

TOTAL SURRENDER

Greetings and blessings, my dearest friends here.

In the most recent lectures that I was privileged to deliver to you, I often stressed the importance of making a total surrender to the will of God. This is a very different emphasis from what was given priority in the earlier years of this transmission. At that time the focus was how to strengthen the observer self and the positive ego. And then to learn how to use these in the service of penetrating the mask, uncovering the lower self, and contacting and enlisting the aid of the higher self. Although I occasionally then made reference to the need for surrender to the will of God, this was not stressed, and most of you did not truly comprehend the depths to which this injunction was meant. But now we are dealing with the second stage of the pathwork,[®] in which learning to live by the greater consciousness, or what I have also termed the real self, is our primary endeavor.

Many of my friends who now pursue this path, and who have not yet arrived at the stage of the great transition, may find that this lecture is beyond the level at which they now need to work. I ask them to trust that there will come a time when my words in this lecture will be precisely what they need to hear at that time.

In the second stage of the pathwork your surrender to God becomes primary. Rather than viewing this feeling of surrender as an occasional experience that you may seek and attain during prayer or meditation, you will learn to visualize the possibility of living in this state of surrender at all times. You must immediately wonder: what are the problems you will face in attempting to achieve this? The problems are twofold. On the one hand you will discover a reluctance to let go of the familiar. You are all already well acquainted with this tendency to resist the new – at times, it seems, only because it is new. Even though one part of you may actively desire to make a change which you feel confident will bring you greater happiness and expansion, you find another part of you which stubbornly resists this, and does all in its power to dig in its heels and say no. This resistance to change has dogged your steps all the way along in this path, and it now could become even more fierce and pernicious. How should you address it now?

The most effective way of dealing with this resistance of the foolish and frightened little ego is to continue to pray for and create experiences of the unitive state. These little tastes of the divine are so sweet to the soul that, once experienced, the soul longs for more and more of them. Therefore, in this work, you do not assault the resistance. Rather, you wean it away from its fear of the new by giving it delicious tastes of what lies in store for it. How, you may well ask, does one create these tastes? There is of course no magic pill that you can take which will produce these states upon demand. They come from the grace of God, and so they cannot be willed or predicted. Even to actively strive toward them may well only have the result of pushing them farther away. But this does not mean that nothing can be done.

Some years ago I gave a lecture on the subject of the cosmic feeling, and in that lecture are given four keys, or prerequisites, to the achievement of this state of consciousness. I will not repeat them now, for you can easily review them for yourself. I will however expand upon the fourth key, which is the capacity to connect with your innermost divine nucleus.

As I stated years ago, this fourth key is meditational, and there are several of my transmissions which give instructions in how to experiment meditatively with contacting the divine within. However, you tend to think of meditation too much in terms of a specific event

which you undertake once or twice a day. The meditation practice for learning total surrender is an on-going meditation which you practice in every waking moment of the day.

Those of you, my friends, who are still working in the preliminary stages of the pathwork may at these words take exception, and protest that too much is being demanded. You may feel that such a requirement would make it impossible for you to do anything else, would interfere with your making a living or raising a family. But such is not the case; this would be a misunderstanding of my meaning. For this meditational activity that I am recommending does not take the place of anything else in your life. Rather, it goes on simultaneously and side-by-side with everything else in your life. It is, for example, possible to learn to pay attention to your body and your breathing throughout the day, as you live your life. It is also possible to learn to notice carefully the flow of all your thoughts and feelings as you live your life. Some of my friends have already learned to do these meditations quite well.

So what I am proposing now is just one more lens through which to view yourself as you go through your days on earth. And this lens is the question: am I now acting from my own self-will, or am I surrendered to God's will. There will be times when you are observing yourself with this question in mind that you will not immediately know the answer to the question. But often you will be able at once to discern when you are acting from a tight self-will – rigid, controlling and fearful; and when on the contrary you are being in your real self and acting trustingly and spontaneously, which is in fact synonymous with doing God's will.

As you undertake this practice more and more you will learn many new things about yourself, and from a new perspective. You will learn in what areas your self-will is most entrenched. You will learn where you most insist on making the decisions yourself, rather than trusting that God truly knows what is best for you. And having this knowledge will then enable you to do the work needed to loosen up these tight places and learn how more fully to let go and let God.

