Pathwork Lecture 31: Shame

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

<table>
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<td>* Greetings * in the Name of the Lord. * I bring you blessings, my friends, * to each one of you and * to all your dear ones. *</td>
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<td>* When we spirits observe human beings, we can see how badly you need spiritual nourishment. *</td>
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• Your body
  is nourished,

as is

• your intellect

and even

• your emotional nature –
  though the latter not always with
  the best possible food.

But when it comes to

• spiritual nourishment,
  most human beings
  starve themselves.

There is a great confusion about
what spiritual nourishment
really means.

It does
not merely mean to

• read,
• hear, or
• learn
  about
  • spiritual truth or
  • law,
  about
  • God and
  • His creation.

It does
not even mean

• prayer and
• meditation
  which, of course,
  if done in the right way,
  is also
  a very important part
  of spiritual nourishment.

However,
the most important substance of spiritual food is
• self-development.
Your
• innermost self,
your
• divine spark,
is
  constantly
  crying out
  for this food [i.e., crying out for self-development],
but
  your conscious being
  refuses
  to hear the cry [for self-development].

When you are
• sad or
• depressed,
when you are
• dissatisfied
  with your life
  whether for
  • actual and
  • rational
    reasons
    or not,
it is
  always
  because
  your spirit
  is starved.

Only that person
  can be
  truly
  • happy and
  • fulfilled
who
  partakes of
  this most important food:
  spiritual development.

For there is
  no human being alive
who has not the opportunity
  to become happy.
It [i.e., your happiness] 
   is in your hands, 
   my friends.

But
   you so often
   • turn the wrong way;
   you
   • seek happiness in the wrong direction;
   you
   • blame others for your misfortunes;
   you
   • blame fate,
   you
   • blame God;
   you
   • blame the alleged injustice of the world.

But
   you
   • do not take the one and only step
     that leads you to fulfillment
     through
       a deep sense
       of having lived your life
       the way your Creator had it in mind for you
       in this particular incarnation.

It varies, of course,
   with each individual,
for not everyone
   has to fulfill an incarnation
   in the same way.

The same
   • work or
   • effort
is not expected
   of everyone.
But
the one thing
you should keep in mind,
my friends,
is that
if you are not quite happy
in spite of occasional outer difficulties,
you have
denied your spirit
some of the nourishment
it craves –
most probably
in the right way
of
• self-development and
• self-recognition.

Anyone
• hearing or
• reading
these words
has sufficient means
to acquire this food [of self-development and self-recognition].

In my previous lectures I have mentioned
several attitudes
in the human soul
which are what you might call
God-eclipsing.

Last time I explained that
• pride,
• self-will, and
• fear
• underlie
• all faults and
• are responsible for
• all unhappiness
• all untruth
that exists
in the human soul.
To continue this series of lectures on self-development, I will discuss tonight a new subject:

shame.

There is a
  • right kind
and a
  • wrong kind
  of shame.

The
  right kind
  of shame
is
  true repentance.

Without this [right] kind of shame, there could never be an incentive for self-development.

Without it [i.e., without this right kind of shame], no one would ever undergo the noble fight, my friends, against one's lower self;

no one would take the path of purification if this [right kind of] shame did not exist within.
True repentance is therefore
  • constructive and
  • very positive.

But there is also
shame of the
wrong kind.

Human beings
so often
confuse
  the two kinds of shame
that now
  I want to devote some of our time together
to this subject.

What is
  the wrong kind
of shame?

We might call it
  a guilt-complex
which, of course,
is entirely
  • destructive and
  • negative.

What do
  your emotions
actually say –
  even though you certainly do not consciously think so –
when you have
  the wrong kind of shame?

They [i.e., your emotions] say:

"I am
  hopelessly bad,
  and there is
  nothing
  that can be done about it."
With this attitude [that you are hopelessly bad and nothing can be done about it] you
not only
• wallow in self-pity,
but
• express a sluggishness that prohibits
  your working actively on
  the elimination
  of that which is wrong
  within you.

Furthermore,
this attitude [that you are hopelessly bad and nothing can be done about it] becomes
more
and more
• unreasonable and
• unjust,
for you
• demand and
• expect
  • respect and
  • love
  from others
although
you do
not
• respect and
• love
  yourself.

