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THE PROCESS OF MEDITATION (MEDITATION FOR THREE VOICES: EGO, LOWER SELF, HIGHER SELF)

Greetings, all my friends here. Love and blessings, help and inner strength are coming forth to sustain you and help you open up your innermost being. I hope you will continue and cultivate this process, so that you bring to life your entire being -- all levels of your being -- creating wholeness in you.

In tonight's lecture I want to talk about meditation. Of course I have spoken about it many times before. I have mentioned that there are many aspects of and approaches to meditation. Now the time is ripe to speak about this important topic in a more comprehensive way, to help you to use this activity more effectively and meaningfully. To really understand the dynamics, the meaning, and the process of meditation and derive the maximum benefit from it, you must be clear about certain psychic laws I have discussed elsewhere. One is that three fundamental layers of personality must be involved if meditation is to be truly effective.

These three fundamental personality levels we may call:

- (1) the conscious ego level, with all conscious knowing and willing;
- (2) the unconscious egotistical child level, with all its ignorance, destructiveness, and claims to omnipotence; and
- (3) the supraconscious universal self, with its superior wisdom, power and love, as well as with its comprehensive understanding of events in human life.

In effective meditation the conscious ego level activates both the unconscious, egotistical, destructive self and the supraconscious, superior universal self. A constant interaction among these three levels must take place, requiring a tremendous amount of alertness on the part of your conscious ego self.

The conscious ego must be completely determined to allow the unconscious egotistical self to reveal itself, to unfold, to manifest in awareness, to express itself. This is neither as difficult nor as easy as it may seem. It is difficult exclusively, my friends, because of the fear of not being as perfect, as evolved, as good, as rational, as ideal, as one wants to be and even pretends to be, so that on the surface of consciousness the ego becomes almost convinced of being the idealized self-image. This surface conviction is constantly counteracted by the unconscious knowledge that this image is untrue, with the result that secretly the whole personality feels fraudulent and terrified of exposure. It is a significant sign of self-acceptance and growth when a human being is capable of allowing the egotistical, irrational, outright destructive child to manifest in the inner awareness, and acknowledges

it in all its specific detail. This alone will prevent a dangerous indirect manifestation of which the person's consciousness is not aware because it is not connected with it, so that the undesirable results seem to come from outside. If your meditation is not to be a lopsided endeavor, it must deal with this kind of blindness.

The egotistical infant's antisocial desires and claims, convictions and attitudes must be exposed in exact detail. It seems hard to accept that there is something in you that is so very different from the way you want to be and the way you think of yourself. Meditation must constantly encourage this self-revelation not only in a general sense, but primarily in specific daily situations that are unpleasant or unsatisfactory.

The conscious ego has to reach down and say, "Whatever is in me, whatever is hidden that I ought to know about myself, whatever negativity and destructiveness there is should be out in the open. I want to see it, I commit myself to seeing it, regardless of the hurt to my vanity. I want to be aware of how I deliberately refuse to see my part wherever I am stuck, and how I therefore overconcentrate on the wrongs of others." This is one direction for meditation.

The other direction must be toward the universal higher self, which has powers that surpass the limitations of the conscious self. These higher powers should also be called upon to expose the destructive little self, so that resistance can be overcome. The ego-will alone may be incapable of accomplishing this, but the ego can and must meditate to request the higher powers to help. The universal consciousness should also be asked to help you to understand the expressions of the destructive infant correctly, without exaggeration, so that you do not go from ignoring it to making it a monster. A person can easily fluctuate from an outer self-aggrandizement to a hidden inner self-deprecation. When the destructive infant reveals itself, one could fall prey to believing that this destructive self is the ultimate, sad reality. For a complete perspective on the revelation of the egotistic infant, one needs to ask constantly the guidance of the universal self.

When the infant begins to express itself more freely because the ego allows it and receives it as an interested, open listener, collect this material for further study. Whatever reveals itself should be explored for origins, results, further ramifications. What underlying misconceptions are responsible for the overt self-destruction, the hate, the spite, the malice, the ruthless selfwill? When the misconceptions are being recognized, guilt and self-hate diminish proportionately.