This every-moment meditation is not right, at this time, for all of you, my friends. For many of you it would be premature to undertake this now. But I urge you to have faith that if you continue to do the work of the pathwork a time will come when this will be the appropriate next step.

I said before that the problems you would face are twofold. The second major area of resistance will come in the form of a fear of death. This may surprise you at first hearing. You have uncovered the fear of death buried beneath so many other apparently dissimilar problems; now does it appear here also? Yes it does.

The form is one of fear of death, covered by numbness, covered by a kind of adolescent bravado. Let us begin by exploring first the topmost level of this form. I say form advisedly because we in the realm of spirit are able to view this creation (which to you is purely emotional and psychological) with an actual and observable shape, defining space in a certain way, and with color and dimension.

So then, adolescent bravado. The human being consciously feels something like this: "I am now the master of my life and the captain of my ship. I have worked on my personality issues and my character flaws for years, and I have made great progress." (As I said earlier, the content of this lecture is primarily geared toward those who have already done a great deal of work on themselves and have already made substantial progress on the path.) "Now I am ready to work toward the next great goal: living my life in full surrender to the will of God. I am ready and eager to do this; now how do I go about it?"

As you keep consciously exploring your intent and your feelings concerning this, you may find a puzzling blankness – a sense of: “I feel very willing, but I seem to have no idea of what to do next.” This is the level of numbness. If you are not careful, and conscious of what is happening, this numbness could cause you to believe that the entire great endeavor is false and fruitless; and you then would be tempted to give up and just return to your now-fairly-happy human life.

The feeling of numbness and blankness is there precisely in order to hide what lies beneath it: the fear of death in yet another form or guise. The cosmic feeling, in its true fullness, is one in which the ego dies. When you have just a small taste of the cosmic feeling, the ego-death is momentary. When the enlightenment experience is a bit more profound, the ego-death lasts longer, and one can actually have the time to experience the ego-sense creeping back. And, let me assure you, it will creep back. This is not purely a tragedy, although it sometimes may feel like that to the spiritual seeker. You humans are not capable of a sudden and total change of level. Your energy systems are not expanded enough yet to be able to handle a change of such magnitude, and therefore you are given small tastes of the cosmic feeling, so that your ability to tolerate it may in time be stretched.

The experience of losing the ego for a minute or two is also, in most cases, an experience of substantial pleasure. This should not come as a total surprise to you, since approximately the same thing occurs during a truly fully experienced orgasm. The sexual experience, in that way, is like a small foretaste of the pleasure of cosmic consciousness. Why then would anyone want to resist such an experience? Why, for the same reason that humans so often resist full sexual pleasure, and learn to reduce it, control it, and render it less. This idea might have seemed far-fetched to you when you first began your path of self-exploration and transformation, but certainly by now you have discovered these irrational and self-defeating currents in yourself.

However, to feel this type of pleasure is not what the experience is really all about. It is rather a side-effect, which can be present to a greater or lesser degree. More important is the on-going openness to knowing and doing God's will in all things. When you begin a day with this intent, you start the day with meditation and prayer, and a renewal of commitment. Then as you go through your day, even in such mundane matters as choosing your breakfast, and the clothes you will wear, you are open to inspiration. This does not mean, of course, that before you get dressed you pray to God to please tell you what to wear. This would be a misunderstanding of the principle. Rather, you pay attention to not acting unconsciously, or automatically, or hurriedly. You learn to flow through the actions of your life, sensing as you go if this action is harmonious and right. And, if you feel a momentary unease, you pause and feel a prayer for clarity, for understanding of what has caused you to stop and inquire. In all this, you are humble.

Let us look again at the form I was speaking about. At bottom is fear – fear of change and fear of the experience of ego-death. This fear is not usually consciously present in you; there is no need for it to be present, since your ego very rarely experiences any danger of an end to itself. But it exists always, and will come to the fore when the ego experiences a threat of this type.

At the top of the form is what seems to be simple self-confidence – a feeling of wishing to proceed, if only you could know in what direction you are supposed to proceed. In between is the limbo of numbness, blankness, and confusion. You will need to learn to drop the mask of the top layer, and get fully into the limbo of confusion. It is only by living in this limbo for a time that you begin to learn that the issue is not really: “How do I go about experiencing the cosmic feeling?” But rather: “Why is it and how is it that I am almost

always running away from the cosmic feeling?" That is, once you have truly dropped the mask of eager willingness, and have lived in limbo for a time, you will begin to see how in fact the part of you which you have in the past most identified with does not want the cosmic-feeling experience at all!

