Pathwork Lecture 40: More on Image-Finding: A Summary

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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<td>Greetings</td>
<td>in the name of the Lord.</td>
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<td>I bring you blessings,</td>
<td>my dear friends.</td>
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<td>Blessed is</td>
<td>this hour [i.e., Blessed is this time we now spend together in this lecture].</td>
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<td>This lecture continues</td>
<td>a series that was started some time ago.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For the benefit of those who missed the preceding lectures in this series,</td>
<td>I would like to say a few words about the spiritual work at this stage on the path of purification.</td>
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What does purification mean in its true sense?

It means the elimination of every current and attitude in the soul that is contrary to divine law.

These currents can not merely be regarded as sinful but also as causes of suffering and personal disadvantage to whoever violates the laws, even when this violation happens unconsciously.

We are not concerned in this group with wrong actions, or even crimes.

All of you, without exception, know what the proper action is, and most of the time you try your best to perform only proper actions.
But

none of you are as yet able to

• control your emotions,

• understand their hidden meaning

and to

• recognize how these emotions have influenced your life.

Many of you constantly doubt God's justice because you have to endure so much suffering while you are trying your best to be

• good and

• decent.

You may think of others whose ethical standards are infinitely lower than your own and yet they seem to fare better.

You do not understand

• the reason for this [i.e., You do not understand the reason why those who you think have ethical standards infinitely lower than your own seem to fare better in life than you do],

nor

• the "justice" [i.e., nor do you understand the “justice” in this happening].
The reason [i.e., The reason why those who seem to have much lower ethical standards than you do and yet who, unjustly it seems to you, fare far better in life than you do]

is that

in the unconscious
the personality
creates
• reactions [i.e., creates emotional reactions]
  and
• conclusions
  that assume
  a rigid form.

We call this rigid form
an "image."

The image
consists of
certain impressions
from which
general conclusions
have been drawn.

These [i.e., These general conclusions about how life works]
not only
• cause a chain reaction
  within your soul,
but eventually
they also
• control and
• direct
  your outer life.

This [i.e., The image (consisting of these rigid general conclusions about how life works) causing a chain reaction within your soul and eventually controlling and directing your outer life]
happens
• even though –
  and
• because –
  the image
  is
unconscious.
On this path
we are concerned with
seeking out
the wrong images [i.e., seeking out and making conscious
the unconscious wrong images]
that the human soul harbors.

There are practically
no exceptions to this rule [i.e., this rule that the human soul has unconscious
wrong images that eventually direct one’s outer life and cause suffering]
unless we think of
the very few purified beings
who come to this earth
in order to fulfill a mission.

In the two previous lectures [see Lectures 38 – Images and 39 – Image-Finding]
I started to indicate
how the images can be found.

This [i.e., This process of finding images]
cannot be an easy process,
for
what dwells in
• the unconscious
is hidden from
• conscious awareness.

I have given you methods
to bring these
unconscious images
to the surface.

This [i.e., Bringing unconscious images to the surface], my friends,
is the only way
to control your life
to some extent.
Some people –
  often those who are
devoutly religious –
think that they
must accept
any
difficulty
as a sign of humility.

This [i.e., That people must accept ANY difficulty as a sign of humility]
is true
  only to the extent
  that they have
accepted
  the law that they violated.

The willingness to
accept a difficulty,
• recognizing
  one's own responsibility [i.e., recognizing and accepting
    one's own responsibility for one's difficulty]

  instead of
  • vaguely blaming
    the "injustice of the law," [i.e., instead of blaming the "injustice of
      the law" for one's difficulty]

    constitutes
    true humility,
    my dear ones.

True humility
cannot be
  a completely passive state,
  which has just as little to do with humility
  as outright rebellion.
True humility is
- passive
  only inasmuch as it accepts
  the temporary state of suffering,
  understanding that it is self-inflicted;

but it [i.e., but true humility] is also
- completely active
  in the willingness to
  - work,
  to
  - overcome,
  to
  - fight,
  and
to
  - recognize self-responsibility
    for all suffering
    in the most direct way possible.

This is a good example of harmonious interplay between the
- active
and the
- passive
  currents.

So you cannot
- sit with your hands in your lap,
  waiting for things to change,
instead of
- changing yourself
  from the inside out.
You have the power to change whatever mishap occurs in your life.

You have the power to alter your life completely, but not if you merely change superficially, by trying to alter only your actions.

You can change your life only if you search first for the inner causes, the wrong conclusions; in short, your images [i.e., your images, which are unconscious].

Before you can change anything, you must understand what in you brings all the suffering.
Only then [i.e., Only when you understand what in you brings all the suffering] will you gradually be able to
- reeducate your emotions,
- dissolve your images and
- create
  - new,
  - productive forms in your soul that correspond to divine law.

But you must comprehend fully that this wonderful possibility [i.e., this wonderful possibility of creating new, productive forms in your soul that correspond to divine law] cannot come to you cheaply.

