling to do any sharing, longings must remain unfulfilled. People would be well advised to consider their unfulfilled longings from this point of view rather than indulging in the usual assumption that one is unlucky and unfairly put upon by life.

One's contentment and fulfillment specifically in regard to relationship is a much neglected measuring yard to one's own development. Relationship with others is a mirror of one's own state and thus a direct help to one's self-purification. Conversely, it is equally true that only by thorough self-honesty and self-facing can relationships be sustained, feelings expand, and contact between human beings blossom in long-term relationships. So you can see, my friends, that relationships and human contact represent a tremendously important aspect of human growth.

The power and significance of relationship represent often severe problems for those who are still in the throes of their own inner dividedness. The unfulfilled longing becomes unbearably painful when isolation is chosen due to the difficulty of contact. This can only be resolved when the self seriously settles down to seek the cause for this conflict in the self, without the defensive measure of annihilating guilt and self-blame which of course eliminate any possibility to really get to the core of the conflict. This, plus the inner willingness to change, must be cultivated in order to alleviate this painful trap in which both available alternatives -- isolation and contact -- are unbearable.

Fear of pleasure, which we discussed many times, is, to a large degree, connected with the problem of dealing with others, of facing up to one's own rigid self-blindness. It is also important to remember that withdrawal can be very subtle and may exist only on a level of feelings that is outwardly unnoticeable and manifests in concealed guardedness and false self-protection. Outer good fellowship does not necessarily imply a capacity and willingness for inner closeness. For many this is too taxing a problem. On the surface this seems to be due to a difficulty to cope with others, but actually the difficulty lies in the self, regardless of how disturbed others may also be.

When people who are of uneven spiritual development are involved with one another, it is always the higher developed person who has the responsibility for the relationship. I mean here specifically that he is responsible for searching the depths of the inner level of interaction, responsible for any friction and disharmony between the parties. The lower developed person is not capable of such a search. He is still involved with blaming the other and is dependent on the other's doing "right" in order to avoid unpleasantness or frustration. Also, the lower developed person is always caught up in the fundamental error of duality. He sees any friction in terms of either he is right or the other person. Conversely, if he detects a problem in the other, this seems to automatically whitewash him although in reality his own negative involvement may be infinitely more weighty than what he sees in the other person. It is only the spiritually more developed person who is capable of realistic, undualistic perception. He may see that either one of the involved parties may have a deeper problem, which does not eliminate the importance of the possibly much lesser problem of the other person. He will always be willing and able to search his own involvement whenever he is negatively affected by a specific relationship no matter how blatantly at fault the other one may be. A person of spiritual and emotional immaturity and crudeness will always put the bulk of blame on the other regardless of paying theoretical lip service to the above-mentioned

process. All this applies to any kind of relationship: mates, parents and children, friendship, business contact, whatever.

The tendency to make oneself emotionally dependent on others -- the awareness of which is such an important aspect of the growth process -- is largely due to wanting to absolve oneself from either blame or difficulty when establishing, maintaining, and sustaining a relationship. It seems so much easier to shift the bulk of this burden to others. But what a price to pay! Doing this renders one indeed helpless and brings about precisely such a state between two equally undesirable alternatives as I just mentioned before: isolation or unending pain and friction with others. It is only when one begins to truly assume self-responsibility by looking at one's own problem in the contact and by willingness to change, that freedom is established and relationships become fruitful and joyous.

If the higher developed person refuses to adopt his innate duty to assume responsibility for the relationship and look for the core of dissension within himself, he will never really understand the mutual interaction -- how one problem affects the other. And the relationship must deteriorate and must leave both parties confused and less able to cope with the self and others. On the other hand, if he accepts this inner, spiritual responsibility, he will also help the other person in a subtle, possibly unpronounced way. If he can desist from the temptation to constantly belabor the obvious sour points of the other and look into himself, he will raise his own development considerably and spread peace and joy around himself. The poison of friction will soon be eliminated. He will also make it possible for himself to soon find others with whom a truly mutual growth process is possible.

When two equals relate, both carry the full responsibility for the relationship. This is indeed a beautiful venture, a deeply satisfying state of mutuality. The slightest flaw or mar in a mood will be recognized for its inner meaning, and thus the growth process is kept up. Both will recognize their participation in this momentary flaw, whether it be an actual friction or a momentary deadness of feelings. The inner reality of interaction will become increasingly the more real one. This must prevent injury to the relationship to a high degree.

Let me emphasize here that when I speak of being responsible for the lower developed person, I do not mean that another human being can ever carry the burden for the actual difficulties of others. This can never be so. I mean that difficulties of interaction in a relationship are usually not explored in depth by the individual whose spiritual development is still more primitive. He will render others responsible for his unhappiness and disharmony in a given interaction and is not able or willing to see the whole issue. Thus he is not in a position to eliminate the disharmony. Only he who assumes responsibility for finding the inner disturbance and mutual effect can do so. Hence the spiritually more primitive person always depends on the spiritually more evolved.

