

1998-05-31-Speaking About Spiritual Topics

Heading

Topic: *Speaking About Spiritual Topics*

Group: N. Idaho TeaM

Facilitators

Teacher: Tarkas, Elyon, Michael

TR: Jonathan, Mark Rogers

Session

Opening

Tarkas (Jonathan TR): Greetings to you all. What a family of faith-propelled personalities here today. This is Tarkas. I am here visiting and have been asked to present you with ideas for consideration.

Lesson

Inclusion

It has been greatly stressed to you all over time the necessity of inclusion, that being helping all the people you encounter on this world to realize they are family. You are learning better what family, from a spiritual perspective, implies, and you are each learning more effectively how to apply yourselves in creating this sense of belonging in those around you. Commonality, inclusiveness, is essential for faith-ers as yourselves on this world, for the isolation of this world has created the effect of isolation in individuals. Herein lies the importance of the proclamation of the brotherhood of man, for it is important that you all gain the ability to love one another. Though it is natural for many of you to be loving towards the Father and endearing among yourselves, many have trouble with their relationship with the Father because they have encountered so little love from others. So, I stress again the importance of accommodating everyone.

Skill, Dissemination

With that said, I would also encourage you to become skilled evermore in encouraging those of your kind to rise to their highest. Though we teach brotherhood and your common connection, we also are teaching you how to better ennoble yourself, to elevate your standards of virtue, what you hold as your ideals and to incorporate them into your actions. Now, this encouragement we have provided you all has been welcomed by you, and it is observed you are making great strides this way. I simply ask you to foster this reach toward higher virtue and spiritual nobility in those around you. The caution I throw your way is that some will have difficulty in receiving this encouragement because of the human tendency to take sides, to be positioning oneself in the order of right and wrong, attained and unattained. So it falls in your lap the need to be able to

develop clever skills, to develop tricks, in a sense. I use "clever" and "trick" in a mild manner; the meaning I wish to convey is that the individual receiving your encouragement has the paradigm in which he functions. The trick is not upon the other but in your ability to change your position to meet their viewpoint and arouse in them the awareness of their next level of attainment. Here is where you need to exercise cleverness in discernment and discovery of the other's perspective. So, while we are endeavoring to reach a spiritual plateau of familial brotherhood on this world, we also would like to draw all of you into ever-higher standards of behavior. Since you are volunteers in this mission, we ask you to help us encourage others this way.

I am finished, and I thank you for this opportunity. It is my first time here speaking with you, and I am encouraged to see another group so well devoted to this outreach program on Urantia.

Evelyn: Can you give us an example of a trick? If you encourage someone to do better, they might get defensive or get into one-upping. Is that what you were saying?

Tarkas: In some sense I am playing with wording that has a double reaction in the human mind. To be tricky or clever appeals to one's ego sensibilities as it also does stimulate an individual to increased skill. However, I also realize that you are oriented toward affectionate regard of one another and respect for another, and these words "clever" and "trick" seem to be manipulative. So, I do emphasize my lighthearted use of these words to stimulate in you the responsive awareness that you are, by necessity, required to shift from your perspective in order to allow another to shift their perspective. By meeting them where they are they are better able to make their next step forward, rather than you addressing them from where you are. Does this help to clarify?

Mary: Maybe "creative techniques" would be better than "tricks"?

Evelyn: I don't have a problem with the word "tricks". I'm trying to think of an example. To encourage someone to strive for higher goals, you don't want to sound condescending. Demonstrating that you can shift to where they are suggests that they could also shift.

(discussion of instances of shifting conversation style to suit listeners)

Tarkas: You have expressed earlier today your appreciation of the Master's ability to translate spiritual meaning into the occupations of the individual to whom he was speaking. You have each now expressed similar patterns of approach. One way of going about this would be to inquire of another how they perceive their progress in a particular field, such as art or career, and engage them in the flight of fantasy, that is, to help them indulge somewhat in what it would be like to fully attain their goal, then to subtly draw them into viewing their entire life through this same drive to attain, thereby bringing them into the spiritual arena with the very mechanisms of thought they have been applying in a circumscribed way.

