

FUNDAMENTAL GUILT FOR NOT LOVING -- OBLIGATIONS

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless every one of you. Blessed is this hour. I welcome all of you, my old and my new friends alike. May this evening give you renewed strength, renewed insight into your lives, your problems, and show you the road. May it give you a glimmer of light if you are hopeless and a new influx of strength if you feel weak.

The universe is forever expanding. All the cosmic forces, the life force, strain toward expansion, growth, union, and integration. Each individual entity, being a universe unto itself, follows this movement toward growth and outgoingness. If these forces are disturbed or thrown out of their natural channels, love cannot prevail. All religions have always taught that love is the key to life. Without love nothing counts.

On our path together we have done more than merely taught this truth. Together we have tried to understand what misconceptions and deviations prevent you from being in harmony with the universal forces, from moving toward expansion and union. Your world on earth is indeed a troubled one. Life is difficult, not only because of the struggle for physical survival, but even more so in these times because of the struggle for the soul's survival. This world is full of human beings whose soul forces are more or less disturbed. If the degree of disturbances is great, one refers to these people as mentally ill; if the degree is less, one calls these disturbed souls neurotic. The words do not matter, the terminologies change with the times, but the underlying cause is always the same. The cosmic inner forces cannot flow organically because people do not dare to love, to let these inner forces free to grow in their natural, organic way.

For humanity as a whole the result is strife, uncertainty, unrest, and the absence of peace. For the individual the same holds true. Often people become physically ill. They have trouble in their relationships, in their work. They cannot cope with life and seek all sorts of solutions but rarely discover the real cause and therefore the real cure. A deeply permeating guilt gnaws at their soul. This is a different kind of guilt than the more specific, often unjustified guilts that smolder closer to the surface of the psyche.

These little and unjustified guilts substitute for the real guilt of withdrawal, unlovingness, and isolation. In other words, these little guilts are supposed to atone for violating the great cosmic inner forces, breaking the flow, as it were. This very deep-rooted guilt prevents you from claiming your freedom, asserting yourself, feeling that you deserve to be happy. Whenever you feel undeserving of happiness, you need, my friends, to discover specifically where and how you do not love; where your pride, self-will and fear, your separateness, petty self-pampering and cowardice surround you with a wall of isolation when you could be freely flowing and floating with the universal love-current. The ensuing misery is due not only to the outer emptiness of your life in the areas where no love prevails, but even more to the deep and hidden guilt about it. It is not easy to

unearth this particular guilt, but if you truly want to find it, you will. As long as this guilt is not found, verified, acknowledged, and experienced, the other work on images and misconceptions will not really help you.

We have often talked about the harm of defenses; the harm of a self-righteous or moralizing attitude with yourself and with others; the harm of perfectionism, the rigid standards that you comply with, often to the letter but seldom in the spirit. These lead often so unnecessarily to a harsh ascetic life that is joy-negating. Why do you believe such defenses exist? They exist because the troubled psyche seeks a solution, but the message is misunderstood by the conscious mind. The psyche says, "Give up your defenses against loving. Do not hold yourself apart! Do not be miserly with your feelings! You are wrong; you sin against the vital law of life. Make up for it, change, become a loving person." The conscious mind does not translate this message properly and struggles to be "correct," "good," "right." But what is being right without love? Nothing. Perfectionism as a substitute and atonement has, indeed, quite the opposite effect because it is unloving and isolated. It emphasizes the self and how it appears in the eyes of others, rather than emphasizing the other person. Therefore the soul gets more deeply ensnared in confusion and unrest, anxiety and guilt. Its messages become harder to decipher because these pseudo-solutions only abet self-alienation.

It is now necessary that you gain an overview of how this process connects with your deep-rooted guilt for not loving, for disturbing the outgoing cosmic flow. The work we are doing together must finally lead you to this. For then the road, or curve upward can begin. Until you find this particular prohibition toward loving as it exists specifically within yourself, your seeking and finding within your soul will often appear to curve downward. The road will often, in spite of occasional victories, seem hopeless. You will ask yourself, "Where does all this lead me? What good is it? How can I change?" When you finally see -- not theoretically and intellectually, but actually -- your selfish withdrawal from loving, regardless of how well you keep it concealed, often by superperfectionism and "right" actions, then and only then can you come to terms with yourself. Then you can make restitution. Then you can atone in a truthful and constructive way and begin to change in this respect. How? You will know if you truly want to. You must expiate this inner guilt, which is much deeper than all the little ones which are often so unjustified and function only to conceal the real ones. You need to atone in order for your soul to become healthy and peaceful, so that you can like, respect, and be comfortable with yourself. Theoretical knowledge will not help, except to inspire you to set out to uncover your hidden guilt for not loving.

