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, devotionally.

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**<br>in the name of the Lord.  

**Blessed are all of you,**<br>my dear friends.  

**Last time I talked about**<br>how evil came into existence.  

**This question has bothered many people**<br>who cannot imagine<br>how a God of love<br>could permit<br>the existence of evil.  

**For those friends who are here for the first time,**  
I suggest they read the last two lectures<br>in order to understand this one  
which is a continuation. |
To briefly recapitulate,
I explained how
long before
the existence of the material world,
some of the created beings
who had been endowed
not only with
• free will
but also with
• a certain power,
abused this power.

I explained how
this Fall of the Angels,
as it is called,
happened gradually
as a slow process of degeneration,
whereby
everything divine
• very slowly and
• gradually
turned into
its opposite aspect.

In this way
a separation occurred
between
• those who had abused their power
and
• those who had not.

I have often said –
and this applies to all beings,
• spirit or
• human –
that
• your attitudes,
• your opinions,
• your feelings, and
• your thoughts
create the spiritual worlds,
even though
you may still live on earth.
You each
create the world
which will be yours.

In the same way,
the spirits participating in the Fall
created
• new worlds
  according to their changing attitudes,
• dark worlds
  often referred to as
  • Hell.

The attitudes of
• disharmony and
• hatred
created such forms.

There is
not just one
possibility
in this respect.

Let us suppose, for instance,
that a being
in its perfect state
had the particular characteristic of
• great strength of love,
• the fire of divine love.

This
love force
would
• turn around
  into its opposite and
• create a fire of
  • hatred and
  • wickedness;
thus
a very disharmonious kind of fiery world
would come into existence.
So, you see,
all legends
are not as unreal
as they might appear to you.

Let us suppose
another individual
in his or her perfect state of development
had the particular characteristic of
• wise judgment,
• calmness, and
• detached reflection.

These attributes
would enable the being
to further the divine creation
in a particular way
through the slow unfoldment
of this special creative power.

Directed to
its opposite force [however],
this power
would create
a world of
• icy coldness,
• icy darkness, and
• desolation.

There are many more possibilities
of how
the infinite variety
of divine attributes
can
• change into their opposites and
• create
the corresponding spheres
in the world of darkness,
of which there is also
an infinite variety,
just as in the divine world.
These spheres
  • of fire or
  • of icy coldness –
    in the spiritual sense, of course –
are just two examples.

There are
  spheres of
    • slime and
    • dirt,
spheres of
  • intense suffering
    through
    • overcrowding or
    through
    • isolation, and
  • many, many other varieties.

Since
  one of the most important divine aspects
  is
    • free will or
    • freedom of choice,
this had to
  turn into its opposite too.

The spirit
  who was the first
  to succumb to the temptation
  of abusing this power,
the one
  who is sometimes referred to as
    • Lucifer,
    • Satan, or
    • the Devil,
who
  influenced others to follow him,
would naturally have been
the first one
  to inhabit
  the new world
  that came into existence.
This spirit [i.e., Lucifer, Satan, or the Devil] had complete power over all those who followed him, and, contrary to God [and God’s use of His infinite power over others], he [i.e., Lucifer] used this power [over others to control others].

God [i.e., in sharp contrast to Lucifer and Lucifer’s exercising control over others] gives the freedom of choice and this has deeper significance than most of you realize.

With that freedom necessarily comes the possibility
  • to abuse the given power and
  • to use it contrary to the divine laws.

If no choice were available, there would be
  • no freedom and
  • no [individual] power.

There can be
  • no divine happiness, in fact,
    • no divinity at all, if it cannot be
      • attained or
      • maintained by free choice.
By the same token,  
the opposite of  
• God and  
• His laws  
must be  
• the prohibition of  
  free choice and  
• the domination of  
  the stronger [here Lucifer]  
  over  
  the weaker ones [i.e., domination over other weaker spirits,  
  including humans].

This state of affairs  
would seem to make  
the salvation  
of the fallen beings [who are under the domination of Lucifer  
and not free to choose otherwise]  
impossible;  

for even should they  
have come to the point  
of desiring  
to go back to God,  
they would  
not have had the power to do so  
since they  
were under the  
• dominion and  
• power  
  of the one who reigns  
  in the world of darkness.

On the other hand,  
how could God  
• not break his own laws  
and still  
• save those beings  
  who longed for him?
If He were to use
his infinite power
by overruling
• the free will and
• the choice
  of those
  who decided to
  use the given power
  in their own way,
He would actually
be acting from
  the same principle [of domination over His created beings]
  as Lucifer.

Here
more than in anything else,
maintaining
  the divine principle
  was of utmost importance,

for only if
  God remained true to
  • himself and
  • his laws
would there be
  a fundamental difference
  between
  • the ways of God [i.e., freedom to all His created beings]
  and
  • the ways of Lucifer [i.e., domination over weaker created beings].
Since
it is God's plan
that
every creature
• should recognize him
and at one time
• come back to him
  out of free choice and
• reattain divinity [i.e., reattain the divinity it had originally],
it was imperative
that he [i.e., that God]
not
use the
same means of force
as his opponent [i.e., Lucifer],
even though
his [i.e., God’s] purpose
might be a good one [i.e., here, God’s purpose
being that all who had fallen would
reattain their original divinity].

