

Pathwork on
God's "Punishment"? Hard Times, Free Will and the Beautiful Plan of Salvation

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 18 *Free Will*, covers the Pathwork metaphysics related to many religious doctrines and puts them in perspective of a loving God's beautiful Plan of Salvation. *This is a good summary of Pathwork!*

This lecture purports that God never punishes, but Spiritual Law results in cause and effect. What I may see as God's "punishment" for my "sin" is nothing more than the Law of Cause and Effect playing out in my life. Through various causes I have put in motion, unpleasant effects or pleasure come into my life. My prayer is not that unpleasant effects be magically removed, or that my "deserved punishment" be "atoned for" by the redemptive works of another (in my upbringing, by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for my sin so I can go to heaven), but rather **my prayer is that I come to see how my thoughts, feelings, and actions** taken by my own **free will**, influenced by my **faults and weaknesses**, have resulted in and will continue to result in my eventual misery or happiness. Once I truly "get" that I bring about my own misery or joy, of my own free will I can make other choices leading to joy and bliss as my life choices begin to align more with Spiritual Law. Of course there is still the issue of my negative intentionality that commits me (by virtue of my participation in the Fall) to staying separate from God and resistant to God's Plan of Salvation. But eventually, by the Grace of God's Love embodied in the Plan of Salvation, all beings, including me, return to God and experience bliss. God does not want me to be "His little dependent child" forever under the care of a "good daddy" but rather God wants me to **grow up**, unfolding evermore the capacity of love, joy, beauty, creativity, wisdom and truth that are my Essence, potential and destiny. **"Bad times" are the medicine leading to my salvation.** Unfortunately (or fortunately, I guess) the medicine doesn't taste good!

12	<p>Many people think that having free will means they can do or think anything they please without causing any effect. This conception of free will is of course a gross error.</p> <p>God has created the Universe, which is governed by an infinite number of laws. He created His children and gave them free will so they could choose to keep or not to keep the laws long before this earth and this material world came into existence.</p> <p>The keeping of these laws entails happiness, love, harmony, light, and supreme wisdom, because God, who is perfect, cannot create anything but perfection.</p> <p>Yet, if any creature were to be forced to stay within the framework of these laws, as if they had no free will, the laws would neither be what they are, nor would they be in accordance with the nature of God. There would be a discrepancy between the basic law of free will and its application in Creation.</p>
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	<p>Beauty, harmony, wisdom, bliss, and love cannot be if the experience of these states is forced on the individual against his or her will or against the individual's <u>own recognition</u> of the wisdom and perfection of the laws. Then God would not be a god of freedom, but a god of slavery, even if His creatures could be happy in an enforced system.</p> <p>Thus each creature -- human or spirit -- has the possibility of choosing to live according to the laws or not. There lies the key to this question; not only the key to an added understanding of free will, but also to an understanding of the coming into existence of evil, darkness, and cruelty -- in short, the fall of the angels.</p> <p>So many people wonder how a god of love could have created evil. But God did not create evil. As you may understand now, He gave each creature the opportunity to freely choose or not choose to follow His laws of perfection.</p>
13	<p>You may say that it is difficult to abide by the divine laws, and indeed it is, in some respects. Whoever has at one time or another left divine law indeed finds it difficult to abide by it again.</p> <p>But for those who have never left it -- and there are a great many to whom this applies -- it is not difficult.</p> <p>The difficulty lies solely in purifying yourself, step by step, until you reach the state that was once yours, where the keeping of the law did not present any difficulty for you.</p> <p>Here I should like to stress that you did not choose to leave divine law because it was too difficult to keep.</p> <p>1) In whatever aspect of your personality you have not deviated from divine law -- for this did not happen necessarily in every aspect -- or</p> <p>2) in whatever aspect you have succeeded in purifying yourself in previous incarnations back to your original state, it is not the least bit difficult for you to keep the laws.</p>
14	<p>The difficulty varies with each individual. For one person it may be difficult not to steal. For another, this presents no difficulty whatsoever, while not losing her temper does. For a third, it may be difficult not to be envious, and so on.</p> <p>It is your aim, through spiritual development and progress, to reach a state where you are able to live within divine law in every conceivable respect without any difficulty at all.</p> <p>And this state, of course, can only be accomplished through your own choosing and your own free will.</p>

15	<p>All this will perhaps also clarify for you the idea of "punishment," against which so many of you revolt. There is no god who dishes out arbitrary punishment. God has created perfect laws and perfect conditions for His children to follow freely or not.</p> <p>If you choose the word "punishment" for that, it is your affair, but you will admit that this gives an altogether wrong slant on the facts as they truly are.</p> <p>God's creation is so perfect and His laws are of such supreme wisdom and love that whatever individuals do -- even those who have deviated from His laws -- they must ultimately find their way back to His laws and thus to a state of utter bliss and perfection. The equation must come out even in the end. It must happen one way or another.</p> <p>To understand this is perhaps one of the greatest difficulties for humankind. However, I will try to give you an explanation though it is difficult for me, having to use human speech, which represents a very great hindrance for us spirits.</p>
16	<p>It appears at first sight that the further you move away from God and His laws of perfection, the more difficult it is to find your way back.</p> <p>In a way this is so, but only in a way. I might say that the "technical" difficulty increases, for you have to work your way back step by step to the state of perfection you once possessed. Yet the further away you are from God the <u>unhappier</u> you are, <u>therefore</u> the more assuredly must you ultimately come back to God through this very state of unhappiness.</p> <p>In breaking the law and experiencing the resulting unhappiness lies the remedy itself and the means to alleviate your unhappy state. To do that is what really counts.</p> <p>You can grasp this truth only if you view life and the world not just from your human and present perspective, but from the overall point of view of creation and absolute reality. All this represents a very good subject for meditation.</p>
17	<p>Think of the many people who live in a state of mediocre contentment with no particular problems and conflicts, yet lack <u>real</u> happiness, people who never pull themselves up to search for more and deeper wisdom, truth, and fulfillment. They do nothing to further their spiritual progress.</p> <p>Yet, when they experience a crisis or some unhappiness, that becomes the starting point for them to do something toward reaching a higher degree of consciousness and therefore also of happiness.</p> <p>This example may make it easier for you to understand that unhappiness is the remedy. It is a very important motivation that has not been generally recognized by humankind, except maybe by a few great people.</p>

18	<p>As long as you are dependent on outer happenings over which you have no control, you will never know happiness.</p> <p>You may feel temporary contentment, but you will be constantly afraid to lose it because you cannot control other people and their power over you or over your circumstances.</p> <p>The only happiness that is durable and cannot be taken away by anyone, the only sure footing you can possibly have, comes about when you develop yourself, when you purify and cure your soul of all the sick and wrong currents that deviate from divine law.</p> <p>That is when you find the inner causes responsible for your trials and hardships.</p> <p>Unfortunately, you will not do that most of the time, <u>unless</u> unpleasant events occur in your life.</p>
19	<p>Now God is not sending you these unpleasant occurrences willfully.</p> <p>Due to your deviation from divine law at one time or another, whether in this life or a previous one, you have prepared the conditions that take effect at this very moment.</p> <p>It is by no means necessary for you to know where and how you lived your last life in order to find the roots of your present hardship; for as long as a trend has not been purified it exists in you and is thus available for your recognition, if you are willing.</p> <p>When you know your faults and weaknesses, you must find either directly or indirectly the roots of everything that is not to your liking about your present life.</p> <p>If you go about finding your deviations from divine law, you will be able to begin a purification process and, on a long and upward-winding path, you will walk out of all the darkness into which you have put yourself by choice; no one else has put you there.</p>