A contact between individuals in which the destructiveness of the lower developed one makes growth, harmony, thriving of good feelings impossible, or in which the contact is overwhelmingly negative, should be severed. As a rule, the higher developed person assumes the necessary initiative to do so. If he does not, there must be unrecognized weaknesses and fears which need to be faced. If a relationship is dissolved on the ground that it is more destructive and pain producing than constructive and harmonious, it should be done when the inner problems and mutual interactions are fully recognized by him who takes the initiative to dissolve an old tie. This will prevent him

from forming a new relationship with similar underlying currents and interactions. It also means that the step of severance occurs as a result of growth rather than as a result of vindictive spite, fear, or escape.

The exploration of the underlying interaction and effect of a relationship where both people's difficulties are explored and accepted is by no means an easy process. But nothing can be more beautiful and rewarding. Anyone who comes into the state of enlightenment where this is possible will no longer fear any kind of interaction. Difficulties and fear arise to the exact degree that he still projects his difficulties in relating on others and still renders others responsible for anything that goes against his liking. This can take many subtle forms. One may constantly concentrate on the faults of others even though, at first glance, such concentration appears justified. One may subtly overemphasize one side to the exclusion of other aspects. These and other distortions indicate projection and denial of self-responsibility for difficulties in relating -- hence dependency on perfection, consequently fear and hostility for feeling let down.

My dear friends, no matter what wrong the other person does, if you are disturbed, there must be something in you that you overlook. When I say disturbed, I mean this in a particular sense. I do not speak of clear-cut anger that expresses itself guiltlessly and which does not leave a trace of inner confusion and pain. I mean the kind of disturbance that comes out of and breeds further conflict. But in spite of my having warned you repeatedly about overlooking your own part in the conflict, it is most difficult for people to look within and find the source of the disturbance in themselves. Even you, my friends, who are sincerely searching for liberation and unification within yourselves, are still involved in deep projection in this area. One of the roles or games we have discussed recently, which is one of the most favorite tendencies of mankind, is the one that says "you are doing it to me" -- making the other person guilty. The game of making others guilty is so overall that it constantly passes by unnoticed. It is so taken for granted. One human being blames the other, one country blames the other, one group blames the other. This is a constantly ongoing process at this state of development. It is indeed one of the most harmful and illusory processes imaginable.

Perhaps only a few of you can begin to see how you are doing this, and when you see it, you only stop it here or there. Begin to question it, and cease placing the guilt on others, which is always a hidden form of hostility and whitewashing of the self. One derives pleasure doing this although the pain that ensues and the insoluble conflicts that follow are infinitely disproportionate to the puny, momentary pleasure.

I would now like to discuss the attitude of the recipient of this game, rather than talk about the enactor of it. He who executes this game truly harms himself and others, and I strongly recommend that you begin to be aware of your blind involvement in this guilt shifting game. But how about the "victim?" How is he to cope with it? His first plight is that he is not even aware of what is happening. Most of the time, it happens in a subtle, emotional, and unarticulated fashion. The silent, covert, indirect blame is being launched without a spoken word. It is expressed in many indirect ways. Now, obviously, the first necessity is concise, articulate awareness, for otherwise the "victim" will unconsciously respond in equally destructive, falsely self-defensive ways. No one involved then really knows of the intricate levels of action, reaction, and interaction until the threads become so enmeshed that it seems impossible to disentangle the complicated aspects of the

relationship. Many a relationship has faltered due to this unaware interaction involving many mutual reactions to something one only vaguely feels.

The launching of blame and guilt spreads poison, fear, and at least as much guilt as one tries to project. He who is the recipient of this blame and guilt may react in many different ways according to his own problems and unresolved conflicts. As long as the reaction is blind and the fact that guilt was placed on him is not conscious, the counterreaction must also be neurotic and destructive. Only conscious perception can prohibit this. Only then will you be able to refute a burden that is being placed on you. Only then can you articulate and pinpoint it.

In a relationship that is to blossom, one must be on the lookout for this pitfall which is all the more difficult to detect because the guilt-projection is so widespread. Also, the recipient should look for it -- in himself as well as in the other. And I do not mean here a straightforward confrontation about something wrong the other person did. I mean the subtle blame for personal unhappiness. This is what must be challenged.

The only way you can avoid becoming a victim to blame and guilt-projection is that you avoid doing it yourself. To the degree you indulge yourself in this attitude (you may do it in a different way than the one who does it to you), to that degree you will be unaware of it being done to you and will therefore become victimized by it. The mere awareness will make all the difference -- whether or not you verbally express your perception and confront the other. Only to the degree that you undefensively explore, face, and accept your own problematic reactions and distortions, negativities and destructiveness, can you refute someone else's guilt-projection. Only then will you not be drawn into a maze of falseness and confusion in which uncertainty, defensiveness, and weakness may make you wither in retreat or be overaggressive. Only then will you no longer confuse self-assertion with hostility and flexible compromise with unhealthy submission.

