

Pathwork Lecture 88: Religion: True and False

1996 Edition, Given September 15, 1961

This lecture is given in an **expanded poetic format**, what I call a **Devotional Version** 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 Version so I can take the words into my heart, phrase by phrase, much as I would in reading poetry -- **devotionally**.

The blessings to me in developing this version have been truly profound, and my wish is that this Devotional Version will be a blessing to others. **I invite you to slowly read and ponder this version 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, sometimes italicized. [My adds of commentary/clarification are in brackets, italicized, and not bolded.] To learn more of my Devotional Version and to access the few lectures I have done in this way, go to <http://www.garyvollbracht.com/quotes/pathwork-lectures-expanded-versions/>
Gary Vollbracht*

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03	<p>Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for all of you.</p> <p>Throughout the ages divine effort was focused on conveying true religion to humankind.</p> <p>That endeavor, however, was accompanied by an unavoidable reaction, not so much of anti-religion, as you may believe, but of false religion.</p> <p>This distortion is promoted by giving to falsehood the appearance of truth.</p>

**If you follow the
history of religion,
you will be able to determine an
obvious
though gradual
trend
with many a relapse,
leading from
the false
toward
the true
religion.**

**Particularly in recent times,
despite,
or maybe
because of
all the
upheaval and
confusion,
the trend is stronger than ever toward
true religion.**

04

**What are the main differences
between
true and
false
religion?**

**One of the main determinants
is that in
false religion
obedience to authority
is one of the great strongholds.**

**In all religions
-- in some more, and in others less --
the concept of
obedience
plays an important role.**

	<p>True religion does not obey. It is free.</p> <p>True religion is a willing process: a free, self-determined action, derived from understanding.</p> <p>It [<i>true religion</i>] makes people act from their own conviction and never from fear, nor from the desire to please and appease a more powerful • person, • being, or • authority.</p>
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05	<p>Obedience to authority has been encouraged by exponents of religion under the half-true and only partly valid argument that humanity was too much enslaved by its passions to be let free.</p> <p>Therefore obedience had to be stressed in order to protect society.</p>
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06

**Superficially
this may seem right;
in reality it is not.**

**For although it is true
that the overall development of humanity
is not advanced enough
to be free of destructive impulses,
the laws to prevent
such destruction
need not be combined
with religion.**

**In other words,
religion would not have to convey
the idea of a stern God-authority
in order to prevent crime.**

**There are other means to effect that
through civil law.
Religion need not be distorted and
truth obscured
by encouraging humanity's
weakest,
sickest, and
most immature
tendencies.**

**It is those tendencies that are exploited
in order to maintain false religion.**

07

**You know by now,
because of your work on this path, that
one of your great struggles is
overcoming the
unconscious desire
to remain a
clinging,
protected
child,**

**to refuse the
apparent hardship of
adulthood,
self-responsibility, and
independence.**

**To the child in you
it seems much better
to remain helpless,
to force the powerful
adult world, or
God, or
any substitute for these two,
to take on the responsibility
for your life
that you yourself should carry.**

**The tremendously damaging effects
that this hidden attitude
has on the personality
can be discovered
only when it becomes conscious.**

**But unconsciously
you battle against this very awareness,
wishfully thinking
in your unconscious
that the disadvantages of adulthood
can be avoided by remaining a child,
who at the same time
refuses to face
the tragic disadvantages of
prolonged childhood.**

**This soul-crippling attitude
finally succeeds in really
making you helpless,
while the god-authority
you desire to
take over your responsibility
is just not there.**

**This [*god-authority being a god-image and not being there in fact*], in turn,
causes
bitterness,
rebellion, and
a deep feeling of injustice.**