It [i.e., Creating new, productive forms in your soul that correspond to divine law] is worth every
- effort,
- every conceivable sacrifice,
  for then you truly master yourself.

If you are willing to do this [i.e., If you are willing to make the effort and every conceivable sacrifice necessary to create new, productive forms in your soul that correspond to divine law],

the help will be given to you.
But do not expect that God will change your life for you. God has given you free will, and it is up to you to find out first what these wrong images are and then, with the methods, help and the guidance I am giving you, it becomes possible to change them [i.e. to change these wrong images].

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During [i.e., During the search for wrong images, which are unconscious] and

• the ensuing change [i.e., during the ensuing change from wrong images to productive forms in your soul that correspond to divine law],

• you need the right kind of humility to accept the unhappiness you have produced without getting angry at yourself for still being imperfect,

and

• you need to
  • vigorously and
  • actively
direct yourself into the channel of self-knowledge.
You have to
learn to accept
on all levels of your emotions
that you are
imperfect
at this moment.

I have said this often, my friends,
but I want to make it quite clear,
that
although you all know
consciously
that you are fallible,
your emotions
do not know it [i.e., your emotions, of which you are
unconscious, do not know that you are fallible].

In your emotions
you want to be
perfect,
and when you discover
an imperfection
that seems new to you,
everything in you
revolts
against
the recognition.

One of the many
symptoms of this revolt [i.e., one symptom of this revolt against the recognition
of any imperfection that seems new to you]
is
guilt.
When you approach your own
  • inner,
  • hidden [i.e., unconscious] images –
    the causes of
    • your suffering,
    the causes of
    • all the repetitive patterns running through your life –
you have to anticipate
  coming across
  inner misconceptions
  that will first give you an unpleasant sensation.

To encounter them [i.e., To encounter your unpleasant sensations]
  with a feeling of guilt
  will get you nowhere.

Realize that guilt
  is really
  • the rejection of the state in which you find yourself at this time,
  • an unwillingness to accept yourself as you are.

When you feel uncomfortable doing this work, ask yourself,
"What do I feel?"

Often you are not even aware that your emotional reaction [i.e., not aware that your emotional reaction, this uncomfortable feeling you feel while doing this work of image finding,]
is guilt.
And if you are [i.e., if your are aware that your emotional reaction, this uncomfortable feeling that you feel while doing this work of image finding, is guilt],

you do not realize what the feeling of guilt really means.

In fact, it [i.e., In fact, guilt] is often confused with
• humility and
• repentance.

This
• knowledge of what to expect,
this
• healthy attitude,
this
• analysis of your feelings will lead you to a major recognition.

Formulate the feelings [i.e., Formulate the feelings you feel while doing this work of image-finding].

Be aware that the unpleasant reaction [i.e., Be aware that the unpleasant emotional reaction that you feel while doing this work of image finding,] often occurs before you are aware of what the recognition [i.e., what the image you are beginning to recognize] actually is.
The formulation of your feelings into concise thought is a major part of the work on this path, my friends.

I cannot stress this enough.

When you do this [i.e., When you formulate your feelings into concise thought], you will find that you feel guilty at having erred.

And then ask yourself again,

"Why do I feel guilty of being fallible, of making mistakes, of having faults?"

The answer must invariably be,

"Because I wish to be more than I am, more perfect, more highly evolved.

Something in me does not accept my own ignorance or selfishness or my desire to find the easy way out."
If you

analyze your reactions this way [i.e., If you analyze your emotional reactions this way],

you will

facilitate matters greatly.

And now some further advice about finding your images.

The task [i.e., The task of finding your images] is hard.

I am not trying to make it easier for you.

You could rightly be suspicious if you were to hear that the
• greatest and
• most perfect
treasure can come easily.

But your efforts [i.e., But your efforts to find your images], as many of my friends
• have already found out
and
• can confirm,
will be well rewarded.

Nothing will give you as great a
• power,
as great a
• feeling of security as

surging ahead on this road [i.e., this road of finding your images], at least after the beginning stages.
First
you will gather
a vast amount of
isolated information
about your
inner reactions [i.e., about your inner emotional reactions].

By
• letting your
  emotions [i.e., By letting your emotional reactions]
  come to the surface and
• putting them into
  concise words,
  instead of
  • pushing them aside and
  • covering them up,
you will find things
  you have never been aware of.

They [i.e., These things you find out by letting your emotional reactions
  come to the surface and by putting them into concise words]
  will often surprise you.

These
isolated bits of information
may not connect
for quite a while.

You will not know
what to do with them [i.e., what to do with these isolated bits of information
  that come up when you let your emotional reactions
  come to the surface and put them into concise words].

You will be inclined to say,

"What next?