What are the consequences when for the sake of a momentary satisfaction you give in to these destructive impulses? When questions like these are clearly worked out, the inner determination to be destructive weakens -- again in proportion to the understanding of the particular cause and effect. If this part of the pathwork is glossed over and taken for granted without particular and exacting insight, the task is only half done. Meditation must deal with the entire problem of unconscious negativity step by step. The interaction is threefold. The observing ego must initially want it and commit itself to reaching in and exposing the negative side. It has also to ask for the help of the universal self. When the infant reveals itself, the ego should again ask for the help of the universal self to strengthen the consciousness for the further work which is the exploration of the underlying misconceptions and the heavy price paid for them. The universal self can help -- if you allow it -- to overcome the temptation to give in again and again to destructive impulses. Such giving in does not necessarily result in action, but manifests in emotional attitudes.

This type of meditation requires a great deal of time, patience, perseverance and determination. Remember that wherever you are unfulfilled, wherever there are problems, wherever there is conflict in your life, your attitude should not be to concentrate with woe on others or circumstances outside your control, but to reach into yourself and explore the causes embedded in your own egocentric childish level. Meditation is an absolute prerequisite here: it means ingathering yourself; calmly, quietly wanting to know the truth of this particular circumstance and its causes. Then you need to quietly wait for an answer. In this state of mind, peace will come to you even before you fully understand why you have a particular negativity. This truthful approach to life will already give you a measure of the peace and self-respect you lacked as long as you held others responsible for what you had to suffer.

If such meditation is cultivated, you will discover a side of yourself that you have never known. In fact, you will come to know two aspects: the highest universal powers will communicate themselves to you to help you discover your most destructive, ignorant side, which needs insight, purification, and change. Through your willingness to accept your lower self, the higher self will become more of a real presence in you. In fact, you will increasingly experience it as your real self so that despair about being bad, weak, inadequate, will fall by the wayside.

Many people meditate, but they neglect the two-sidedness of the endeavor and therefore miss out on integration. They may indeed actualize some of the universal powers that come into play wherever the personality is sufficiently free, positive, open, but the unfree, negative, closed areas are neglected. The actualized universal powers will not, by themselves, enforce an integration with the undeveloped part of the self. The conscious ego-self must decide for this integration and fight for it, otherwise the universal self cannot get through to the blocked-off areas. Partial integration alone with the universal self may lead to even greater self-deception if the consciousness is deluded by the actually existing partial integration with divine powers and becomes even more prone to overlook the neglected side. This makes for lopsided development.

The next step in meditation is to reeducate the destructive infant that is now no longer entirely unconscious. This infant with its false beliefs, its stubborn resistance, its spitefulness and murderous rage, must be reoriented. Reeducation, however, cannot take place unless you are fully aware of every aspect of this destructive infant's beliefs and attitudes. This is why the first part of meditation -- the revealing, exploratory phase -- is so fundamental. It goes without saying that this first phase is not something one gets over with, so that then the second, and later the third phase can begin. This is not a sequential process; the phases overlap. Exploration, understanding, and reeducation often go hand in hand while at other times they must proceed separately. The sensitivity for this must be cultivated; no rules can be made to relieve you of the need to feel into yourself to know what to use and when.

It is easy to look past what is stagnant in you. Even if the first meditational approach is used properly and you are capable of seeing new aspects of the destructive child in you, the second part of the process may be neglected. An understanding of the causes and effects may not be worked through. Or perhaps the third aspect of reeducation is not fully undertaken.

When you go through the entire process, a tremendous strengthening of your whole self takes place. Several things begin to happen within your personality, my friends. In the first place, your conscious ego-personality itself becomes stronger and healthier. It will be stronger in a good,

relaxed sense, with more determination, awareness, meaningful directedness and a greater power of concentration with one-pointed attention. Second, you will cultivate a much greater self-acceptance and understanding of reality. Unreal self-hate and self-disgust will go away. Equally unreal claims for specialness and perfection also go away. False spiritual pride and vanity as well as false self-humiliation and shame disappear. Through the steady activation of the higher powers, the self feels less and less forlorn, helpless, lost, hopeless, or empty. The whole sense of the universe in all its marvelous possibilities reveals itself from within, as the reality of this wider world shows you the way to accept and change your destructive inner child.

This gradual change enables you to accept all your feelings and let the energy flow through your being. When your small, petty, mean side is accepted without thinking that it is the total, final reality, then the beauty, love, wisdom and infinite power of the superior self become more real. This power cannot lead to unrealistic arrogance, specialness, and self-idealization when you are constantly dealing with your lower self. Such an attitude leads to balanced development, integration, and a deep, reassuring sense of your own reality. Realistic, well-founded self-liking must result.

