Pathwork Lecture 39: Image-Finding

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**  

*in the name of the Lord.*  

*I bring you blessings,*  

*my dear friends.*  

*Blessed is*  

*this hour* [i.e., Blessed is this time we now spend together in this lecture]. |
| **04** | **The material world**  

*constantly*  

*presents you with obstacles*  

*that prevent you*  

*from seeing the world*  

*as it really is.* |
These obstacles [i.e., These obstacles that prevent you from seeing the world as it really is]

include
  • time,
  • space, and
  • motion.

• Time,
  • space, and
  • motion
are completely different
  in
  • the spiritual world
  than
  in
  • your world of manifestation.

You have definite periods of
  • time
and
  • invariable,
    • objective
    • measurement.

A year is
  a year;
  a
  • month,
  a
  • week,
  a
  • day,
  an
  • hour
exist
  independently of personal attitudes.
The same applies to distance [i.e. As with periods of time that exist independently of personal attitudes, so with the world if distance, which also exists independently of personal attitudes].

You also have definitely designated directions –

- right,
- left,
- up, and
- down.

In the spirit world this is not so [i.e., In the spirit world you do not have designated directions such as right, left, up, and down].

I have a good reason to mention these notions of

- time and
- measurement tonight.

Scientists have

- sensed and
- found some of this truth through
  - nuclear physics and
  - outer-space exploration.

In the not too distant future, exploration of outer space will be as commonly accepted as

- air travel is today.
When pilots sit in an ordinary airplane, they do not need instruments to indicate whether they are
• ascending
or
• descending.

When explorers finally fly through outer space, this will not be so, and you will all come to see the truth of what I tell you.

The moment you leave the gravitational field of earth, you will not be able to determine whether you are going
• up
or
• down.

When the plane ascends, you will be under the impression that it is descending, and vice versa.

This is very significant, my friends.

For even though you still live in the world of manifestation, when you explore outer space by technical means, you approach the laws of the spirit.

These phenomena should open the eyes of a thinking person.
I have talked to you a great deal about the necessity of exploring your soul and, particularly in the last lecture [see Lecture 38 – Images], I discussed the
- inner images,
- wrong
  - impressions and
  - conclusions
    that a human being forms over the course of several lifetimes.

I spoke about the importance of finding these images.

That [i.e., Finding these images] is the only way you will be able to understand
- yourselves and
- everything that
  - has happened and
  - will continue to happen until you dissolve the images.

As in
- outer space,
so in
- your own development:

Only by
- going down can you
- go up.
Only by exploring
  • the depths,
  • the deepest regions
    of your unconscious mind,
    can you
    • develop spiritually and
    • ascend in the true sense.

Temporarily you will appear to regress.

Depressions are almost unavoidable, temporarily,
  in the search for
  • what
  and
  • who
    you really are.

But, my friends, think of the analogy between
  • space exploration
  and
  • self-exploration,
    which will soon be confirmed by human science.

You have to descend into your unconscious
  in order to reach the
  • liberation and
  • clarity
    of absolute truth
    as far as you are able to perceive it [i.e., as far as you are able to perceive absolute truth]
    while still in the body.
I promised you that tonight I would continue my discussion of image-finding.

A few facts are important for pursuing a diligent search.

What I say here will not mean very much to those
- who still feel reluctant about embarking on this path
- and
- who merely listen to these words.

Perhaps they [i.e., Perhaps those who still feel reluctant about embarking on this path and who merely listen to these words]
will gain a little more understanding of the Pathwork principles.

These glimpses [i.e., These glimpses into an understanding of the Pathwork principles]
may eventually open the door for the
- active,
- personal search
so necessary for complete purification
so they [i.e., so those who still feel reluctant about embarking on this path and who merely listen to these words will open the door to self-search for purification and thus eventually come to]
voluntarily step across the threshold from
- the darkness into
- the light.
I beg any of you who
• has not started yet [i.e., who has not started this Pathwork process yet],
  but
• is willing [i.e., but who is willing to start this Pathwork process
  of spiritual growth through self-search and purification],
  to ask
  one of the people
  of the inner group
  to work with you,
  for it [i.e., for this Pathwork path of spiritual growth
  through self-search and purification]
  cannot be done alone.

Arrangements
  will be made;
guidance
  will come.

Anyone
  truly desirous of
  spiritual growth
  will find help;
  of that
  you can be sure.

Now, my dear friends,
  before you start searching for your images,
  you need to know
  several important facts.

The first is
  that you
  do not
  approach your unconscious
  with a
  moralizing attitude [i.e., with a moralizing attitude of “right” OR
  “wrong,” or “good” OR “bad”].
Your unconscious
• does not like it [i.e., Your unconscious does not like a moralizing attitude as you search it for your images]

and
• will resist [i.e., will resist being searched with such a moralizing “right or wrong,” “good or bad” judgmental attitude].

It [i.e., Your unconscious]
will
• fight against you and
• make it all the harder for your willing consciousness to come to terms with it [i.e., come to terms with your unconscious].