It is
not
the end [i.e., here, that the fallen would reattain divinity]
alone
that counts,
but
very much
the means too [i.e., the means by which created beings reattain divinity]!

Only by remaining true to these principles [including giving freedom to all beings]
would the
most stubborn
of the fallen beings
one day
• see the vast difference
  between these two ways of being [i.e., freedom vs. domination]
and
• understand
  the dignity
that lies in the divine principles,
even though it means
a path of suffering
for those who wish to get out of
the self-created miserable circumstances.
Since

- life in spirit
- is in direct relationship
- to the
- inner
- • harmony,
- • enlightenment, and
- • general attitude,

spirits

- who have become
- disharmonious

cannot be simply put into

- a world of harmony
- as you might travel
- into a beautiful country.

In the world of spirit

the country

- is
- both
- • you
- and
- • your product.

Therefore,

the once fallen spirits

- • had and
- • still have

to attain

- a state
- where again
- they
- naturally
- produce harmonious worlds.

That this can

- only be accomplished
- through
- the same
- slow process
- of development
- as the Fall
- with its
- degeneration

is natural enough.
You will readily understand now that this must happen [i.e., the fallen spirits must change their innermost attitudes] in free choice, too, so that questions like,

"Why has God not done away with evil?",

need not come up any more in your deliberations.

On the other hand, means had to be found so that the creatures who desired to return to God and to keep his laws instead of Lucifer's [laws] could do so within the framework of the laws of God [including the divine aspect of free will].

Thus the free will of no one would be broken, not even [the free will] of Lucifer himself.

This [means by which those who have fallen and who now desire to return to God and reattain divinity without violating free will and other of God's laws] is the great Plan of Salvation in which Christ played a major role.

I will talk about this in more detail the next time.
The spheres of darkness
first came into existence
where the spirits lived
under the dominion of Lucifer.

In the beginning
there was no
• longing for or
• sense of
  the light
  they had once possessed.

Only after tasting
the self-chosen medicine
for a considerable time,
that is, [the self-chosen medicine of]
  experiencing
  a state of desolation [for a considerable time],
did a vague longing
for something else –
  they did not quite know [longing] for what –
take hold of
  some of these [fallen] beings.

It goes without saying
that the memory of
• God and
• his worlds
  was extinguished
  to the degree
  that disharmony
  had set in,
but it [i.e., but the memory of God and his worlds]
  was revived again
  as attitudes changed.

The latter [i.e., the changing attitudes in the fallen beings, leading to the reviving of the memory of God and his worlds in the fallen beings]
could only occur
  as an exceedingly slow process, however.
Spiritual darkness
annuls knowledge,
which is spiritual light.

Just as with human beings,
if you have
no
spiritual enlightenment,
you have to work
spiritually
to regain
glimpses
of this light.

The vague longing
that
first
• some and
later
• more
creatures
felt
was sufficient
to bring
a glimmer of light
into their world,
as though
a faraway dawn
changed
the contours of their world
a little bit.

• The cold
would not be
quite so cold any more;
• the fire
not so hot anymore;
• the filth
not quite so filthy any more; and
• the loneliness
not quite so
• unbearable and
• hopeless
any more.
When
  enough spirits
came into the state
  of longing
and
  the longing [in these spirits]
increased,
the time was ripe
  for the material world
  as you know it [i.e., the earth sphere]
to come into existence.

You may say
  that God
created
  the material world,
and this is true,
  for nothing can be created
  without
  the creative divine force.

However,
  it is equally true
that the material world
  was also created
  by the longing of enough spirits
  for something higher.

The world
  in which you are now living
is
  the product
  of the desire
  to strive higher.

Here [in the world in which you are now living, i.e., in the earth sphere]
  conditions exist
  • in which
    spiritual development
    can proceed, and
  • in which
    a free choice for God
    can be made –
    which is impossible
    in the worlds of darkness.
In other words,
this earth sphere
is a product
of the longing
of the fallen spirits.

And it [i.e., the earth sphere]
is equally a product
of the longing
of all those beings
• who remained with God and
• whose deepest desire
  • was always, and
  • is always,
    to bring their brothers and sisters
      back to God.

Therefore,
both
• the divine worlds
  and
• the worlds of darkness
helped
  in the creation
  of this earth sphere.

The influence
of both worlds
• exists and
  • will manifest itself
    according to
      the attitude
        of each individual being
          on this plane [i.e., on the plane of the earth sphere]
            possessing the power
              of free choice.

• Conditions and
• circumstances
  on this earth sphere
    are different, of course,
      due to
        the new form of matter;
  but then,
    circumstances vary
      in all spheres.
Long before
the fallen spirits developed far enough
to be born as
men and women [on this earth sphere],
the spiritual life force
first acted
to create
other forms of life.