Mind you, this [lack of respect and love for yourself] is not
because of
  your shortcomings.
In the deepest regions of your being you cannot respect yourself because of
• the wrong attitude,
• the wrong kind of shame that makes you
  • passive
  where you should be
  • active.

Thus, you find yourself in a vicious circle: the more you deny to yourself the experience of the constructive shame that would make you
• lift yourself up and
• work on yourself with realistic self-recognition – the foundation of self-development –

the more you despise yourself.

The more you do that [i.e., the more you despise yourself], the more you need to demand
• love and
• respect from others to make up for the lack of self-respect.
The blind, unconscious, and immature side of you believes that if you receive sufficient appreciation from others, it will make up for the lack of self-respect you can never truly possess.

- unless you fulfill the basic spiritual laws within your own soul and
- unless you do the maximum of what can be expected of you in self-development according to your overall spiritual development.

I know, my friends, that no one thinks these thoughts [i.e., no one thinks that if others would show you sufficient appreciation and respect, it would make up for your lack of self-respect and you would not have to develop yourself and thereby legitimately and naturally achieve true self-respect] consciously,

but if you would test your emotions, examine their demands as to what they actually mean and express, this is what you would find.
Remember –
  and this is very important –
your lack of self-respect
  is not due to
  your
    • faults,
    • weaknesses,
    • shortcomings, and
    • sins –
      no matter what they may be –
  but it [i.e., but your lack of self-respect]
  is due to
  your
    • wrong kind of shame.

The moment
  you exchange
    • the wrong shame
  for
    • the right [shame],
I can promise you
  that
    in the measure this change [from the wrong to the right kind of shame]
      takes place,
  you must develop
    • true and
    • justified
      self-respect
      long before
      the faults in you
      have disappeared.

You do
  not have to be perfect
in order to
  respect yourself.

All you have to do [to respect yourself]
  is to adopt a
    • realistic and
    • constructive
      attitude
      toward
      your imperfections.
The more your self-respect is established, the less you will crave for the respect of others, for you are then resting secure within yourself.

And this [i.e., And resting secure within yourself] will so change your • inner attitude and your • emanations that you will have a different effect on others;

this [i.e., your different effect on others due to your resting secure within yourself] will make it so much easier for the people around you to actually give you the • love and • respect you desired in the first place.

Perhaps it has not occurred to you that the wrong kind of shame • comes from your pride and • furthers your pride even more.
This [i.e., the fact that the wrong kind of shame comes from and furthers your pride] may sound paradoxical at first.

Let me explain it this way:

Your lower self with all its shortcomings is a factor to reckon with if you do not want to escape your present reality.

The more you try to escape the facts of your life, the sicker your soul must become.

By having the wrong kind of shame, you do escape reality, for what your emotions express is that you will not accept yourself as you really are.

The moment you hopelessly despair about the lower side of your nature, you have not accepted yourself as you are.

It [i.e., hopelessly despairing about the lower side of your nature] means you are lacking the humility of courageously facing everything about yourself—and that is pride.
Let me stress once again:

Intellectually
you know
that you are imperfect,
but emotionally
you don't.

Often there is
a wide chasm
between
what you
• know and
• think
  consciously
and
what your emotions
• claim and
• desire.

It is
not at all difficult
to make the emotions
conscious
if only
you are willing
to take the trouble
to translate them [i.e., to translate your emotions]
into
concise thoughts,
but it [i.e., but this translation of emotions into concise thoughts]
needs a little effort.

Your emotions
claim perfection
before
this perfection
can be yours.

You place yourself
higher
than the efforts
you have so far taken
would warrant.
At the same time [that you place yourself higher on the ladder toward perfection than the efforts you have so far taken would warrant],

you do
• know,

or at least
• feel,

that you are
not there yet.

Instead of
consciously recognizing this fact [i.e., recognizing that you are not as high on the ladder toward perfection as you think you are]

and slowly
working up to the point
where you want to be,

you become angry
at
• the world and
at
• yourself
  for being
  what you are

and refuse
  to make the inner effort
  to become
  what you want to be.

So

the wrong kind of shame
means
• pride,
• laziness,
• injustice, and
• escape from your present reality.

This [pride, laziness, injustice, and escape from your present reality]
is what makes you
  feel guilty, my friends,
and not
  the actual faults
  you may possess.
These [i.e., the actual faults you may possess] would never make you feel guilty, provided you adopted the right kind of shame in which you accepted yourself in humility as you are at present, not fleeing from your reality, and thus building up from there [i.e., from where you are now] – slowly, step by step.