In your development so far,
you have realized the importance of
• purification and
• self-knowledge.

You have all started to think about your
• mistakes,
your
• shortcomings, and
your
• weaknesses.

The same [i.e., Having made mistakes and having shortcomings and weaknesses] holds true on all levels of your being.
When I say, 

"all levels of your being,"

I mean 
that there are
• several 
  layers, 
not merely
• a conscious 
  and 
• an unconscious 
  layer.

In fact 
several degrees of
• consciousness and 
• being 
exist 
  about every conceivable 
  • attitude, 
  about your 
  • faults and 
  • weaknesses, 
as well as 
  about your 
  • qualities and 
  • strengths.

In the last analysis, 
the wrong inner impression 
exists as a 
rigid form 
that 
controls 
all 
the events in your life.
It [i.e., The wrong inner impression that exists as a rigid form that controls all the events in your life] also consists of the faults you may consciously know quite well.

You may not realize that these same weaknesses [i.e., that these same weaknesses that you may know consciously quite well] exist on a separate level, however.

So, if you approach the search with the attitude of self-moralizing, you will have difficulties.

That is why I have advised you to start with [i.e., to start your search for unconscious faults, weaknesses, wrong negative attitudes, and other wrong inner impressions with] a different approach [i.e., an approach that is not direct but rather is an approach that is indirect and does not lead to self-moralizing].

The best way to begin [i.e., The best way to begin your search for unconscious faults, weaknesses, wrong negative attitudes, and other wrong inner impressions] is by thinking about your

• hurts,
• conflicts, and
• problems.

Regard your wrong inner attitudes as

• ignorance and
• error.
Actually,
  that [i.e., Actually, ignorance and error]
  is what
  all
  faults
  really are!

Think about
  your
    • idiosyncrasies,
  your
    • prejudices,
  your
    • tight emotions
      in certain domains of life.

Think
  • how you
    react
    emotionally
    to certain things
  and
    • when and
    • how
      these reactions [i.e., Think when and how these emotional reactions]
      repeat themselves
      throughout your life.

Review the
  disappointments
    that
      apparently
      have nothing to do with
      your
        • actions and
        • reactions.
**Afterward** [i.e., After you have observed and thought about the when and the how of your emotional reactions], when you recognize a pattern [i.e., a pattern to your emotional reactions], you will be able to see the connection [i.e., see the connection of your emotional reactions] with an inner attitude that may so far have escaped your consciousness.

Only after you have gained some understanding of
* your inner reactions [i.e., gained some understanding of your inner emotional reactions]

and
* their bearing [i.e., and the bearing of your emotional reactions] on outer events

will you see that these reactions [i.e., that these emotional reactions] actually are nothing less than
* a fault, or
* several faults that exist on a deeper level, quite apart from your outer personality.

**Once you realize** that your inner reactions [i.e., that your inner emotional reactions] come from a faulty attitude,

there are two possibilities.

Each [i.e., Each of the two possibilities] represents an obstacle best removed by awareness.
One possibility [i.e., One possibility once you realize that your inner emotional reactions come from a faulty attitude] is that you find the same faults that you have already recognized on a superficial outer level.

You may even have overcome some of these faults [i.e., overcome some of these superficial faults] to some degree.

You will be all the more shocked to find the same trends all over again [i.e., shocked that you find the same faults all over again after you have overcome them to some degree on a superficial level].

You will either react by saying that you already knew that you had this fault, thereby preventing yourself from realizing that you have come across something quite new [i.e., new on a deeper level], although you are aware of its [i.e., you are aware of this fault’s] outward existence.

But it is necessary to approach this fault [i.e., to approach this fault that is on a deeper level] as something new, in spite of your familiarity with its outer existence.
Unless you approach it this way [i.e., Unless you approach this familiar fault as something quite new on a deeper level],

you cannot
  • experience and
  • relive
    the original feelings
    that led you
    to form the attitude [i.e., to form the faulty attitude]
    in the first place,

and

without
  re-experiencing them [i.e., without re-experiencing the original feelings
  that led you to form the faulty attitude currently causing you difficulties]

you cannot
  gain
  the necessary understanding [i.e., the understanding necessary for
  finding your images].

When you come across
  known
  • reactions or
  • faults
    in your inner images,

beware of
  the attitude
  that you already know about them.

You may
  know about them,
  but
  • they still exist
    on another level,
    and
  • you must approach them
    with as much freshness
    as you would
    if you were encountering them
    for the very first time.

Remember this, my friends.
The second possibility [i.e., The second possibility once you realize that your inner emotional reactions come from a faulty attitude] is that you encounter tendencies that are completely contradictory to the self you consciously know.

Again, this [i.e., Again, the fact that you encounter tendencies that are completely contradictory to the self you consciously know] may be a hindrance because you may be tempted to say:

"Oh, but this cannot be so.
I do not have this fault.
As a matter of fact, the direct opposite is one of my most significant virtues."

Let us take a few examples to make this a little clearer.