**You feel cheated.
After all,
you have obeyed,
often to the letter.**

	<p>But, obedience of this sort always has the wrong motive: "If I obey, you will protect me. You will make decisions for me. I will not be held responsible and I will be rewarded with happiness for being an obedient little child."</p> <p>Since God does not <i>[in fact]</i> "reward" such unhealthy attitudes, you must feel cheated. <i>[Therefore, holding on to this "rewarder" god-image]</i> You cannot help but feel injustice in the world.</p>
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08	<p>False religion has encouraged and capitalized on this very sick tendency <i>[in the child-self]</i>.</p> <p>It <i>[false religion]</i> has set up rules <i>[to obey]</i> and dogmas <i>[to believe]</i>, and has distorted the law into such a rigid concept that humans <i>[children and immature adults]</i> fell easily into this submissive and dependent attitude.</p> <p>False religion encouraged <i>[both in the child and the immature adult]</i> • fear, • dependency, • helplessness, and • a humiliating, though often very subtle, tendency to appease.</p>
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	<p>This has the additional crippling effect of causing <i>[in the child and immature adult]</i> self-contempt and shame, <i>[due to belief that "I'll never be good enough"]</i> which in turn often has to find outlets that become destructive toward others, as well as the self.</p> <p>Rebellion must follow this set of emotions.</p>
09	<p>Whenever</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• fear,• timidity,• nonassertion,• appeasement, and• obedience <p>predominate in a personality, rebellion must exist also.</p> <p>It <i>[rebellion]</i> may not be on the surface, but it must exist! There can be no doubt about it.</p> <p>It will be quite a battle <i>[in the child's and immature adult's psyche]</i> to find this level of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• rebellion,• bitterness,• hostility, and• aggression. <p>This battle is caused by resistance to giving up the cherished self-image of the "good" person.</p>

	<p>The need for such "goodness" mostly stems from the hidden striving to remain a helpless child <i>[rather than grow up into adulthood, staying a child]</i> in order to make the grown-up world -- or God, or life, or human authority – see the necessity <i>[and "duty" of the authority in response to the child's faithful obedience]</i> of taking care of the child.</p> <p>And the child <i>[believes that it]</i> only "deserves" <i>[as a "reward" for "goodness"]</i> such benign care <i>[for its wellbeing]</i> if it maintains its <i>[“perfect”]</i> "goodness."</p>
10	<p>By the same token, if <i>[on the other hand]</i> you encounter in a human being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• overemphasis on independence,• hostile domineering tendencies,• toughness, and• denial of all laws and rules, <p>you may be certain that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• fear,• cringing appeasement, and• helplessness <p>also exist, though hidden from awareness.</p>

	<p>The shame surrounding These [unconscious] tendencies <i>[to fear, appease, and feel helpless]</i> is so great that the outer personality takes on a false freedom and independence in a poor imitation of the real qualities [of freedom and independence].</p> <p>Because such people wish so strongly to avoid the struggle of life, they cringe like [the first group,] the predominantly fearful and appeasing type, but are ashamed of this weakness, as well as of the disappointment of not getting their way.</p> <p>Unconsciously, • they feel alone.</p> <p>They feel rejected • by God, • by life, • by human authority, and this shame must be hidden at all costs.</p>
11	<p>Both crude types <i>[both the fearful, appeasing, and obedient type as well as</i> <i>the type pretending to be free and independent from any authority]</i> -- often appearing in more subtle mixtures and combinations – represent, of course, <i>psychological deviations</i> that can always be traced to parental influences and early experiences.</p> <p>It is also important to consider these <i>[distorted psychological]</i> manifestations from the <i>spiritual and</i> <i>religious</i> point of view, however.</p>

	<p>Complete awareness and understanding of these [heretofore mostly unconscious] attitudes will show you how you inwardly deviate from your [outward] conscious beliefs.</p>
12	<p>So where there is outer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• religious faith,• obedience, and• appeasement, <p>try to find not only the clinging helplessness, but also the hidden resentment that</p> <p>God has not come forth to provide you with what you need and want,</p> <p><i>[namely, that God has not fulfilled His duty]</i> to lead you by the hand, to make life right for you,</p> <p><i>[and finally, that God has not fulfilled His duty]</i> to eliminate from this earth [once and for all]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cruelty and• injustice,• suffering and• pain. <p>Such general complaints are often motivated by the inner subjective disappointment of not being "taken care of" [by God, by those in authority].</p>

	<p>When <i>[on the other hand]</i> you find manifest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• rebellion and• aggressiveness,• a drive for overindependence, <p>try to find deep down in you a wish for the strong hand of <i>[a benign loving]</i> authority that is utterly good to you, and your disappointment that you could not find it.</p>
13	<p>It will be a part of your task in <i>[the psychological work of]</i> self-search to ascertain where false religion exists deep in your soul; where you borrow, as it were, religious precepts behind which you hide and excuse your childish tendencies <i>to refuse to grow up.</i></p>
14	<p>Your <i>conscious</i> right opinions are worth very little when they are undermined by your <i>unconscious</i> beliefs.</p> <p>If you <i>[do not go beyond</i> <i>these right intellectual religious ideas and beliefs, that is, if you]</i> do not <i>[fully]</i> <i>live,</i> <i>experience, and</i> <i>feel</i> these right ideas, they become powerless. They are empty.</p>

