

THE KNOWLEDGE OF ONESELF

Lecture by Samael Aun Weor

We are going to talk a bit about spiritual restlessness. The first thing we need is a deep creative comprehension, for this is fundamental to know oneself.

Where do we come from? Where are we going? What is the objective of existence? Why do we live? What do we live for?

There was a phrase at the entrance of the Temple of Delphi which read, "Homo Nosce Te Ipsum," which means, "Man, know yourself and you will know the universe and its gods." To know oneself is fundamental.

Everybody thinks they know themselves when, in actual fact, they do not. Therefore, it is necessary to reach the full knowledge of oneself. This can be done with incessant self-observation. We need to see ourselves as we really are.

Unfortunately, people readily admit they have a physical body, but it is very hard to make them understand that they have their own psychology. They accept their physical bodies because they can see them, but their own psychology is a bit different. Obviously, this happens because they cannot see their own psyche; for them it is something vague, which they cannot understand.

When a person starts observing himself or herself, it is an unmistakable signal that one has the intention of wanting to change oneself. It indicates he is becoming different from others.

It is in relation with people, in the different events of life, e.g.: being at home, at school, in the country, in the street, etc., from which we can get the necessary psychological material for the awakening of the consciousness. Our hidden defects pop up spontaneously, and if we are alert and on guard, like a lookout in time of war, then we will be able to see them.

A discovered defect must be entirely comprehended in all levels of the mind. For example, let us say we were in a scene of anger; we would have to understand everything that has happened. Let us suppose we have had a small disagreement, perhaps in a shop where we have asked for something and the assistant has brought us the wrong thing. Then we react in a lightly irritated manner, and say, "Sir, I asked you for one thing and you brought me something else. Don't you realize I'm in a hurry? I can't waste my time!"

There is a small quarrel, a small displeasure, and it is obvious we need to comprehend what has happened.

When we arrive home we must immediately concentrate on what has happened, and if we look further into the motives behind why we reacted in such a manner, cursing the assistant, we discover our self-importance. This is to say, we believe ourselves to be very important. Obviously, we can also find within ourselves conceit, pride, irritability, etc.

There is impatience. In fact, there are several defects. Impatience is a defect, conceit is another, self-importance, which comes from pride; it means seeing oneself as very great or important. Thus, now we can see the reasons for despising the assistant who was serving us. All of these defects have made us react in an inharmonious way. So now, we have discovered some Psychological "I's" which we have to work on through comprehension.

We have to deeply study the Psychological "I" of conceit. It will have to be totally understood. It will have to be analyzed.

We will have to deeply understand the Psychological "I's" of self-importance, pride and impatience. These need to be analyzed, studied and understood separately.

We have to accept the fact that there are a group of Psychological "I's" hidden behind each seemingly insignificant event. We have to study every "I" separately because our Essence is bottled up within each one of them.

Therefore the "I's" have to be disintegrated, annihilated and reduced into cosmic dust.

In order to disintegrate them, we will have to concentrate on reaching our Divine Mother Kundalini, to pray and to beg Her to reduce our defects into dust; but first of all we have to have comprehended the defect or "I" that we are working on.

Let us start with anger. After understanding it, we beg our Divine Mother to eliminate it. Later, we look at the "I" of impatience and again, after comprehending it, we beg our Divine Mother to eliminate the defect. Then we look and comprehend our "I" of self-importance and ask ourselves, "Why do we feel ourselves as important if we are no more than miserable worms of the earth?" and we say to ourselves, "On what do we base our self-importance?"

Indeed, if we look closely we will see that there is no basis for our self-importance, because we are nothing; every one of us is just a vile worm of the earth. What are we before the infinite? Before the galaxy in which we live? Before all those worlds that inhabit our endless universe? Why do we feel ourselves to be so self-important?

Therefore, by analyzing every one of our defects or "I's," they are going to be completely understood.

Every defect we are working on has to be eliminated with the help of our Divine Mother Kundalini.

In an external scene, several "I's" can take control of us.

Let us look at another example, one of jealousy perhaps. In a scene of jealousy, it is unquestionable that there appear several additional "I's." If a man finds his wife talking closely to another man and he feels they are becoming too close, how will he feel? He will feel jealous, and create an unwanted scene. It is taking part in, for example, jealousy, anger, self-esteem (feeling hurt). The "I's" of jealousy became active, also the "I's" of anger.