All these aspects determine the ability to cope with relationships. The more these outlines are profoundly understood and lived, the more intimate, fulfilling, and beautiful human interaction will become. How can you assert your rights, reach into the universe for fulfillment and pleasure, how can you love without fear unless you approach relating to others in the way outlined above? Unless you learn to do this, thereby purifying yourself, there must always be a whip lurking in the dark when it comes to intimate closeness: the whip of loading guilt upon each other. Loving, sharing, and profound and satisfying closeness to others could be a purely positive power without any threat when these snares are looked at, discovered, and dissolved. It is of utmost importance that you look for them in yourselves, my friends.

The most challenging, beautiful, spiritually important, and growth-producing kind of relationship is the one between man and woman. The power that brings two people together in love and attraction and the pleasure involved in it are a small aspect of the state of being in cosmic reality. It is as though each created entity knew unconsciously about the bliss of this state and sought to realize it in the most potent way open to humanity. That way is in love and sexuality between man and woman. The power that draws them together is the purest spiritual energy, leading to an inkling of the purest spiritual state.

However, when men and women stay together for a longer period of time in a more enduring and committed relationship, the maintenance of bliss, and even increasing it, entirely depends on

whether the two people involved relate to one another in the terms discussed before in this lecture. Are they aware of the direct relationship of enduring pleasure and inner growth? Do they use the inevitable difficulties in the relationship as yardsticks for their own inner difficulties? Do they communicate in the deepest, most truthful, self-revealing way, sharing their inner problems, helping each other rather than placing mutual guilt on each other and whitewashing themselves? The answers to these questions will determine whether the relationship falters, dissolves, stagnates -- or blossoms. When you look at the world around you, you will undoubtedly see that very, very few human beings grow and reveal themselves in such an open way. Equally few realize that growing together and through each other determines the solidity of feelings, of pleasure, of enduring love and respect. It is therefore not surprising that long-lasting relationships are almost invariably more or less dead in feelings.

Difficulties that arise in a relationship are always a yardstick for something unattended to. It is as though a loud message were being spoken. The sooner it is heeded, the more spiritual energy will be released so that the state of bliss can be expanded and grow along with the inner being of both partners. There is a mechanism in a relationship between a man and a woman that can be likened to a very finely calibrated instrument that shows the finest and most subtle aspects of the relationship and the individual state of the two people involved. This is not sufficiently recognized by mankind, not even by the most aware and sophisticated human beings who are otherwise familiar with spiritual and psychological truth. Every day and every hour, one's inner state and feelings are a testimony to one's state of growth. To the degree this is heeded, the interaction, the feelings, the freedom of flow within and toward each other will blossom. The perfectly mature and spiritually valid relationship must always be deeply connected with personal growth. The moment a relationship is experienced as irrelevant to inner growth, left on its own, as it were, it must falter. Sooner or later it must falter. And that is the fate of the majority of human relationships -- especially the intimate one between two mates. They are not recognized as a mirror to inner growth, so that the relationship gradually wears out. The first steam evaporates, and then nothing remains. Either overt friction and dissension or stagnation and boredom will wreck what was once promising. Only when each one grows to his ultimate, to his and her inherent potentials, can the relationship become more and more dynamic and alive. This must be done individually and mutually. When relationship is approached in that way, it will be built on a rock and not on sand. No fear will ever have room under such circumstances. Feelings will expand, and security about the self and each other will grow. Each day and each hour will be a mirror to the inner state of either or both partners and therefore to the relationship. Whenever there is friction or deadness, there must be something stuck, something blind, something that ought to be seen. There must be some interaction between the two people which is unclarified. If this is understood and properly handled, not only will growth proceed at maximum speed, but happiness, bliss, the feeling of meaningful living and deep profound experience, and ecstasy will grow into forever deeper and more beautiful dimensions. Conversely, fear of intimacy implies rigidity and the denial of seeing one's own share in the difficulties in relating. Anyone who ignores these principles or who only pays lip service to them is emotionally not ready to assume the responsibility for his inner suffering -- either within a relationship or because it is absent. This state also brings about fear of one's feelings. He is still at this primitive juncture where he shifts guilt on to others. Fear and uncertainty will make it impossible, under such conditions, to find bliss and closeness -- fearless closeness.

So you see, my friends, it is of the greatest importance to recognize that bliss and beauty, which are eternal spiritual realities, are available to all those who seek the key to all problems of

human interaction, as well as to loneliness within their own hearts. True growth is as much a spiritual reality as profound fulfillment, vital aliveness, and blissful, joyous relating. When you are inwardly ready to relate to another human being in such a fashion, you will find the appropriate partner with whom this manner of sharing is possible. It will no longer frighten you, will no longer beset you with conscious or unconscious fears when you use this all-important key. You cannot ever feel helpless or victimized when the significant transition has taken place in your life, and you no longer render others responsible for what you experience or fail to experience. Thus growth and fulfilled, beautiful living become one and the same.

May you all carry with you new material and inner energy force awakened by your good will. May these words be the beginning of an inner new modality to meet life, to finally make the decision, "I want to risk my good feelings. I want to seek the cause in me rather than in the other person, so that I become free to love." This kind of meditation will indeed bear fruit. If a germ, a particle of this is being carried away tonight, it was truly a fruitful evening. Be blessed, all of you, my dearest friends, so that you become the Gods that you potentially are.

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