

Pathwork on
The Nature of Spiritual AND Psychological Development

The following set of quotes from Pathwork Lecture 87 *The Next Phase on the Path: Questions and Answers* describes the nature of Spiritual and Psychological Growth. The lecture notes that spiritual growth and psychological growth are, in a way, actually one and the same.

Note: My commentary precedes the Pathwork lecture quote that follows it; the lecture formatting is also mine and is intended to help slow us down and let the words penetrate more deeply...

The lecture invites us to look at our progress and growth along our path of development from last year to this year. While Pathwork Lecture 69 *The Folly of Watching for Results While on the Path: Fulfillment or Suppression of the Valid Desire to be Loved* speaks at length on this subject, in Lecture 87 we are invited to look back and see where and how we have grown.

Spiritual and psychological growth are **not measured** in terms of how much **more loving, creative, secure, wise, and powerful** we are compared to where we were a year or two or three ago, but **rather** in terms of **self-awareness** – knowing our **problems** and **conflicts** and a having a **deeper understanding** of how our **faults, images, misperceptions, and ignorance have contributed to our problems and conflicts**. Does looking at our faults mean we are not happier than we were a year ago? While on the surface it may seem we would not be happier, but actually in a deeper way we are happier – for two reasons: the **truth sets us free** and secondly our **happiness comes as a byproduct** so to speak as we do our work in finding, accepting AND dissolving our faults.

04	<p>Looking back at the past working season, we recognize that it was indeed a very fruitful period for all my friends. You have developed. You have, in some cases, grown more than you are aware of at this time.</p> <p>If you try to evaluate where you stood a year ago and where you stand now; if you consider your development not so much in terms of perfection, but rather in terms of awareness of your problems and conflicts,</p> <p>you will truly see that this has been a very decisive period for most of you.</p>
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Take a break, but use it wisely. This Lecture 87 was given June 9, 1961. Lecture 88 was given three months later on September 15. And there were no private sessions during this time either. But the Pathworkers were to continue their self-discovery, especially **looking at their emotional reactions and coming to understand what these emotional reactions might signify**. They were called to **self-responsibility** during this break.

05	<p>In the next working season we hope you will accomplish further insight, growth, and self-understanding.</p>
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	<p>In order to accomplish this without unnecessary delay, do not consider this interval of inactivity in the group and in private work as a period of stagnation. It need not be that,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">but it depends on you.</p> <p>You can all relax and enjoy yourselves as much as possible and yet continue your search and self-observation.</p> <p>Make this period, in its own way, a time of further growth, even though this may be accomplished in a different way.</p> <p>Let it be a time of preparation and of increased training in <u>awareness of what your emotional reactions signify.</u></p>
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The Guide notes the importance of **deep emotional awareness** that will become the emphasis of the work in the next working year. **Deep emotional awareness is a key aspect both of spiritual development and of “advanced” spiritual states/stages.** So we must work toward this deep emotional awareness – which is **beyond theory** and intellectual “knowing” *about* the existence of these states. **Deep emotional awareness is Knowing via experiencing these states.**

06	<p>When the new working season starts, we shall enter into a new phase, just as we did last year. In this coming phase the principal aim will be less a further theoretical understanding than a <u>great deepening</u> of your <u>emotional awareness.</u></p> <p>To some degree this has already been accomplished, particularly in the last two years, but more is necessary. In the next season I shall give you specific help in this endeavor. You all should know that this is the goal now.</p>
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There is a spiral nature to the work. We **begin** our spiritual journey by laying the foundation of **spiritual concepts and ideas – an intellectual process.** This can lead to “right” thoughts and “right” actions, but these may be coming by will-power and not be coming from “right” underlying **feelings.** The feeling layer is deeper and spontaneous, not manageable or controllable by our will.

True spiritual maturity is a spirituality motivated by deepest feelings, but for this to occur the distorted unconscious emotions must be addressed – emotions that are distorted by unconscious images, wrong conclusions, misperceptions, ignorance and distortions of truth, etc. For spiritual progress to proceed, the distorted emotions must be cleared up, and this is done through so-called **psychological work**, including such practices as daily review where even the slightest disharmony on an emotional level can, over time, be traced to its roots and eventually dissolved. In such **psychological work** the **unconscious becomes conscious.**

As we become more conscious we can return to the spiritual work, only this time **the spiritual work will be done from a deeper more profound level of consciousness.** This process continues as a **spiral**, taking us ever deeper inside ourselves, bringing us to

higher levels of consciousness. Hence the **spiritual and psychological work go hand in hand** as our spiral of spiritual development proceeds. Increasingly our thoughts and actions – love, creativity, wisdom, power, etc. – will come not from a direct edict of our will but rather will spontaneously arise from our real selves, our undistorted Divine Essence, our feeling/emotional selves. Thus this **inner world is the only true reality**. It is **free** and **spontaneous**. This inner world grows as we grow spiritually and psychologically.