It [i.e., this way – accepting where you are and building up slowly from there] is the only way to • change and • develop.
The wrong attitude
brings further hazards, however.

Because of
• your pride and
• your need for
  • respect and
  • love
    from others,
you
begin to withdraw from
what you really
• think and
• feel
  about yourself and
hide it [i.e., hide what you really think and feel about yourself]
behind a wall,
so to speak.

You dare not
stand up for
who you really are
because
your emotions
say that
  if you were yourself,
you would be despised.

As I said before,
the more
you lack
self-respect,
the more important
the respect of others
becomes to you.

So
you create
a mask self.

In some subtle way,
you become
a fake.
And that [i.e., And becoming a fake], in turn, makes you even more despondent and you despise yourself even more.

The vicious circle
- continues in full force and
- carries you into deeper emotional conflicts until you develop the
  - courage and
  - humility to break it.

Please do not confuse standing up for who you really are which includes your lower self, with giving in to the impulses of your lower self in your deeds.

There is a vast difference between
that [i.e., between giving in to the impulses of your lower self in your deeds and behavior] and

a simple
- recognition and
- acceptance of what you are, without building up a different personality for the outside world to appear better.
One often establishes a fake "real self" for the very reasons explained here [i.e., in order to appear better than you are].

As long as you feel

• sad,
• bitter,
• defiant, or
• disharmonious in any way when you encounter your faults,

you have not yet accepted yourself as you are.

Again you have to strive for the middle path.

• Accepting [your faults and imperfections] does not mean
• wanting to stay in a state of imperfection.

It [i.e., accepting your faults and imperfections] means that you first have to learn to accept your state of imperfection.
You should also find out whether you desire to be cherished for your shortcomings as a compensation for your imagined inability to
  • change
      and thus [i.e., as a compensation for your imagined inability to change, and thus, as a compensation for your imagined inability to]

  • come to cherish yourself.

When you have made such and other unreasonable emotions conscious, it will be easy to direct them [i.e., to direct your now-conscious emotions] into proper channels.

When you are capable of really and truly accepting yourself as you are, not desiring to appear better than you are, you have fulfilled the basic requirement to be on this path, my friends.

Before that [i.e., before your are capable of really and truly accepting yourself], you are not on it [i.e., you are not on this path called pathwork] as yet, but merely in a state of preparation for entering the gate leading to it [i.e., entering the gate leading to this path called pathwork].
In other words,
as long as
there is the wrong kind of shame in you,
you cannot
advance on this path;

you have to exchange it [i.e., exchange the wrong kind of shame]
for
the right kind of shame.

The wrong kind of shame
will create
a state of mind
that is
not only
• extremely unhealthy,
as I outlined just now,
but will also
• make you feel
more
and more
alone.

Whenever you
feel
• lonely and
• not understood,
please realize
that, at least to some degree,
the condition I have described [regarding having the wrong kind of shame]
must be responsible for it [i.e., must be responsible for your loneliness
and for your not being understood]

and not
other people's
lack of
• love and
• understanding.
No matter how incapable of love the people around you may be, you would never feel lonely if this wrong attitude [i.e., this wrong kind of shame where you rely on respect from others to compensate for your own lack of self-respect] were not somehow prevailing within you.

So do not seek a remedy [to your loneliness and feeling you are misunderstood] from without, but [rather] turn around within and look at yourself from this point of view [i.e., from the point of view that you harbor the wrong kind of shame].

You, whoever you are, may feel ashamed of something.

Whether it be • big or small, • grave or unimportant, is not the point.

You cover it [i.e., you cover what you are ashamed of] up; you hide it; you appear to be without that something of which you are ashamed.
This [hiding of that of which you are ashamed]
is the wall
that separates you
from others.

But in this way [i.e., by hiding that of which you are ashamed]
you can never be sure
that you are
really
• loved and
• appreciated.

For
this little voice in you
keeps saying:

"If they only knew
• how I really am and
• what I have done,
they would not love me."

That [belief that if others really knew you
they would not love you]

makes you
feel
• alone,
• suffering, and
• cold.

You think that
all the affection given to you
is destined for
the person you
• appear to be
and not for
the person you
• really are.

Of course you are
• insecure and
• lonely
in that state.

