Pathwork Lecture 105: Humanity’s Relationship to God in Various Stages of Development

This lecture is given in an expanded poetic format, what I call a Devotional Format of the lecture, and in that sense this is my interpretation of the intent of the lecture. I may have interpreted portions differently from you, and I ask you to ponder the words for your own interpretation. I did this Devotional Format so I can take the words into my heart, phrase by phrase, much as I would in reading poetry – that is, devotional.

The blessings to me in developing this format have been truly profound, and my wish is that this Devotional Format will be a blessing to others. I invite you to slowly read and ponder this format of the text – with an open heart to experience the Guide's Presence and Love emerging from among the words such that the wisdom comes to LIVE you.

For clarity: The original text is in bold and italicized. [My adds of commentary/clarification/interpretation are in brackets, italicized, and not bolded.] To learn more of my Devotional Format and see the lectures I have done in this way, go to https://www.garyvollbracht.com/pathwork-lectures/pathwork-lectures-devotional-format/

Gary Vollbracht

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| 03 | Greetings,  
my dearest friends.  

God bless all of you.  

Blessed is this hour [i.e., blessed is this time we now spend together].  

Blessed are your efforts.  

Blessed is your work. |
| 04 | Before I turn to tonight's lecture,  
I wish to extend our thanks,  
from  
the world of spirit,  
to  
all of my friends  
who have worked on this Path  
of self-recognition. |
For this [work of self-recognition] is, indeed, something to be thankful for.

Nothing helps so much
in the entire world,
as every little step
towards
the further self-awareness
of each individual.

Nothing
can help eliminate
• suffering and
• confusion
so much
as your own efforts
in this direction [i.e., in the direction of
further self-awareness].

The sincere desire
to face
• the truth
  in yourself,
• the reality
  that is in you
  right now,
is the only way,
  not only
• for helping yourself,
  but
• to help better conditions all over.

Nothing else
will eliminate strife.

All of you
have made progress in this respect [i.e., progress in respect to facing
the truth in yourself, in your present reality]

in the past year.

Each one of you
has gained
a little more insight
into yourself.
All of you,
* some more,
* some less,
  are a little better able
  to face yourselves
  as you really are.

Perhaps not entirely yet –
  that is true –
  but surely better than a year ago.

So it has been a fruitful year,
  more than you can possibly realize.

We believe that,
  after this short interruption of activities [over the summer],
  the year to come will bring
  still further progress
  in this direction –
  the ability
  to face yourself
  as you are now.

When I say
  progress,
I mean
  the removal of barriers
  to see that
  which is,
  rather than
  striving away from
  it [i.e., rather than striving away from “what is”]
  in the false belief
  that it is
  spiritual progress
  to
  try to
  be
  what you cannot
  as yet [i.e., what you are not yet able to]
  be.
In your daily life
many possibilities are offered to you
• to see yourself
  as you are;
• to verify
  what you
    really feel,
  rather than
  what you
    try to feel.

All you have to do is
  to remind yourself
constantly
• to be alert to
  this reality
    in you [i.e., to be alert to your own reality];
• to cultivate
  the awareness [of what you really feel in each moment].

After this very fruitful year,
it is to be expected that
most of my friends,
after perhaps
overcoming
• a defense here and
• a resistance there,
  will penetrate deeper
  into
  emotional levels,
  so as to become aware
  • of their [i.e., of their emotional levels’] existence, and then
  • of their [i.e., of their emotional levels’] significance.
This further understanding [of your reality, of your real emotions and their significance]

will liberate you
more and more,
after the initial fear of it [i.e., after your initial fear of your understanding of your reality of who you really are]
has proven unreasonable;

if only you
• continue and
• do not let this fear [of understanding who you really are]
stop you,
but [rather]
• face it [i.e., face the fear of understanding who you really are],
• examine it,
• grasp it,
instead of
• repressing it;

and then
• come to terms with it.

And now, my friends,
let us turn to tonight's subject.

I wish to discuss
man's relationship to God
• in the cycle of development,
• in the various stages
of this cycle [of development]
that man goes through.

In the last lecture I discussed
the state of being
without awareness,
as the
first stage
in the great cycle.
Primitive man, during his first few incarnations, is still near to this state of being without awareness.

He lives unto the day, tending to his immediate needs.

As yet the mind [in him] is
• not developed and therefore
• not equipped
  • to ask questions,
  • to doubt,
  • to think,
  • to discriminate.

He lives in the now, but without awareness.

In order to live in the now in awareness, various stages have to be gone through.

As man continues to develop his mind, he will first use it [i.e., first use his mind] for his immediate needs that become more pressing in a growing civilization.

In other words, he first uses the mind concretely.
But later, he begins to use it [i.e., to use his mind not only concretely but also] abstractly.

He begins to ask the important questions that have preoccupied mankind ever since the beginning of time. These [abstract and philosophical] questions are:

- "Where do I come from?"
- Where do I go?
- What is the meaning of life?
- What is the significance of this universe?"

Man begins to perceive
- nature,
- her laws.

He observes the magnificence of nature's laws.

And he begins to wonder.

This first wonderment represents the first conscious steps towards relating to the Creator.

- "Who created these laws?"
- Who made all this?
- Is any superior mind responsible for this creation?"
With such questions, the first ideas about God come into existence.

Thus, when he then concludes that there must be someone of such infinite
• superiority,
• wisdom,
• intelligence,
his choice he feels he must relate to this supreme Being.

But simultaneously, man’s
• spiritual and
• emotional immaturity producing
  • fear and
  • many other problematic emotions, colors
  this concept of a superior Creator.

On the one hand he wants an authority who
• thinks for him,
who
• decides for him and
• is thus responsible for him.

He clings to this authority in the hope of being relieved of self-responsibility.
On the other hand,
  • his fears of life [i.e., his fears of life’s inevitable pain, suffering, death] and
  • his inadequacy to cope with it [i.e., to cope with life],
    project onto this God.

