

02 Pathwork Lecture #123–1996 Edition
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LIBERATION AND PEACE BY OVERCOMING FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

03 Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for each one of you. Blessed be your every effort in the direction of self-development, liberation, and self-realization.

04 One of the fundamental human predicaments is the struggle to overcome the duality between life and death. From this basic predicament derive all other problems, difficulties, fears, and tensions you have to contend with. Whether this manifests directly as fear of death, of aging or of the unknown, it is always fear of the passing of time. All are manifestations of the same basic fear.

05 In order to assuage these fears, humanity has created philosophical, spiritual, religious concepts. But concepts, even if they result from attempts of one individual to pass on a true experience, will not relieve the real tension. The only way to truly overcome fear and reconcile the great duality is to delve into the first unknown you fear so much: your own psyche.

06 This sounds simpler than it really is. To explore the unknown corners of one's own mind is by no means just a question of resolving dualities. There are many who ardently pursue a path of self-exploration yet shy away from certain facets of their innermost selves. The tension and disturbance is then glibly explained away. These people may even have made considerable progress and resolved certain inner conflicts, but vast areas of their psyche remain unknown.

07 To the degree you are unaware of what goes on within you, you will fear the passing of time and the "great unknown." When one is young, these fears may be assuaged. But sooner or later every human being will be confronted more directly with the fear of death. I want to emphasize it again: to the degree that you know yourself, you fulfill your life, yourself, your dormant potential. And to that degree death will not be feared but experienced as an organic development. The unknown will no longer pose a threat.

08 The path of self-discovery embodies this struggle, my friends. The avenues of escape, even within the framework of this path, are too varied to enumerate. Only by your unceasing willingness to see, evaluate, comprehend, and unify yourself by ruthless truthfulness will you ultimately succeed.

- 09** One of the main obstacles to overcoming the fear of death is the fear of letting go of the barriers which separate you from the opposite sex. As long as these barriers exist, the fear of death must also be there just as strongly. There is a very direct connection between these three: fear of one's own unconscious, the fear of love with the opposite sex, and fear of death. The connection between the first two is beginning to dawn on you, but the third part of the triad may still be a novel idea. It will cease to be an arresting theory, however, once you experience the connection yourself, in the effort of self-understanding. You will then know the truth of these words.
- 10** Self-fulfillment depends on fulfilling yourself as a man or as a woman, respectively. Ultimately, you cannot fulfill yourself without overcoming the barrier between you and the opposite sex, thus truly becoming a man or a woman. Of course, there are also other aspects of self-fulfillment. You may be unaware of certain potentials you possess: your talents, your strength, your inherent good qualities, such as your courage and resourcefulness, your broadmindedness, your creativity. However, none of these can truly unfold in their inherent splendor unless a man truly becomes a man, and a woman truly becomes a woman. The self-realization that takes place while the barrier to union with a mate remains can be only partial and conditional. For this barrier indicates a barrier to areas within the self that you shy away from exploring and understanding. It indicates a resistance to fully grown selfhood and an insistence on artificial infancy. This carefully nurtured parasitical state prevents liberation through overcoming the fear which is a product of duality.
- 11** When all resistance to unknown areas in oneself has vanished so that one no longer fears oneself, one cannot possibly fear other human beings, including the opposite sex. A great inner freedom and trust, born out of an objective, realistic attitude releases the tight grip of control that stands in the way of letting oneself go into the state of being. When you fulfill yourself, there is no longer a barrier, no more holding on in fear of the unknown, in distrust of the self or the other. The same holding on prevents you from entering into the cosmic stream of timelessness that you experience in the highest bliss of union with a mate, and that you experience in the highest bliss in what you call death.
- 12** Death has many faces. Those who are afraid, tightly holding onto the little self, may experience death as fearful seclusion and separateness, but for those who are not afraid of living fully, of reaching out and no longer preserving the little self, death is the glory that union on this earth can be and more! Therefore, the struggle of self-realization, in the last analysis, must mean: first, removal of the barriers between your consciousness and the hidden areas of your psyche. These hidden areas are not always covered up and unconscious -- they are often right in front of your eyes if you but choose to look at them. Second, removal of the barriers between you and your counterpart, whoever he or she may be at a given phase. And the third barrier is between you and the cosmic stream. Whenever this stream carries you, you will experience its rightness. It is functional at this stage of your being, it is organic. But people fearing themselves, the other, and therefore the stream of being, do not trust the

passing of time. They hold on with the little self and create a wall of clouds between their higher consciousness and their momentary awareness.