When you see the truth in yourself and it becomes second nature to want and commit yourself to this truth, you will detect an ugly side in you, which until this point you were too resistant to see. Simultaneously, you also detect this great, universal, spiritual power that is in you and that in fact is you. Paradoxical as it may seem, the more you can accept the mean little creature, the ignorant little infant in you without losing your sense of self-worth, the better you will perceive the greatness of your innermost being, provided you truly do not use your discoveries about the little self to beat yourself down. The little self wants to seduce the conscious ego to stay within the narrow confines of neurotic self-beating, hopelessness, and morbid capitulation, which always cover unexpressed hatred. The conscious ego must prevent this stratagem using all its knowledge and resources. Observe this habit of self-beating, hopelessness, and capitulation in yourself and counteract it -- not by pushing it underground again, but by using what you know. Talking to this part of yourself you can bring to bear on it all the knowledge of your conscious ego. If this is not sufficient, request the powers beyond your consciousness to come to your help.

Another important aspect of getting to know both the lowest and the highest in you is that you realize the function, the capacities, but also the limitations of the conscious ego. On the conscious level the ego's function is wanting to see the full truth of both the lowest and highest in you, wanting with all of its strength to change and give up destructiveness. The limitation is that the ego-consciousness cannot execute this alone and must turn for help and guidance to the universal self and wait patiently without doubting or impatiently pushing. This waiting needs an open attitude about the way the help might manifest. The fewer preconceived notions one has, the faster help will come forth and be recognizable. Help from the universal consciousness may come in an entirely different manner than your concepts may make room for, and this might prove to be an obstacle. An open, waiting, accepting, and positive attitude is also necessary, though recognizing its absence, can also become a constructive acknowledgement of where the self is at the moment.

There are many different kinds of meditation. There is religious meditation, which consists of reciting set prayers. There is meditation in which the main emphasis is put on increasing the powers of concentration. In another type of meditation spiritual laws are contemplated and thought through. There is meditation in which the ego is made totally passive and will-less and the divine allowed its own flux. These and other forms of meditation may have more or less value, but my

suggestion to the friends who work with me is rather to use the available energy and time for confronting that part of the self that destroys happiness, fulfillment, and wholeness. You can never create the wholeness you truly aspire to, whether or not this aim is articulated, if you bypass this confrontation. This approach includes giving voice to the recalcitrant aspect of the egotistical, destructive self that denies happiness, fulfillment, and beauty for any reason.

So far we have discussed two phases of the meditation process: first the recognition of the unconscious destructive egotistical self and then the understanding of the underlying misconceptions, the causes and effects, the meaning and the price to be paid for the present destructive attitudes. The third phase is the reorientation and reeducation of the destructive part of the self. What I will say now must be taken with great care, otherwise the subtleties involved will not be communicated. Reeducation might very easily be misunderstood and lead toward a renewed suppression or repression of the destructive part that is beginning to unfold. You have to take great care and deliberately aim to avoid this, without, however, allowing the destructive part to engulf you. The best attitude toward the unfolding destructive part is one of detached observation, of unjudging, unharried acceptance. The more it unfolds, the more you must remind yourself that neither the truth of its existence, nor its destructive attitudes are final. They are not the only attitudes you have, nor are they absolute. Above all, you have the power inherent in you to change anything. You may lack the incentive to change when you are not fully aware of the damage the destructive part of you does to your life when it goes unrecognized. It is therefore another important aspect of this phase of pathwork meditation to look deeply and widely for indirect manifestations. How does unexpressed hate manifest in your life? Perhaps by feeling undeserving and afraid or by inhibiting your energies. This is only one example; all indirect manifestations have to be explored.

It is important here to remind yourself that where there is life, there is constant movement, even if this movement is temporarily paralyzed: matter is paralyzed life-stuff. The frozen blocks of energy in your body are momentarily hardened, immobilized life-stuff. This life-stuff can always be made to move again, but only consciousness can do it. For life-stuff is filled with consciousness, as well as energy; whether this energy is momentarily blocked and frozen or whether this consciousness is momentarily dimmed does not matter. Meditation must mean, above all, that the part of you that is already conscious and moving actually intends to make blocked energy and dimmed consciousness moving and aware again. The best way to do this is to allow the frozen and dimmed consciousness first of all to express itself. Here you need a receptive attitude, instead of a reaction that what comes forth is devastating and catastrophic. The panicky attitude toward one's own unfolding destructive infant does more damage than the destructive infant itself. You must learn to listen to it, to take it in, to calmly receive its expressions without hating yourself, without pushing the infant away. Only with such an attitude can you come to understand the causes of its underlying destructiveness. Only then can the process of reeducation begin.