He senses
the power
  of this immensely
    • wise and
    • resourceful
  Creator of
    all the natural laws that he can see.

Since he cannot yet
separate
  • power [i.e. man’s awe about the powerful Creator of all that can be seen]
from
  • cruelty [i.e., man’s experiences of life’s inevitable pain, suffering, and death, experiences he assumes are also from this God],
    he begins
      to fear
        this God
          of his own projection.

Thus he begins to
  • appease, to
  • cajole, to
  • submit to, and
  • become subdued by,
    this imaginary God-image.

To recapitulate:
the first state of awakening
causes man to wonder.

In this
spontaneous experience of
  • wonder and
  • perception,
    he often has
      a genuine
        • God-experience and
        • relationship [with God].
But then,
  • as he grows more
    • conflicted and fearful
    [in life, with its inevitable pains, suffering, and death],
  • after his desires [for a better, more fulfilling, and less painful life] become more urgent,
all these
  • emotions [i.e., his conflicts, fears, and urgent desires for a better life] and
  • attitudes [toward life]
    color
    this first God-experience
and he relates no longer according to a
  • genuine,
  • spontaneous,
  • creative
    experience [of God],
  but [rather, he relates] to a
    projection of himself.

The more the mind grows in one direction only [i.e., the direction of working with the concrete aspects of daily living, without being used [i.e., without being used to understand life itself and to understand root causes of its pains and suffering – the understanding that is necessary for the mind] to resolve its
  • problems and
  • conflicts
    which remain hidden away from awareness,
the more does his relationship to God become false.
False,  
because it [i.e., because his relationship with God]  
is based  
• on personal needs,  
• on wishful thinking, and  
• on fear.

The more this proceeds,  
the falser  
the concept of God becomes –  
• consciously or  
• unconsciously.

In the end,  
it [i.e., the concept of God]  
will become  
a superstition,  
with  
• less truth and  
• more dogma.

When this goes on  
and on,  
man comes to a point,  
• after  
his  
• original  
• genuine  
• experience and  
• perception  
turns to  
a superstition,  
that makes a farce out of God;  
when he can no longer  
continue in this trend,  
his intelligence,  
which has grown in the meantime,  
will prevent him from  
going on in this way [of superstition, the way of less truth  
and more dogma]  
indefinitely.
The intelligence will then say
• "it cannot possibly be that there is a Father who leads life for us.

[Rather.]
• It is up to us.

• It is our responsibility.

• We have free will."

And a counter-reaction sets in.

And then,
man often turns to the other extreme and becomes an atheist.

The state of atheism exists in two ways:
1) an absolute lack of
• awareness and
• perception of
  • life and
  • nature,
  • her laws and
  • the significance of creation.
2) a reaction to the
• superstitious God-Image [including the God defined by various religious dogmas] and
  • [the God-image that is the] self-projection of man, denying self-responsibility.
This latter state of atheism [i.e., the atheism that is one’s reaction to God-images of various types],

erroneous in itself as it is,

is still indicative of

a further state of development other than [and beyond]

a belief in God [i.e. beyond a belief in one’s God-image].

This [belief in one’s God-image] comes predominantly from

• fear,
• evasion,
• escapism,
• wishful-thinking,
• denial of self-responsibility.

The latter [state of atheism that is one’s reaction to God-images of various types]]

is often

a necessary transitory period on the way to

a more

• realistic and
• genuine

• experience of and
• relationship to
God.

During this stage [of man’s atheism], faculties are cultivated in man that are of utmost importance for his individual growth.

This does not mean that I advocate atheism.

This is no more the case than that I advocate a

• childish,
• clinging,
belief in God.
Both [atheism and a childish, clinging belief in God-images] are stages [of the soul’s journey].

In each stage there is something important that the soul learns. Something is imprinted in the soul that is
• productive and
• lasting,
long after the superficial layers of the mind have dispensed with the falsity of both extremes.

In this second stage of atheism [i.e., the atheism of rejecting his God-image], man learns to assume self-responsibility.

He lets go of the wished-for hand that
• leads life for him,
• absolves him from the consequences of his own mistakes.

It [i.e., self-responsibility] makes him give up the expectation of being rewarded for being obedient to rules.

Simultaneously, it [i.e., self-responsibility] frees him from fear of being punished.

In some ways, it [i.e., self-responsibility] brings him back to himself.
But
when a certain point
is passed
in this stage [of atheism, i.e., this stage of self-responsibility],
it is no longer possible
to maintain
the concept of atheism.

The more
any
• thought,
• concept,
• scientific fact, or
• philosophy
is carried to its
• logical end and
• conclusion,
the less
is it possible
to maintain an
• untruth or
• half-truth;
or even
• a temporary state
  that had its healthy function
  at a certain period.

When man passes through
these various stages briefly discussed here,
he is bound to arrive at the point
when he uses his mind
• to question
  • his own motives;
• to look
  • at and
  • into
    himself.

Thus
he cultivates
awareness
by facing
the reality within.
As he proceeds to do this [i.e., as he cultivates ever deeper levels of awareness by facing the reality within],

forever deeper levels of his psyche become liberated.

In this liberation [of deeper levels of his psyche],
genuine God-experience is the inevitable outcome.

This genuine God-experience is very different from the childish belief in a self-projected God which the mind has created out of

• fear,
• weakness, and
• wishful-thinking.

He no longer acts because he feels God

• demands or
• expects it of him.

He lives in the now.

He

• does not fear his imperfection and
• does not fear God's punishing him for it [i.e., for his imperfection].