How does it help me
  to have found out
    that I actually feel this way
    when I thought that
      my motives
        were different?"
You must not be dismayed [i.e., You must not be dismayed by not knowing how all the pieces of information that you are discovering as you follow your emotional reactions fit together into a whole picture].

On the contrary, finding the pieces of information will be extremely useful, even if at the beginning they do not add up.

Continue on searching, and you will receive the necessary help.

Again I emphasize, no one is capable of doing this work alone.

That [i.e., Doing this work of searching for your images alone] is impossible.

But whoever is willing, will receive help and ways will be found to bring such a willing person to another member of this group so a team can be formed.

If you continue the work, you will see that all the isolated pieces of information will connect.

You will find a chain reaction, a vicious circle in yourself.
One reaction [i.e., One emotional reaction] leads to another [i.e., leads to another emotional reaction] until the circle closes.

When you have found several such vicious circles, you will have made a major step forward.

Slowly but surely you will begin to understand certain things about yourself and your life.

But even this [i.e., even when you have found several such vicious circles and as a result understand certain things about yourself and your life, this] is not sufficient.

You have merely found the barest structure, the overall plan that will make it a lot easier for you to continue.

The work of filling in [i.e., filling in the structure and the details of the overall plan] has yet to start.

At this point, you will still be unable really to grasp, on all levels of your being, what your life and your conflicts mean and how you have caused them [i.e., how you have caused your conflicts].

You may grasp some perhaps [i.e., some of how you have caused your conflicts], but not all [i.e., but not all of the ways you have caused your conflicts in life].
Some of you, my friends, have already arrived at this stage [i.e., arrived at this stage where you grasp some of the ways you have caused conflicts and problems in your life], so I would like to discuss how to proceed from here.

Those for whom this material is new may not be able to understand what I am saying, but something might still reach them [i.e., may reach those who may not yet be able to understand what I am saying] as an echo in their souls.

My words may open the door a little wider, so that the new friends, too, may cross the threshold from dependency on their unconscious motives [i.e., from dependency on their unconscious motives that are causing their emotional reactions] to their independence as free children of God.

My first advice, my dear friends, is, once you have found some of these vicious circles:

Put into words concisely the wrong conclusions they contain.

Write them down, so that they cannot dissolve.

Then you can start meditating on how these wrong conclusions have influenced your life.
For you know that
nothing
is so powerful as
the images [i.e., as the images, of which you are unconscious].

You know that
if desires are contained
in the images
that contradict
your most cherished
conscious desires,
the image-desires
overrule
the outer ones,
no matter
how strong
the latter may be [i.e., no matter how strong your most cherished outer conscious desires may be].

Your images
draw you into circumstances
that correspond to them [i.e., that correspond to your images];

they [i.e., your images, of which you are unconscious]
draw
• the people
and
• the circumstances
to you.

Therefore,
it should not be too difficult for you
to understand,
when you formulate
the wrong conclusions,
what
• was
and
• is
responsible for
your problems in life.
It goes without saying that you should keep your lists of • problems and • conflicts in front of you in black and white.

First, find a common denominator in all these conflicts.

You will not yet know • what caused them [i.e., what caused these problems and conflicts], • how they came about [i.e., how these problems and conflicts came about].

But once you have found these vicious circles, further search will uncover a single common denominator.

Once you have made this list [i.e., this list of problems and conflicts], you will probably be puzzled to find that certain problems have recurred.

They [i.e., These certain problems and conflicts that have recurred] may have taken various forms, but there is always a repetitive pattern.
This [i.e., That certain problems and conflicts have recurred and keep recurring in your life] is the first indication that an image is involved.

If a problem occurs just once, it does not necessarily have anything to do with an image.

But be careful in judging that [i.e., judging whether or not a problem that occurs just once has anything to do with an image].

You should be able to understand clearly how the wrong conclusions that have become conscious have
• affected and
• caused your various conflicts.

This process [i.e., This process of making wrong conclusions conscious and then coming to understand how these now-conscious wrong conclusions have affected and caused your various conflicts] should be painstakingly undertaken by all my friends who work together.

This [i.e., Your working together as a group to painstakingly undertake this process of making wrong conclusions conscious and then coming to understand how these now-conscious wrong conclusions have affected and caused your various conflicts] will indicate where the breaking point of the image lies.
Once
  • the wrong conclusion
    is clear in your mind
  and
  • you have recognized
    how it has influenced your life,
start to
  reverse
  • the circle
  and
  • the conclusion
    into its opposite –
    at this point
    in theory only.

For, of course,
  emotionally
  you are not yet capable of
  living
  according to
  the right reactions.

But
  if you face
  your wrong conclusions
  by
    • feeling them [i.e., by feeling your wrong conclusions],
    by
    • re-experiencing
      all the emotions [i.e., by re-experiencing all the emotional
      reactions connected with your wrong conclusions]
      consciously,
you can then see
  what
  the right conclusion
  would be.