The denying, panicky, frightened, self-rejecting, and perfection-demanding attitude you usually have makes every part of this meditation impossible. It does not permit unfoldment; it does not permit exploration of the causes of what might be unfolded; and it certainly does not permit reeducation. It is the accepting and understanding attitude that enables the conscious ego to assert its benign dominion over violently destructive and stagnant psychic matter. As I have said many times, kindness, firmness, and deep determination against your own destructiveness are necessary. It is a paradox: Identify with the destructiveness and yet be detached from it. Accept that it is you, but also know that there is another part of you that can say the final word if you so choose. For this

you need to widen the limitations of your conscious ego expressions to include saying at any moment: "I will be stronger than my destructiveness and will not be hampered by it. I determine that my life will be at its best and fullest and that I will and can overcome the blocks in me that make me want to remain unhappy. This determination of mine will bring in the higher powers that will make me capable of experiencing more and more bliss because I can let go of the doubtful pleasure of being negative, which I now fully recognize." This is the task of the conscious ego. Then and then only can it also call into play the powers of guidance, wisdom, strength, and a new inner feeling of love that comes from being penetrated by the universal self.

For reeducation, too, has to proceed through the relationship of the three interactive levels, just as it was necessary for making the destructive side conscious and exploring its deeper meaning. Reeducation depends on the efforts of both the conscious ego, with its instructions to and dialogue with the ignorant child, and on the intervention and guidance of the universal, spiritual self. Each in its own way will effect the gradual maturing of this infant. The ego determines its goal to change the consciousness of the negative inner child by wanting this and committing itself to it. This is its task. Full execution of this task is made possible by the spiritual influx from the deeper personality that has to be deliberately activated. Here the consciousness must again adopt a twofold approach: one is activity that asserts its desire to transform the self-defeating aspects, leading the dialogue and calmly but firmly instructing the ignorant child. The other is a more passive, patient waiting for the final, but always gradual, manifestation of the universal powers. It is they who bring about the inner change when the feelings lead to new, more resilient reactions. Thus good feelings will replace those which were negative or dead.

Rushing and pressuring the resisting part is as useless and ineffective as accepting its direct refusal to budge. When the conscious ego does not recognize that there is a part of the self that actually refuses every step toward health, unfoldment, and the good life, a counteractive movement may be one of hurried, impatient pressure. Both derive from self-hate. When you feel stymied and hopeless, take it as a sign for you to search for that part in you that says, "I do not wish to change, I do not wish to be constructive." Set out and find this voice. Use the meditative dialogue here again, to explore and let the worst in you express itself.

You can see, my friends, how expressing the negative part, exploring its meaning, cause and effect, and reeducating it must be a constantly fluctuating process, alternating and often simultaneous. See how the three levels of interaction combine in the effort of purification and integration. Meditation functions here as a constant articulation of what was previously unarticulated. It is a threefold communication and confrontation: from the ego toward the destructive self and from the ego toward the universal self, so that the universal self can affect both the ego and the destructive self. Your own sensitivity will grow day by day to feel what exactly is needed at any given point on your evolutionary path.

Each day brings forth new tasks, exciting tasks, beautiful tasks. They should not be approached in a spirit of wanting to get it over with, as if only then could life begin. On the contrary, the meditation process is living at its best. You may begin each meditation by asking yourself, "What do I really feel at this moment about this or that issue? In what respect am I dissatisfied? What is it I may be disregarding?" Then you may request the universal spirit in you to help you find these particular answers. Wait trustingly for what may unfold. Only when some part of you unfolds can you have a direct confrontation, communication, or dialogue with it and ask it

further questions, as well as instruct it. With patience and determination you can remold the distorted part, but only after it has fully expressed itself. You can reform, reorient stagnant psychic energy with your willingness to be totally honest, totally constructive, loving, and open. If you find an unwillingness in this regard, then that must be confronted, explored, and reeducated.

This is the only meaningful way in which meditation can move your life toward the resolution of problems, toward growth and fulfillment, and toward unfolding your best potential. If you do this, my friends, the time will come when trusting life will no longer sound like a vague, faraway theory that you cannot put into personal action. Instead, your trust in life, as well as self-love in the healthiest sense, will fill you more and more, based on realistic considerations, instead of wishful thinking.

The paradoxes and opposites that you constantly deal with in life will be reconciled. This is important, particularly when you meditate on this threefold interaction within you. I would now like to discuss a few of these important paradoxes. For instance, let us examine the paradox of desire. Both desire and desirelessness are important spiritual attitudes. Only to the dualistic, separated mind do they seem like opposites leading to confusion about which is right or wrong.