- 13** The three basic hindrances are pride, self-will, and fear. All faults, problems, confusions, distortions, conflicts, and misconceptions derive from pride, self-will, and fear in one form or another. The same triad constitutes the barriers to the three avenues of self-expansion. Let us consider this more closely.
- 14** Take first the barrier between consciousness and the unconscious: pride. It bars the way because you may not like what you will find if you venture into the unknown within yourself. It may not be flattering or compatible with your idealized self-image. Even if your finding proves not to be derogatory, you will fear it might be. The importance of being admired makes you adopt the standards and values of others whose approval you seek. This creates a block of pride, a wall, a cloud that hinders insight.
- 15** Self-will causes apprehension that what you find may force you to do something your little ego is not inclined to do, or to give up something which it is unwilling to surrender. Self-will wants the little ego to be in control, so you can cling to the known.
- 16** Fear bars the way when both pride and self-will indicate a lack of trust; then fear makes you believe that the final reality is not to be trusted. Cosmic reality is embedded in your deep unconscious as the stream of cosmic events. If you enter into this stream, it cannot help but be benign, bringing happiness, fulfillment, and meaningfulness. Distrusting this stream and therefore holding on to what you know, in the belief that you might fare better than by taking the chance of entering the unknown, creates walls of fear. It is this fear that blocks full self-recognition.
- 17** The triad of pride, self-will, and fear also applies to the barrier between the self and a mate. Pride enters because, whether you are man or woman, you fear the apparent helplessness -- and therefore shame -- of giving over to a force greater than your little ego. Love between the sexes is a humbling experience and therefore the enemy of pride. Your pride wants to direct and control; it does not want to give over to any force, even if this force is most desirable. Even though you and everyone else go through life desiring to love, you still block it and find ways to compromise with the contradictory directions of your soul. The force driving you into love is great indeed, for it derives from your innermost nature. The drive deriving from pride, self-will, and fear pushes you away from love.
- 18** Self-will is opposed to love because it wants all control; it cannot give itself up. It seems to you -- erroneously, of course -- that only when you obey and are governed by the little self are you safe. You are under the misapprehension that giving yourself over to the love force is the same as heedless and headless greed, unreasonableness, and lack of realism. This is not so. Realism, objectivity, the ability to relinquish, and fearless willingness to enter love are not only compatible but interdependent. You block the experience out of fear of losing your dignity -- meaning pride -- and your

selfhood -- meaning self-will -- when, in reality, true dignity and selfhood can be gained only by giving up pride and self-will.

19 The fear of losing safety and one's very life is not so different from the fear that blocks the blissful experience of self-forgetfulness in union with a mate. Some of you may sense the similarity, at least occasionally.

20 The triad of pride, self-will, and fear also influence one's attitude to death. Dying ultimately means giving up self-direction -- and this surrender, strange as this may seem, appears humiliating. In order to avoid the humbling truth that the little self is not all-powerful, you hold onto it in pride and self-will, thereby creating ever stronger waves of fear.

21 In order to resolve this erroneous duality, particularly the conflict between giving up the self and full possession of the self, I would like to present what may indeed sound like a paradox: are you finding yourself on such a laborious path of self-realization only to become capable of giving yourself up to union with the other sex and to death? The truth is that you cannot give up successfully what you have not found, for you cannot freely let go of something you have never really possessed. Only when you can freely give up your selfhood will you gain more selfhood.