He can see it [i.e., he can see his imperfection] without becoming frantic.
Yet understanding its [i.e., his imperfection's] harm, but not fearing it [i.e., not fearing his imperfection or its harm], he will then see that

- not the imperfection itself is so harmful,
- but [rather, what is harmful is]
  - the lack of awareness of it [i.e., lack of awareness of his imperfection];
  - the fear of being punished for it [i.e., fear of being punished for his imperfection];
  - the pride of wanting to be above it [i.e., pride of wanting to be above his imperfection].

Being not frantic to get over it [i.e., not being frantic to get over his imperfection], he will have
the calm to observe it, thereby understanding
- its [i.e., the imperfection’s] background and
- its [i.e., the imperfection’s] reason for existence.

In this process, he grows out of it [i.e., grows out of the imperfection].

As man cultivates this attitude [toward his imperfection], he makes
a genuine experience of God possible.

On the other hand, [rather than this slow process of growing out of his imperfection by facing it and understanding both the imperfection and the reason for its existence]

it is the occasional
- glimpse and
- sense
  of it [i.e., of a genuine experience of God] that facilitates the proper attitude toward oneself.
This genuine God-experience is being.

God is not perceived as acting –
• punishment or
• reward, or
• guidance along certain ways in order to take away the effort of man.

He [i.e., man] realizes that God is.

This is very difficult to explain in words, my friends.

But it is the only way I can say it.

You cannot come to this feeling that God is if you do not first face what is in you right now, • imperfect,
• faulty,
• childish as it may be.
It would be misleading to assume that each of these stages I described here roughly, follow neatly one after the other.

They overlap.

They do not always follow in this order, because

the human personality is not made up of one level.

It [i.e., the personality] is, as you know, conflicting [i.e., has conflicting components].

Different layers of the personality express different attitudes at any given time, even in this particular respect [i.e., in respect to one’s stage of development, or to one’s genuine God-experience or to one’s relationship to God].

Hence, it is possible that at one period of a person's life, he may be

• consciously in one stage,
• unconsciously in another.

Only after he proceeds on such a Path of self-knowledge [i.e., such a path as Pathwork or other path of self-knowledge],

does this hidden unconscious stage come to the fore.
In this way [i.e., after the previously unconscious stage becomes conscious], it often happens that at a later period something comes out that seems to belong into a former stage.

This [situation where something comes out that seems to belong into a former stage] is also due to the fact that a certain necessary stage was

• not fully lived through
• but repressed due to outer
  • influences and
  • pressures.

So my description [of stages of development as related to one’s relationship to God] is only a vague general outline.

Beware of judging • yourself or
• another according to what you see.

But generally speaking, this is the cycle [of development] that humanity goes through.

Self-awareness must eventually lead to the state of being in awareness [vs. the very early primitive stage of being without awareness].

Simultaneously [with the state of being in awareness], a new relationship to God comes into existence.
[In this new relationship to God,]

God is experienced
as being.

I repeat,

you cannot come to it [i.e., you cannot come to a God experienced as being]
if you do not

first experience,
in a negative way,
that which is,
now.

Nor can you come to it [i.e., nor can you come to a God experienced as being]
by

• concepts
  you learn;
• philosophies and
• practices
  you observe;
• doctrines
  you follow.

If you are

unwilling to

• live through, and
• be in
  your present
  • confusions,
  • errors, and
  • pains,
    • facing and
    • understanding
      them,

you

cannot ever

• be in
  God.
Or to put it in other words:

you cannot be

in a state of

- happiness,
- peace,
- creativity

without strife,

if you do not

face the

- temporary,
- often unpleasant

reality.

Only then [i.e., only when you face the temporary, often unpleasant reality]

can

the great Reality

be experienced.

The latter [i.e., the great Reality]

will first come

- occasionally and
- in vague glimpses.

But this [facing of your temporary, often unpleasant reality]

will give you

a new

- approach and
- relationship to God.

It [i.e., this facing of your temporary, often unpleasant reality]

will not only

transform your

- attitudes and
- concepts of

- God,

but

[transform your]

- concepts also of

- yourself, or
- your place in life.
Needless to say that
in man's relationship to God,
his prayer –
meaning
his speaking to God –
also goes through these phases.

The prayers
are the expression of
the various phases.

It is often the case,
as it is with all things on earth,
that man
is actually
• inwardly
  already in a new stage,
while he
• outwardly
  still clings to
    old habit patterns;
  patterns he adopted in a former stage.

This may
not only apply to
• the way man prays,
but also to
• certain concepts he clings to,
in his conscious mind,
while inwardly
  he is already beyond it [i.e., beyond where his
    conscious mind is].

The mind
is habit-forming.

Habit
is an intrinsic quality
of the mind.
Experience
cout of being
never forms habits.

It is only
the mind
that does it [i.e., it is only the mind that forms habits].

• The memory,
combined with
• the tendency to form habits,
is the danger
of the mind
in regard to
true spiritual experience.

The more
flexible you are,
the less
will you fall into the trap
• of set habit patterns;
• of clinging to
old
• concepts and
• ideas
that once gave you
an experience and
[an experience] which you wish to recreate
by holding onto it.
If you increasingly train yourself to face what is in you now, you free yourself of habit patterns that hold you back:
• from productive living;
• from true experience,
whether this is [truly experiencing]
  • God,
  • life,
  • yourself —
    • it is all the same,
    • it is being.

Is it not habit that made such deep grooves into your mind of a certain experience so that this experience turned into a rigid image?

Isn't it habit that causes you to stick to
• misconceptions,
• wrong conclusions,
• generalizations that are always half-truths, at best?

This applies to many things, my friends.
Again,

I wish to emphasize that whenever you discover such erroneous ways in yourself, beware

• of feeling guilty,
• of being frantic,
• of feeling "I should not."

This attitude is

• the greatest barrier,
• the very greatest of all!

And now, my friends, let us turn to your questions.

QUESTION:
I tried to explain what you explained to us about

• the spirit and
• the free will
to two people –

• one very religious, and
• the other a scientist.