Consider the people who have a strong sense of responsibility in their lives.

Their
- family and
- business contacts know that they are thoroughly responsible.
Yet when they [i.e., Yet when these same people
who have a strong sense of responsibility in their lives]

• try to understand
• their lives and
• themselves
and
• begin to look for their images,
they may be shocked
to find
that
in certain ways
they
are
irresponsible.

The resulting puzzlement
could lead such people
to reject the new findings [i.e., to reject the new findings that in certain
ways they ARE irresponsible]
as wrong
because
they [i.e., because these new findings about their
areas of irresponsibility]
contradict
another part of their being.

In their confusion
they might quickly cover up again
what they were just about to
bring out of hiding.

Or let us take people
who are known to have
a great deal of courage.

By uncovering certain
• emotional reactions,
• tendencies and
• inner conditions,
they come face to face with
the cowardly part of their personality.
This realization [i.e., This realization that a part of their personality is cowardly] may come as quite a shock.

People then will say to themselves that this cannot be so [i.e., people say to themselves that it is impossible that a part of their personality is cowardly].

They may cite a number of instances where they have proven their courage.

Yet their discovery of certain cowardly emotional reactions is also valid.

So it is important for you, my friends, to realize that in the deeper layer of your images you may find faults that you do not have outwardly.

Outwardly you have exactly the opposite reactions, and genuinely so – not only as a mask.

You always tend to think in either/or terms.
Humanity has learned by now that it is wrong to say a person is
• good [i.e., it is wrong to say a person is ALL good]
or
• bad [i.e., it is wrong to say a person is ALL bad].

That far you have come.

But the need to exclude an either/or judgment also holds true for every individual tendency –

good or bad.

If you have this general understanding, my friends [i.e., If, my friends, you have this general understanding of the need to EXCLUDE an either/or judgment in EVERY individual tendency],

if you impress this knowledge on your mind,
it will be much easier for you to reach the goal [i.e., the goal of finding and dissolving your images].

In this way [i.e., By excluding the either/or judgment in every individual tendency], when you delve into the deeper realms of your being, you will eliminate difficulties that exist only because you INSIST that every tendency must be EITHER totally bad OR totally good, and in such either/or judgments you ignore some facts of the life of the soul [i.e., you ignore facts such as the fact that aspects and tendencies of the soul are NEVER TOTALLY bad or TOTALLY good].
People nowadays talk about depth psychology.

Your self-search is exactly that [i.e., Your self-search is exactly that: depth psychology].

But in order to win the battle [i.e., win the battle to find and dissolve images], you also have to learn depth

- prayer,
- meditation, and
- thinking,
  my friends.

At first your

- prayer or
- meditation
  is an intellectual pursuit,
but when you arrive at the findings on the level of the inner self,
  you have to go deeper [i.e., go deeper than the merely intellectual pursuit].

There are rare moments when you are filled with

- God and
- the laws of truth.

Such moments [i.e., Such moments when you are filled with God and the laws of truth]

may occur long before you have discovered deeper levels of consciousness.
This feeling [i.e., This rare feeling when you are filled with God and the laws of truth]
cannot be
• forced;

it [i.e., this rare feeling when you are filled with God and the laws of truth] cannot be
• controlled.

It [i.e., This rare feeling when you are filled with God and the laws of truth] is
• grace,
  my friends.

And it [i.e., And this rare feeling when you are filled with God and the laws of truth] will become
a more or less permanent state
once you have
• made conscious all unconscious falsehoods
and have
• cleansed yourself of them.
What I mean by
• "depth prayer"
or
• "depth meditation"
or
• "depth thinking"
is that you
take everything you have found out
about
your hidden reactions –
whether
they concern trends
you find repeatedly
or whether
you come across
quite different reactions
from your
known outer ones –
and think about
their effect on
• yourself and
• others.

Compare them [i.e. As they become conscious, compare your emotional reactions]
with
spiritual law
as you now know it.

Think from
both the
• spiritual
and
• practical
points of view.

Work with
the newly-found knowledge [i.e., the newly-found knowledge about your
previously hidden reactions to people and life situations]
by re-experiencing
the feelings it evokes [i.e., by re-experiencing the feelings the newly-
found knowledge about your emotional reactions evokes].
Then think about it again [i.e., Then think again about the newly-found knowledge about your emotional reactions to people and life situations]
as objectively
    as you know how.

Pray to God
for
    • further enlightenment and
    • strength
to change
    your erroneous reactions.

Simply
    shift your thinking
    to a deeper level
and
    apply it [i.e., apply your thinking]
to the knowledge you have found.

This [i.e., This process for finding and dissolving your newly-found deeper images] may not be easy
    for some of my friends to understand,
    particularly for those
    who have not started on the search [i.e., the search for images].

But I am sure
    that most of my friends
    who have advanced in this direction
    will understand what I mean.

It [i.e., This process for finding and dissolving your newly-found deeper images] is a very
    • subtle and
    • important
    matter.
Do not leave the newly-found understanding [i.e., understanding of your deeper images] alone, for you may then very well slip back into the same old pattern.

