

The Path – II

T096 The Inner Teachings 17th May 1939 Pembroke Hall, London

Invocation:

Let us open our hearts to the love and wisdom of the eternal Spirit from whom we come and in whom we live, who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent.

Amen.

The omnipresence and the omniscience of the eternal Spirit is a comforting realisation. The soul is breathed forth by God and always retains that parental link. When we can return again into the fuller consciousness of this sustaining life, then we enter the eternal peace. In the process of the soul's growth it strives to shake itself free, it seeks freedom. Let us compare the child soul of a man* with the life of a little child. We see in that child the struggles for self will. It will cry and scream sometimes and show its determination to get its own way. The sterner or shall we say the wiser parent will give freedom so that the child can kick and shout and expand its lungs, but only up to a point. Then the child feels the strength and warmth of the parent, and although it may struggle and protest, in time it becomes docile and nestles against the heart of its parent. Thus it grows with the parent. For as the parent advances in years and learns wisdom and greater poise and [a] wider perspective, so the child absorbs from its parent's inner growth. All that is most beautiful and most sweet in the parental plant can be transmitted to the child, and the fruits of later years become more sweet and mellow.

*[*For editorial policy around gender, see the introduction.]*

If we believe this picture truly to express the life of a child of God, we shall be able to respond in like degree to the wondrous strength of God; we shall know that God is all wisdom. His plan is perfect. We emphasise this perfection, because man so often beats his wings against the very arms of love—perhaps this is a natural outlet, the natural desire for growth and expansion. Let us picture the soul on the path of spiritual evolution, a soul first sent forth by the Father to dwell in form in the higher worlds, a Christ-like form truly created in God's image. We see this soul form gradually selecting its own clothing as it descends through the higher spheres of life down into the lowest. We would make this clear: when the soul first leaves its home it is not only living in heaven, but it comes to live on the physical plane, and commences to weave its clothing or soul body whilst contacting, whilst living, on earth. This is difficult to understand because the idea may have taken root in your mind that the soul is a long time descending through the celestial spheres before it finally manifests in the physical body, but the spirit is weaving its garments from its first contact with the life on the physical plane. In the beginning the young soul was perhaps more open, more receptive to the influences of the teachers from the higher realms, but as it descended and clothed itself more completely in denser garments, the spirit within became more shut in, its senses more obtuse, and so it was unable to respond to the higher worlds. In this state we see man in prison, man bound and darkened, blindfolded.

The soul may pass through incarnation after incarnation in a weary round of rebirth; a path which appears to those who do not understand to be terrible, because the soul, bound to the wheel of rebirth, has no freedom, no opportunity. You may look out and think you see

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thousands of souls thus blindfolded and bound upon the wheel. Wait, we see beneath bonds and blindness a beautiful process slowly—oh so slowly—taking place. We see a light, so masked and dimmed, but light it is within this form. We watch the journey through the ages, and see the man passing through perhaps terrible earthly experiences, but we see that in each life there is light absorbed, perhaps through some experience of love or sacrifice, and it is usually through human love, however crude in expression; love bestowed on flowers, perhaps, or on animals, or given to some person. Love is helping that inner light to grow. The right reaction of the man to harsh and bitter circumstances causes that light to become brighter. The soul may weary of its journey on earth, but the wondrous love of God mercifully blinds that soul so that it neither knows past nor future, but lives only in the present.

Thus the soul of man journeys onward, not by a pitiless road, for there are certain beauties and recompense, and satisfaction can come in countless ways. Shall we visualise the man, staff in hand, walking this dusty, weary path, growing weary at eventide (or at the death of the physical body) and laying him down to rest, and in the morning he awakens feeling like a man reborn. He is reborn, renewed and refreshed in those higher worlds, and so he starts off again for the next day's work (or walk). Along the path he finds fruits growing which satisfy his hunger. He finds running streams of crystal water which satisfy his soul's thirst. God is very watchful and mindful of His children's simple needs. Will you ponder on this, dear ones?