They then asked if God is

• omniscient and
• loving,
then He also knows the future.

If He knows the future, while He gave us free will, He must know what we will do with it [i.e., do with free will].

And this I cannot answer.
ANSWER:
In the first place,
the future
is a product of
time.

And time
is a product of
the mind.

Therefore,
in reality,
future
does not exist.

Just as
past
does not exist.

I realize that this [i.e., I realize that the future and the past not existing]
is impossible
for most people to understand.

Outside the mind,
there is
being –
that is,
no
• past,
• present nor
• future,
only
• NOW.

This can,
at best,
be vaguely sensed,
by feeling,
rather than
[by] intellect.
Furthermore, 
this question [about an omniscient God knowing the outcome (including the resulting apparent suffering) of giving beings free will]
arises from
the same complete misconception
I outlined in this very lecture
in that it [i.e., this question]
shows
the concept of God who
• acts,
• does.

Creation is,
in the true sense,
• not an action,
and certainly
• not a time-bound action.

When God
created spirit,
it [i.e., spirit]
is
• out of time,
• out of mind,
• in the state of being.

Each spirit
is, in this sense,
God-like
and creates his own life.

God
does not
• take away [from] or
• add on [to]
[the spirit God created].

Moreover, I have this to add:
it is man's complete illusion
to believe that
• pain and
• suffering
are terrible
in themselves.
Please,
try to understand
what I am saying.

Man's
inordinate
fear of suffering
is
• utterly unrealistic,
and again
• a product of the mind,
• in error.

Man
fears
• pain and
• suffering
mainly because
he believes
• he has nothing to do with it [i.e., that he has nothing to do with pain or suffering];
• that it [i.e., that pain or suffering]
can come without his being responsible for it.

In other words,
it [i.e., pain or suffering]
is either
• unjust,
or [is]
• chaotic coincidence.

But
once he realizes that
every pain he experiences
is due to
his own evasion of
• truth and
• reality;

once he
not only
understands this [i.e., understands that pain is due to evasion of truth]
as a principle,
but
actually connects the links [between pain and evasion of truth],
he will no longer fear it [i.e., no longer fear the pain].
He will see the key, long before he can even begin to use it.

He will no longer guard against the supposed arbitrariness of life against which he feels helpless.

Thus, his suffering will
• take on an entirely new aspect and
• become productive.

This [understanding of suffering and connecting the links between suffering and evasion of truth] then, will make man see that the actual suffering is not half as frightening as his
• fear of, and
• attitude towards it.

To a slight degree, many of you have experienced this [i.e., have experienced that actual suffering is not as frightening as the suffering you feared].

You have experienced that when you fear something before it happens, it is so much worse than when you actually go through it.
And you have also experienced how your pains take on a new face once you thoroughly understand how you have created them.

If you observe this chain of events within, abstaining from • perfectionism, • moralizing, and • justifying, the pain instantly recedes, although the outer situation may remain the same.

When you truly come to terms with your reality, you can also accept the imperfection of life as such.

Without rebellion against imperfection, • many patterns transform and • you cause less suffering for yourself.
But your
• conscious or
• unconscious
  expectation
  that life should be perfect,
causes you
• to rebel,
• to resist,
• to erect barriers
  which cause
  more
• imperfection and
• suffering
  than life would otherwise contain.

So it is
your attitude
• to suffering,
• to life,
• to your position in life and
• towards yourself,
that determines
how
you experience suffering.

If man's
attitude
toward suffering
were not as distorted as it usually is,
he would find that
the problems
he has to solve
in conquering
• mind and
• matter
  are beautiful.

They [i.e., the “beautiful problems” you have to solve
  in conquering mind and matter]
are the most beautiful things
  in your earth life.
Only by conquering
• your own
• resistance and
• blindness,
• your lack of awareness
  of yourself,
will you
  experience
  the beauty of life,
  whether
  • at one time
    you go through
    • difficult periods, and
  • at others,
    you experience
    • happiness and
    • fulfillment.

When man
comes closer to this understanding,
a question such as this [i.e., a question about an omniscient God knowing
the outcome (including the resulting apparent suffering) of giving beings free will]
could never be asked.

It [i.e., this question]
• is so confused,
• contains so much
  • blindness and
  • lack of awareness of reality, it
• shows such spiritual immaturity,
  that it [i.e., this question]
  cannot even be answered
  in any way
  that will make sense to the questioner.

You
cannot understand
  with the mind
  what is beyond
  the realm of the mind.
For that [i.e., for understanding what is beyond the realm of the mind], another faculty is necessary, but so long as the [very] existence of such a faculty [for understanding what is beyond the realm of the mind] is denied [by such a person], how can you even make the person come to an eventual understanding?

The question [about an omniscient God knowing the outcome (including the resulting apparent suffering) of giving beings free will] also contains an eternal
• conflict in mankind, [and]
• conflict in religious concepts.

On the one hand, man postulates that God is an omnipotent Father
• who acts at will;
• who rewards you if you obey His laws;
• who guides you without your active participation in your own inner life, provided you humbly ask for it.

On the other hand, it is postulated
• that man has free will;
• that he molds his own fate;
• that he is responsible for his life.

While religion teaches the latter, it [i.e., religion] simultaneously cripples
• free decision and
• self-responsibility by forcing man to obey certain prescribed rules.
Between these two, apparently mutually exclusive concepts [i.e., the concepts that man is self-responsible for his life and yet must obey certain rules set forth by God], man is confused.

The question you asked is a typical example of such confusion.

* An omnipotent Creator and
* man's self-responsibility are only mutually exclusive when viewed
  * in time, and
  * from the mind,
when this omnipotent creator is perceived as acting like man,
  * in time,
  * from the mind.

You do not yet have to be in the state of being in awareness before you can sense that, in reality, in the state of being, there is no conflict between the two.