But only you
can change it [i.e., only you can change that state] –
no one else.
It will be easy for you to see that the only remedy for this constant state of loneliness, of insecurity, and of growing self-despisal is the one step that appears hardest to you, namely to break down the shame and stand up for what you really are.

The more you try the other way, the way of subtle deception, the deeper your dilemma will be.

You have seen that.

So it is up to you to take the one courageous step of becoming yourself and thereby gaining true security and the true appreciation of your friends.
For they [i.e., For your friends] who are
• spiritually developed and
• capable of love
will most certainly not love you less; quite the contrary.

And they [i.e., And your friends, on the other hand.] who are
• immature and therefore
• incapable of love
will not be retracting their love for you since
• they never really gave it [i.e., never really gave you love]
• nor did you ever really own it [i.e., nor did you really own their love].

For such people [i.e., those who are immature and incapable of love] find themselves in exactly the same spot as you are in now:
• craving for affection, respect, and love to assuage their own lack of self-respect,
• absent because they too do not have the courage to be themselves.

Their kind of love was an illusion in the first place.
So the only way
to build a secure ground
on which to stand
is to
stop the pretense
you have laboriously cultivated
all your life.

This seems
a hard step
at first,
my friends.

Again, I want to stress that
you are not expected
to tell your secrets
to everyone you meet.

Choose
the right person
to open up to;

choose the person
who can help you.

Then choose the people
with whom
you are really close
and those
who know you
as you really are.

Otherwise,
you can
never
be yourself.
It [i.e., opening up honestly to another]
   is not a question of
   what you
   • say,
   but rather of
   what you
   • feel;
   a question of
   your
   • inner attitude.

In order to
   adjust your emotions
   from
   • the wrong kind of shame
   to
   • the right kind,
all you have to do
   is delve into
   your emotions
and, as I so often say,
   translate them [i.e., translate your emotions]
   into
   • clear-cut
   • concise
   thoughts.

Then,
   when you see
   the unreasonableness
   of the immature side of your soul,
you can readjust them [i.e., readjust your emotions].

Only when you do that [i.e., only when you see the unreasonableness of
   the immature side of your soul and readjust
   your emotions accordingly]
   will you be able to take the next step.

Only then [when your have readjusted your emotions]
   will you have
   • security and
   • self-respect.
For as long as you hide behind a wall of falsity, you must despise yourself – [despise yourself]
  much more than a brother or sister of yours who may have many more weaknesses but who has the courage to
  • live without pretense and
  • act according to the real self [will despise himself or herself].

It is not
  • how good you are or
  • how many weaknesses you still have
that determines your self-respect.

Self-respect – and as a result of it also the respect of others – can only be measured by
  • how true you are to yourself,
or
  • how much you deceive and escape yourself,
or
  • how much you hide behind a wall of pretense.
This wall of pretense [you hide behind] is not something easily recognizable from the outside.

It [i.e., the wall of pretense you hide behind] is something subtle within that only you yourself can find, by
• testing and
• probing
• your emotions and
• their meaning.

True repentance in the positive sense means
• to simply take stock of the self and
• to accept its weaknesses in their present state, with the deep desire to change.

At the same time you need to acknowledge that the change can only come by again and again
• recognizing the deeply ingrained faults and
• comparing the faulty reactions to
• the ideal state.

Thus you learn humility.
The moment
you do not wish
to appear
• better or
• more
  than you are,
even in your own eyes,
you will have
taken yourself down
  from the high place
  in which
  you have put yourself.

You can
start
  rebuilding
only after
  you have torn down
  the false edifice.

If you have the courage to
• stumble
  a thousand times
  over
  the same faults and
• forever lift yourself up
  to try again,
then
• you pay God the debt
  you owe Him;
then
• you are worthy
  of His grace;
then
• you are
  truly
  on the path.
Then

you rid yourself of
• pride and
• falsity
long before
you are
perfect
in all the details
of your personality.

Thus

you approach perfection
much faster than you think,
in spite of
some of your
stubborn shortcomings
that linger on.

In that way

you
must
win.

But

if every time
after having stumbled again
over
the same fault
• you become
  so despondent
that you
  despair of yourself;
  wishing to give up, and
• you consider
  self-acceptance
  to be senseless,
then

you have the
• destructive and
• weakening
  kind of shame,
  which will
  never
  get you anywhere.
For as long as you despair so easily, there is too much pride in you, and then the • healing, • curative action of being able to observe your own weaknesses in the true light of what they are, neither • exaggerating nor • diminishing them, will not be able to affect your soul.