Any event or problem, any scene of our lives, can serve us as a basis for self-discovery. In any event, we can discover inside ourselves many "I's." For this reason, we have to be alert and on guard at all times.

There is an urgent need to be in a constant state of alert perception and acute awareness. If we do not proceed in this way, the consciousness or Essence will continue to be bottled up within all these psychic aggregates or defects we have in our interior, and for this reason we will never be able to awaken the consciousness.

We have to understand that we are asleep. If people were truly aware, they would see, feel and touch the realities of the superior worlds. If people were aware, they would remember their past lives, they would see the earth as it really is, because at this very moment we do not see how it really is at all.

The people of Lemuria used to see the world as it really is. They knew that this world has nine dimensions. Let us say seven fundamentals. They used to see the world in its multi-dimensional form. In the fire they used to perceive the Salamanders or creatures of fire; in the water they were able to see the Undines, or creatures of water; in the air they would perceive the Sylphs, and in the element earth they could perceive the Gnomes. When they would lift up their eyes towards the infinite they could perceive other planetary humanities.

The planets of space were visible to them in a distinct way as they could see the aura of the planet plus its planetary genii (angel).

Unfortunately though, when the human Essence was bottled up within all of those "I's," or psychological aggregates that form the "myself," or the ego, then the consciousness

fell asleep. In the time of Lemuria any person could see at least half of a Holtapamnas, which is equivalent to five and a half million tonalities of color.

When the consciousness became bottled up within us, the sense of real perception degenerated. During the time of Atlantis they could only perceive one third of the colors and now we only perceive the seven colors of the solar spectrum plus a few tonalities.

The people of Lemuria were so different. For them, mountains held a high spiritual value; for them, rivers were the body of Gods. The whole earth was perceived by them as a great living organism. They were a different kind of people.

Now, unfortunately, humanity has involuted atrociously. Now man is in a state of senility. If we do not care about discovering ourselves, to know ourselves better, we will carry on with our consciousness asleep, embottled within all these "I's" we carry inside.

Psychologists normally believe we only have one "I." In Gnosis we think differently. In Gnosis we know that anger is an "I," greed is another "I," lust, pride and gluttony are "I's," etc.

Virgil, the poet of Mantua and author of The Aenied, said, "Even having a thousand tongues and an iron-roofed mouth we still would never be able to completely number them!" There are so many! Where are we going to discover them? It is only in practical everyday life that it is possible to discover ourselves.

Any scene or happening in the street is sufficient to see how many "I's" enter into activity. When any "I" comes into action it is necessary to comprehend and eliminate it. Only in this way is it possible to liberate the Essence and attain the awakening of our consciousness.

The most important thing for us to do is to attain the state of awakening because while we carry on as we are, ASLEEP, we can know nothing about the mysteries of life and death, and true reality. It is imperative for one to awaken the consciousness. It is only possible to awaken the consciousness if we really want to, but it is impossible to awaken if the Essence that we carry within remains bottled up within all of our psychological "I's."

We currently live within a very complicated mechanism. Life has become one hundred percent mechanical. The Law of Recurrence is terrible. Everything is constantly repeating itself. In this way we can compare life to a wheel that is incessantly spinning. Things that happen periodically happen again and again. Indeed for most there is never a final solution to the problems one has in life. Everybody has problems and in our current state of reality there is never a final solution.

If there was a final solution to the problems in life it would mean that life would not be life but instead death, therefore a final solution is not known. When the wheel of life spins, always the same things happen in a more or less similar way, but never do we reach a final solution. It is impossible to stop the repetition of events.

Therefore the only thing we need to know is how to react towards the different circumstances of life. If we always react in the same way, if we are always violent, if we are always lustful, if we are always greedy in front of the different events of life that repeat themselves over and over again in our every existence, we shall never change.

The events that you are living today you have already lived in a past existence. If you are listening to me now, in a past existence you were listening to me also. Perhaps it was not here in this house or maybe not even in this city, but you were listening to me, and not only in the last existence but in the existence before that and so on. That is to say that the wheel of life is always spinning and the events of mechanical life are always the same. It is impossible to stop life's events, therefore we must change our attitudes towards the events of life.