22 Now, if death, or dying, can be such a blissful experience, why then is it perceived so darkly? Why doesn't a death instinct, a yearning for death exist, as, for example, the strong instinct to lose oneself in love? Why must death be encountered without the help of instinctual drives, and why must human beings work so hard to overcome the barrier of fear? You may ask, why is it that we, on this earth, have to battle against this great unknown? At first glance, such questions seem justified and logical, but when you take a closer look, you will understand that things must be as they are. You see, my friends, it would be so easy to wish for death because you cannot cope with life when life is painful and unfulfilled. In this unfinished, ignorant, and blind state of terror, you would all too easily escape into death, even though, in this case, death would not prove any different than life -- for both are intrinsically the same. In order to avoid such a destructive escape, the life instinct must be very strong. And it can operate only as long as death remains an unknown. No words can remove your fear of the unknown, so your life instinct can prevent you from choosing death out of negative, destructive motivations. This strengthens the stamina to try and try again, until life is finally mastered through understanding the self, and hence the universe. Only in this endeavor will the inner understanding finally dawn that death is not to be feared -- or, that it is feared only in exact proportion to the still existing fear of living and loving. Hence the sharp cleavage between life and death, their illusory opposition, begins to dwindle. The true understanding of these words can come only when life is no longer a threat and no longer needs to be fled so your life instinct will no longer have to oppose the death instinct; they will be one and the same. You will then not need to rush ahead, nor will you need to hold back.

- 23** If you look at your conscious and unconscious attitudes toward the passage of time, toward life and death, you will find that they are identical with one another and with your innermost, hidden attitudes toward love, regardless of your conscious, healthy desires. You will find that the fear of the unknown plays a role in all these attitudes. You will find that you constantly fluctuate between trying to hold back time in a fear-cramped motion, and rushing ahead because you cannot stand the moment. Very rarely indeed are you in harmony with the cosmic stream of your life, your individuality. This is what being in peace with oneself, being in harmony with God, really means: not holding back, not pushing toward, but dissolving in the life stream, in full possession of yourself, yet without fear of giving up self-possession. This is the great experience that you are blessed and privileged to have when you find your mate. And this will ultimately be the experience of going into a new form of consciousness.
- 24** The key to all this lies in self-discovery on the many levels from which you still shy away. When you avoid parts of yourself, you cannot help but project outwardly onto others and into the outside life what seems like a terrifying self-confrontation. Hence the projection cannot yield peace and liberation, regardless of how much precarious temporary satisfaction it appears to give. You always find reasons and excuses outside yourself to hedge what most needs to be tackled. This applies to practically all my friends, at least occasionally.
- 25** But all of you also make progress, and each little step in the right direction will finally dissolve the clouds, the barriers, between you and this higher consciousness, the timeless stream. This consciousness furnishes you with all the wisdom, truth, and rightness you need for your everyday life. Some of you have occasionally tapped this source and experienced it, only to lose it again. When you contact this inner source of peace, truth, and highest bliss, you will deeply comprehend the significance of Creation.
- 26** The truth is like the sun, around which all other planets revolve while it remains constant and bright, even though it is often covered by clouds. The clouds are your pride, your self-will, and your fear, your ignorance and your stemming against, or hurrying ahead of, time. But in the moments you perceive your truth -- be it ever so banal or apparently insignificant in terms of cosmic development -- the clouds disperse and the warm sun of your higher consciousness regenerates you with strength and well-being, with joyfulness and peace. This sun within yourself is constantly ready to warm and enliven you, but you, my dearest ones, must overcome much more. Then all fears, all pride, and all selfwill will fall away. To say that they already have will not make it so. If it were so many of your reactions, feelings, and expressions, as well as the effect you have on others and they on you would be drastically different.
- 27** This is not an easy topic to understand. It needs more than a searching for understanding with your mind, which, in itself, will accomplish little. It needs the keener understanding of your being, which can come only when you look at the feelings that keep you from happiness at this moment. If you look at your desires, fears, and needs, your apprehensions and reactions -- right or wrong -- at this and every moment, you will find the eternal now. In it you can live fearlessly with rightful confidence in

the unknown. You do not have to become perfect; you are perfect, in a sense, when you can calmly face, acknowledge, and come to terms with your present imperfection.