If you will
  meditate on this
  daily,
eventually
  your reactions [i.e., your emotional reactions]
  will change.
It is not sufficient that your thinking changes; your thinking might have been absolutely correct long before you ever found out anything about an image.

The important thing is that your emotions [i.e., that your emotions and spontaneous emotional reactions] change.

The wrong conclusions always contain several of your faults, some of which you may be aware of, but you have not been aware of how they [i.e., how your faults] played into your images.
Your images may contain a whole nucleus of faults.

But although you should not look for your faults when you search for the images – for the unconscious does not like a moralizing attitude – at this point [i.e., at this point when you are still searching for the images], once the bare structure of the image has become conscious, you should see which of your faults also play a role in it [i.e., play a role in your image].

One of the universal elements of images is fear.

If you analyze how a particular fear is connected with your personal faults, if you also understand • where your ignorance lies and • the resulting wrong conclusion, you will have again advanced a major step toward the dissolution of your images.
There are several generalizations that apply to images.

One is that human beings are afraid of

- being hurt,
- things going against their will.

Because of this fear [i.e., Because of this fear of being hurt or this fear of things going against their will] – which, of course, can exist only because of

- self-will and pride –

the personality builds defenses.

People think that by adopting a certain attitude they will avoid what they fear in life:

- pain,
- suffering,
- disappointment.

The error [i.e., the error in thinking that by building certain defenses or adopting certain attitudes one will avoid pain, suffering, or disappointment], the wrong conclusion [i.e., the wrong conclusion contained in such thinking] lies in failing to realize that by building these defenses [i.e., these defenses against pain, suffering, or disappointment]

- you not only do not avoid the suffering,
- but it [i.e., but your pain, suffering, or disappointment] actually becomes worse.
To the
  • ignorant lower self of the human being
to the
  • childish and
  • immature
    side of the personality,
    the protective measure [i.e., the protective measure to protect against
    pain, suffering, and disappointment]

    seems
    very
    • good and
    • logical.

Still,
  you cannot help but realize
  how faulty your defense mechanism was
  when you built your image,
    if
    you will think it through consciously [i.e., if you will think
    through this image with its associated defenses],
    viewing the whole problem
    from this angle [i.e., from this angle of defenses against
    pain, suffering, and disappointment, defenses
    that you now see are associated with your images].

Not only
  were you unable
  to avoid pain,

  but
  in the long run
    it [i.e., the defense mechanism against pain contained in this image]
    brought you
    infinitely greater pain
    than you would have had
    if you had
    not
    built the defenses
    of this image.
It is very important, my friends,
when you reach this stage [i.e., when you reach this stage where you realize how faulty your defense mechanism was when you built your image] that you consider your images from this viewpoint [i.e., from this viewpoint of the defense mechanisms contained in your images].

Ask yourself,

"Why did I build it [i.e., Why did I build this particular image]?"

What was the occasion?

What did I want to protect myself from [i.e., What pain, suffering, or disappointment did I want to defend myself against]?

How did it work out in reality [i.e., How did my image with its defenses work out in reality]?

And how would my life work if I did not have this false, protective measure – this image?"

The answer will always be:

There is no iron-clad insurance for warding off pain [i.e., warding off pain, suffering, and disappointment].

You cannot go through life without it [i.e., You cannot go through life without pain, suffering, and disappointment].

You all know this.
Since
no ordinary human being
is pure,
pain is,
to some degree,
unavoidable.
But
if
• you
  accept life
  with its pain [i.e., with its pain, suffering, and disappointment],
  always trying to understand
  what
  in you
  called it forth,
and
• you meet it [i.e., and if you meet life’s inevitable and unavoidable pain]
  voluntarily,
you will not only
  • encounter much less pain [i.e., much less pain, suffering, and disappointment],
  but
  • the pain [i.e., but the pain, suffering, and disappointment]
    that is unavoidable
    will not hurt half as much.

• Remember that [i.e., Remember that if you accept life with its pain, always trying
  to understand what in you called this pain forth, and if you meet this pain
  voluntarily, then you will not only encounter much less pain, but the pain
  that is unavoidable will not hurt half as much],
my friends, and
• look at
  your own
  • conclusions,
  • defense mechanisms, and
  • images
  from this angle:

  • "What did I try to avoid [i.e., What pain, suffering, or
    disappointment did I try to avoid in my wrong conclusions,
    my defense mechanisms, and my images]?

  • How well did I succeed [i.e., How well did I succeed in avoiding
    this pain, suffering, or disappointment by means of my wrong
    conclusions, my defense mechanisms, and my images]?"
Then
   think about pain [i.e., Then think about pain, suffering, and disappointment]
   a little differently.

Try to think about it [i.e., Try to think about pain, suffering, and disappointment]
   with
   • a maximum degree of detachment,
   or with
   • a fresh new outlook.

You will all realize that
   pain [i.e., that pain, suffering, or disappointment]
   is also
   relative.