So, my friends, do not despair if you have no success for quite a while in overcoming your weaknesses. You may perhaps understand now that here [in the right kind of shame and right kind of self-acceptance] you have a great curative agent for remedying something [that is] even more important than the actual weakness you are treating.
You will learn
the right kind of
• shame and
• self-acceptance,
which
• brings humility,
• overcomes pride, and
• shows you
  how to live
  in your own reality.

If you were
soon
very successful
  in overcoming
  your individual faults,
it might make you
  even prouder,

and pride [here, that is, pride of having overcome some of your faults]
  is more harmful
  than
  many other faults.

Apart from that [i.e., apart from pride that might arise
  if you soon overcame the faults you are so battling against],
the faults
  you are battling against
have been ingrained in you
  often for many incarnations,
so you
  cannot expect
  to get rid of them
  within a few years.
However,

- if you are capable of facing these weaknesses;
- if you meet them [i.e., meet your weaknesses] with open eyes and a healthy attitude and learn even while you are still stumbling over them;
- if you have the humility to face yourself knowing where you really belong – not too low, nor too high –

then even though you are still imperfect, you are laying the foundation to a very healthy and normal inner attitude.

- Think and meditate about this, my friends.
It is not sufficient to just
• hear or
• read
  my words
   once,
for that [i.e., reading or hearing my words only once]
will not be
the kind of spiritual food
  that helps you to discover
   where
      • your feelings
        still deviate from
          • the ideal state.

Find the echo [of my words]
within you
to direct you
  in your
daily
    • strivings and
  in your
daily
    • spiritual work.

When you do that,
you will be giving yourself
the food
  your spirit needs.

Perhaps you now begin to sense
why it is so necessary
to be able to talk
openly
  about yourself
to
    • a qualified person
  and then
    to
      • the people
        you are really close to.
For as long as
you keep things hidden
within you,
everything
gets out of proportion.

You may
• exaggerate one thing
  and
• underestimate another.

But a person
who is
detached from
• your problems and
• your inner struggles
may see things [in and about you]
in the right light.

As I have often said
in private sessions,
there is a spiritual law
which applies equally to
• psychoanalysis
  and
• confession.

It is
the law of brotherhood.

The moment
you open up
to another person,
you risk
an act of humility.

At
• that moment
  with
• that person
you do not want to
appear
  more perfect
  than you are.
That [i.e., wanting to appear to another person more perfect than you are] is one of the most harmful human tendencies, my friends.

When you show yourself to one person as you are, you will instantly feel the relief your spirit has cried for, even if that person does not give you a single piece of advice.

Your spirit suffers when you act against its laws.

And you feel better all of a sudden when you are able to humbly reveal yourself.

The law of brotherhood is working.
Something in you says,

"At this moment
I do not want to
appear
better than I am.

I want to
show myself
as I am;

I do
not
strive for
• respect and
• love
that I think
is not really due me
because of
the things
of which I am ashamed."

Though
you are
wrong in that too,
for
• love and
• respect
are due
every
living creature,
but you think
they [i.e., love and respect]
are not due you
because of
something
you keep in hiding.

And in this distorted view [distorted because you keep part of yourself in hiding]
• you suffer
loneliness and
• you go on pretending
in some subtle way [i.e., pretending by keeping some part of yourself in
hiding in order to appear more perfect than you are].
The wrong kind of shame also violates the law of brotherhood.

Thus you may see once again how every inner feeling can be right when it comes from the godself.

However, the same [inner feeling] can be distorted by luciferic powers.

It is so also with shame [i.e., shame can be right when it comes from the godself or it can be wrong when it is distorted by luciferic powers].

So I say to you, my friends, when you really and truly desire to develop along this path you will find guidance at a certain point.

You will be almost pushed into a corner where you will open up for your own salvation.
Of course,
you always have
your free will
and this [free will]
we spirits
will
• respect
  at all times and
• never violate it,
  even if
  we do know
  what may seem
  so difficult
  for you to express.

But
you
have to do the talking.

We
will not do it
for you.

You are
always
free, therefore, to
• refuse and
• retire deeper
  into your corner and
• resent that
  you are being pushed
  in this direction.