This may be difficult for some of you to understand at first. I will attempt to make it somewhat clearer now, though in reality it will only become fully clear after you have spent some time in practicing the suggestions that I make in this lecture. But, for now, here is some clarification, at least on the conceptual level, that may be of some help to you.

I spoke a moment ago of the part of you which you have heretofore most identified with. This is precisely the ego self. It makes total sense that in the human state you would come to learn to think of the ego as you, for this is what all of the experiences of the infant and the young child are leading toward. And if the young human does not learn to develop a sense of itself as an ego, it will dwell instead in some form of mental confusion and perhaps mental illness. Therefore, for a human child on the way to becoming an adult, to develop a strong ego is a sign of health.

However, one aspect of ego reality is the illusion that we are all separated bits of consciousness. It is essential for the child to learn to be lost in this illusion precisely because it is going to be living its life surrounded by other egos who are convinced of the truth of this illusion. And therefore, for its safety and sanity, it needs to believe what everyone else believes. But, at a different level of reality, it is the task of human beings to see through this illusion and to overcome it.

I think that you now can sense how there will be many levels of your being – all of the childhood conditioning, and all of the self-preservation lessons, for example – which hold on to the ego-sense as your most precious possession, and your greatest guarantee of safety. These levels of you, most of which have become unconscious, have no understanding of the concepts of “real self” or “cosmic feeling.” And therefore, so long as you are simply playing around mentally with these ideas, you-as-ego are not threatened and you think that you probably would like to experience these states of consciousness. However, when you in fact start to get close to one, alarm bells go off in the ego, and it does what it can to run away.

I will summarize. Our subject is total surrender to the will of God. You will certainly remember the previous transmissions in which I have explained that such a total surrender is the true task of the spiritual seeker. In this lecture I have stressed that this state of surrender is one which ultimately is to exist at all times.

I have spent some time describing the barrier to attaining this state. One is the general resistance to change, which at bottom is inertia and sluggishness. At first such inertia may seem to be a relatively harmless part of human life, but viewed more deeply it is more properly seen as the evil of inertia. For it is at bottom the same sluggishness of matter which resists transformation into light and spirit. It is the void resisting fullness; it is darkness resisting light.

The second barrier, yet again, is the powerful human fear of death, pushed into the unconscious, but nonetheless affecting your actions every waking moment. It is the action of self-will in you which seeks to deny death and to cheat death. At a certain level of being, you experience every little “triumph” of the ego-will as a defeat of the power of death. Conversely, it is by allowing, and freely suffering, all of the “little deaths” of life that you learn step by step to surrender more fully to the will of God.

This is a part of the meaning of the great story of Jesus Christ. While praying in the Garden of Gethsemane he foresaw his death, and, while fully experiencing the fear and the

horror that anyone in human body would feel at this prospect, he nonetheless totally surrendered to the will of God. By fully and consciously surrendering to the power of death, because that was God's will for him then, he demonstrated the reality of eternal life, and showed the way for human beings.

I have showed two aids for overcoming the barriers to surrender, and to experiencing the cosmic feeling, though in reality these two aids are simply different aspects of one exercise of consciousness.

I have recommended a form of consciousness discipline in which you learn to go through every moment of your day paying close attention, in each moment, to your position on the spectrum of self-will and surrender to God's will. This exercise is to be done gently, without trying to force anything, for this is not in any way an exercise of what is usually thought of as willpower. For you cannot force yourself to surrender! Rather, this exercise is an endeavor to keep reminding yourself to look at yourself carefully all through the day, and simply notice, with objectivity, whether you are being self-willed or surrendered. You will probably be surprised to notice how often and how strongly your self-will is at work. Do not let this discourage you; this will not mean that you are doing the exercise wrong, for one of the major goals of this exercise is precisely to show you the truth of this for yourself. Simply hearing something about yourself is never as powerful a learning as experiencing the reality of it for yourself many times a day.

As you watch your self-will at work, you are also seeing, at the same time, your resistance to experiencing the cosmic feeling.

This then leads to the second suggestion I have made. I have urged you to look at your attitude toward attaining the cosmic feeling, with its attendant ego-death, with an eye to discovering how you have been living in a mask with regard to this question. Needless to say, this is not a one-time discovery. Quite the contrary. You will discover time and again how your supposed attempts to achieve egolessness turn out to be just more forms of concealed ego aggrandizement.