I repeat this, because it is constantly forgotten by my friends: An action, a thought, an attitude is seldom good or bad, right or wrong in itself. This can be said only of the most extreme actions, and even then it is often misleading to label them as such. The value of an action, thought, or attitude can be determined only by finding out if it is motivated by love or by separateness, selfishness, fear, or pride. You still evaluate yourself and others by an act, by an outer manifestation, and you disregard what is behind it.

The same deed or attitude, coming from two different people, or perhaps even from the same person at different times, can in one instance be a loving act -- and a liberating experience for all concerned; in another instance, however, the identical action can be a petty and degrading one. The loving deed comes from true concern for another, or from a spiritual issue that is at stake. The self here is not of primary importance. Or it might be that the action that outwardly appears more noble

is inwardly less so than another deed that has the opposite appearance. This is very confusing for you. Evaluating someone else's action calls for intuitive faculties. These faculties can be sufficiently developed only if you learn to be truthful with yourself and admit that your very proper and correct behavior is often not dictated by love at all.

Let us now consider something else from this standpoint. Very often you are convinced that your actions are ethical and moral even though you may already have discovered that the motives are selfish and not loving. Your motives may be desire for approval and admiration or love, but not for loving. These, of course, are selfish motives. While you may admit to these motives, you are convinced that your behavior leaves nothing to be desired. And yet, so often, even this is not true. At times it may be true, but the many times when selfish motives induce you to act selfishly, you do not see it at all. Your awareness is geared to right actions, but not to selfish ones. You still ignore the latter, just as you ignored the selfish motives behind your unselfish acts. Hidden selfish motives induce you to act them out, adversely affecting your surroundings. The guilt then may make you overly submissive, and lead you to give in to the unjustified demands of others. This will only simply strengthen their own selfishness. You then become confused and do not know when to assert yourself against unjustified demands, and when to give and act unselfishly.

Truthfulness with yourself finally helps you see where you disturb the universal forces by prohibiting yourself from loving. As you recognize this, you will let go of that prohibition for the sake of love. You can cultivate the deep desire to change and find ways and means to do so inwardly and outwardly. You will give up your little fears and misgivings, your imagined shame and vulnerability, for the sake of loving. You will be led by concern for others and for what is good and constructive in itself. This will make you free, flowing, and secure.

This, my friends, is not a sermon. These words are directed to a deeply hidden layer or core of your being. Often, the stronger the knowledge in your brain, the more ignorant you are in a deeper part of your being. Think carefully about all this. Try to apply it in your meditations and your self-search and find where and how it holds true for you. Do not apply it to others you may resent -- that temptation is always great -- but see it in yourself. As you notice your perfectionism and your little guilts, try to find behind all of them another kind of guilt.*

And now I would like to cover another topic: obligations. Many of you, in your self-search, have found your rebellion against living. This rebellion may assume various forms: it may be manifest or it may take shape as sloth, apathy, stagnation or a sense of utter drabness, where everything becomes an effort and you would rather do nothing at all.

Now why do you rebel against life? It is not only the unhappiness or the pain you fear and rebel against. That too, of course, is one reason, but there is also another. You resent the obligations, responsibilities, and duties that life imposes upon you. Your fight for physical and psychological survival necessitates alertness, power to make decisions, willingness to make mistakes and learn from them. You must expose yourself, and act in the face of risk. When you do not say yes to life in loving and relating, as well as in obligations, you are pushed and dragged through life against your will. To quite some degree, if you want to remain sane, you have to go through this active part of living, but you do so against the stream, as it were. You submit to it because you have to, and not because you have said yes to it. If you do not willingly say yes to life in all its aspects, but

allow yourself to be pushed by it, you cannot experience the dignity, the grandeur, and the beauty of it.

You go to the extreme of your unwillingness when you refuse to shoulder your moral obligations toward yourself. You may acknowledge accountability for your own misery in theory, but when it comes to practical living, you wish to absolve yourself from it. Subsequently, everything in your life becomes a tedious task. In an advanced stage even the daily routines of living, such as eating, getting up, cleansing yourself, doing little chores, may become too much. Then there is no dignity or freedom in performing everyday chores, be they big or little.

When everything is an ordeal, something in you rebels. If you fundamentally absolve yourself from accountability for your personal unfulfillment and trouble and refuse to look for the inner connection, then such a weariness is the outcome. You want things done for you. You do not want to cope with decisions, with the strain of living. Or, more accurately, what would ordinarily be an exhilarating challenge becomes a strain. How can you resolve this, my friends?