The original life force
that
• works and
• manifests itself
  in each created being
not only
produced
• animals,
• plants, and
• minerals,
but also
• other substances
  which were at first
    without
    self-awareness.

Just as
a plant
  is without
  self-awareness,
so too
were these substances.

As time went on,
more and more beings
came into
a state of longing for light.

This [state of longing for light] would perhaps
constitute
the only feeling
these beings had
at that time.
Very gradually, human beings came into existence in material form through various intermediate states.

When this happened [i.e., when human beings came into existence in material form], a major phase was accomplished.

This was the time when the first glimmer of self-awareness was
• born, or
• reborn, or
• re-awakened.

More and more people came to live on earth.

Only with self-awareness, which includes
• thinking and
• deciding,
can development take place.

All the forms of life which existed before human beings have been leading up to this point.
You all know now
that human beings
produce
their spiritual world.

And on earth
where the influence
of God’s world
also existed,
for the first time
since the Fall,
they [i.e., human beings]
now had the opportunity
• to learn,
• to change,
• to turn to God
and thus
• to create a better world
  for themselves
    in both
      • matter and
      • spirit.

They [i.e., human beings]
would go to
the spirit world
after
• the death of the body and
also
• during sleep
  when the body rested.

From the spirit world
they would receive
• inspirations and
• influences
  of all sorts.
This is why development cannot proceed faster; for all the incarnated beings were at first so low in their development that they were constantly influenced by their own sphere.

If God's world had not acted on this earth too, there would not have been any difference between:

- the earth sphere
- a sphere in the world of darkness.

You must all realize, my friends, that I can give you only a very rough outline of all this.

This touches the very greatest questions, which cannot be fully understood by any human being, for both:

- human language
- human understanding are too limited.

Therefore, as a rule I do not even like to talk much about all this because the main thing for you is:

- to learn to know your own soul and
- to develop it spiritually.
However,
human beings
often wonder about
these fundamental questions,
not merely
• in a spirit of superficial curiosity,
but
• in good faith.

And
• ignorance and
• wrong conceptions
  of some of these points
may seriously hinder
your development.

This is why
I have been charged
to give this series of lectures,
even though
some of you
may not yet have
sufficient inner perception
to
• sense and
• feel
  the
• truth and
• deep significance
  all this information holds
• in general
  and also
• for your own lives in particular.
How did the influence of the world of God manifest itself?

Could angels of God
• guide and
• inspire
  the human beings
  who were incarnated
  from the spheres of darkness?

This would be an impossibility since according to universal law an individual human being has to make the first step in order to receive help from the world of God.

How could this [first] step be made if the whole entity was still so coarse that it had
• no inkling of God,
• no idea of his world, and
• no notion of what to do?

On the other hand, God's world co-created this material earth and thus, according to the law of free will, [God's world] had the right to manifest its influence on earth.
The answer is that pure spirits who remained in the divine worlds were incarnated at all times.

To be sure, very few were incarnated [on your material earth] at one time, but the influence of one such being outweighs by far the
- strength and
- influence of a hundred creatures of the world of darkness.

The spirits who were incarnated from the world of God brought with them
- light,
- love, and
- wisdom.

They fulfilled a great mission with their incarnation on earth, and their influence was much more far reaching than might have appeared at first sight.

With this influence growing steadily through the ages, the fallen spirits during their incarnation on earth could freely choose what side to listen to:
- the side that reached their lower nature
  or
- the side that seemed to push them ever upward regardless of the difficulties encountered.
By such free choice, God’s law concerning this aspect of life [i.e., the divine aspect of life of having free choice rather than being forced by God] was not violated.

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<td>Communication with the beyond took place not only through • guidance and • inspiration, but – • what always existed and • what will exist – through • a more direct form of communication, namely what you now call mediumship in various forms.</td>
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Communication with spheres of the beyond depends entirely on the • attitude, • goal, and • general development of the • medium as well as of the • people using the channel.

During the early times, human beings who were fallen spirits could not have any communications other than with the world of darkness.
But
the pure
incarnated spirits [i.e., the spirits not participating in the fall]
had communication with
the world of God.

And this [communication with the world of God by incarnated spirits
not participating in the fall]
so strongly outweighed
the
• danger and
• damage
of communication with
the Luciferic worlds
that it [i.e., that the incarnation on earth of a few spirits from the world of God]
was indeed
worthwhile.

If communication with
one world
could exist,
a connection with
the other
was within the law.

If one [i.e., If connecting with the world of God]
had been impossible,
then the other [i.e., then connecting with the Luciferic worlds]
would have had to be
equally impossible.

Incidentally,
this is where some human beings make a great mistake
when they reason that
any
communication with the beyond is
• Luciferic and
• dangerous
and even claim that
it [i.e., claim that communication with the Luciferic worlds]
is the only possible one [i.e., the only possible communication with
the world beyond the human sphere is with the Luciferic worlds].
Human development
could not have proceeded at all
in those early times
if the pure spirits
who were occasionally incarnated [into the material earth sphere]
could not have made
a very direct connection
with the world of God
from which
truth
could come to humanity.