Fear of pain [i.e., Fear of pain, suffering, or disappointment]
   is always
   infinitely worse than
   the pain itself [i.e., than the pain, suffering, or disappointment itself].

It is the same with
   physical pain.

If you
   push against it [i.e., If you push against physical pain],
if your muscles
tense up,
an incision
will be much more painful
   than
   if you relax.
There are certain people who have such control over their minds and bodies that they can endure dreadful injuries without feeling any pain.

They have learned to accept the oncoming pain without any revolt, giving themselves up to it.

Thus they are in such a high state of relaxation that what would ordinarily hurt badly does not hurt anymore.

It is exactly the same with pain in the soul.

Apart from this [i.e., Apart from the fact that pain in the soul would not hurt nearly as much if you would not fear such pain but rather could accept such soul pain in a high state of relaxation],

many of your problems and worries would not exist if you understood yourselves and your images.
My dear friends,
finding out that you yourself are responsible [i.e., you yourself are responsible for your life] is a major point of this work.

Many misunderstandings of this concept [i.e., Many misunderstanding of this concept that you yourself are responsible for your life] are possible.

In the first place, many people think that the concept of self-responsibility eliminates God.

They either think that
- there is a God who directs their lives,
  and
- if they suffer, they have to take it on the chin –
  or they turn to
  • atheism.

This [i.e., The concept that self-responsibility eliminates God] is not necessary, my dear ones.

Self-responsibility represents a burden to you as long as you feel guilt at finding your inner errors.
But

once you have overcome
this error [i.e., once you have overcome this error of feeling guilt
at finding your inner errors]

by
accepting yourself
• as you are
  now,
  without
  • revolt and
  • anger,
  without
  • the wrong kind of
    • shame or
    • guilt,
  • as having the courage
    to be yourself
    in every respect,

then

self-responsibility
will liberate you.

Understanding
what
in you
has caused
your
• problems,
your
• worries,
your
• discontent and
• unhappiness,
  will make you stronger
  than
  any false security
  ever could.
Whether you have looked for this false security [i.e., this false security to avoid your problems, your pain, your worries, your discontent, or your unhappiness] in

- **your relationships with others** [i.e., looking for false security in your relationships with others],

- **ideas,** [i.e., looking for false security in ideas.] or

- **a distorted concept of God** [i.e., looking for false security in a distorted concept of God.]

does not make any difference.

- **Strength** and

- **freedom** will come to you long before you are able to change your

  - **emotions** [i.e., your emotions or emotional reactions],

  - **images,** or

  - **habitual inner reactions.**

It [i.e., Strength and freedom] will come to you the moment you have fully understood your own

  - **causes and effects.**

**Self-responsibility is crucial**

in this connection [i.e., Self-responsibility is crucial in connection with your coming to understand fully your own causes and effects as related to your life and your problems],

my dear ones.
There is hardly a human being who does not want to avoid it in some way [i.e., who does not want to avoid in some way the self-responsibility required to come to understand fully one’s own causes and effects in creating one’s own life and its lack of freedom, its unhappiness, its pain, and its problems],

despite
your revolt against
your self-inflicted lack of freedom.

This conflict [i.e., This conflict between 1) revolting against your self-created lack of freedom on the one hand, and, on the other hand, 2) wanting to avoid self-responsibility for your life and its lack of freedom, its unhappiness, its pain, and its problems]
can be resolved
only by finding out
• why
and
• how
you have
• curtailed your own freedom,
• given up self-responsibility
in order to choose
what seemed like an easier way of life.
The reactions to
taking responsibility for one's life
vary with each individual.

Everyone is made up
of different
• currents,
• faults, and
• qualities
  that interplay differently
  in different relationships.

So one person may,
for the same basic reason,
  have a completely different reaction [i.e., emotional reaction]
  than another,
  although they are both motivated by
    the desire
      to escape self-responsibility.

And the more you escape this [i.e., the more you escape self-responsibility]
in your inner life,
the more chained
you become.

Straining in these chains,
you
• kick against
  the world,
    feeling it [i.e., feeling the world]
      unjust,
and often even
• wallow in self-pity
  while you prevent yourself from
    breaking the chains.
The first step to freedom is to recognize
• how,
• where, and
• why
you
have inflicted this dependency [i.e., this dependency for your life on people and events outside yourself] on yourself.

If you understand
• your inner motivations and
• how they [i.e., how your inner motivations] have actually brought you more suffering than what you had hoped to avoid [i.e., more suffering than the suffering you had hoped to avoid],
you will become free.

So, for the time being, approach image-finding from the angle I have just shown you:

(1) Self responsibility: find out
   (a) where you have caused your suffering [i.e., your suffering, pain, etc.] and
   (b) how it is in your power to change it [i.e., how it is in your power to change your suffering].