I would like to again point out that deep within there is something that has not said yes to the fight, to the challenge in a good sense, not in a hostile one, that life puts to us. Find this little voice, bring it out into the open, and then accept its meaning. You will find that this voice belongs to a greedy child that wants to receive everything but give nothing. Ascertain the selfishness and laziness in this voice once you bring it out of hiding. When you understand its nature, and see it without false moralizing and justification, you will want to change. Mature responsibility also requires love and unselfishness. Find where, why, how these are lacking when you put up a lazy resistance against assuming responsibility in your life, or do so only because you have to. You will eventually change your inner attitude and thus go with life rather than against it. When you are constantly tired and apathetic, or when you constantly find yourself in the throes of depression and rebellion, investigate, my dearest friends, whether this very basic rejection of life holds true or not for you.

When you discover this rejection, allow it to come out just as irrationally and unreasonably as it exists. Do not be ashamed of it. Pronounce it to yourself, write it down, open up unrestrainedly to your helper and reveal all the comfortable illusory ideals you harbor. Maybe this voice will state that it just likes to vegetate and do nothing; that it does not wish to overcome, to make efforts, to cope with people and their demands; to decide whether or not these demands are justified or not. It does not want to deal with obstructions, frustrations, criticism. It will tell you that you wish just to float.

You see, as there is in everything a healthy and also a destructive aspect, so it is with the desire to float. There is the healthy floating that comes from following the universal powers of love, from being active in life, saying yes to it. And there is the unhealthy version, the distortion, in which one wishes merely to vegetate and not shoulder life at all. Only when you determine this unhealthy desire concisely, and acknowledge it without self-deception, can you begin to find out why this seems so tempting.

I venture to say there are as many reasons as individuals, but there are always certain common denominators. There is fear of exposure to failure and inadequacy, in other words pride. There is desire for greater perfection than you have. It is a substitute for the love you don't allow yourself to feel. And here is the link. You need not be so perfect if you love. Therefore you need not fear

failure. If you did not fear failure so much, life would not become so difficult. It is often the inherent, unconscious terror of failure that makes life so arduous. So here we have the pride and the fear. Or, you may say no to life because you cannot stand anything going against your will. You fear frustration so you do not willingly go along with life. Here we are back to pride, self-will, and fear, the fundamental faults that prohibit love and disturb the soul.

In each case you will have to start from your own consciousness of feelings and reactions. At first, they may appear to have no similarity with either pride, self-will, or fear. Yet when you look closely and analyze their significance, you will always come back to this triad. And when you go a step further, you will see that these three attitudes directly prohibit love and are contrary to it. Because of them you harbor a deep-seated guilt, whether or not you are now aware of it. Hence you burden yourself with attitudes and behaviors that are infinitely more difficult to live with than the love you originally wished to grow into.

So my dearest friends, I recommend that you set out to find how much rebellion you have against life, and how it takes shape in your life. Find where, deep inside you, you equate having no obligations with freedom. Then seek further to understand that this is wrong. Ponder this lecture and see how both parts of it -- the guilt for not loving and the problem of obligations -- have a common denominator.

And now, your questions.

QUESTION: You mean to say that when a person's attitude toward life is correct and positive, his feelings will be right also, and consequently his actions will benefit him and others? That all depends on this fundamental attitude?

ANSWER: Yes, that is what I am saying. This may sound very simple, but as you all know, it is a laborious path to establish this fundamental attitude so that it accords with the universal forces.

QUESTION: We are planning to make some changes and improvements in the discussion sessions. Would you have any suggestions?

ANSWER: Yes. I will not go into technical details. This is something my friends can work out among themselves. The laborious road of trial and error is a test from which each individual can learn. When you build something together in this way, you will gain a sense of accomplishment that has much more value than simply following advice. Then your spirit will be in it. This, after all, is the only thing that matters. Therefore the question is really how to go about it so that your spirit is in it together, with as many participants as possible.

To help in that direction, I will remind you of the purpose of these sessions. The idea of these discussion groups is to help you put into practice, to assimilate, a theoretical knowledge and to apply it to your private lives. If you approach the discussion with this outlook and you constantly remind each other of that, it will keep you from abstract theorizing. You would not really need meetings to just theorize, which comes easily for most of you anyway. Let your aim be to voice where you do not emotionally understand something. Then through private and group work you will first verify that such emotional understanding is still lacking. You know so well that the first step toward understanding is always acknowledgment and concise verbalization of what one does

not understand. This is half the battle. Let each person pronounce what may be intellectually but not yet emotionally understood; what is not yet a living experience. Then the others may help with clarification, perhaps by way of examples. Personal exposure is not necessary unless desired by the person; the discussion can be kept general. This should not be confused with the group work. The important thing is to help you toward an emotional assimilation. Others who have the experience perhaps through having worked out a particular point under discussion may show how to arrive at this assimilation.