All you have to do is face yourself
  * without resistance,
  * without the pretense of being more than you are,
  * without striving to be more perfect than, at this moment, you happen to be.
Each individual aspect that you view in yourself in such freedom, puts you, at that moment, into a state of being and you inwardly perceive the truth of God as Being without contradictions of the sort you asked in your question.

Then you will know, profoundly, that
- complete self-responsibility is not exclusive of
- a supreme Being.

A person who is inwardly not ready, cannot possibly understand what I am saying here.
In this connection,
I would like to say
that it may occur to some of you
why it is
that
some great spirits,
either
• in the body
or
• without body through human mediums,
have passed on great wisdom,
yet their teachings
actually seem to encourage
one of those temporary stages
I mentioned as
a phase
in the great cycle.

Their teachings
were adapted to
• this still immature stage,
rather than to
• drawing people out of it [i.e., rather than drawing people out of this
immature stage].

You may rightly wonder
why this is so.

The answer is that
each stage
has to be gone through
thoroughly.

One cannot be forced
to skip a stage,
otherwise
something unassimilated
will
• remain in the soul and
• manifest in a later period.
Let us suppose we had a group of people here who have not gone through the development you have gone through in the last few years.

What I would say now, for instance, about the relationship to God, would make absolutely no sense.

A person who has not, at least to some degree, experienced the peace of

• true self-awareness,
• without
• self-condemnation or
• self-justification,
as rarely as this may happen to you,
cannot possibly sense the meaning of the state of being.

If a group is, perhaps, just between

• the second [stage, the stage in which man is in a state of fear of God, and is superstitious and intellectually dogmatic regarding his relationship with God]

and

• third stages [the third stage being that of atheism and self-responsibility] in this great cycle,
a spirit will have to talk in such a way that he can be understood.

Yet, he [i.e., the spirit] does not lie.
But for such a group [i.e., a group between stages two and three], it is humanly impossible to understand more.

Only by gradually bringing a group out of this stage [two of fear, superstition, and intellectual dogma] in to [stage three, of atheism, self-responsibility, and] self-facing, can the souls of these people begin to absorb more truth, even if the mind cannot follow it.

This is why it may often occur that spiritual helpers, from this or the other world, seem to encourage a phase from which you have already emerged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMENT: I know that if I would have listened to this lecture a year ago, I would not have felt it as I do now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANSWER: Of course not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now at least, there is a chance of understanding, of grasping, of sensing, be it only in rare moments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a smaller way, man repeats these cycles over and over under various levels.

It is not just once that he goes through each of these stages.

You may even observe that the lectures I have given you in all these years, in a way, go through these stages.

Each of the phases we passed, prepared you for that which is the key: self-awareness.

The
- ability,
- willingness,
- courage,
- incentive, and
- reason
to do so [i.e., the ability, courage, and reason to go through these stages and reach self-awareness],
- has to be cultivated and
- does not come easily.

This is why these phases exist.

But they [i.e., these phases] do not exist as ready-made laws.

They [i.e., these phases] exist because of man's inherent rhythm of growth that cannot be hurried.
Yet it [i.e., yet man’s growth through these phases] needs
  • encouragement and
  • preparation.

It [i.e., man’s growth through these phases] needs
  • help
to direct attention to his resistances.

QUESTION:
Will you please elaborate on the meaning of prayer in the different stages?

ANSWER:
I believe it is rather evident from the lecture itself:

Prayer will be adapted to the conscious
  • attitude and
  • concept of any given phase.

In the very first stage, when man is still almost in the stage of being without awareness, there is no prayer, because there is no God-concept.
In the next stage [i.e., in the second stage], when man begins to
• ask questions and
• wonder,
and in this spontaneous experience of
• wondering and
• allowing new considerations to fill him,
this, [wondering and allowing new considerations to fill him] in itself, is
• prayer or
• meditation.

The next [or third] stage may be the realization of a Supreme Intelligence.

In this [third] stage, prayer takes the form of admiration of the marvel of the
• universe and
• nature.

It is worship.
In the next [or fourth] stage, when
  • the confusion of the mind,
  • the immaturity and inadequacy
    cause
      • fear,
      • clinging,
      • helplessness,
      • dependence;
when
  • wishful-thinking and
  • greed,
  • unacceptance of reality
    causes
  supplication [i.e., causes a humble request for help from God], prayer will be expressed accordingly.

When prayers [humbly requesting help from God] seem to be answered in this state [of stage four, a stage of fear and wishful thinking], it is not because
  • God acts,
but [rather] because, in some way,
  • man
    • is sincere
      in spite of all his self-deceptions and evasions and
    • has thus opened a channel within through which laws of being can penetrate to him.

This [distinction in stage four between a prayer “answered” because “God acted” and a prayer “answered” because “man opened a channel within”] is an important distinction that will only be perceived at a later stage.
When man realizes his own participation in whether or not a prayer is answered, he will lose the sense of helplessness and of the arbitrariness of a willful God he has to appease by man-made and superimposed rules.

But I might also add that what often appears like an answered prayer is [really] the strength of an unconflicted mind in the particular area where the prayer is answered, at least at that time.

[Next, in stage five.]

- When man comes into the state of independence,
- when he lets go of this imaginary God who punishes, rewards, and leads life for him,
- when he finds himself in the state of atheism, of denial of any higher being, he does not pray, of course.

At least not in the conventional sense.
[In this stage five, the stage of atheism and self-responsibility]
- He may meditate on himself,
- he may look at himself
  in sincerity,
  and this [self-facing], as you all know by now,
  is the best prayer
  in the true sense.

But [on the other hand in this stage five in man’s development]
  it may also be
  that man,
  in the atheistic state,
  • is completely irresponsible, and
  • fails to
    • think and
    • look at himself.

He may escape from himself
  the same way as
  the person who uses God
  as an escape from himself.