As the man journeys, in due time and order he catches a glimpse in the distance of a cross raised against the sky. Humanity, the earthly mind, has this picture presented to it as symbolic of Christ and his words and sacrifice. This is not all: the cross is an age-old symbol which all men at a certain stage of spiritual evolution become able to see. The cross of light is to be found through all races, all civilisations, an outward symbol of an inward spiritual experience, of surrender. The neophyte, when first the bandage is taken from his eyes, beholds the light, and behind and in the light the cross of self-surrender. This is the first major initiation. We will speak on initiations at a later date; self-surrender is the first major initiation—the surrender of self-will.

Here we would diverge for a moment, for there are paradoxes which we continually meet on the spiritual path. At every step a paradox—so confusing, and we do not know what is meant or which path we should take. Here again men are liable to lay down hard and fast rules. One says 'We must go that way'. Another says 'No, this is the path—I *know*'. What are we to do? We are faced with a deep spiritual problem and we have eventually to learn by our intuition to discriminate between the upper and the lower or the left and the right hand path. Here we cannot be bound by our brother's advice, because what is right for him, what is *his* pathway, is not necessarily ours. We must decide for ourselves which is the way to journey.

Yes, discrimination [is needed]. Everyone knows our duty but ourselves: 'If I were you, I should do so and so'. Have you heard that? 'If I were Mrs So and So I should take this course.' But would you? If you were placed in exactly the vibrations, the conditions and with the same qualities of soul development, would you do as you say you would? How *can* we

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judge for another soul, whose quality of consciousness, whose feelings and reactions are vastly different from our own? We cannot decide for anyone else and no one else can decide for us. So, when these little arguments crop up, smile and say 'Yes, I know.' Say nothing to hurt the brother so eager to advise you. Do not say 'Oh no, I know that is not my path, you are quite wrong'. Say 'Yes' and don't forget the smile! Are we encouraging [you] to be deceptive? No, but men on earth must wear masks. However, all men should so develop their X-ray vision that they see through the mask to the real person beneath. When they can do this they do not judge, they understand and have a feeling of goodwill and fellowship for every brother.

Difficult problems arise in modern days which affect the individual. I am thinking of a question which was sent to someone in this Lodge concerning the advisability of joining an A.R.P. group*. This may not appear to be relevant, but we take it as an illustration of discrimination. If we answer by saying 'It is your duty to do this' we may be wrong. If we say 'No, it is not your duty; we know there will be no war and there will be no need for A.R.P. work' we may be equally wrong. It is a matter for the individual to decide. He must deny self, put self on one side and consider only the possibility of the service to life and his fellows. One man gives service through spiritual channels and not material; he may feel that his time can be better used on the spiritual path, and no other man can decide for him. He must be the deciding factor. The second man may feel with all his being that he is helping best by assisting in precautions against possible danger in the future. Both men are right. It is the motive behind all action which is important. Is yours a motive which desires to contribute the very best towards human advancement? Or would you draw to yourself attention and self-glory?

*[*Air Raid Precautions (ARP) was an organisation set up in 1937 dedicated to the protection of civilians from the danger of air raids.]*

The same question arises about war and conscription and the army. What is the right attitude for, shall we say, a brother of the light to adopt? Is it right for him to allow himself to be trained to kill his brother man? Is it right for a man to kill his brother? On the other hand is it right to stand aside and watch warfare and bloodshed and make no effort to defend the victims? What is the answer? We are told by wise teachers that we must always obey the law of the country in which we live: 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.'* Do you see our problem? The answer can only be individual, and no-one has the right to say to another 'You must' or 'You should not'.

*[*Matthew 22 : 21]*

With regard to soldiering, even your government recognises the conscience of man. That is important. It does not matter to anyone else what his brother's conscience says, or whether it is functioning truly or otherwise. The decision rests entirely with the individual. If the brother knows within his being that it is his duty to belong to the army, then that brother must do so, and he will receive his quota of spiritual attainment through this particular service. It is entirely a question of the quality of the soul consciousness. If the man *feels* that is his way,

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that *is* his way. On the other, if a man's whole being shrinks from bloodshed and warfare; if the whole idea of training to kill brother man is wrong and repugnant to him and he feels that there is a better way of service, then his may be the more difficult path but he must follow it, even amidst the condemnation and perhaps jeers of his fellows. He too will receive the due reward of his spiritual labours as he journeys up the steep path.