(2) Find out about your fear of being hurt [i.e., your FEAR of being hurt, disappointed, etc.].
Realize that this [i.e., Realize that your FEAR of being hurt, disappointed, etc.] 
causes 
all 
your misery.

This excessive fear [i.e., This excessive FEAR of being hurt, disappointed, etc.] 
makes you behave 
like a person 
so afraid of death 
that he commits suicide.

That [i.e., Committing suicide] 
is what you 
all 
are doing 
with your images, 
my friends.

You are 
so afraid of hurt 
that you create forms in your soul 
that bring you 
more 
needless 
hurts 
than would befall you 
without 
your imagined defenses.

My friends, 
hurt 
has to be accepted 
• not because 
  God gives it to you 
• but because 
  you have given it to yourself.
This [i.e., That you have given hurt to yourself], however, should not lead you to revolt against • yourself or against • the wise law that created the situation.

You need to accept that you are • imperfect and that you • suffer according to the measure of your imperfection.

The more you work toward your purification, the more you will alleviate the suffering.

Among other requirements, that [i.e., the fact that you must work toward your purification to alleviate the suffering] means not expecting a miracle overnight.

Understand that you learn also by • meeting the pain, by • accepting it [i.e., by accepting the pain caused by your imperfection] as long as you are in this stage [i.e., in this stage of purification].
The more relaxed you can be in viewing yourself and your suffering, finding out the causes [i.e., finding out your imperfections that are causing the pain] and eliminating them [i.e., eliminating the causes of your pain, that is, doing the work of purification required to gradually eliminate your imperfections], the faster you will get over it [i.e., get over your suffering].

And then [i.e., And by accepting your pain, and then taking self-responsibility for going through this relaxed process of purification in which you SLOWLY eliminate the imperfections causing your pain, thereby SLOWLY getting over your suffering] you will have the proper attitude toward pain.

Only by accepting pain – and this [i.e., and accepting pain while taking self-responsibility for the purification required to remove the imperfections causing your pain] is the only healthy way [i.e., is the only healthy way of accepting pain], avoiding both masochism and cringing revolt – will pain finally cease.
When you completely accept pain, you go through it; and only by going through something can you reach beyond it.

All the great philosophers of this world teach you that
- pain
- and
- pleasure
become one
  in the absolute;

I am showing you the way to reach that state [i.e., the way to reach that state of oneness where pain and pleasure become one in the absolute].

You cannot attain pleasure by avoiding pain,

but you certainly can [i.e., but you certainly can attain pleasure] by going through it [i.e., by going through the pain] in full understanding of how you yourself produced it [i.e., how you yourself produced the pain through your imperfections].
So as to avoid misunderstanding,
I emphasize once more
that acceptance of pain
does
not deny
your power
to avoid it [i.e., acceptance of pain does not deny your power to avoid pain]
on this path of purification.

Quite the contrary.

But pain
cannot be dealt with
superficially;

it [i.e., dealing with pain]
calls for
• hard and
• patient
work,
going into
the depth of your soul.

This work [i.e., This work of dealing with pain]
demands
your best, my friends,
for that [i.e., for giving your best]
is the only way
you can
receive
the best of life.
And now to your questions, my dear friends.

QUESTION:  
You said several times that the cause of sickness is in ourselves.

I am meditating on this subject and I can't figure it out.

Let's say a disfiguration of a bone....

ANSWER:  
You must differentiate between
• karmic sickness
and
• non-karmic sickness.

This does not apply only to
• physical sickness
but to
• every other hardship in life – and hardship is always disease, spiritually speaking.

The technicalities of cause and effect work the same way in
• karma [i.e., where causes occurred a previous lifetime] as within
• a single lifetime.
| 42 | In both cases [i.e., In the cases both where the causes occurred in a previous lifetime as well as in the cases where the causes occurred in the current lifetime] it is up to you to eliminate the negative causes.

There are, however, certain difficulties you cannot overcome in this life; you just have to bear them.

That [i.e., That there are certain difficulties you cannot overcome in this lifetime but simply have to bear] does not mean that you cannot eliminate the causes – that [i.e., eliminating the causes of CURRENT difficulties, CAUSES that occurred in a PREVIOUS lifetime] has to be done at one time or another anyway – but the effects [i.e., the current effects and difficulties due to those causes that occurred in a previous lifetime] have to be borne.

| 43 | Other, non-karmic effects can be eliminated.

A karmic debt manifests as a single event.
An effect [i.e., An effect, difficulty, pain, or problem due to various causes] that can be dissolved usually recurs
• constantly,
• in a pattern.

This [i.e., An effect or difficulty that usually recurs constantly, in a pattern] does not mean that the causes were not started in former lives and
• are thus karmic too, technically speaking.

But you can find a starting point in this life, and by following through this work, you often can
• change your life and
• eliminate your conflicts.