Human beings desire, for only desire can bring you to the fourth aspect of meditation. This is the expansion of your conscious concepts in order to create new and better life-substance, hence life experience. This is the creation I have spoken about in previous lectures. If you do not desire a better state of being and more fulfillment, you will have no material to create and mold life-substance. Visualization of a fuller state presupposes desire. These concepts must be fostered by the conscious ego, and the universal consciousness must intervene to help create a more expanded state.

If you see desire and desirelessness as mutually exclusive, you cannot grasp or feel the necessary attitude. Desire must exist for one to believe in new possibilities and to unfold into greater states of fulfillment and self-expression. But if desire is tense, urgent, and contracted, it forms a block. Such desire implies, "I do not believe that what I want can happen," which is, perhaps, the result of an underlying, "I really do not want it," because of some misconception or unjustified fears, or an unwillingness to pay the price. This underlying denial creates too tense a desire. Therefore a kind of desirelessness must be present which could be expressed as the statement, "I know I can and will have such and such, even if it is not realizable right now, in this or that specific form. I trust the universe and my own good will sufficiently that I can wait and will strengthen myself along the way to cope well with the temporary frustration of this desire."

What are the common denominators of healthy desire and healthy desirelessness that make meditation and indeed all life-expression real and beautiful? First there is an absence of fear and the presence of trust. If you fear frustration, unfulfillment, and their consequences, the tension of your soul movement will prohibit the fulfillment you want. Eventually you will even give up all desire. Then desirelessness will be distorted, misunderstood, and of the wrong kind because too much tense desire is present. In the final analysis such tense desire comes from fear caused by the infantile belief that you will be annihilated if you do not have what you want. Hence you do not trust your ability to cope with lack of fulfillment, which makes you inordinately frightened of it. So the vicious circle continues. The fear induces a cramp that becomes a denial of desire. These very subtle, obscure attitudes need to be explored in your meditation, so that you can come to the fourth stage

of meaningful meditation. In this stage you express your desire with confidence in your ability to cope with both nonfulfillment and fulfillment, and therefore with a benign universe, capable of yielding to you what you long for. The obstacles along the way can be dealt with when you know that the ultimate state of bliss will be yours anyway. Then desire and desirelessness will not be irreconcilable paradoxes, but complementary attitudes.

Similarly, it seems paradoxical to postulate that both involvement and detachment must exist in the healthy psyche. Again there must be a twofold approach to the understanding of this seeming contradiction. If detachment is indifference because you are afraid to be involved and unwilling to risk pain and scared of loving, then detachment is a distortion of the real attitude. If involvement means merely an expression of a super-tense will that your infantile insistence on having what you want right away generates, then the healthy, productive version of involvement is inverted.

I will choose a third example of apparent opposites that make a comprehensive whole when not distorted. Let us take the inner attitudes of activity and passivity. On the dualistic level these two seem to be mutually exclusive. How can you be both active and passive in a harmonious way? The right inner interaction includes both these inner movements. For instance, meditation, as I have explained it here, must include both. You are active when you explore your inner levels of consciousness; you are active when you commit yourself and struggle to recognize and overcome resistance; you are active when you question yourself further to let the previously unadmitted destructive side express itself; you are active when you have a dialogue and reeducate the infantile, ignorant aspects of yourself; you are active when you use your ego-consciousness to enlist the help of the spiritual consciousness; you are active when you create a new concept of life experience, as opposed to an old, limiting one. When the ego deals with both other "universes" to establish a connection, you are active. But you must also learn to wait passively for the unfoldment and expression of both these other levels. Then the right blend of activity and passivity prevails in the psyche. The universal powers cannot come to fruition in a human being unless both the active and the passive movements are present.

These are very important concepts to understand, to use, and to observe within yourself. Find where they are distorted and where they are functioning well. When the three-way interaction within yourself takes place, there is always a harmonious blend between desire and desirelessness; between involvement and detachment; between activity and passivity. When this balance becomes a steady state, the destructive infant grows up. It is not killed or annihilated. It is not exorcised. Its frozen powers resolve themselves into live energy, which you will actually feel, my friends, as a new, living force. This infant must not be slain. It must be instructed so that salvation can come to it, liberating it, bringing it to growth. If you work toward this goal, you will steadily move closer to unifying the ego level and the universal self.

This is powerful material. Be blessed, be in peace, be God.

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