You can easily
• deceive yourself and
• think that, merely because you have found out an
  • important and
  • significant piece of knowledge about your soul, nothing more is necessary.

You can
• have the theoretical knowledge and
• still go right on reacting [i.e., right on reacting emotionally] the same old way.

It is not sufficient to
• find an inner understanding about your hidden
  • trends and
  • reactions [i.e., hidden emotional reactions] and
• leave it at that.

The work [i.e., The work of dissolving images] only begins after such recognition.
And that [i.e., And that real work that begins only after you find an inner understanding about your hidden trends and emotional reactions] is the meditation in depth, on the deep emotional level you have discovered.

If you do neglect this meditation, you may retain what you have found, but gradually it [i.e., but gradually what you have found intellectually] will become • more remote, • a merely theoretical knowledge in your brain, while underneath you go on reacting as before [i.e., reacting emotionally as you did before].

In that case you have not succeeded in • integrating and • unifying your • erring emotional reactions and • wrong conclusions with your intellectual knowledge.

Emotions are more habit-bound than outer tendencies; moreover, they [i.e., emotions] are so elusive that in spite of your efforts, your old patterns may go right on and • escape your attention.
You are so used to
shoving uncomfortable knowledge
into your subconscious
that you cannot get rid of
the habit
from one day to the next.

Breaking the habit
requires
a great deal of
• training,
• concentration, and
• effort.

New habit patterns
have to be established
until
you recognize
the signs of the hidden trends
that must be made conscious.

You have to develop
a special sensitivity for them [i.e., You have to develop a special sensitivity
for the signs of the hidden trends that must be made conscious] –
and this takes time,
of course.

It is also possible
to go to the opposite extreme [i.e., to go to the extreme that is opposite to the
old trends and emotional reactions that you now understand intellectually],

which is
just as
• harmful as the old reaction
and
just as
• bound by your images.
This [i.e., Going to the extreme that is opposite to the old trends and emotional reactions that you now understand intellectually]
may happen

    either because

    you

    • are unconsciously impatient and
    • want to correct your soul tendencies
      • in a hurry
      • by drastic means –
        which, of course, is not feasible.

Or it may happen because

    you

    • are angry at yourself and
    • act in a spirit of
      defiance,
      against
        • yourself
          as well as [defiance against]
        • the world at large.

This reaction [i.e., This pattern of emotional reactions]

is just as wrong as

    the old established pattern.

You merely use

    a different manner of operation.
Beware of these two pitfalls, my friends
[i.e., Pitfall 1] shoving your new uncomfortable understanding about your emotional reactions and trends into your unconscious rather than working to integrate and unify your erring emotional reactions and wrong conclusions with your newly found intellectual knowledge, or
Pitfall 2) being impatient and rushing forcefully and prematurely to the extreme emotional reaction and trend that is opposite to the old trends and reactions that you now understand intellectually or act in a spirit of defiance against your self as well as the world at large, my friends].

The only way to work is with the understanding you have gained [i.e., The only way to work in order to dissolve your images is with your new understanding about your heretofore hidden emotional reactions and trends],

• quietly,
• patiently, and
• steadily
  • accepting your temporary inability to react differently [i.e., accepting your temporary inability to react differently emotionally],
  • knowing that slow growth is the only possible way.

Take the newly-found knowledge and view it from various angles.

• Pray and
• meditate on
  • the deeper level of this new knowledge rather than on
  • the outer level on which you have worked before.
You may also have established habits in
• prayer and
• meditation.

They [i.e., These old established habits in prayer and meditation] were useful in the last [i.e., in the previous] phase of your development, but now you have to shift to a deeper realm.

Another point of equal importance I want to bring to your attention is that, strangely, everything connected with these distorted inner images causes you acute shame, even when the image is about something that is not shameful, objectively speaking.

There might not be any justification for the shame; you would not feel that such behavior deserved shame if you encountered it in others.
Once you have the courage to bring your feelings out into the open, you will see for yourself how the sense of
- shame
- embarrassment completely vanishes.

But before it is out, while you are still struggling with it, you will feel the shame very strongly.

You may have a fault that is infinitely worse than what you are ashamed about, but since you discovered it [i.e., since you discovered this infinitely worse fault] a long time ago, you have accepted it by now; therefore, you do not feel ashamed of it anymore.

You may even be able to discuss it [i.e., discuss this fault that is worse than a fault of which you are ashamed] openly with others.
However,
  • something that is
    a much lesser fault,
  or
  • a trend that apparently has nothing to do
    with
    • a fault or
    with
    • the recognized standards of sin

  causes you
  acute shame
  as long as
  you have not come to terms with it

Let us say, you discover that
  you were very strongly
  • influenced [by] and
  • dependent on
    one of your parents,

  something that is
    in itself
    nothing to be ashamed of.

Until now
  you ignored
  • how much and
  • in what manner
    you were influenced
  and how
  • dependent you still are
    on the emotions
    your dependency has created.