Doubtless there are problems and questions arising out of what we have said, so we will await your questions.

Q.You have spoken of soldiering. I believe that the person born under the sign Aries is particularly suited to that calling—would that have a bearing upon his evolution?

A.Yes, probably that soul would need that particular experience on the path of life, but the influence does not necessarily apply to the physical plane—it may apply to the higher planes; it need not necessarily work out in soldiering but in other directions.

Q.Do we learn the lessons on the path in the order of the signs, each representing a certain cosmic quality which has to be developed?

A.Yes. Think of the wheel of the zodiac as the path—each sign following after the other. Another presentation of this truth is in the story of the Twelve Labours of Hercules.

Q.Would you say that in each cycle there is a proportion of souls destined to pass over through violence? In the middle ages personal violence was much more frequent; nowadays the tremendous casualty list from the roads provides for that proportion of our population destined to pass over through violence?

A.Destined to pass over through violence, because the soul has brought about that particular karma, but when man refrains from being violent then souls will not have to meet death in violent form. Whilst the karma of nations is violent there will be violence in passing over—if not in warfare, in sudden death of one kind or another. Violence in the karma of humanity causes the passing out through violence. When humanity has overcome the violence in itself there will be no more death by violence.

Q.Does the wheel of rebirth refer only to incarnations in this world, or does it also embrace incarnations in other worlds?

A.There are wheels of rebirth on other planets, but so remote from our present stage of consciousness that I do not think it is wise to refer more to it tonight. If you are thinking of rebirth on this earth and then rebirth on to another planet and then back again to earth—I will not say that that never takes place, but it only does so in *very* rare cases.

Q.Referring to the question about violent death: do you mean that when people stop being violent with each other there will be no more accidents et cetera?

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A.I mean that exactly. Death will be peaceful and happy, just like stepping out of an old coat and saying ‘Goodbye, I have finished with you—God bless you’. This used to be when the world was on one of its peaks of light. It will be so again.

Q.Is the very bad weather the result of people’s thoughts of violence or depression?

A.Yes. Disturbance in the atmosphere can be brought about by the disturbed and violent thoughts of men. Did you notice that during the crisis when the war clouds hung so heavily how heavy the atmosphere was and how dark the days? So also when our beloved David abdicated—again the heaviness and darkness. Of course it was the mass thought which produced the conditions.

Q.Would a healing by a master constitute an initiation of a certain kind?

A.There are cases where a healing by the master’s love can be a great initiation because it brings with it a transmutation of karma. By the transmutation of karma I mean that the love of Christ can so powerfully enter and cleanse the soul that its karma is completely washed away. The sins are washed away or redeemed by the love of the Christ, but this is not so frequent as is thought in some schools. It is rare, but it is possible—we have seen it happen.

Q.Is there a greater pressure of karma on the soul who desires to make rapid progress?

A.When rapid advance is being made yes, it must be so. It just draws the attention of the lords of karma to the spot, as it were. The soul eager to progress in order to help humanity must be prepared to face a certain extra pressure of karma, but a corresponding light and illumination comes which makes the karma appear light. It can even be dissolved in the great light; that which to a less enlightened soul would be a great trouble, to the more enlightened is not a trouble because it is viewed in another way.

Benediction:

With hearts full of thankfulness for our creation, our preservation and all the opportunities for spiritual growth, and for the opportunities of service to God and man, we close this service, knowing that the peace and love of the Great White Spirit is with us always.

Amen.

The search matches with either words and phrases, which appear in the text, or the following ‘key’ words and phrases, which are similar in meaning to those in the document:

Parenting, past lives, flexibility, unique, non-judgement, tolerance, soldier, armed forces