If we learn not to react towards the impact coming from the external world and learn to be calm and serene, then it will happen that we will avoid the mechanical result from a mechanical reaction.

In order for you to better understand my words I am now going to narrate an event of which I wrote about in my book *The Mystery of the Golden Blossom*.

In that existence my name was Juan Conrado. I was the Third Great Lord of the province of Granada in ancient Spain, and I was as well a fallen Bodhisattva. It was during the same period as Torquemada, the notorious Inquisitor. He was committing terrible acts throughout the whole of Europe. He used to burn people alive at the stake.

I came to the Inquisitor Torquemada in order to ask him about a Christian punishment for someone. There was a certain Earl during this time who used to constantly mock me with his words. At that period I was swordsman and I wanted to avoid another duel. Not because I was afraid, but because I was tired of having so many duels.

I came before the doors of the Palace of Inquisition very early in the morning. I was greeted at the palace doors by a blue monk and he said to me, "What a miracle seeing you here, Lord Marquee."

"Thank you very much," I said, "I came here to ask for a hearing with the Lord Inquisitor, Monseigneur Tomas de Torquemada."

"Impossible," he said, "Today Monseigneur is too busy. But, nevertheless, I will try to arrange a hearing for you."

"Thank you very much," I said.

Instantly the blue monk disappeared and I waited for him to return. When he came back he said, "A hearing has been arranged for you, Lord Marquee. You may come in." I walked in and crossed a patio and two big halls which were both in total darkness. Then at last I reached a third hall. This hall was lit up by a lamp which was over a table and before the table was seated Tomas de Torquemada, the Grand Inquisitor and a crude being. On his chest he was wearing a big cross and he was in an apparent state of holiness with his hands on his chest.

We greeted one another with all the courtesy of ancient times. Then he said, "Please, sit down Lord Marquee and please tell me what is the reason of your visit."

I said, "I have come here to ask you about a Christian punishment for the behavior of a certain Earl. He mocks me incessantly and I do not want to duel with anyone anymore."

"Oh, do not worry about him," he answered. "We have had many complaints about this little Earl. We are going to arrest him and bring him here to the Inquisitional house and we are going to take him to the Tower of Martyrdom and then we are going to put his feet in red charcoals and make him suffer. We will also lift up his fingernails and we will melt lead onto his fingers. We will torture him and then take him to the public square and burn him on the stake."

"Well," I said, "I was not really thinking about going quite that far. I was only going to ask you for a Christian punishment." Of course I was very perplexed hearing Torquemada speak in this way with his hands on his chest in such a holy position. It repulsed me. I could not help but feeling revolted and I apathetically said, "You are a very perverse man. I only came here to ask you for a Christian punishment. I didn't come to ask you to burn someone alive on the stake and mercilessly torture him." Then I said many other harsh words and Torquemada called in his personal guards. He rang a bell and suddenly some armed men rushed in.

The Inquisitor stood up from his chair and said, "Catch him."

"One moment gentlemen," I said, "Remember the rules of knighthood." During that time the rules of knighthood were very well respected all over the world. "Give me a sword and I'll fight everyone of you."

One of them gave me a sword and then took a step backwards and said, "On guard!"

I replied, "I'm always on guard," and then we became fiercely locked in battle.

This gentleman was very good with the sword and I was no tame sheep either. The duel was very hard, and I had to use my best shots in order to lead victoriously but the other men who were watching the fight suddenly realized that their friend was headed straight towards the grave and so, of course, they all came at me at once, attacking me.

I defended myself as well as I could, jumping over tables and using furniture for a shield. I tried marvels in order to survive but the moment came when my right arm tired and I could not use the sword to its fullest advantage any more. Then I said, "You have won. You have out numbered me. That wasn't very gentlemanly of you at all. If you want my sword then take it."

Then the Inquisitor ordered, "To the stake!" It was not very difficult for them to burn me alive. They tied me up to a stake and set fire to the dry wood that was all around and in seconds I was consumed by the flames. I experienced great pain while watching my physical body being burned. I felt this great pain being transformed into happiness. Then I understood that far beyond pain there is happiness.