When you first come across this realization,
  it causes you
  acute embarrassment.
This [i.e., Your initial acute embarrassment caused by now discovering how you were influenced by your parents and how dependent you still are on the emotions your dependency has created] is a typical image reaction, my friends.

And if you expect this [i.e., if you anticipate and expect this sudden acute embarrassment as a typical image reaction] to happen, you will make things easier for yourself.

You will not be under the • emotional, • subjective impression that you alone have such feelings.

For that [i.e., Thinking that it is you alone who experiences such acute shame from the image you hold] is what you unconsciously believe when you feel so ashamed.

You have created separateness for yourself with all your inappropriate defenses [i.e., defenses against FEELING the acute shame and thinking that it is you alone who experiences such acute shame from the image you hold].
But if you realize
• that this feeling of isolation [i.e., this feeling of isolation due to false shame]
is common to everyone,
• that it is
  a symptom
to be expected,
you will be able to counteract it [i.e., counteract this feeling of isolation and shame]
by not giving much heed to it.

You will free yourself
of the
  separating wall
  that encloses you in
  • darkness,
  • loneliness,
  • fear,
  • guilt, and
  • false shame.

Only in this way
can you
• evolve as a free person and
• hold your head high,
instead of
being governed by your
• false impressions and
• shame.

It takes only
a moment of courage
to
• go through
  what seems so shameful
  and
• face yourself
  as you are.

This is the only way
to discover
your phantom world
of
• fear and
• shame
  that has no reality whatever.

Remember that [i.e., Remember that this world of fear has no reality whatever].
Thus, my dear friends, you see that when you go
• inward and
• downward,
you
• gain an understanding of
  the shadows in your soul and
• comprehend
  how they came to exist.

When you look at your erroneous emotional conclusions, you will discover that fighting your imagined
• shames and
• resistances with the tools of
• patience,
• sound endeavor, and
• willpower

is, in truth, the only way to ascend in spirit.

Thinking you can
• avoid this apparent descent and yet
• attain spiritual growth is
• utterly unrealistic.

It is
• self-deception and
• wishful thinking.

You cannot avoid it [i.e., You cannot avoid this apparent descent].
QUESTION:
You said humans were all given the same amount of time.

Does that mean that time is something different to each individual spirit?

ANSWER:
What I mean is this:

Let us say you have an hour.

An hour will remain an hour, regardless of how it appears to you.

This is true whether it is
• pleasant
  or
  • unpleasant.

You can measure it and it still remains objectively an hour.

Your own impression, what you
• think and
• feel during that time, is
  • subjective and has no bearing on the
    • objective hour that has passed.
Now in the spirit world it is exactly the opposite.

Subjectivity validates the spiritual attitude;

every
  • measurement
  or any other
  • value
  is subjective in spirit.

Is that clear?

COMMENT:
Yes, thank you very much.

QUESTION:
I find it hard to understand meditation and prayer in depth.

If you have approached a problem already, how can you approach it on a deeper level?
ANSWER:
Reaching the same old problem
on a deeper level
happens
organically
as you continue to work.

But
once you have uncovered
a new approach
to a problem,
you have to
• think,
• meditate, and
• pray
  with the new findings
  all over again.

Whether you discover
the same tendencies
that you were
• already aware of, or
• partly aware of,
or
whether you discover
some completely new reactions,
you have to approach them [i.e., approach the tendencies or reactions]
with a spirit of
• newness,
• a new outlook,
so you
vibrate with
the experience
of the realization.

And then you have to
• think about it.
• Pray to assimilate
  the new material properly.
• Pray that you will be able to
  integrate it [i.e., Pray that you will be able to integrate the new material]
  with your personality,
  so that you will become
  well rounded.
A new finding usually does not fit into the mental picture you have of yourself.

It [i.e., A new finding] calls attention to itself.

To make the distorted emotions whole and healthy, one has to work on one's findings in the way I have explained in this lecture.

**QUESTION:**
You wanted to talk tonight about the problem of desire [i.e., the desire for something] versus renunciation [i.e., versus the renunciation of that something].

**ANSWER:**
On a previous occasion I said that desirelessness can be very easily misunderstood, especially if you happen to have an image which makes you afraid to live, afraid to feel, and afraid to love.
The
outer intellectual knowledge
you may gain through
spiritual teachings
• may support this very image [i.e., support this image that makes
you afraid to live, feel, and love]

and
• can be used
as a rationalization for
the pseudo-solution
of withdrawal from life
because
the negative unconscious
is constantly on the lookout
to use such arguments
to justify
• itself [i.e., to justify the negative
unconscious itself]

and
• its image [i.e., and to justify the
unconsciousness’s image that
makes you afraid to live, feel,
and love].