When man reaches [stage five,]
  the stage of
  active pursuit
  • of self-awareness,
  • of facing himself as he really is,
  he may, at the beginning,
  still be accustomed to
  the old [form of] prayer [from stage four, the prayer]
  of
  • begging for help,
  • asking God to do for him
    what he used to shy away from doing himself.

Yet, in spite of this [old] habit in prayer,
  he begins to
  face himself.
Only after
reaching deeper levels
of such self-facing,
will he
gradually
avoid the kind of prayer
he was used to [in stage four, the prayer of asking
God to do for him what he could do for himself].

He may even go through a stage
of not actively praying at all,
in the usual sense.

But he meditates –
and that is often
the best prayer!

He meditates
• by looking at
  his real motivations;
• by allowing
  his actual feelings
to come to the surface;
• by questioning them [i.e., by questioning his actual feelings]
as to their reason for being.

In this kind of [meditation] activity,
prayer
in the old sense [of asking God to do for him what he could do for himself]
becomes more and more
• meaningless,
• contradictory.

His prayer
is the action
• of self-awareness and
• of looking at himself in truth.

His prayer
is his sincere intent
to face
what may be most unpleasant [for and in him].
It [i.e., this self-facing meditation leading to deeper self-awareness] is prayer because it contains the attitude that truth for the sake of truth is the threshold to love.

Without • truth and without • love, there can be no God-experience.

Love cannot grow out of trying to pretend a truth that is not felt.

But love can grow out of facing a truth, no matter how imperfect it is.

• This attitude IS prayer.

• Candor with oneself IS prayer;
• alertness to one's resistance is prayer;
• owning up to something that one has hidden from in shame is prayer.

When this [process of self-facing] proceeds, the state of being gradually comes into existence, little by little, with interruptions.
Then, in the state of being, prayer is no longer an action of uttered
• words or
• thoughts.

[Rather,] It [i.e., prayer] is a feeling
• of being in the eternal NOW;
• of flowing in a current of love with all beings;
• of understanding and perception;
• of being alive.

It is impossible to convey that
• these few aspects I mentioned here,
in addition to
• many more indescribable feelings,
comprise prayer in the highest sense.

It [i.e., prayer in the highest sense] is awareness of God in His Reality.

But this kind of prayer [i.e., the kind of prayer that is awareness of God in His Reality] cannot be
• imitated or
• learned through any
  • teachings,
  • prescribed practices, or
  • disciplines.
It [i.e., this kind of prayer that is awareness of God in His Reality] is the natural outcome of the
• courage and
• humility
to face oneself
• completely and
• without reservation.

Before you have reached this highest state
• of relating to God,
• of being,
  where
• prayer and
• being are
• one,
• all you can do,
• the best prayer in the world,
is the
• renewed
• constant intent
• to face yourself without any reservation;
• to remove all pretenses between
  • your conscious mind and
  • that which is in you; and then,
• to remove the pretense between
  • what is in you, and
  • others.

This is the pathway, my friends.
QUESTION:
I have recently learned of a young cousin who has a malignancy.

And I would like to ask that I have the prayer of this group for his recovery and I would like to know if there is anything I can do, or that can be done to help him?

ANSWER:
My dearest,

this question is so very contradictory to everything I said tonight, and previously.

It is certainly understandable that you feel that way.

Of course
• you, and
• the whole group, can pray.

The validity of such prayer is the sincere good will
• that you wish the best to another person;
• that you do not want him to suffer;
• that you would do what you could to help alleviate such suffering.

If you are so intended, open yourself for inspiration.
If there is any way
to give
  • strength and
  • consolation,
it may come
  with such openness [to inspiration].

But from our point of view,
we view these things so differently.

  • Temporary suffering,
  • parting, and
  • death
    is,
    • in reality,
    • not what it means to you.

I know this is painful,
at the moment,
in time.

There is no doubt that
pure
  • thoughts and
  • feelings,
pure
  • intent,
  must
    have an effect.

Not necessarily
  in the exact manner you wish,
    but nevertheless,
      it has a very good effect.

QUESTION:
It is not his death that is so painful,
  but the leaving of
    • small children, and
    • so many things undone,
      • brilliance and
      • talent.
**ANSWER:**

Actually,
what you think is
inevitably lost
because
[it is] not concluded in this life,
is not so.

No one
goes from this earth sphere
if it is not
• right and
• good,
  unless he takes his own life.

Nothing happens
in the entire universe,
• that is meaningless,
• that cannot be productive.

There is no waste.

The waste
exists only temporarily
when you
do not make
the best of your life
while you have it.

But
leaving earth life, as such,
is never wasteful,
regardless of how young a person is
who leaves his body.
If you truly
• think and
• meditate
  about these words,
  they will be
    • of greater help,
    and therefore
    • more consoling
than if I were to tell you
• that any means exist
  that can interrupt
    the laws of cause and effect,
• that God can protect you from
  certain stages
    • that man has to go through, and
    • which can be so fruitful for all concerned.

Now, I am
  not indicating here
    that he cannot be helped.

This is not within my realm.

The outcome
  may not necessarily
    be as you fear it.

But whether or not it [i.e., whether or not the outcome]
  is [as your fear it],
    no waste exists.

There is meaningfulness
  even for those who stay behind.

QUESTION:
Would you comment, please,
  on the progress of
    our group work
and show us a way to make it
  an even more dynamic experience for us,
    that is [show us how to make it] truly group work?
ANSWER: 
Yes, my friend.

I believe most of you can begin to
• sense and
• experience
  that this group work
  is of immeasurable importance.

How else [but in your group work] can you
safely
allow
  your negative emotions
  to come to the fore?

To allow them [i.e., to allow your negative emotions] an outlet
  that not only
• will be destructive for an environment that does not understand [i.e., an environment outside your group in real life, an environment that does not understand your negative emotions and hence an environment in which your negative emotions would be destructive to others if you were to act them out in real life],
  but
  will even be fruitful for everyone else's further insight [i.e., fruitful for everyone else in the group by helping them to gain further insight]?