It does not matter how intense human pain is; it always has an end. I stepped forward and realized I could keep walking. I left the place walking away slowly. I just disincarnated from my body. The physical body died on the stake.

Today, for example, if an event like that were to happen I am sure I would not be burned or executed. Why? Because if I have no "I's" of anger or impatience and I would listen to the Inquisitor very patiently. I would understand the state that he is in. I would keep silent and have no reaction and as a result nothing would happen. It is obvious that I should have left the place completely calm.

So these problems are obviously created by the ego. If on that occasion I would have not reacted in such a way against the "Holy Council," as it was called, against the Inquisition, I would not have died on the stake as I did. I would have given my farewell and left without any problems.

There would only be one point to work out and that would be to advise the earl that he would be arrested and burned alive at the stake. It could have been my fault, but no! I should have had the valor to inform him even if he would have been angry at me and perhaps I could have saved his life. Perhaps he would have been grateful. The fact is, such a stupid event would never had happened if the ego had been disintegrated. Unfortunately, I had a very developed ego and these are the problems that the ego creates.

If one has no ego, no such problems arise. It would happen that when these events repeat themselves, such problems would be avoided. The reality is that events and problems repeat themselves constantly. What we have to do is modify our attitude towards events. If one's attitude is negative he will create bad problems.

We must change our attitude towards existence, but one cannot do this unless he eliminates those prejudicial elements that one carries in his psyche.

Let us look at some psychic aggregates. Anger, for instance. How many problems does this aggregate create? What about lust and also jealousy? How miserable does jealousy make us feel? Envy: how many inconvenient states it creates. The diverse circumstances of life are repeated with or without us but they are always repeated.

The important thing is that one must change one's attitude to the diverse circumstances of life. We have said that we must deeply know ourselves. If we know ourselves, we can discover our errors; if we discover our errors we can eliminate them; if we eliminate them we can awaken our consciousness and if we awaken our consciousness we shall come to know the mysteries of life and death. We would experience the Truth, that which does not belong to time.

While we carry on with our consciousness embottled within the ego it is obvious we will never know anything of the mysteries of life and death. We will never experience reality, but instead live in ignorance. Therefore it is imperative for us to realize in ourselves the quote from Thales of Miletus: "Homo Nosce Te Ipsum." "Man, know yourself and you will know the universe and its gods."

All laws of nature are within ourselves and if we do not discover them within ourselves we will never discover them outside of ourselves. Therefore the universe is within ourselves. Man is contained in the universe and the universe is contained in man. If we do not discover the universe within ourselves it is obvious that we will never discover it outside ourselves.

There are extraordinary possibilities in all of us but first we have to start by living the quote "Homo Nosce Te Ipsum."

The false personality is, for instance, an obstacle to finding true happiness. Every human being has a false personality formed by conceit, vanity, pride, fear, egoism, anger, self-importance, self-sentimentalism, etc.

The false personality is indeed problematic, because it is ruled by all kinds of psychological "I's." While one possesses the false personality one cannot experience true happiness. How could one experience it? If one wants to be happy, and all of us have the right to happiness, then one has to start by eliminating his false personality, but in order

to eliminate the false personality one has to eliminate all these "I's"; then everything will change.

When we create in our consciousness a continual center of gravity, then comes an extraordinary state of happiness; but while the false personality still exists, happiness is not possible. We have to consider all these things if we really want to attain true happiness one day.

Unquestionably, the most important thing in practical life is precisely to crystallize in the human personality that which is called Soul. This gives us all the powers, strength, virtues and faculties of the Being. If one eliminates, for example, the defect or "I" of anger, in its place will be crystallized the virtue of serenity.

If one eliminates the defect of egotism, in its place will crystallize the marvelous virtue of altruism. If one eliminates the defect of lust, in its place will crystallize the extraordinary virtue of chastity. If one eliminates the intimate nature of hatred, in its place will crystallize love. If one eliminates from his or her personality the defect of envy, in its place will crystallize the joy of another's well being, and so on.

Therefore we must understand the necessity of eliminating all the subjective thoughts from our psyche in order to crystallize in our human person that which is called the Soul. It means cosmic powers, virtues, etc.