With the knowledge
you have gained since,
you will now
understand better
why I said at the time
that
desirelessness
has to be approached carefully,
otherwise
it [i.e., otherwise desirelessness]
will do more
• harm [i.e., harm you by making you afraid to
live, feel, and love rather than to desire and
manifest these positive qualities]

than
• good.
People with this kind of image [i.e., this kind of image that makes them afraid to live, feel, and love]

are very afraid
to face
• the world,
• their feelings, and
• the unavoidable disappointments,

so they
• withdraw
and
• use
desirelessness
as a camouflage
to fit their image [i.e., to fit their image that makes them fear life].

This is a very common phenomenon.

Only those who have no such fear can understand the true meaning of
• desirelessness and
• renunciation.

Wherever fear of life is embedded in an image – and many people have it to some degree –

the only way genuine desirelessness can be attained is by facing the fear of
• life and
• love.
To
  • risk
    the hurt
  and
  • bear your fear
    that your desires
    will not be fulfilled,
rather than
  trying to
    forcefully
    prevent yourself
    from going through
    this necessary stage of development,
is important.

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Only after
  having tasted
  voluntarily
  the hurts
  connected with desire
  will you be able to
  leave desire behind.

You cannot do it [i.e., You cannot leave desire behind]
  by going around it [i.e., by going around tasting voluntarily
  the hurts connected with that desire not being fulfilled],
  my dear friends.

You cannot
  force yourself
  into
  a state of "desirelessness"
  you have not yet attained [i.e., not yet attained by tasting voluntarily
  the hurts connected with that desire not being fulfilled];

this [i.e. forcing yourself into a state of “desirelessness” you have not yet attained
  by tasting voluntarily the hurts connected with that desire not being fulfilled]
would amount
  • to a lie
  and even
  • to cheating.
As long as you still have desires, you have to
• acknowledge them
and
• go through them [i.e., go through those desires by tasting voluntarily the hurts connected with those desires not being fulfilled]
in order to honestly
grow out of them [i.e., HONESTLY grow out of those desires].

Gradually, in the organic growth that spiritual development always is,
the hurts [i.e., the hurts connected with those desires not being fulfilled]
will become less, not because you
• fear and
• avoid them [i.e., not because you fear the hurt of those desires not being fulfilled and avoid feeling the hurts of their not being fulfilled]
but because you are willing to face them [i.e., willing to face and taste voluntarily the hurts connected with those desires not being fulfilled].

That is the only way
• renunciation and
• desirelessness can be obtained without
• error and
• self-deception.

And only you, the individual, can be the judge of how useful it is to meditate about desirelessness at the moment.
Only if and when you are completely fearless of
- hurts and
- disappointments
is the time ripe [i.e., ripe for genuine desirelessness and renunciation],
my dear ones,
and not before!

If you have forced yourself into a state of resignation, you have chosen with the unconscious motive of escaping what you fear [i.e., escaping your fear of feeling the hurt of disappointment if your desires are not fulfilled.]

This is the only valid procedure:

accepting that you still
- have desires [i.e., accepting that you still have unfulfilled desires]

and accepting
- their price [i.e., accepting your feelings of hurt, pain, and disappointment, the natural price of having and accepting unfulfilled desires].

Because of the acceptance [i.e., Because of your acceptance of feelings of hurt, pain and disappointment, the natural price of your unfulfilled desires],

- your desires will differ from
- the desires of people who have no spiritual aims.
Those people [i.e., Those people who have no spiritual aims] will let their self-will push ahead.

Controlled by their desires, they [i.e., those people who have no spiritual aims] will rebel against • everything and • everyone who stands in the way of the gratification of their desires.

But you who are on this path can evaluate these currents [i.e., these currents of desire, and currents of pain, hurt, and dissatisfaction that are the natural price of simply accepting unfulfilled desires] • viewing them from a distance and • consciously controlling them, neither • giving vent to them nor • suppressing them.
If you
• listen
  within yourself
and
• interpret
  your feelings,
you will be able to see
where your
• self-will,
• pride, and
• ego
  claim gratification
that your
• higher self
  deems wrong.

Those who know
that
the purpose of life
is
• not the gratification of
  self-will
and that
the sole purpose of life
is
• not happiness,
but that
life is given to you
to learn
both from
• happiness
and
• unhappiness,
will not give in to
the desires
  of the lower self.
If you cannot help
giving in to
the lower self
at times,
you will learn
an additional lesson
from that [i.e., from giving in to the lower self at times].

Only those
who
do not escape
• unhappiness
can become
• happy.

And only those
who
do not escape
• unhappiness
can achieve
• true desirelessness,
  though perhaps
  only much later.

So there lies the answer,
my friends.

And hearing these words,
I hope you will
not use the idea of
• desirelessness
and
• renunciation
to rationalize away
your inner fears
of
• life,
of
• love, and
of
• being hurt.

Is that clear?

COMMENT: Yes.
| 39 | **QUESTION:**  
What about the problem of selfishness in prayer? |
|---|---|
| 40 | **ANSWER:**  
I have discussed that on various occasions,  
but I will do so again,  
perhaps with a slightly different slant, my friends.  

I know that many people  
are afraid that  
their prayers  
are selfish.  

But that depends very much on how  
you pray.  