**Only when beliefs are
incorporated
at the *emotional* level,
integrated
in the whole character structure,
will they have power.**

**Whenever you wonder
why things happen to you
that run counter to
your [*conscious*] beliefs and
the spiritual laws [*of the Cosmos, laws that*]
you [*consciously*] know so well,
you can be sure that, at least in some respect,
you [*unconsciously*] deviate
inwardly [*from spiritual law*].**

**It will be your task [*as you do your work*] to
find
how and
how much
you *unconsciously*
deviate from
your correct *conscious* opinions.**

**While you may know perfectly well [*intellectually*]
that
God is
neither
a benign [*gracious authority rewarding good behavior
and right beliefs*]
nor
a hostile authority [*punishing bad behavior
and wrong beliefs*],
that
God has freed us
and [*that*]
it is up to us to develop
[*into healthy psychological and spiritual adulthood*],
[*and finally*] you may often find [*to your amazement*] that
your emotions
completely deviate
from such [*conscious intellectual*] knowledge.**

15

**Problems you carry
through many incarnations and
through your childhood
are instrumental in bringing
these *unconscious*
conflicts [*fear, appeasement, disappointments*]
to the surface.**

**But [*also recognize that*] so does
the tendency of
religion to
encourage
*blind obedience.***

**Both [*these internal experiential and external false religious*] causes
produce *personalities* distorted by**

- helplessness,
- false goodness, and
- appeasement;

or

- overindependence,
- rebellion, and
- false toughness;

or [*most often*]

- a combination of both.

**In both instances [*both appeasement of authority and rebellion against authority*]
you hide something and
ardently try to prove
to**

- yourself and
- others

**that the hidden
does not exist.**

In one case

**you hide the
rebellion and
hostility;**

in the other,

**you hide the
helplessness and
desire for protection,
the tendency to
appease and
be falsely "good."**

16	<p>By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• finding,• tracing,• understanding, and• resolving <p>these distortions, you not only <i>[individually]</i> <i>grow up</i> and <i>[thereby]</i> become a stronger and happier human being, you also <i>[on a broader religious and cultural level]</i> contribute much more than you can possibly perceive at the moment toward the elimination of <i>false religion</i> and its <i>[the false religion's]</i> substitution by <i>real religion</i> in the world at large.</p>
17	<p>Obedience, as false religion encourages and teaches it, is completely incompatible with the idea that <i>a free human being can attain divinity.</i></p> <p>Once blind obedience is eliminated from religion <i>[externally]</i> and from the soul of the individual <i>[internally]</i>, rebellion against what is truly • good, • wise, and • loving in religion will cease</p>

because
religion will lose
that tinge of
hypocrisy and
sanctimoniousness
that it so often has
for a number of individuals.

True religion, [which is always one and the same as]
genuine spirituality,
aims primarily
to make you free,
to make you strong,
to make you responsible
so that you
do not wait for justice
to be dished out to you
[by God or other outside authority],
but [rather] discover
your own justice.

With the wrong attitude,
you not only
fail to eliminate
your self-imposed helplessness,
you [even] encourage it,
as well as
encouraging false religion,
even if the
weakness and
clinging to authority
happens to take
a consciously secular form.

Thus you must see that such
immaturity and
soul deviations
play hand in hand with
false authoritarian religion.

Anything false [e.g., false authoritarian religion]
always brings
an equally false countermeasure
[e.g., immaturity, rebellion, weakness, soul deviations].

18	<p>So, find in what subtle, deeply hidden recesses of your soul you expect God <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to live for you;• to make decisions for you;• to bring desired results for you;• to give youwhat you could [perhaps even easily] get for yourself if only you decided to become free and mature.</p> <p>Find in yourself this element that is more harmful than you now can realize.</p> <p>You cripple yourself with this hidden attitude.</p> <p>And you make a false crutch <i>[i.e., you use the authority of false religion as a crutch]</i> out of the truth <i>[rather than use the truth directly for what it is intended].</i></p>
19	<p>False religion does more harm to true religion than complete atheism and materialism [do] because it [i.e., false religion] makes a farce <ul style="list-style-type: none">• of truth,• of the dignity ofthe freedom and divine strength in humanity.</p> <p><i>[And beyond this,] It [i.e., false religion]</i> puts a powerful argument into the mouths of the antireligionists.</p> <p>So it becomes very important that you find where you continue to cling [to the authority in false religion] because you are afraid of standing on your own two feet.</p>

**You may at first wonder
how to go about
finding this element**
[of clinging to or rebelling against authority]
in yourself.