To
• have this benefit and
• remain within the framework
  of the divine law [i.e., within the framework of free will],
an equality
  had to exist
    so that each individual
      could make
        a free choice.

An equal influence
  had to come from both sides.

This meant fewer beings
  of the divine world
  living on earth,
  because
    their strength
      always
        • outweighs and
        • outlasts
          the influence of evil.

However,
  especially during the early times,
  a great interchange existed
    between
      • the material
      and
        • the Luciferic
          worlds.
The dark spirits claimed
• to be gods and
• to favor [or shower] human beings with all sorts of grants
  if they [i.e., if the human beings], in turn,
  would follow what the Luciferic spirits dictated.

Despite all this
• harm and
• danger,
the few communications which were established with
  the world of God
  made up for the damage
  a hundred times over.

The incarnated pure spirits had
• enough enlightenment within themselves
  to spread divine truth
  as well as
• the necessary requirements to be in communication
  with the world of God
  as instruments.

For without
  the mediumistic connection [to the world of God],
  not enough truth could have been given to humanity.

Even though
  the pure spirits had no evil in them,
the material shell of a body took so much energy away
  that the teachings coming from within their own selves
  would not have been sufficient.
Truth was spread
in the manner that humanity
at each particular period
was ready to absorb.

This went on for a long time.

Gradually
more of
the once fallen spirits
came into the state
where they could recognize God.

Their longing
became
• conscious and
• meaningful.

Their will
could now be developed
to overcome
the evil impulses
of their lower nature.

The change
that began to take place
had a much greater effect
than can be easily realized.

Not one of you
fully understands
that
if
a single person
develops really well,
doing the best
in his or her power,
this person
does not only
• help himself
but
• adds the most valuable cosmic power
to a great reservoir.
It [i.e., a single person developing really well] will ultimately have a very decisive effect that will spread considerably, even though the person may not see even a part of this effect.

As people change, they might see some of the effect in their immediate surroundings by noticing how all of a sudden their fellow-creatures begin to change a little bit, due to their own change.

But people will not know, as long as they are on earth, how far-reaching the effect of the smallest endeavor in this direction is.

No such endeavor [to develop oneself really well, doing the best in one’s power] is therefore ever in vain, my friends!

It is as though you threw a stone into a pond of quiet water.

A ring appears around it, then come more and more rings, until they extend so far that your eyes cannot follow them to the outer periphery, but the rings are still there.
If one person overcomes a single weakness, it constitutes the best help in the great Plan of Salvation.

Next time I will continue from here and talk in greater detail about the part Jesus Christ has played in the Plan of Salvation.

And now I am ready for your questions, my friends.

**QUESTION:**
The dissection of Einstein's brain showed no marked anatomical differences between
- his brain
and
- the brains of other human beings.

What is, in a metaphysical sense, the brain as the physio-psychological vehicle for
- intelligence and
- intellect?

**ANSWER:**
This experiment is the very best example to show that intelligence is not in the physical body.
The ability
  • to think,
  • to create,
  has nothing to do with
  the physical organs,
  unless, of course,
  the physical organ
  is damaged,
  which would affect
  the corresponding subtle body.

I think most of you know
  that
  • all thinking
    takes place in
    one of the subtle bodies,
  just as
  • all feeling
    is in another subtle body.

The subtle bodies,
  as development proceeds,
  will
  • integrate and
  • eventually become
    just one:
    the spiritual body,
    where all
  • purified and
  • perfect
  • thinking and
  • feeling
    will have integrated
    into the
  • last,
  • ultimate and
  • eternal
    subtle body.
Until this [integration and unification] is accomplished,

there is **division**, each function [such as thinking or feeling] belonging to a
- special layer or
- subtle body.

The physical layer has
- as its sole function
  - the physical life
    - in its various aspects.

But
- thinking or
- feeling
  - belongs to different realms
    - and therefore
      - takes place in a different
        - layer or
          - body.

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**QUESTION:**
Could I hear a few words about **bodhisattvas** in relationship to **Jesus Christ**; is there any relation?

**ANSWER:**
There is no relation in a direct way.

The word you use [i.e., bodhisattvas] – we have different terms – designates a special type of being in the divine world.
All created beings had originally a particular divine aspect, specially developed, and the [original] purpose of creation was that each being would complement the creation by furthering other aspects through [its] development, so that perfection would be reached not only in • one aspect, but in • all [aspects].

This is how the power of creation could have been used by all beings, but was only used by those who did not abuse this power [in the Fall of the angels].

Absolute perfection exists only • in God and • in Christ, who has most of the divine substance.

The perfection of all other beings is a relative one, but it [i.e., the perfection of all other beings] could become perfect by their [i.e., by other beings’] becoming co-creators.
The so-called bodhisattvas are beings endowed with certain particular aspects of divinity, each [bodhisattva] representing a different one [i.e., representing a different aspect of divinity].

This one aspect [of divinity] is their particular force with which they help in the great Plan of Salvation • in very special ways and • by • various and • special means.

But until the plan [i.e., the plan of creation] reaches its completion, the pure beings use their efforts to help others with their particular strengths.