You cannot say of any act  
that it is • selfish  
or • not [selfish]  
without examining it.  

Aside from crass instances,  
it is your motive  
that counts in all  
• desires and  
• attitudes.  

Selfishness always  
depends on the how.
To determine this [i.e., i.e., To determine the “how” of your prayer and decide whether or not your prayer is selfish]

is really very simple.

If you pray for things solely because
   • you want them
and because
   • it would be pleasant to have them
and
• for no other reason,
then, of course,
   it is a
 • selfish prayer
and
   it will do
 • no good at all.

For only a pure spiritual force coming out of your soul will have an effect.

A selfish prayer • indicates a misunderstanding of life and
• is therefore made in untruth, even though you are not deliberately dishonest.
Nevertheless, an
• untrue thought,
  • innocent and
  • in good faith
  as it may be,

cannot meet with
• the true forces
  of the cosmos.

Like
  attracts
  like,

and this law
  cannot be changed.

One of the first things you learn on this path
  is
  to ask yourself about
    • your motives for
      desiring a certain thing;
  to ask yourself about
    • the why of some of your
      emotional reactions.

If you do not find the answer [i.e., the answer to what your MOTIVES are for
  desiring a certain thing or to WHY your emotional reactions
  are what they are in certain situations or to certain people],

it is
  a good beginning
  to pray for
  the will
  to recognize yourself
    • fearlessly and
    • truthfully.
Thus, in such an instance [i.e., in such an instance when you pray for the will to recognize yourself fearlessly and truthfully], you would pray that your motives should become purified. This [i.e., Praying that your motives should become purified] cannot be construed as selfishness.

Furthermore, it is certainly not selfish to pray for the good of other creatures. If you can bring yourself to pray for those who have harmed you— and mean it—that in itself is an act of purification.

And if you pray for
• strength and
• understanding to overcome your cowardice
  • to face yourself and
  • to overcome your resistance to developing yourself, there is nothing selfish in that.

If you believe that wanting the happiness that inevitably results from purification, after a certain point is reached, is self-serving, then remaining
• unpurified and
• unhappy would seem to be a higher aim because it would seem selfless!
In this connection [i.e., In connection with your being happy or unhappy] you must understand how God's laws work:

Only those who are happy can bring happiness to others.

[By happiness]

I do not mean • cheap and • easily obtainable happiness, but • the real thing [i.e., but I mean REAL HAPPINESS] that • comes only by hard labor and that • no one can take away from you.

You will never see an unhappy person who can truly bring happiness to others.

That [i.e., An unhappy person bringing true happiness to others] is impossible.

An unhappy person may do • a good deed, • a single unselfish act, but cannot possibly make another person happy.
Therefore [i.e., Therefore, since an unhappy person cannot possibly make another person happy],
your
• purification and
devolution
should be
the main intent
of your prayer,
apart from praying for others,
and
consider the resulting happiness [i.e., consider the happiness resulting from your purification and development]
• a byproduct [i.e., a byproduct from your work of purification and development],
• a means
to an end [i.e., consider your resulting happiness as a means to bring happiness to others],
rather than
• the end itself [i.e., rather than treating your own happiness as the ultimate goal of your work of purification and development].

If selfishness, namely the desire to become happy, enters your motivation a little bit at the beginning of your upward climb,
• recognize this,
but
• do not mind it too much.

Accept yourself as
• you are [i.e., Accept yourself as your are, as being selfish, because your motivation for praying is only to become happy],
as
• still imperfect.
Even if
    • the selfish motive [i.e., Even if the selfish motive: “to become happy”]
    is not as pure as
    • expecting happiness only as a byproduct [i.e., expecting happiness only
        as a byproduct of purification and development],

it [i.e., the prayer with the selfish motive: “to become happy”]
    is still
    a step forward
    in the realization of truth.

Only by
    purifying yourself
    can you become happy.

The person
    who has
        a lower degree of consciousness, however, [i.e., The person who has a
        lower degree of consciousness, however, does NOT believe that
        happiness comes only by purifying oneself but rather]
        believes
        that
        happiness
        results from

        giving in to
        all the desires
        coming from
        the lower nature.
If you are not free from selfishness – and scarcely a human being is – it is certainly healthier to see this clearly [i.e. to see your selfishness clearly] instead of forcing it away; in that way it [i.e., by forcing your selfishness away, it] will only
• hide in your soul and
• cause you more harm than the
• clear and • courageous recognition of its existence.

• Know that the aim is a higher one [i.e., Know that the aim is higher than merely recognizing your selfishness, the aim is to OVERCOME your selfishness], and
• know that you are emotionally not there yet [i.e., know that you are not yet able EMOTIONALLY to overcome your selfishness, know that you need more purification and development work to overcome your selfishness EMOTIONALLY].

Also realize that secluded happiness [i.e., realize that happiness secluded from others and isolated] is impossible.
The separating wall [i.e., The wall separating you from others] must crumble,

and that [i.e., and tearing down and crumbling this wall that separates and protects you from others] is what all of you are afraid of;

it [i.e., tearing down and crumbling this wall that separates you from others] threatens you.