Besides, it is not even necessary for you to know [i.e., to know whether your problem or difficulty is caused by a karmic debt or whether its causes started in this lifetime].
Since
• it [i.e., Since the cause of your problem or difficulty, whether it occurred in this life or in previous lives] is actually quite the same, and
• any ill-effect must be dissolved by you in any event,
you should approach your purification in the same spirit, whether it concerns • a karmic debt or whether it applies to • causes started in this life, perhaps with a seed you have brought over from former incarnations.

The definite knowledge that a certain state is karmic would only make you • lazy and
• say, “I have to bear this [i.e., I have to bear this, since it is a karmic debt and not something I caused in this lifetime],” instead of doing the necessary work [i.e., necessary work of purification], no matter what the cause.

I can safely say that very few of my friends have karmic circumstances that cannot be changed.
Here is
   a room full of people,
   and
   not one person
   is completely happy.

There is
   not one person
   who would not want
   some kind of change,
   perhaps not
     • a pronounced change,
     • a conscious
       "I want this instead of that,"
   but you may feel
     • an unhappiness,
     • unrest,
     • disharmony,
     • fear,
     • insecurity,
     • loneliness,
     • yearning.

All of you, my friends,
   including those who will read these words,
   have the power to change this
   if you want to.

And if
   your unconscious immature nature
   were not so unreasonable
   that it
   wished for
   effortless change,
   you would be
   much further advanced.
It is my advice for all those who are still struggling on this threshold [i.e., on this threshold of whether or not to choose to take self-responsibility for their life by finding and dissolving images]
to ask themselves,

"What do I really want?

What does
• my uncertainty,
• my indecision
actually mean?

Doesn’t it mean that
• I revolt against unhappiness and
• I wish for change but I am unwilling to bring it about myself?"

Anyone who has this resistance should pose that question.

If you can answer [i.e., If you can answer the above question], you have attained the first victory because you will then see what an
• unreasonable and
• childish streak lives within you.

For that [i.e., For whatever this unreasonable childish streak that lives within you wants] is what you actually desire.
Yes my friends,
that [i.e., whatever this unreasonable childish streak that lives within you wants] is what all of you would want,
that
  • the work [i.e., that any work required to get what the child within wants]
    be done
    for you,
that
  • the dear God in Heaven
give it to you [i.e., that the “dear God in Heaven” give you whatever this unreasonable child in you wants].

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QUESTION:
One of my students asked:

What is more important,
  • knowledge in the form of
    • general knowledge,
    • science,
  • knowledge of
    • the universe,
    • the manifested world,
or
  • emotional self-knowledge?

Clearly,
  emotional self-knowledge
  is more important.

But what do you have to say to those spiritual aspirants who in some way disregard science?

They claim that
  spiritual development alone
  would bring the highest good
  without it being integrated with
  the knowledge of the manifested world.
ANSWER:
There are many
whose call it is
to concentrate mainly
on their spiritual development
and they fulfill their task
by doing so.

There can be
no doubt about it.

Certainly this [i.e., Certainly spiritual development]
is the most important thing
for
all
human beings.

But it is a mistake
• to transfer their own task [i.e., to transfer
  their own task of spiritual development]
on all others,
or
• to make
  a general rule of it [i.e., to make a general rule about spiritual development
  being the most important task for everyone].

The unfoldment of
the universal forces
is
• manifold and
• varied.

Nothing must be curtailed.

Many have
different tasks:
one in
• the arts,
others in
• science,
and so on.
Oneness

must eventually
result from
such diversity
throughout Creation.

The ideal case
would be that
• scientists,
• artists, or
• whoever else is contributing to
the final oneness,
  • follow
    their own spiritual development
  • while they simultaneously worked on
    their particular
    • talent and
    • task.

This [i.e., Working simultaneously on their spiritual development WHILE they work on their particular talent and task]
certainly can be done.

In fact,
their work [i.e., their work on their particular talent and task]
would increase many times in
• quality and
• creativity
if it were combined with
• purification and
• self-development.
There are many talented human beings who have not yet progressed that far, however.

They may have a great talent in one direction and eventually they contribute with it to the unfoldment of the spiritual forces, even though the connection [i.e., the connection between their talent and the unfoldment of the spiritual forces] cannot always be discovered right away.

In a roundabout way, scientific improvement must lead to the same spiritual reality as self-knowledge, no matter how much science may be abused temporarily.

Therefore it is a mistake to advocate one's own inclination for all.
So

some human beings
may combine their
• spiritual development
with
• science,
others
with
• an art,
still others
perhaps
• in the kitchen,
• in nature,
    and so on.

In much later stages
all these will become
one,
but this oneness
can never be accomplished
if you are not first
one
with yourself.

You have often heard
the expression
"to be one."

How can you follow this through
in practice?

By this work of
image-finding.
It will be much easier to understand how you are not "one" at this time when you find your images.

You will then see how your
- intellect,
- conscious layers, are convinced of your good motives because of the rationalizations you have concocted for yourself.