The plan of creation [in contrast to the Plan of Salvation] will only come to its full conclusion as each being perfects himself or herself in all ways.

Now [i.e., presently] only Christ, except of course for God, • is perfect in all ways, and • has all talents completely developed.
All other beings have their characteristics with which they were created, God leaving it up to them, that is, [up to] all of us, to continue his creation ourselves, by developing all other • characteristics, • aspects, or • talents in a perfect way.

So it is not quite correct to say that all created beings were once completely perfect, as the Absolute is.

We were perfect in our own ways which, of course, is always relative.

You can be perfect within the frame of your present development, for instance, but that does not mean that you are absolutely perfect.

Someone of a much lower development than anyone of you here can be relatively more perfect than some of you of whom more can be expected.
So perfection remains relative as long as the plan of creation is not fulfilled, except with:
- God and
- Christ.

And this should answer your question, for the beings you have mentioned are perfect only in some ways, while Christ is perfect in all ways.

**QUESTION:**
Last time, you answered the question about:
- willpower and
- self-control.

I think it is important to see oneself in one's true reality to achieve self-understanding in order to improve oneself.

But how can one attain this self-knowledge?

**ANSWER:**
This [question about how to attain self-knowledge] is a:
- very good and
- very important question indeed.
Of course,
I speak a great deal about this subject
to my friends
with whom I work privately,
and
I have also treated it occasionally
in general lectures,
but this is so
• basic and
• important
  that it cannot be stressed enough.

As you rightly say,
before
• willpower and
• self-control
can be strengthened,
you have to have
a certain amount of
self-knowledge
so as to have
a clear-cut idea
• why
  you want to develop your attributes,
• what is
  your goal, and
• in what direction should
  • willpower and
  • self-control
    be utilized.
In order to have willpower, the goal has to be clear in your mind, yet
• to find out your true
  • goals and
  • wishes,

and most important of all,
• to gain
  • self-knowledge,

you definitely need some willpower already to begin with.

Thus the process works both ways.

The first step in the proper order is to establish
• what the issues are,
• why it is necessary to have self-knowledge.

• What are its advantages?

• How costly is it [i.e., how costly is self-knowledge] to attain?

• What are the disadvantages of not having it [i.e., what are the disadvantages of not having self-knowledge]?

Once you clearly understand this, you can make the proper decision.

You will gain clear understanding [of the importance of self-knowledge] if you set out to think about it objectively, disregarding the resistances [to having self-knowledge] of your lower nature.
All you have to do is
• not shirk the issue [of having self-knowledge] and
• think things through
to the end of the road.

This is not so difficult; it merely requires a little bit of
• courage and
• wisdom.

Everybody has some
• courage and
• wisdom within,
and it is only a question of letting it come to the surface.

As with willpower, here too, it is a question
• of deciding,
• of making up one's mind [for attaining self-knowledge concerning all aspects of one’s inner life]

once and for all.

This can be done only by considering all sides.

The trouble with people
• is not that they cannot do this
• but that they avoid those decisions concerning their inner life [i.e., concerning their self-knowledge].
They run away from them [i.e., from those decisions concerning their inner life and self-knowledge],
sensing it might be uncomfortable; they prefer to cover up the issue [regarding their inner life and self-knowledge], instead of viewing it with
• clear eyes and an
• open, unbiased mind,
not pampering the lazy self that likes to wallow in the swamp of self-indulgence.

So the why of the trouble and discomfort of self-knowledge has to be established.

These questions are not so difficult to answer, at least not for a person who knows that God exists, even if many facets of
• him and
• his creation are still ignored.
Even if 
your belief is feeble, 
but you follow the thought 
to the end, 
the understanding 
must come 
that it is necessary 
to develop oneself.

And self-development 
cannot be done 
without 
self-knowledge [i.e., knowledge of all aspects of one’s inner life].

Self-knowledge 
is the only thing 
that really counts, 
my friends!

Nothing else [but self-knowledge of all aspects of your inner life] 
is any good, 
nothing else [but self-knowledge of all aspects of your inner life] 
will ever 
• bring your development about, 
• enable you to have 
  • real faith and 
  • real love, 
  • for God 
    above everything and 
  • for your fellow-creatures 
    as for yourself.

You have to 
begin with yourself 
before you can attain the 
• freedom and 
• harmony 
you all long for 
in your innermost being.
No matter what path you choose,
if it
• does not contain complete self-knowledge, or
• does not make it [i.e., does not make complete self-knowledge of your inner life] a major requirement,
you will accomplish nothing, no matter how much you
• learn and
• read and
• do this or that.

All this counts for nothing, unless
you use the knowledge you acquire as you follow the path of soul-knowledge.

Now how to accomplish this [i.e. now how to accomplish following the path of soul-knowledge]?

Of course, it [i.e., following the path of attaining self-knowledge or soul-knowledge] is not easy.

But its rewards are the richest,

for this path [of attaining self-knowledge or soul-knowledge, or knowledge of your inner life] is the only one that will bring you liberation.