You do not realize that by keeping your separating wall you

• defeat your own purpose

and you

• contradict your desire to develop,

which exists just as strongly as your fear of it [i.e., just as strongly as your fear of developing].

You all desire

• happiness

and you all desire to

• give happiness,

yet you cannot achieve either one [i.e., cannot achieve either happiness or giving happiness] without losing your separateness.
And how do you
lose
your separateness?

By doing
the very thing
that seems
hardest to you.

Perhaps it is
• giving up your
  pride,
• going through
  your apparent shame.

When you approach the problem
this way [i.e., by tearing down your walls that separate you from others and thereby making HAPPINESS and GIVING HAPPINESS possible: giving up your pride, going through your apparent shame],
you will realize that
in this kind of prayer [i.e., this kind of prayer for COURAGE to face yourself, to purify yourself, and to develop – to tear down the walls of separation]
there is certainly nothing selfish.

For God
wants you
to be happy.

It is a long tradition of
misunderstanding,
that
to be
• godly
means
to be
• unhappy and
• severe.

To be godly
is supposed to be
• martyrdom.
This image [i.e., This image that to be godly means to be unhappy, severe, and a martyr] is engraved in humanity as a whole.

No, my friends, it [i.e., No, this image that to be godly means to be unhappy, severe, and a martyr] is not so.

So do not feel guilty if you also become happy.

But do not pray directly for happiness.

Pray for the
• strength and
• ability
to remove the obstacles you have placed between yourself and happiness.

This [i.e., Removing the obstacles you have placed between yourself and happiness] means going through the unhappiness, self-inflicted by
• error and
• ignorance.
The outcome [i.e., The outcome of removing the obstacles you have placed between yourself and happiness, including going through the unhappiness, self-inflicted by error and ignorance]

will be
the clear light of
• peace,
• harmony,
• beauty, and
• joy
that will be
yours
regardless of
other people’s actions.

That
is the spirit you should have
when you pray.

| QUESTION: | May I ask
why is it so difficult at times
to start praying at all? |
|----------|---------------------------|

| ANSWER: | You all know that
your development
does not
proceed
• upward
or
• downward
along a steady line.

It [i.e., Your development] fluctuates,
going
• up
and
• down
in
• spirals. |
And sometimes, while you are on a downward curve, you do not realize you are a step higher than the last upward curve you were on.

Although the last upward curve was, on the whole, lower than the present downward curve, every upward curve feels better [i.e., feels better than any downward curve].

You felt an elation and a liberation [in the previous upward curve] that you do not feel on the downward curve, which you have now worked yourself up to.

Whenever you are on a downward curve, you encounter conflicts that you have not yet resolved.
They [i.e., The conflicts that you have not yet resolved] disquiet you; they make you
• restless and
• fearful
until you have laboriously
• worked them out [i.e., until you have worked out these unresolved conflicts]
and
• understood them;
until you have
• fitted them [i.e., until you have fitted these unresolved conflicts] into as much of the whole picture as is available to you now.

When this is done [i.e., When you have worked out these unresolved conflicts and fitted them into the whole picture as is available to you now],
• the upward curve sets in again, and
• you enjoy the clear air of a gained truth a little further.

But when the downward curve comes again, you must delve into the darkness of your
• confusion and
• error,
and that cuts you off from the divine stream.
You may oversimplify this by saying:

"Things are depressing; I experience unpleasant things and that [i.e., and because I experience unpleasant things] is why I am cut off from the divine flow."

You are only half right, and that [i.e., and being half right] is always dangerous.

The unpleasantness you are experiencing is only
- a reflection,
- a necessary effect of the cause you have within yourself that waits to be dug out.

And that [i.e., And because the cause within yourself of the unpleasantness you are experiencing waits to be dug out] is why, when you are on the downward curve, which may vary in length according to
- the personality and
- the inner problems to be solved, the flow is cut off.
You are surrounded again
    by the strong impressions
    of
    the world of manifestation.

You can
    no longer connect with
    the feeling
    of reality
    you have tasted at other times.

The disconnection [i.e., The disconnection from reality]
    is necessary;
    it [i.e., the disconnection from reality you have tasted at other times]
    provokes a battle on your part
    to attain victory again.

Every victory
    means
    a new upward curve.

It is quite natural
    • that in such periods
    of temporary darkness
    • you cannot
    feel
    God’s absolute truth,
    • that
      • you do not
      vibrate with
      it [i.e., that you do not vibrate with
      God’s absolute truth].

This [i.e., This feeling and vibrating with God’s absolute truth]
    cannot be forced
    by your will.
But what you
• can and
• should
do during these periods [i.e., during these periods of
darkness and struggle]
is to
• think
• clearly and
• reasonably
  about your findings
  in the light of
  what you
  now know,
  although temporarily
  this knowledge
  sits only in your
  brain,
and to
• wait
  until you become
  filled with
  this knowledge again.

Be blessed,
my dear ones.

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