But when you dig deeper you will find out that your
- reactions [i.e., your emotional reactions] and
- desires take an entirely different direction [i.e., a direction that is entirely different from the direction of your intellect and your conscious layers that are convinced of your good motives].

So you are split in several respects.

If you cannot become one within yourself – and that can be done only in this work – then how can you become one in all the divine manifestations much later?

First things must come first.
There are now several thoughts in this room:

"Why should it be possible to purify only in this way [i.e., only by finding and dissolving images]?

There are many people who do not know anything about images, yet they also develop."

True, my friends, but in the last analysis it always comes back to this:

No matter
• what period of history,
• what part of the earth you live in,
no matter
• what names are chosen [i.e., chosen for the purification process],
the idea [i.e., the idea of “finding and dissolving images” for purification] always remains the same:
   to find
      how you deviate in your
      • unconscious
   from your
      • conscious
      mind.

Those who do not take this wonderful opportunity now [i.e., this wonderful opportunity to find and dissolve images now in their pathwork]
cannot escape this work at a later time.

Granted, the same purification is possible
• in the spirit world and
• by coming back incarnation after incarnation with the same images until
   life
      • teaches the entity and
      • thus gradually dissolves them.
But think how much you can save yourself,
if you are willing to do this work [i.e., willing to do this work of image-finding].

Only those who have understood some of their images
will have an inkling
of how much they would have had to go through
until they learned
• what they have to learn
and
• what they could learn in this search [i.e., in this search
for images].

You are always so concerned with
finding out about
your previous incarnations.

It would be more useful
if you would
• meditate and
• think
about your future.

By
• knowing
your images
and
• finding
and
• understanding
them truly,
you can very well figure out
what your future incarnations might be
if you were
not
to take this great opportunity [i.e., if you were NOT to take this
wonderful opportunity to find and dissolve
your images NOW in your pathwork].
**QUESTION:**
Could there be a person
almost without manifested knowledge
who could still reach into
the highest sphere?

**ANSWER:**
But of course!

*Erudition*
has nothing to do with
self-knowledge,
unless it [i.e., unless such erudition – such extensive book learning]
• serves and
• helps
development.

*If erudition*
is an end in itself;
it does not enhance
spiritual development.

*Of course,*
a natural intelligence
is necessary for this path
but that [i.e., but natural intelligence]
is something completely different.

*Erudition*
is sometimes
even more
• a hindrance
than
• an asset.

*It [i.e., Erudition and extensive book learning]*
may serve as a
• subterfuge
and
• rationalization,
even as
• an escape.
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<th>QUESTION:</th>
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<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Also, erudition does not stay with the monad [i.e., with the individual].</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In other words, it [i.e., erudition and extensive book learning] can be discontinued.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is that so?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ANSWER:</th>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Certainly.</td>
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<td>Anything that is superficial is discontinued.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Only what reaches the deeper layers of your being remains.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>That is why it is so important that you integrate • your emotions with • your superficial outer knowledge, if the latter [i.e., if your superficial outer knowledge] follows a higher ethical line as is often the case.</td>
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</table>
That [i.e., Integrating your emotions with your superficial outer knowledge] is the whole point on this path.

You know that when you die, not only
• your physical body disintegrates
  but
• the outer subtle body as well [i.e., but the outer subtle body disintegrates as well] at some later time.

None of it [i.e., None of your physical body or outer subtle body] constitutes your real personality.

These outer layers [i.e., Your physical body and your outer subtle body] are necessary to fulfill your work on this earth plane, therefore they [i.e., therefore your physical body and your outer subtle body] should bring out the inner person.

The inner subtle bodies remain.

These [i.e., These inner subtle bodies] are the very layers you reach by digging into your emotions.

An entity may be incarnated with a certain amount of knowledge.

Your present environment may offer you additional knowledge.

It is up to you what you do with it.
Do you use it [i.e., Do you use the knowledge you brought into this incarnation and the knowledge you picked up from your present environment] on a superficial level?

Then this knowledge will be gone after the outer subtle body disintegrates.

But if you use it to integrate
• your real self
with
• this new outer knowledge for the purpose of development,
then the knowledge you are privileged to absorb in this environment will have served its only valuable use.

Every one of my dear human brothers and sisters gathered here:

• Receive and
• absorb this divine blessing streaming to you.

Let it [i.e., Let this divine blessing streaming to you] strengthen you in the one way you need it best, namely
to go out and
break your prison walls.
Be willing
to do it [i.e., Be willing to go out and break your prison walls]
and then
go to God.

But do not expect
God
to do it for you.

God will
• show
  you
  the light of love
and
• help.
  • Courageous
  and
  • noble
  is the person who has said yes
  to this search.

And may many more of my dear friends
enter this threshold
and
leave the dark tunnel behind.

Joyful blessings
of love
• envelop
and
• penetrate
  you.

Be in peace,
my dear ones,
be in God.
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