Mary: So much of our wisdom in comes from experience. It's hard to have a plan until we have tools attained from success in working with someone.

Tarkas: Exposing oneself to a broad array of your fellows increases your library, your tools, the instruments in your studio. Again I draw you back to the master as the profound example of this method.

Mary: He made an amazingly concentrated effort through knowledge, book learning, as well as actual experience with people. Learning about all different kinds of people and their religious beliefs will help us be more inclusive and versatile in reaching out.

Tarkas: Expertly expressed. Imagine encountering another and striking conversation about, say, their religious orientation. Without having any understanding of the particular religion they adhere to, your exercise of drawing them out with questions would be initiated with rather superficial inquiries such as, "What is your religion?" Whereas having studied something about the concepts, you are better prepared to ask a deeper question, for instance, how would they reconcile the statement that the hand of God functions in the world when all about them they see chaos? Now you have begun to delve deeper rapidly.

I hope this helps to further illustrate.

Mary: During mundane interactions, if we maintain the goal of learning about others, we'll learn how to approach them in a more parallel, less oblique manner. If we can keep this in mind we will become more versatile in ministry.

Tarkas: Yes. Good.

Dialogue

Elyon (Mark): I greet you today, this is your companion, Elyon. I would throw my two cents into this discussion, as well. I would offer to attempt to remove your from concept frame, or alter in any favorable way, the stigma that discussion on your part of spiritual matters is somehow inappropriate. I point out that in your basic, daily contact with your fellows, most of the exchanges that occur are based on your personal experience, whether it is your personal experience with the weather, with your neighbors, with your friends, with what you recently viewed on television. Nevertheless these constitute your personal experience and your reaction to your personal experience. I declare to you that it is equally as valid for you at any point in the conversation to simply state your perspective without fear that breaching new territory of spirituality is somehow taboo, not to be approached without your partner's full consent. An individual you have a conversation with may choose to interject a variety of thought patterns which they would engage you in. You, from your perspective, are not insulted or put off or taken back by the desire of another to introduce discussion. You should adopt a similar philosophy when it is your turn to produce topics for discussion. You should not enter into this with the apprehension or preconception that perhaps this subject matter is inappropriate. Rather, if it is your personal experience, if it is your topic of interest, then it is equally as valid as any other topic. I realize that much of your hesitancy is contained in not wanting to force any concept on another. Realize that you, in your

daily exchanges, are not forcing your concepts on anyone. If another brings up the subject of automobiles, they have not forced this on you. If you choose not to discuss it, you simply do not reply or do not further the conversation. You are not insulted or challenged by them wanting to discuss automobiles. You simply determine whether or not you will engage them in this. Likewise, should you decide to introduce spirituality in any form, it is their option to choose to engage you in this or to simply let the ball drop. Either way you have done no harm in this. Your perspective has been made, and the door has been opened for further discussion.

As was mentioned in the discussion earlier today, it simply takes the door being opened sometimes before the whole realm of possibilities becomes open. This is perhaps where you have the greatest leverage in your daily ministry, to simply crack the door. Do not attempt at any time to thrust the door wide open and force discussion if unsolicited. However, always be ready to twist the handle and unlock the door so it may be swung gradually or abruptly as reaction dictates.

Mary: We need to avoid pigeonholing people, assuming they wouldn't be interested in any subject. Spirituality isn't any more unusual to bring up than the weather. Hopefully, they are all interested to some degree; we may just speak a different language on the subject.

Elyon: Very well stated. This brings me to my next comment; you touched on it briefly just now. It would be helpful if you would, each one, make active and conscious attempt to alter this conception in your mind that this subject is somehow not as freely accessed or is uncomfortable or forbidden. The times we live in are changing rapidly. You have been told that channels are opening; communication is increasing. These are times when dialogue of this sort needs to be introduced. Do not make the mistake of being so respectful of what you perceive another's position to be that you decline to even be engaged for the possibility that you might be out of line. If you are unwelcome in your solicitation, you will immediately become aware. When you become aware, no one in this room is a forceful personality enough to not back off.