How else [but in your group work] can you rid yourself of
  the pressure of repressions?

How else [but in your group work] can you learn to
understand yourself
  in the mirror of the other?

How else [but in your group work] can you,
• best and
• fastest,
  learn to communicate
• on a deeper level of your being,
  rather than
• on superficial ones [i.e. on superficial levels of your being]?
All this [deeper level of communicating]  
• has begun [in your group work] and  
• can be furthered in the years to come  
  if you keep this [i.e., if you keep this benefit of  
  deeper communicating in your group work]  
  in mind.

Provided  
you continue to grow  
in the future,  
as you have this last year,  
the group work  
will prove more and more fruitful,  
an addition to the private work  
that is one of the greatest assets  
you will not want to miss  
under any circumstances.

The progress  
of the various groups  
depends primarily  
• on the individual’s  
  • participation and  
  • willingness to penetrate  
    the surface defenses;  
• on his willingness  
to let go of resistance;  
• on his willingness  
to see the truth within;  
• on his willingness  
to dispense with  
  • justification,  
  • moralizing,  
  • rationalizing,  
  • intellectualizing.

All that you know.

You have made  
• tentative beginnings  
in this respect,  
• in some instances  
  very good progress  
in this particular area.
But as yet, there are
• many guards and
• much pride
  that prevents
  the true opening of the channels
  that will yield the results
  it [i.e., the results that the opening of the channels]
  ultimately will [yield].

Too often
  you do not
  see yourself.

You do not want to
  expose yourself.

This [situation of being defended against seeing and exposing yourself]
will undoubtedly improve,
• as your sincere will does not falter;
• as you
  face these emotions within,
  in the candor I so much advocate.

So I wish to remind you,
  once again,
  also as far as
  the group work is concerned,
  • learn more and more
    to bring out your feelings.

  • Learn to observe
    your own reactions.

  • Observe your tendency
    of always explaining your reactions away.

  • Observe your subjectivity.
And gradually you will come to the point when you will be capable of expressing
  • unreasonable,
  • childish,
  • imperfect emotions
  without explanations.

Then, and then only, can you begin to
  • examine and
  • understand them [i.e., these unreasonable, childish, imperfect emotions]
  in their true light.

As long as you are ready with an explanation before you express them [i.e., before you express these unreasonable, childish, imperfect emotions]
  clearly,
you cannot gain the self-awareness
  • you wish and
  • which is so essential for your liberation.

As you become aware of your own defenses, you will learn not to strive away from it [i.e., not to strive away from the situation], but rather to experience yourself
  • in awareness
  • in your defensiveness.

This then, is the right approach.

This is more progress.
In the real sense,
• it [i.e., experiencing yourself in awareness of your defensiveness] is more enlightenment,
• it [i.e., experiencing yourself in awareness of your defensiveness] is more constructive,
   than trying to force yourself away from something you cannot feel.

I know, my friends, that I am being very repetitious.

But it cannot be emphasized enough.

It is always forgotten, and needs constant reminding.

This emotional experience,
• being in what you feel,
• seeing it for what it means,
this is the way of the group work, also.

This will then make a more fruitful interrelationship.

It will contribute more to your individual progress than anything you are capable of imagining at this time.

You have made a very good beginning in this direction.

The first year of this particular group work has gone better than expected.

But that does not mean that you cannot do so much more.
In the following year,
so much more benefit
will derive for each of you
who is sincere
in this endeavor.

More interaction will be established
from
one soul
to another,
not from
one intellect
to another.

QUESTION:
Could I ask you a question about
man's development,
as you talked about it
• last time, and
• this time, too?

It seems to me that
our Western culture
suffers from holding onto
• the intellect and to
• the will,
instead of approaching
• the special state of being.

And, if that is so,
what can we do
to counteract this tendency,
• in education, say, or
• in cultural life?

ANSWER:
It is quite true that this is a general tendency, of course,
as you all know.
What you can do [to counteract this tendency in the West of holding onto the intellect and will instead of approaching the special state of being]? 

There is only one answer.

At the risk of being again repetitious, I have to say once more, there is no other way than cultivating self-awareness in the way you are doing.

The more you mature emotionally, the more awareness do you gain, the more this [special state of being] will emanate from you and, in some way it [i.e., this special state of being] will find expression, 
• spontaneously, 
• creatively, 
in your activities, whatever they are.

Whether you are 
• a doctor, 
• a teacher, or 
• a shoemaker, makes no difference.

You will influence your surroundings, not so much 
• by what you say or preach, 
but 
• by your mere being, 
• by your emanations.
Each individual
going through
such a path of
self-finding,
is bound to contribute to
this great change.

The world
cannot be changed
unless
a sufficient number of people
are doing
just what you are doing.

But
every single human being
helps toward that end.

No one's efforts
at self-honesty
are beneficial
only
for himself.

Incidentally,
this change
has begun to take place already,
here and there.

A group like yours
contributes more
than
vast masses of people
• who preach doctrines,
• who force away the emotions,
• who feel they must be good,
while their
true state of being
is removed from such goodness.
A group of only five people, who face reality as it happens to be now, contributes more to the entire world, not only • to your earth sphere, but • to all spheres, than the best intended • teachings and • ideals that reach merely the surface intellect.

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QUESTION:
When we are • angered or • disturbed by the • perversity, • selfishness or • cynicism of others, or • disturbed by • corruption in high places, is this a fault?

Does the light on the path make us blind to the wrongs in the social organism of which we are all members?

What should be our attitude towards social problems?
ANSWER:
If you consider your question,
you will discover the
• emotional dependency and
• moralizing character
  underlying it.

• Moralizing with
  • yourself
  (what should be our attitude? Is it a fault?), and
• moralizing with
  • others.