So it is only logical that it cannot be easy.
It [i.e., attaining self-knowledge of your inner life] means,
in the first place,
to be able to
humble yourself.

No one likes to hear that,
my friends.

For
• self-will and
• ego and
• vanity
  • exist
    in every human being and
  • are the strongest hindrances to
    • perfection,
    • faith,
    • harmony and
    • love.

Whatever
the various individual faults
can possibly be,
this [humbly facing one’s self-will, ego, and vanity, facing the truth about the self]

applies to each and everyone
• who goes through
  the cycle of incarnations,
in other words,
  • who is not
    a pure spirit.

If you want
to gain self-knowledge,
you have to reconcile yourself
first to the idea:

"I have to do what is most difficult for me."

For that is the key.
If it is most difficult for you
to show
  having a weakness,
then
to show
  that [i.e., to show your weakness]
is just what your soul needs
to struggle free
  of its chains.

Or if it is difficult for you
to give up
  • your vanity, or
  • your selfishness,
then
  that is where you should jump in –
    freely,
    • because
      you choose so,
    • not because
      life forces you.

You see, my friends,
  the divine laws
    are made in such a way
    that the things you need
come to you.

But it will be so much easier
  • if you meet them halfway,
  • if you decide
    on your own accord,
    "I want it [i.e., I want this self-knowledge about what I do not want to see] because
    I obviously need it"
    and then step into it yourself.
If life
  • forces or
  • pushes
    you into it,
    against your will,
  it will not only
  be so much harder
but it will
  come to you again
  and again,
  until you have learned
  through self-knowledge
    that you need
    • what life gives you, and
    • to meet it freely yourself.

Then the lesson will be learned
  and life will have other things to offer you.

The more
  purified you are by this process,
the less
  you will need unpleasant experiences.

  Or rather,
  what used to seem unpleasant
  will not be so any more.

You cannot avoid
  what you need,
  that I can assure you.

Until you have met it
  • out of your own accord,
  • with the
    • realization and
    • understanding
      of its necessity
      for your character,
  it will not cease.

Please remember that,
  all of you.
In order to gain self-knowledge, you might, for instance, sit down and ask yourself, "What is most difficult for me to do in my daily life?"

Perhaps for some of you the most difficult thing will be to admit the truth, for whatever motive.

For another, it might be humiliating to show yourself as you are without a mask and without the superiority with which you try to impress people.

For yet another it may be most difficult to be modest, to remain in the background;

for another, to give something, whether materially or spiritually.

Everyone has different difficulties, and each one of you can find out about them comparatively easily, if you really try.

You do not have to think very far; think of your immediate reality, your life right now.
View every day that passes
from that point of view.

And you will,
after some
  • trying and
  • training,
come to see your reactions
  quite differently,
    I assure you.

You will learn to recognize
emotional reactions
of which you had been
completely unaware before.

Your immediate
outer problems
are only
  the effect
  of some cause
    which is hidden from you,
    but not so deeply
      that you could not
        so easily recognize it
          if you only practiced
            what I say here.

Then the connections
will appear so clearly in front of your eyes
that you will be shocked at yourself
for not having seen all this in the past.

Making the connection
between
  • your troubles
and
  • their causes,
    which you subconsciously
      yet deliberately
        had pushed out of your awareness,
          will have a blissful effect on you.
It [i.e., making the connection between your troubles and their causes] will make you happy the way only truth can.

It will
liberate latent
• powers and
• healing forces
for your
• body and
• soul.

If you experience this [liberation by connecting troubles with their causes through attaining self-knowledge] regularly,
then you can be quite sure you are on the proper path.

But because the temptation is always so great to put all this [attaining of self-knowledge] aside,
you should be prepared to do battle with it [i.e., with the temptation to put aside attaining self-knowledge] every time anew.

After a time, this temptation [to put all this attaining of self-knowledge aside] will cease.

But at the beginning it will require considerable effort to guard against your lower self that tries to stifle the aspirations of your spirit [to develop and grow].

You may be the loser if your outer self allows all the "excuses" [to humbly attaining this honest self-knowledge] your lower nature furnishes.

Of course, I speak very generally now, not just to answer a personal question.

This applies to everybody.
Make a list of your faults.

If you can think of only two or three,
then you have proof
that you do not know yourself.

And then you can avail yourself
of the opportunity of
* self-purification and
* self-knowledge
by doing what seems at first so difficult.

Ask the people around you
to tell you
what your faults are.

This
* will give you knowledge about yourself and
* will teach you the humility you need.

For as long as it is difficult for you,
it is a telling sign
that you need just that [i.e., the humility to
ask others about your faults]
very badly.

If it is
easy for you [to ask others about your faults],
if you
do not feel
* resentment,
* resistance, or
* any kind of heaviness within,
them it [i.e., then asking others about your faults]
is not important any more.
It does not matter
what you try to tell others;
[rather] it matters
how you feel
when someone tells you
of your shortcomings.

If you observe
clinically
what you feel
when that happens [i.e., when someone tells your of your shortcomings],
if you
do not want to fool yourself about it,
you will know
where you stand
spiritually.