However,
you can also
take the opportunity
and
• step out of your hiding place,
• open your eyes, and
• see that herein
  lies your salvation.

It is up to you.
When guidance appears
in the form of
an unpleasant test,
you cannot
fully understand
what is happening.

Yet it [i.e., the guidance appearing in the form of an unpleasant test]
is there
to help you do
what is necessary.

Such an
opening up
of your personality
is healing.

You think of
these experiences
as hardships.

Once you understand, however,
why
they are necessary
you will cease to see them
in that way.

You are like
children;
you do not know
what is good for you.

And God’s helpers
who are all around you
constantly –
particularly with the person
who is willing
to take this path of purification –
manage to
• guide and
• inspire
people [i.e., people around you and others who influence you]
to create situations
which afford you the opportunity [for development].
But you have to decide with your free will whether or not you want to learn from them [i.e., learn from the situations brought to you by other people, people who are guided and inspired by God’s helpers to create situations for your growth and purification].

You can either

- open your eyes to the significance of the situation,
- shirk from the issue and refuse to recognize the call,

for it is a call!

Decide, my friends.

- Do you want to take your courage into your own hands,
  or
- do you think that you can advance on this path without summoning the courage to follow the call?

I can promise you one thing.

After you have made the decision to take this path, you will already feel a foretaste of the spiritual rebirth that must come sooner or later when a certain phase is reached.
The greater
  • the effort and
  • the apparent difficulty
    of
      • recognizing the call and
      • following it,
the more
  • relief,
the more
  • victory,
the more
  • happiness,
the more
  • self-respect, and
the more
  • inner
    • joy and
    • peace
will you feel
after
  • the test is over and
  • you have
    fully understood
    how to go on
    from there.

This, my friends,
I beg you
to remember very well.

Do not choose
to forget these words,
secretly thinking that
if you manage
to evade the issue
the situation
will cease to exist.

Read my words
every day,
whenever
you are faced with such a decision.
We deal not only with what you consciously know and hide.

That is comparatively easy.

Once you are able to reveal consciously hidden thoughts and feelings, you need, with our help, to try to find what unconscious currents lie behind them.

That is then the work to be done.

Of course, you cannot do so alone; and you cannot do so unless you have displayed the courage to bring into the open what you do know.

Most people carry hidden unconscious factors equally active as the conscious ones [i.e., equally active as the hidden conscious factors].

Those [i.e., the hidden unconscious factors] are a little more complicated to find.
The first prerequisite [to finding the hidden unconscious factors behind the hidden conscious factors] is to be
  • free and
  • open
  enough
to be able
to talk about
everything
  pertaining to your person.

You can never reach
the hidden
  • motives,
  • currents, and
  • emotions
  without that [i.e., without being able to talk about everything pertaining to your person].

If you
  fulfill the necessary requirements,
help will be given to you –
  that you can be sure of.

The help you need
  is
  the grace of God.

Without it [i.e., without the grace of God]
you cannot reach your
  • unconscious and
  • stubbornly hidden
  shames
  blocking the way.
But
   if you wait for
   the grace of God
   in
   • defiance and
   • anger,
   saying to yourself;
   • "Why can't I have it [i.e., Why can't I have grace]?"
   • Why someone else
     and not me?
   • I have suffered so much.
   • I am due for it now;
   • I have tried so hard,"

then you
   push away
   the time for grace,
   because
   your attitude
   is not humble.

You take it upon yourself
   to judge,
and
   you cannot judge.

You have no way
   of judging
   • how much you have suffered, and
   • when the grace is due, and
   • how hard you have tried,
     especially in comparison with others.
You lack
  • comparison;
you even lack
  • complete self-recognition,

for as long as
  you cannot delve into
    what your unconscious
      hides,
you do not
  know yourself.

And how can you
dare to
  • judge and
  • compare
if you don't even
  know yourself?

When you
  nurse a spirit of
    true
      • humility and
      • patience,
then
  the grace,
    my dear ones,
      will be much nearer.

If you have difficulties,
  try to concentrate on this.
If you cannot advance, although you are
  • working and
  • doing your best –
    and many do not advance
    because they are not working
    the way they could,
    so it is not the lack of grace – and

if there are blocks
  you cannot seem to penetrate,
ask yourself,

"How humble is my attitude?"