As I often say,
you cannot find
any true answer
as long as
the underlying attitude
is thus colored [i.e., colored by such moralizing characteristics].

No,
you certainly need not be blind
because you are on a path of self-finding.

You cannot be [blind].

• Condoning and
• blindness to
  what exists
  is not the answer.

The answer is
not
a lazy acceptance of evil.

But neither is the answer
a rebellion
against evil.

You cannot
transform it [i.e., you cannot transform evil]
when you rebel.
When you rebel,
You can, at best,
make certain
superficial reforms
that
• have no solid ground and
• are therefore bound to end in
  an equally wrong
  opposite –
  and so [the superficial reforms] become evil
  all over again.

The productive approach
would be,
after
• discovering and
• removing
  the self-moralizing attitude,
to ask yourself,
"is my anger truly
  an objective one?"

Or am I involved [i.e., am I angry because I am personally
  affected by this particular evil]?

You will then perceive
the difference
between
• objective
  and
• subjective
anger.

The former [i.e., objective anger]
• does not have an urgency,
it [i.e., objective anger]
• is detached,
it [i.e., objective anger]
• does not make you
  restless and
  frustrated.
Whenever

- you feel frustrated and
- the anger personally hurts,

it [i.e., your anger]
always hides
something that you have not faced in yourself.

- This lack of peace,
- this disturbance,
is always a sign of
subjective anger,
which is a sign of
not being aware of
what is really going on in you.

I have said it so very often,
and have to repeat it again,
no collective means
can ever,
ever really,
change the world,
unless it is sustained by
- inner growth and
- transformation
which is the product of
self-awareness.

As long as man
does not face
his own
- injustice,
- greed,
- selfishness,
- one-sidedness,
- pride,
- fears,
al on a
deeply hidden
psychological level,
these same attitudes
are bound to continue in the world,
regardless of
what social reforms are instituted.
Social reforms
  • are the product of man,
they
  • are maintained by man.

If man, generally,
hides within,
  what outwardly
he wants to disappear,
it is a discrepancy [between what is hidden within, and therefore unconscious, and what he sees outwardly and wants to disappear because he sees it as evil]
that [desire for the disappearance of the evil he sees outwardly]
can have
  no hope
of finding realization [i.e., the disappearance of the evil he sees cannot be realized; the evil will remain].

But
  this does not mean
one should not
do what one can
  in order to eliminate
  • wrong or
  • evil.

[Rather, this understanding means] Only,
[that] you should understand
  what is really necessary
in order to change the world.

As long as
  you are at war with yourself,
outer war is a result.

As long as
  you are inwardly
  • greedy and
  • selfish
  and do not even know it,
outer
  • greed and
  • selfishness
cannot be successfully eliminated.
If you
    truly want to contribute
    to the good of general conditions,
    apart from
    whatever you may be able
    to do
    in deeds,

try to find
    these similar conditions
    within yourself
    that you so strenuously object to
    outwardly.

They may exist in a
• much more subtle or
• modified
  form,
  but essentially
  they must be there [i.e., they must be within you, though hidden].

When you become aware of them,
    know that
    • you, and
    • millions of others like you,
      are responsible for
      the ills of the world.

• No guilt,
• no self-flagellation,
  only the recognition of
  a fact.

Outer reforms,
    regardless how efficient,
    will work lastingly
    only when
    more people
    do
    what I advise you, my friends,
    to do.

When you look at history,
    you will see that this is so.
• Reforms and general improvements exist in a genuine and lasting way exactly to the degree that man has become more self-responsible, more aware of himself, more mature.

But wherever social reforms were way ahead of man's inner growth, they may have a temporary effect, only to evaporate, or to end up in an equally evil extreme on the other side of the scale.

The world, in general, is nothing more than the outcropping of the individuals, of their inner state, their present inner truth.

I said this already years ago.

Perhaps, now, you will be better able to verify it.
Such an imbalance of going from one extreme to the other, in the attempt to eliminate an evil, is exactly what happens in the individual soul.

When man attempts to change superficially, he swings from one extreme to another.

When he adopts one rule, good as it may be, in exchange for another he does not like in himself, he is not profound.

He has not attempted to investigate what he really feels.

This, as you encounter so often in this work, is what you experience in the world at large.

My dearest friends, I leave you for but a short time.

That does not mean that the continued process of inner growth need be halted.
It [i.e., your inner growth] depends on you
• how you approach yourself,
• your daily
  • experiences,
  • reactions,
  • feelings.

Keep up this self-observation, no matter what.
• Do not stop it,
• do not run away from yourself.

Bring peace into your own heart by looking at yourself as you are now.

There is no other real way of gaining peace, but there are many
• false,
• illusory ways [of gaining “peace”].

Most of you have experienced this, at least occasionally.

Your lack of peace is always due to somewhere not wanting to face yourself.
**Remember this** [i.e., remember that your lack of peace is not wanting to face yourself in some area of your life],

and as you
• do [i.e., as you do remember this], and
• more and more
dissolve your
  • pride,
  • pretense and
  • resistance,
you will perceive
what it means
to be in
  • reality,
to be in
  • the state of
    being in awareness.

Even
• the unpleasant reality of the moment,
• the product of your
  • conflicts and
  • confusions,
if you
  truly
  • face and
  • live
  it [i.e., truly face and live even that unpleasant reality],
instead of
running from it,
even that [unpleasant] reality
  is peaceful –
it [i.e., that unpleasant reality]
  is God.

**Only that** [i.e., only facing and living all reality]
can be the door to
an eventually
greater Reality.

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**With this,**
I bless
• each and every one of you,
• each and every one of your dear ones.
Try to feel
• the love,
• the warmth and
• the truth
  • that comes from
    the world of being;
  • that can be yours
    for the asking.

You have a key now.

Use it!

Be in peace,
be in God!

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