This is the only way
you can become
really detached, my friends.

When your own shortcomings in the eyes of others
do not matter any more,
when your humiliation
does not matter any more,
then
you are detached –
not when you
avoid the things that bother you [about yourself].

This is difficult,
at least at the beginning,
and perhaps not everyone is ready for it.
Some may need
• more time,
• more knowledge,
• more dabbling at the fringes
before they can
really go on the path;
but whoever does it
will, indeed,
become free.
God will help you
through all the further stages
of self-realization
if these initial steps [of attaining self-knowledge] are taken.

So my advice is this:

First,
think about what,
in relation to other people,
seems most difficult for you.

After you have found this out,
consider with what trend in you
this might be connected.

And then
decide
whether you are really ready
to overcome
whatever chains you in this way,
not only
for the sake of
• your own freedom,
but
for the sake of
• God,
for the sake of
• your own spirit,
• your higher self,
for the sake of
• your development,
for
• the love you could only then
give and
receive,
for
• your complete fulfillment.

Are you ready to do that?

How many of my friends here are?
And then, if you have decided with a
- big and
- wholehearted
Yes,
you will need
your willpower,
my dear ones.

You will need
- willpower and
- self-discipline
to battle all your faults,
which can never happen
- by pushing them into the subconscious,
- by merely covering them up so that they do not show on the surface.

For do not believe that something you are unaware of does not exist.

The process of eliminating your faults, which is the next step after self-knowledge, is a very different one.

Briefly, the process [of eliminating your faults] is this:
Watch yourself first as you really are,
- without vanity,
- without wanting to be
  - better or
  - more than you are at this point.
Simply
- take stock and
- get accustomed to seeing yourself
  - where you really are and not
  - where you want to be.
Accept your temporary reality for two reasons:

1) You have to be
   • unemotional and
   • undisturbed
   about what you are
   before you can change yourself.

   This requires
   the new habit
   of seeing yourself
   • clearly,
   • without any
     • false motives and
     • excuses and
     • blindness,
   for a while.

2) This will also teach you
   the necessary humility
   that is a
   major requirement
   of
     • spiritual development and
     • true detachment.

Accepting yourself
   as you are
   does
   not
   mean
   that you should
   remain this way.

The ultimate goal
   must be
   to change the negative trends,

but this cannot be done
   before
   you have accepted
   entirely
   the stage you are in.
Thus, observe yourself daily
• when and
• how
  your faults manifest,
  not only outwardly,
  but also
  in your feelings.

By observing
  your [emotional] reactions
you will learn to ascertain
  how far you
  have to come [yet]
  toward
  accepting yourself
  without embellishment.

After this stage [of fully accepting yourself with your faults] is mastered,
the next one [i.e., the next stage of eliminating your faults] can begin:

  by meditating on
    what
      the opposite
        of any particular fault is;
    how you might
      • react and
      • feel
        if you had already
          achieved
          the transformation [of this particular fault].

If you do this faithfully for a while,
  asking God for
    • inspiration,
    • help and
    • strength,
you will begin to
  feel
differently.
Your new inner reactions will
• leave you
  so free,
• make you
  feel
  so wonderful!

You may also meditate on how
each of your particular faults is a direct hindrance
to the unfoldment of love.

For each fault is just that [i.e., a direct hindrance
to the unfoldment of love].

It [i.e., each fault] blurs the love force in the soul.

If you proceed in this way, God will
• inspire and
• guide you,
you can be quite sure of that.

As I said, this is a difficult path.

But blessed are those
• who take it,
• who have
  • the courage and
  • the wisdom
to do so.
I know, my friends, that I have given you strong medicine.

No one likes to hear these things.

It would be so much more pleasant to hear what
• is easy or
• is impersonal.

But, unfortunately, that would not correspond to truth.

And since I am a spirit
• of truth,
• of the world of God,
I have to give you truth,
whether it is comfortable [for you] or not.

Yet, bitter as the medicine may be, I think that if you open your hearts, you will feel the love I have for each one of you.

Love cannot come from any other side but the side of God's world.
And you should never be grateful to anyone else but God.

Whether it is through me or another spirit of the world of God, no matter how much you may be helped, no created being is anything without God.

The higher developed a creature, the less it will want honor and admiration.

That [i.e., honor and admiration] is due only to the Creator, without whom we are nothing.

This applies to us spirits just as much as to you humans.

When you are accomplishing something – whatever it may be – realize that it is only through the grace of God that you can do it, not through yourself.
By yourself
you are nothing.

And the highest created being in existence,
Christ himself,
has said so,
time and again.

**QUESTION:**
I understand that
when we are incarnated on earth
we have certain limitations
in our spiritual development.

Is it possible
• to burst this,
• to go farther
  than the limitations
  which are set for us?

**ANSWER:**
Oh yes.

I will say this, however:

You cannot
  accomplish everything
  in one incarnation.

That would be impossible.

But you can certainly
break the limitations.

That happens quite often.