In the meantime try assuming the very opposite; just imagine people freely and willingly desiring to engage you in conversation of a spiritual nature. Try this in your perspective with individuals. I realize that this is almost 180 degrees from where you reside in your approach to this scenario. Nevertheless, I encourage you to be bold, to remove the concern that you are overpowering, because you are not. It is no more overpowering for you to suggest some aspect of spirituality than it is for your neighbor to suggest the weather is pleasing. They are merely facets of your personal experience. You could argue that your spiritual perspective is of far more enduring quality than the transient nature of the climate. Therefore, be not afraid to drop the hint, to crack the door, to at least let the other individual know that this is part of your experience. (If the other shows no interest)...you leave it be; you talk about the weather, the automobiles, and the grass. On the other hand, if they do choose to engage you with it, then you have made the first step to crack the door wherein you may both enter into that bastion of spirituality where you can both grow from the experience. It is far better to take the

remote chance of offending another or making another uncomfortable than it is to decline to ever enter that domain of spirituality with them.

Realize that they may very well be equally as apprehensive about discussion of their spirituality with you. If you make the first move, you open the arena for both of you. You may be surprised at those around you who are in search mode and at a stage of consideration of these issues. This is occurring more frequently as a consequence of the opening of the circuits and the work done behind the scenes by the many spiritual helpers. Many individuals are searching for meaning. It would take but a word from you or any other for the floodgates to open. Individuals would greatly appreciate having someone who they consider a friend, a neighbor, an acquaintance to simply discuss these issues with.

Never forget that it is equally important to be as good a listener as you are an instigator of conversation, that many individuals simply desire to share the experiences they are trying to assimilate into their repertoire. So, once again the command, the calling, to be bold and step forward. Do not fear that you will be shunned or regarded as fanatical for merely suggesting the spiritual side of your nature. It is, indeed, fully half or greater of your entire nature, yet, it is rarely discussed except in settings like this. That, my friends, needs changing. You are in a position to change that scenario by merely dropping the hint, opening the door. It is a simple matter to do, but I realize it takes some courage on your part. I bid you the courage and the strength to do that.

Jonathan: All paths lead to God; it sounds like all conversations lead to God. We illustrate not that all we can talk about is spirituality, but that in any conversation we can provide patterns of thinking that can help another later in applying that pattern in an entirely different context. In being a good listener, we can rise when others open the door for us.

Elyon: I will also offer that you reflect in your dealings with our brethren, when you are in discussion on any given topic, you are basically sharing your values, whether it is the value of a good day, of a good automobile, of the interaction you had with another. You, in bringing any conversation to the forefront, are offering something of your value system to be shared with others. They are doing the same; they bring forth things of value to share with you that they have in their lives. It is incumbent upon you to point out to them, softly, maybe, that one of the aspects that is of value to you is your spirituality. This can be powerfully effective, especially to individuals who you have come to know on a different level. They have witnessed you as a friend, a neighbor, an acquaintance, as someone they see in the course of business. They have formulated a relationship and opinion of you given this exposure. Now you can add one more thing to the equation; you can add that in your life you hold of value and significance your spiritual connection, your spiritual reaction to the world. This may open many eyes in that they thought they knew you, and now they learn another side of you, that there is more to you than met the eye, so to speak.

Mary: Not all people interested in spirituality are fanatical. It might be enlightening to know that you can be involved in religion without begin offensive.

Elyon: Again, very well said, an excellent perspective. You are dealing with a common perception of what religion is and does. It is your fortune and privilege to show those around you by your actions and demeanor and receptivity that you are a breed apart from the stereotype they may be thinking. You are quite normal and average in many regards, nothing to be afraid of, simply a fellow human being.

Closing

Michael (Jonathan): My children, I greet you with a few words today, and they are that you go forth and proclaim the good news. Let me adjust the definition of proclamation by also repeating that he who has seen me has seen the Father. This is the way in which you will reveal the good news to your fellows. With this I leave you now.