Nevertheless, I will also say that the intellect is not everything. The intellect is only useful when it is under the service of the spirit, but not everything is the intellect. Unquestionably we have to suffer through great emotional crisis if we really want to crystallize soul in ourselves. If the water does not boil at a hundred degrees centigrade, it does not crystallize what has to be crystallized, it does not eliminate what has to be eliminated.

Therefore, if we do not previously suffer a great emotional crisis we will not crystallize in ourselves that which is called Soul. When the soul completely crystallizes in ourselves, our physical body is also converted into Soul.

Jesus the great Kabir talked about this clearly: With patience thou shalt possess thy souls.

People do not possess their souls; their souls possess them. The soul of every person suffers carrying with itself an overwhelming burden (the person). To possess soul is something very different. There are "I's" that are very difficult to eliminate, terrible defects, "I's" that are related with the Law of Karma. When one reaches this point it seems like one is not progressing when in fact we really are, but with infinite patience we will at last eliminate these "I's."

Patience and serenity are extraordinary faculties or wonderful virtues needed to go onward in this path of Radical Transformation.

In my book "The Three Mountains" I talk precisely about patience and serenity.

One day while in a monastery a group of brothers and myself were impatiently waiting for the abbot. The hours passed by and the abbot and the high priest still had not arrived. Amongst the brothers were some quite honorable Masters but they also were walking up and down the hallway, very impatient and preoccupied.

During all this, I was serene and calm and was waiting patiently. I was very surprised at my brothers' impatient attitude. Finally after a few hours the abbot arrived and while talking to everybody he pointed at me and said, "You need two virtues that this brother has. Please, tell the others what these two virtues are."

I then stood and said, "We need to be patient and serene."

The others were amazed. Then the Master brought me an orange which symbolizes hope and as he approved of me, I was allowed to enter the Second Mountain which is the Mountain of Resurrection.

The other brothers were not approved to enter. I was later called to another monastery to sign some papers and this I did. While I was there I received certain esoteric instructions and I was accepted to further my studies at the Second Mountain, but those other fellows are unfortunately still fighting to attain patience and serenity.

Hopefully you can now see how important it is to be patient and serene. For this reason when one is working on the dissolution of an "I" and one cannot dissolve it because it is a difficult one, it could be an "I" that is related with our Karma; the only thing one can do is to multiply patience and serenity until one triumphs.

Many people are impatient, they want to eliminate certain "I's" right now, immediately, without paying the necessary price, and this is absurd. In the work on oneself it is necessary to multiply patience and serenity to the infinite. He who has no patience, he who does not know how to be serene, fails on the esoteric path.

Observe yourselves in practical life. Are you patient? Observe yourselves. Do you know how to remain serene at this precise moment? If you do not have these two virtues, you will have to work to attain them. How? By eliminating the psychological "I's" of impatience and lack of serenity.

Anger; the "I's" of anger do not allow serenity. In the long run, what are we looking for in this work? To change! But to change totally! Because as we are now, we are constantly suffering and bringing bitterness to ourselves.

Anybody can make us suffer just by touching us in a vulnerable spot on the heart. If someone says a harsh word to us we suffer; if someone taps us on the shoulder and speaks sweet words to us, we rejoice. We are so weak! We have no control over our own psychological process. Anyone can control our psyche. Do you want to see a person feeling anger? Say to him some harsh words and he will feel anger and if you want to see him happy tap him on the shoulder and say a few sweet words and he will instantly be happy. It's so easy!

Anyone can play with another's psyche! How weak-minded the humanoid creatures are.

We must attain a change in order to eliminate all our weaknesses. We must even lose our own personal identity. This means that the change must be radical and complete. Our personal identity, for example, "I am so and so," must be eliminated from oneself; and then one day we will find that we have no personal identity. If we truly want to become different, then obviously personal identity has to be lost. We need to convert ourselves into entirely different creatures, happy creatures; and we have the right to happiness.

If we do not make an effort, how can we change? The most important thing is not to identify ourselves with external circumstances. Life is like a movie that in fact has a beginning and an end. Different scenes are constantly passing through the screen of the mind. The most serious error within us is to identify ourselves with these scenes. Why? Simply because they pass. They are just scenes of a great movie and in the end they always pass.

Fortunately, in my life I have accepted as a motto not to identify myself with the different circumstances of life. It comes to my mind memories from my childhood where my earthly parents got divorced and my siblings suffered greatly.