It can
only
happen
by what I have explained in the answer I gave before
about this
noblest of all paths.
• If a person really has the will, and
• if this will is put into practice, then
  • the limitations will recede and
  • much more can be accomplished in one life.

What you can accomplish in one incarnation by taking this path would perhaps need twenty otherwise.

That is the difference.

This example should give you an idea of your power to break the limitations.

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QUESTION:
But not everyone is led to this path.

There are millions of people who are not...

ANSWER:
In the first place,
This [pathwork group with whom I communicate] is not the only possibility to take a path such as this, my dear.

Certainly, the help that direct communication with the spirit world of God can give is a very valuable one.
But
everyone
who has
even the slightest possibility
to take the path
will be led
* somehow,
* somewhere
to the right place,
either to
* a person
or to
* a spirit,
so that
he or she
may receive
the necessary material to work with.

It may be
through
* a church, or
through
* a particular teacher, or
through
* a spirit, or
through
* a very strong
direct communication
by way of inspiration.

The spirits
recognize
where the possibility exists;
they
recognize
whether the desire
* is there or
* may be aroused, and
they will guide
accordingly.

Everybody will get
just what they need,
you can be sure.
The problem never arises that someone who is ready for the path may not have the opportunity to find it.

This [i.e. this situation that someone who is ready is not given the opportunity to find a suitable path] does not exist, my friends.

The laws of the divine world work too accurately for that.

The problem is much rather that a great percentage of people • who could take this path and • who are led to where they could do it, finally do not.

Often the world of God tries again and again, offering different possibilities, but the essence is never understood, because people do not want to understand it [i.e., to understand the path to God].

Just look at your own circle – and it is similar everywhere – many more come than • stay and • actually do it.
Believe me,
  this [situation of people leaving when offered an opportunity for growth]
  does not happen
  at the cost of
  others
  who may not have such possibilities.

Whether
  • here or
  • elsewhere,
only a handful
  out of hundreds
will
  really and truly
  take this path.

Every
  • great person,
  • teacher,
  • priest –
    any communication
    with the world of God –
will convey the same:
  many people are guided to them,
  and a
  small, small part
  will fulfill the purpose
  of that guidance.

The great majority
  of humankind,
however,
  is not yet ready
  to take this difficult path
  of perfection.

If in this life
  they learn just enough
  • to become a better person,
  • to accept that perhaps
    God does exist after all,
this might prepare them
  for the path
  in their next incarnation.
So, you see, the spirit world actually

- gives more people the possibility, just on
  the remotest chance [that they will take the path],
- than there are people who
  take the opportunity.

You can be sure that those
who are not guided anywhere
either have
- no desire,
- no real understanding, or
- not the remotest possibility
  in this life to change in this respect,
or have
already found
- what they needed and
- what is best for them in this incarnation.

QUESTION:
Could you please make clear the difference between
- the soul
and
- the spirit?

ANSWER:
The spirit is
- the ultimate being,
- the indestructible being that lives eternally.
The soul [in contrast to the spirit]
is one of the subtle bodies that will, eventually, disintegrate.

Is that clear, do you understand that?

I think what you want to know is how the two manifest, so that you may know which is which.

Is that what you mean?
{That is correct.}

To have the spirit consciously manifest is, of course, not easy.

This [i.e., having the spirit consciously manifest] can only happen • when spiritual development has reached a certain point, • when a breakthrough has been accomplished in a person's higher self.
Then [i.e., when your spiritual development has reached a certain point and when a breakthrough has been accomplished in your higher self] you will feel that something

• thinks within you,
• directs you,
• sends you messages,
• gives you
• deep and
• unquestionable knowledge –

and all this does not come from

• your brain region where your normal thinking takes place,

but from

• the region of your solar plexus.

Your soul [in contrast to the spirit], however, manifests in your

• emotional life,

in your

• feelings and

in your

• subconscious.
Even to become conscious of your feelings, a great deal of self-knowledge is necessary;

most people are unaware of their

• real feelings and
• emotional reactions
    and are thus slave to them;

they are mastered by them, instead of

• controlling and
• mastering them.

To achieve this mastery [over feelings and emotional reactions],

• self-observation,
• objectivity, and
• self-criticism
    are essential.

If what I advised tonight in my second reply [i.e., the reply regarding attaining self-knowledge, page 35ff] is followed, the result must be, first,

  awareness of
• the soul,
and then

  awareness of
• the spirit.

I will answer the rest of the questions next time, my friends, for our time is up.
I beg all of you, especially those who have come here for the first time:
Do not be too hasty in your conclusions.

This is such a vast subject, new in many respects, even to some of my more regularly attending friends – and it may take a little time to adjust to new outlooks.
Do not bar your vision by too hasty conclusions;
think • seriously and • carefully,
and do not let your unconscious emotions play you a trick by blurring your judgment.

Be careful of that [i.e., of letting your unconscious emotions blur your judgment], for you may do great harm to yourselves.

God's blessings go to every one of you.

Take this blessing in awareness, so that it may help you in your decisions, that it may strengthen you to • recognize the will of God and • act accordingly.

Be in peace, be in God!
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