Nurse these words
  instead of
  turning away from God
  the moment
  things become difficult for you.

This is my advice
  for my dear, beloved friends.

I should like to discuss
  one more subject
  before we turn to your questions.

I have already mentioned
  that you are
  ashamed of your faults.

Most of them [i.e., most of your faults]
  you wish you did not have.
However,
    there is also
        another category [of faults besides those faults you wish you did not have],

and it will be important
    to look at your faults
        from this new point of view,
namely,
    that you have some faults
        which you are in love with.

This [i.e., having faults you are in love with]
    explains why
        you do not get ahead
            in some particular respect
                of your development.

You do not
    admit it,
but you are actually
    quite proud of
        some of your faults.

Of course,
    as long as
        this is true,
you cannot possibly
    overcome them [i.e., overcome the faults you are in love with].

Find out
    how this
        applies to you.

Once you are aware
    that you are
        emotionally attached to
            some of your faults,
pray that God
    may help you
        to recognize
            • why this is so and
            • what lies behind it.
Pray that you may be able to see this attitude [i.e., the attitude of loving some of your faults] in an objective light, so as to develop the right kind of shame about it.

Check
- all your faults and
- your emotional reactions to them [i.e., emotional reactions to all your faults] in all honesty.

As you go through your list, you will see that there are
- some faults you really do not like and
- others you cherish in some way.

Then, when you feel that attachment [to a particular fault you cherish in some way], ask yourself:

"How would I react if another person were to display the same fault either in
- the same way
or perhaps in
- a slightly different way?"

You are actually often quite irritated when another human being displays the same fault you are somewhat proud of in yourself.
Once you approach the fault
from this point of view [i.e., from the point of view of how you would see others having this fault],
you will
lose the pride
you take in it.

As long as
the pride persists,
however,
you cannot possibly
overcome the fault.

I will be very happy
to let you present to me
any fault you choose
for analysis.

I will show you
how
every one of them
is connected with
• pride,
• self-will, and
• fear.

I will show you
• how to analyze the fault,
• how it leads to other faults, and
• what is connected with it –
and in this way
help you
to better
self-understanding.

I will show you
how to
• meditate on it [i.e., how to meditate on a particular fault] and
• proceed,
in this particular way,
with the spiritual work
on your path.
I will also show you how every single fault, weakness, or imperfection is a direct hindrance to love – and therefore to God.

I will also point out what the underlying good quality behind each fault is,

for there is no fault that is not a distortion of something good and pure.

Try this [i.e., try to find how your faults are a distortion of something good and pure] as an exercise yourself;

apply it to your faults, for your spiritual work is useless if it is abstract and impersonal.

Where you are unable to do so [i.e., unable to see your faults as a distortion of something good and pure], bring the faults here.
Now are there any questions in connection with this subject before we turn to your other questions?

QUESTION:
You stressed the point that one should open up to a qualified person.

Could you elaborate on the problem of a person who has the desire
• to open up and
• to be humble,
but does so indiscriminately and therefore
• no good is coming from it – only
• harm and
• repercussions?

ANSWER:
Yes, you see that this [i.e., that this opening up to others indiscriminately] is, of course, the opposite extreme [of opening up to one person you trust], and you know that all extremes are wrong.

Such a person [i.e., a person who opens up to others rather indiscriminately] has a deep need for which the spirit cries.
The real need [of the spirit] is not recognized and therefore the wrong satisfaction is sought.

However, the case you mention is not as much of an extreme as you think.

Often a human being • opens up about many little things, and even • exposes actual shortcomings, so as to keep the real issue hidden.

QUESTION:
But what if that same person • masks the true faults and • invents artificial guiltsto divulge?
ANSWER: That happens.

You see, it will not do any good to tell such a person to choose to open up to the right people, because he will never know who the right people are.

- The intuition is lacking, as well as
- the sound intellectual judgment.

Neither faculty [i.e., neither the intuition nor the intellect] can function well as long as one
- rationalizes and
- covers up the true reasons [for indiscriminate opening up to other people].

Such a person has to be brought to first recognize this fact [i.e., to recognize the fact that the true reasons for indiscriminate opening up must be discovered before one can discern who the who the right people are to whom to open up].

That, of course, can only be done very slowly.

And it cannot be done at all if the desire is not there.

But the desire can grow.
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Be blessed,
all of you.

Be in God.

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