07	<p>Some of you have wondered why at the beginning my talks were of a more <u>spiritual</u> nature, while lately the emphasis has been more <u>psychological</u>.</p> <p>Although you all realize by now that true spiritual development cannot occur without clearing up distorted emotions, your knowledge is still largely theoretical and not yet conducive to a true understanding.</p> <p>Only as you become increasingly aware of the true significance of your emotions will you understand that spiritual development deals much more with your unconscious emotions than with your actions and thoughts.</p> <p>The general knowledge you can acquire about them will not really help your spiritual development.</p> <p>But each apparently insignificant insight about your own reactions and emotions will constitute a major step toward spiritual growth.</p> <p>This is why the emphasis has been, and still is, on the unconscious. And the approach that explores the unconscious is a <u>psychological one.</u></p>
08	<p>The time will come, however, when the circle will close and we will return to a more spiritual emphasis, but with a deepened and broadened understanding. We shall come back to this point with a different attitude.</p> <p>Spiritual knowledge, even spiritual action, is one thing. But spiritual living, feeling, being, and inner experience is an altogether different matter, and can be experienced only after the inner world of feeling has been explored and understood.</p>

	<p>The inner world is the only reality that counts. It determines your material life just as much as your spiritual life, as you will find out more and more on this path.</p> <p>You can already see clearly, as a consequence of this work, that your inner problems are responsible for your outer ones.</p>
09	<p>So, my friends, do not for a moment believe that you move away from spirituality by our emphasis on psychological work.</p> <p>The one must include the other, and you will recognize this more and more in the coming phase of our work.</p>

Why is the psychological work necessary? Why can we not simply proceed with the spiritual work and forget about the psychological work? Why do we have to pause or lessen our spiritual work and focus instead on the psychological work, which can be so painful and challenging compared to the spiritual work that inspires us onward?

Ultimately spiritual growth involves **alignment** with **spiritual law**. In the beginning of our spiritual journey we may not be ready to tackle spiritual law! We may even rebel against the idea of spiritual law and having to comply with it. Why? When our consciousness is at the **dualistic level** of the child, the introduction of spiritual laws causes all kinds of problems – excessive **guilt** that leads us to look away in shame and fear because we see our deviations from spiritual law, pretense and exhaustive effort so as to **appear as if** we already comply with the demands of our **idealized self image** that we believe is fully aligned with spiritual law (perfectly loving, wise, powerful, creative, etc.), and, in the end, **rejecting ourselves** rather than **accepting ourselves** as we are as **merely and utterly human**. This guilt, pretense, self-rejection and judgment **blinds us to the Truth** of our humanity (and, hence, blinds us to the Truth of our Divinity).

Through the psychological work, inspired and supported by our spiritual foundation, we courageously address the guilt, the striving to be perfect, and the rejecting of ourselves. Gradually from a relaxed non-judgmental state (non-dual, 50/50 consciousness) we can then return to the spiritual work that continues to inspire us onward. As we grow our emotions and feelings, not just our thoughts and actions, increasingly align with spiritual values. From there we are free to be spontaneous, guided by our now-aligned feelings, by our true spiritual Essence. Our aligned inner life comes forth, now guided by our enlightened feelings and emotional self!

But we must remember that our inner life, our feeling life, when not conscious cannot be directly controlled by our will. To control our inner life, our feeling life, we must **make our unconscious conscious**, and once conscious and understood (coming to know root causes behind negative feelings, etc.) our negative feelings can be controlled by addressing and correcting the causes behind them (misunderstandings, distortions, ignorance, lack of trust, fear, pride, self-will, etc.). Understanding vs. misunderstanding, clear vision vs. distorted vision, knowledge vs. ignorance, faith and trust vs. doubt and

mistrust, etc. lead to **positive feelings** that are aligned with Spiritual Law. These aligned positive feelings can then freely and spontaneously lead our inner life that in turn manifests our outer life. **This process is taking a spiritual approach to our emotions.**

10	<p>If we purposely refrained from evaluating your inner conditions from the viewpoint of spiritual law, we had good reason to do so.</p> <p>As you know, stringent self-judgment is usually destructive and hinders your search.</p> <p>It must not be encouraged at a time when you cannot yet get away from the childish distinctions between so called good and bad.</p> <p>1) This would only strengthen your guilt feelings.</p> <p>2) It would also strengthen the exaggerated demands and standards of your idealized self-image.</p> <p>3) It would hinder you from accepting yourself as you are, and that acceptance is the only basis for growth and change. This fact requires the neutral approach we have adopted.</p>
11	<p>But in the last analysis you will realize that you must apply spiritual values, which up to now you have applied more to actions and thoughts than to feelings, to your inner life.</p> <p>In order to spotlight the feelings without courting the dangers of self-judgment, more substantial growth has to take place.</p> <p>True development is indicated when your inner life corresponds to what you all know to be right, good, true, and loving.</p> <p>However, since feelings cannot be controlled by an effort of will, you cannot simply influence and control them as you do actions and thoughts.</p> <p>Only if and when you completely understand your unconscious reactions and therefore control them, can you safely take a spiritual approach to your emotions.</p>

12	<p>The distinction between the spiritual and the psychological is arbitrary and, in reality, nonexistent.</p> <p>But since you do think along these lines, it is necessary to explain the difference.</p>
13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When you become aware of how you use spiritual values to castigate yourself for falling short of a false perfection; 2) when you understand the falseness of your motivations; 3) when you see the pride and the pretense, contrary to your belief in your goodness; 4) when you are aware of the real aims you wish to pursue with your desire for spiritual perfection, <p style="text-align: center;">then, and only then, can we return to spiritual evaluation and consider your inner problems without damage and obstruction.</p>