28 When you no longer struggle against the self, thus shedding your pride and pretense, and become willing to change, thus shedding your selfwill, together with all fears of self, of others, of life, of love and of dying -- all these evaporate like ice in the sun.

29 Are there any questions?

QUESTION: What about a person who does not fear death for himself, but just for people he loves. In other words, can the fear of death be for other people?

30 ANSWER: This may easily be a projection. It may also be a reversal of the fear of life. If one fears life, certain other people may represent the security one feels lacking in oneself. One may fear loneliness, lack of actual or irrational protection, by the loss of others. Just because these considerations are not faced, out of a sense of shame that one may really mourn not so much out of love as out of self-concern, the fear becomes increasingly persistent and disturbing. If you have the courage to look at all these possible emotions, after overcoming the initial reluctance, fear of the death of others will diminish; the bitter frightening aspect of it will disappear, and you can then look at the causes of your own helplessness. Attaching the fear, or other negative emotions, to where they really belong rather than experiencing them in displacement, is always a relief.

31 But the work begins only then: finding why one fears life so much that one has to cling to others; why one does not use the inborn faculties to live fully and therefore no longer fear life or death. If you fear life, you must also fear death, whether you consciously experience it in incidents when your life is, or seems, endangered, or whether you fear the loss of others. Fear of coping with life can manifest as fear of the loss of a loved one. And so can fear of losing one's life. The approaching death of others triggers the reminder that one day death will come to the self, too. But this fear is still so hazy that one experiences it only through the other person. Only when an actual confrontation occurs can one really gauge whether or not one is afraid of dying.

32 This projection applies both to the fear of living alone and to the fear of one's own death. Both these indicate the same thing.

33 All this would have to be investigated. Wherever fear of life, or confronting a certain problem exists, you will be disturbed by the fear of death in one form or another. Often the real root -- in what respect fear of self and of life exists -- cannot be recognized at once. It may manifest only by symptoms, and one has to look for these symptoms and investigate them for their significance. Take for example one's attitude to this pathwork, professed and actual; one's attitude to the opposite sex -- again professed and actual; one's reactions to current life circumstances -- all this has to be looked at with a penetrating spirit of truthfulness. When you can determine a fear of, or to use a more

psychological term, resistance to, your innermost self, you can be sure that fear of death must exist in equal measure. And so does the fear of loving, of letting go of yourself in this great experience. Find it; see it in yourself, and you will have conquered a great deal.

34 Of course, these words are directed to everyone.

35 It is also important to note that you are often misled in this respect because in your fantasy life these fears do not exist. You may deny the existence of the fears of loving and of self-surrender because you are acutely aware that you ardently desire this fulfillment and can experience it without inhibition in fantasy. You then believe that outer reasons are responsible for your incapacity to actually realize this fantasy life and that these reasons have nothing to do with you. But if you cannot realize this fantasy life, there must be an opposing current of fear in you that prevents the experience. To find it, to lift it out of hiding, is so very important. It is a vast step forward compared to the belief that one is free from obstructions while all the time they continue to exist underground.

36 Through this lecture I have given you various avenues to explore the actual state of your soul regarding life, love, and death. I showed that the conscious conviction and feeling about these three great forces may be only one side: the other side is applying awareness to unify opposing forces. I showed the various symptoms by which the hidden, opposing currents can be detected. Discovering them is of the very greatest importance and may lead you out of a temporary bottleneck in your work.

37 QUESTION: Wouldn't a fear of being left also account for the fear of losing dear ones?

ANSWER: Yes, this is what I said at first. The insecurity, the fear of having to confront life alone -- hence the fear of life in pure form, once it is broken down and analyzed.

38 Where there is fear of life, there must be fear of love and of death. Where one of these fears exists, the other two must exist as well. When you establish this link within yourself, you are bound to experience growth, liberation, strength, confidence. It cannot be otherwise.

39 Blessings for each one of you. Do not despair, my friends, when you sense the barriers I discussed tonight. They are removed more effectively through awareness of their existence than through ignorance. Please realize and understand this important truth. Make it your own by testing it, and you will rejoice. Be blessed in this new awareness, each one of you. Be in peace, be in yourself, and therefore in God!

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