However, if here or there something is not intellectually understood, then, of course, these study groups are the place to air it. If your pride prevents you from doing so, it is not only to your own detriment, but also to the detriment of the entire venture. The right spirit, humility, and honesty will make your discussions a living, dynamic experience. Otherwise, they will become dull and dragging.

The speed at which these study groups can grow into a meaningful venture depends, first, on the pride of the timid ones who do not wish to expose their "ignorance," and, second, the pride of the boisterous ones who show off their "knowledge" to impress others. Both have burning questions. Some of these are quite conscious, others are unformulated, vague, out of laziness and pride. Such inner nonparticipation is a passive pretense that hinders the quality of the discussions. If every participant prepares questions by voicing what he or she does not understand, both intellectually and emotionally, I can promise that these discussion groups will turn out profitable for all concerned.

Let these discussions also serve as opportunities to probe yourselves. What is the motive for sharing? What is the motive for not doing so? To the degree that you voice your confusions, these discussions will prove of immeasurable value. Help will then be given as much to those who pronounce their confusion as to the others especially by the example that is set. Then your group will truly become a school where each person is pupil and teacher at the same time. If you keep this in mind and try to live it, all the outer details will easily fall into place. They are unimportant. Trial and error, and the improvements you will make along the way will come easily and without friction. If this basic spirit prevails, it will draw others along, because it is the strength of the spirit that matters. And even those who are too timid and blind and lazy will be swept along by the truthfulness, the self-honesty, the humility of those who actively participate. This will make the venture blossom.

QUESTION: I have a personal question. It refers to this lecture. Many years ago, following a dream interpretation you gave me, I found out that I was hiding my guilt about my mother behind something else. Then I found out that I don't love myself, so how can I love others? I felt all of a sudden that this might be the real guilt. When you came to the second part of this lecture, about the unwillingness to go through the day's little chores, I realized that this also holds true for me, and the idea came to me that perhaps I am hiding my real guilt because I am egocentric?

ANSWER: You are quite right, but you will have to find particularly how this holds true, how this egocentricity manifests. It has to become more than mere general knowledge. Your momentary awakening is the first step in the right direction; it is truly a new awareness of self. You may recall that I have often said that too much perfectionism is a substitute for withdrawing from loving in one form or another. The greater your soul's readiness for loving -- or to put it differently, the greater

your potential for spiritual development -- the more your soul protests when love is obstructed. Therefore the protest itself, unpleasant as it may feel, is the medicine.

I have said this often, but it is not yet fully understood. Nor do psychologists sufficiently understand that the neurosis itself is, in a sense, the first step to the cure of the soul. The sickness is not caused by outer events, but by a violation of the soul that prevents it from developing its potential. This is always a personal matter, and in the last analysis a spiritual or moral one. It is a question of integrity. Without such painful manifestation the person would be unaware that something was amiss. In truth, what is considered an illness is, at the same time, a medicine. In that lies one of the benign qualities of spiritual and universal law.

On the one hand, you feel a great love force. It is part of your nature. But it is counteracted by a prohibition. This prohibition causes the problems. You have to find it specifically. You are almost there; you actually find yourself on the threshold of the full realization of this core problem in you. Not daring to love may apply only to certain areas of your life, not to all relationships. When you verify this point, you will ascertain the source of the real guilt that produces the unjustified guilt, as well as the perfectionism.

My dearest, dearest friends, the love force, the life force, is abundantly flowing toward each one of you, and also to my absent friends. I think you can all feel it. You feel the light and the strength. Rejoice on this path. There is nothing more meaningful. There is nothing that makes more sense, no matter how painful life may sometimes be, no matter how many times you may feel a relapse or a stagnation. If you persevere, the light will become steadier and stronger. If you are more outspoken and more direct, this entire group will grow more and more. Those who find themselves in a hopeless depression will be less inclined to hide. Instead, they will go to those who find themselves strong at the moment; who have successfully passed through such a stage and have come out of it through this work. They will communicate with them and will thus be helped. This is true love, this is true relating. You all have much to learn about this. You are at the beginning of a very concise stage of your development. You all have learned a great deal and have thus come nearer to the point where this group, as a whole, can truly become a functional love group.

And now, be blessed, all of you. Be in peace and in God!

* See also Lecture #49

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