But in the course of these explorations your ego will in fact be humbled many times, and all of these humblings of the ego are in and of themselves good for the soul, for the real self. In time, as you continue to pay attention, more moments of the cosmic feeling will fall upon you. In time, it will be less difficult to live for long stretches of the day in meditative awareness. In fact you will discover that to live in meditative awareness is truly not a strain at all, but rather the most pleasurable way to live.

When you reach the level of the pathwork in which total surrender to God is the focus, you will no longer be working in the old way on overcoming certain character flaws. Rather, you will be working on living each moment in a state of greater and greater surrender. And it is here that your relationship with Jesus Christ becomes yet more important.

How is this so? The stories of Christ that have come down to you in the gospels include the tales of Christ as a healer, as a curer of the sick and afflicted. These stories are not the inventions of the pious or credulous. Christ truly did heal the physically sick, and he cast out devils from those who were psychologically and spiritually afflicted. When his disciples inquired about these healings, he told them: "Her faith has saved her." "His faith has cured him." There is a deep lesson in this for you and for all humanity.

When you are far enough along on the path of self-transformation, when you have reached the level of working on total surrender of self-will, you can have faith that Christ will cure whatever it is that remains in you to be healed. I will say this again in other words. At a certain point, after the great transition, after the shift to the second stage of the pathwork,

when you are working to live in the real self, in accordance with the greater consciousness, you can work on your remaining issues in a new way. This way involves surrender – surrender to God’s will, surrender to Christ as the human form that God took so as to come more than halfway to meet human beings. To learn to surrender to God’s will is at bottom no different than learning to surrender to Christ, for he said: “I and the Father are one.” But to have Christ as your focus can make the issue easier for you, since Christ is closer to the human energy. With Christ, the journey to make contact with God is not so long or so arduous. With Christ, the energy of the heart may more easily be engaged, and the love force can then carry you forward. As you learn to have complete faith in Christ, then you will learn to unload from your shoulders the burdens of your imperfections that you still carry. You may give them to Christ and he will carry them for you, or he will alter them so that they are no longer burdens.

Do you understand? Take a moment now to ask yourself if you understand this. As you learn to surrender your self-will, which includes your self-important notion that it is all up to you, you can put your faith in Christ the healer. You can turn over to him the remaining pieces of your lower self. This does not mean taking the easy way out, or being spiritually lazy, or trying to get something for nothing. Those simple people of Palestine of whom you read in the gospels were not trying to outsmart life and get something for nothing. Christ said to them: “Your faith has saved you.” To have such great faith and to act upon it is an act of wondrous courage. To give up the notion that you know what is best for you, even better than God does, is exceedingly difficult for human beings. To risk hoping for so much, to risk being dreadfully disappointed, to risk looking and feeling foolish, all of these human traits try to hold you back from full faith and love. So what I am suggesting is that you can learn to feel and to pray: “I have faith that God loves me. I will ultimately come to no harm. I trust that Jesus Christ has more than enough power to heal whatever in me needs healing.” This is the next level of miracle that is available to you.

Of course this is a matter of degree, and you will learn to deepen your surrender, and your faith, by degrees.

My dearest friends who work on this path, let these words penetrate your being. It is not enough to hear them or to read them once. Use them as a subject for meditation. If there are parts which you do not understand, ask your path friends and helpers for assistance. Learn to have faith. If you lack faith now, do not assume this must be true for all time, for you can learn to identify what blocks your faith, and you can learn to claim again your fullness of faith.

A beautiful new way of being awaits you. This is not a promise of happiness in heaven, and you do not have to wait for death to claim it. A new and wonderful way of being alive in the world is your birthright, but you must do the work to find it and to make it yours. Your task is a large one, but it is not impossible. As you find yourself, you also perform a wonderful work for the greater cause of light and love. Be blessed. Be in God. Learn the joy of surrender to God’s will, and faith in the loving power of Christ the Healer.

* * *

The above text may not be altered or abbreviated in any way, nor may the copyright, trademark, service mark, or any other notices be removed. Recipients may be charged the cost of reproduction and distribution only. Pathwork® is a registered service mark owned by The International Pathwork Foundation, PO Box 6010, Charlottesville, VA 22906-6010, USA; www.pathwork.org