Our father forbade us from visiting our earthly mother. Nevertheless we were not so ungrateful as to forget her. I always used to escape from my house with a younger brother who would always follow me. We would have a short visit then return back home. My little brother suffered a lot because while we were returning he would say, "When we get home Dad is going to whip us."

I would say back, "Why do you cry? Just remember that everything passes." When we got home, as expected, our father was waiting for us, he was very angry and he whipped us. Then we would go to our room to sleep and while we lay in bed I would say to my brother, "You see it has already passed, because everything passes... everything...." One day our father heard me when I said to my brother, "Everything passes ... everything,"

and of course my father who used to be very wrathful got his terrible whip, came into our room again and said, "Now then, everything passes does it!" and then he spanked us once more.

My father then felt calm and satisfied after this. Seeing that he had left us I turned and whispered to my brother, "You see, even this has already passed again."

I would never identify myself with such experiences. I kept this as a motto throughout life, "not to identify myself with external circumstances, events or problems in life, because I know that such things pass."

One worries because he has a big problem and cannot see a way to work it out; later it passes and then a new scene arises completely different, so then, why is one worried? It was going to happen, so why should one worry?

When one identifies himself with the different events of life, he makes many mistakes. If one identifies himself with a drink that a drunken friend offers to him, he ends up drunk. If one identifies himself with a person of the opposite sex, then he ends up fornicating. If one identifies himself with an insulter's words, then one ends up insulting them back.

Do you think that it is right that one should identify himself with scenes of weeping sentimentalism where everybody is crying bitterly? Finally one ends up crying, too. Do you think that this is correct, that anyone can make us cry?

What I am saying to you is very important if you really want to discover yourselves. I say it is indispensable because if one identifies himself with a scene it means that one has forgotten himself; therefore he has forgotten about the work he is presently doing and then he is foolishly wasting his time. People forget themselves, they forget their deep internal Being and for that reason they identify with external circumstances.

People are asleep because they are identified with the different circumstances that surround them and everybody has their own Psychological Song. I talk more about this in my book Treatise of Revolutionary Psychology.

For instance, one meets someone who says, "In life I did this and that, I was a rich man, I had money but it was stolen. I was swindled and that 'so and so' was the one who swindled me." This is his Psychological Song. Then years later one finds the same person singing the same song again. It is his Psychological Song. He will remain identified with this event for the rest of his life. In such circumstances, how is one going to dissolve the ego? In what way? Because what one is doing is fortifying the "I's" instead of dissolving them.

If one identifies himself with a fight, he ends up throwing punches. It comes to my mind the case of a boxer defending his title in the U.S.A. In the end all the spectators ended up fighting amongst themselves, it became crazy and in the end, all were boxers. Observe in yourselves what identification is. For example, I have seen a lady watching a movie where all the actors were crying. It was clear to me that they were acting but this lady who was watching this film ended up crying too, very hysterically.

You can see what identification is. This poor lady identified herself with the movie. She worked herself up, feeling as if she were the heroine. She created a new psychological "I" and this new "I" has stolen a part of her consciousness. In this way if this person was asleep, now she is more asleep. Why? Because of the identification! This is obvious.

One must never identify himself with anything in life, circumstances or unpleasant events because everything passes. One has to take profit of circumstances to study oneself, to observe oneself:

"Do you feel anger?" "Do you feel jealousy?" "Do you feel hatred?" "What do you feel in this moment?."

This is the way to study the psychological "I's," knowing how not to identify oneself and taking profit from any event.

Do not forget that the worst calamities offer to oneself the best opportunities for self-discovery. When one identifies herself with unpleasant circumstances one commits mistakes and complicates one's life.

Everybody is full of problems because they identify themselves with the events in which they are living. If one does not identify oneself with anything and remembers, "Everything passes... Everything..." "This scene will also pass," and when one does not identify with it, one does not complicate his or her life.

People enjoy making matters in life more complicated; if someone is hurt with a harsh word he reacts with violence and in this way everything turns out to be more difficult.

Let us take advantage of the unpleasant circumstances of life for self-discovery. In this way we will know what sort of psychological defects we have.

Let us see life as a psychological gymnasium in order to discover ourselves.