I say
**it does not matter
where you begin
if you focus
on this goal**
*[of finding where you cling to or
rebel against the authority espoused
by false religion].*

Take any negative emotion:

- envy,
- bitterness,
- fear,
- helplessness – and most indicative of all,
- self-pity.

**Once you ascertain these feelings,
it will not be so difficult to find
where you cling to
spiritual and
emotional *[psychological]*
infancy.**

**Search in this direction
even if you believe this doesn't apply to you.**

**If you really want to find the truth
you will.**
*[Remember that] You always have
[found the truth if you truly wanted to].*

**Once you have found this
unconscious insistence
on remaining a *helpless child*,
you will soon come to see
that it
*[this insistence on remaining a helpless child and
refusing to grow up into spiritual adulthood]*
is responsible for**

- your weakness,
- your helplessness,
- your enduring fear of life.

	<p>But <i>[instead]</i> you <i>[unconsciously]</i> combat this discovery <i>[that you do not want to grow up into spiritual adulthood but rather remain a child]</i> by making yourself even</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• more helpless,• more fearful, and• weaker <p><i>[thus setting in motion a vicious circle].</i></p> <p>Once you truly see and understand this,</p> <p>you will begin to change – and your <i>[inner]</i> strength will grow.</p> <p>You will no longer hope for God</p> <p>to give you what you should and could</p> <p>be strong enough to obtain for yourself.</p> <p>And this <i>[experience of obtaining what you want by your own strength]</i> will give you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-respect and• security. <p>While you <i>[still are unwilling to do for yourself and instead]</i> cling to a stronger <i>[external]</i> authority than yourself</p> <p>in order to avoid effort and responsibility <i>[it takes to be your own authority],</i></p> <p>you cannot help feeling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-hate and• self-contempt, <p>and you become</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• weaker and• more helpless <p><i>[and thus enter deeper into the vicious circle]</i></p>
20	<p>Such a <i>[clinging, submissive]</i> relation to authority can take the form of</p> <p>a vague sense that the world at large must be appeased.</p>

**This [vague sense of needing to appease] can be felt also
toward certain people,
or it can actually be
your concept of God,
which then leads to the God-image I have discussed before.*
*False religion and
your unconscious insistence
on remaining an infant
combine to produce this
God-image.***

21

**In the *transitional state* between
giving up false religion and
embracing true religion,
there comes a *phase of nothingness*.**

**It [i.e., this in-between phase of nothingness] is a difficult phase indeed.
It is a phase in which
you feel alone
because
the false god [image of your false childish religion]
is dissolving
and
the true God [of your adult's emerging true religion]
can not yet take hold of your being.**

**In this [in-between] phase
all your faith may begin to crumble.
You may be full of doubts
about the very existence of God.**

**This [sense of a crumbling faith and doubt about the existence of God]
is the consequence of
eliminating**

- the false security,
- the escape,
- the crutch

that are part of spiritual infancy.

**Since the god of your childish concept
indeed does not exist [in fact, and is merely the child's image of God],
God Himself appears temporarily
not to exist at all.**

22

But as
the false religion and
its God-image
vanish,
even while you feel temporarily alone,
an inner force
begins to grow
in you,
long before you become aware of it –
provided, of course,
you are not thrown by
this temporary state [*where you*
sense God does not exist],
but continue to [*do your psychological and spiritual*] **work.**

You need to be willing [*to continue to work and*]
to take it upon yourself [*seemingly without the help of God*]
to become

- whole,
- strong, and
- self-reliant.

You have to determine
not to allow this temporary state [*where you feel God does not exist*]
to crush you into abdicating
life and
struggle.

If you fall into such a state
[of being crushed and defeated by the illusion that God does not exist],
you cannot come out a

- free,
- strong

individual [*i.e., a mature spiritual adult personality*].

[In this state of being crushed by the illusion that God does not exist]

You may again fall back into the
misleading,
shallow
comfort of
false religion
[with its “certainty” and dogma that the external authority
of the god-image is real and should be called upon for
help].

	<p>If [on the other hand] you develop your own strength for the very reason that you feel alone [and in feeling alone, you have no “god” to fall back on], then you will be victorious, and the road to true religion will be paved by your own attitude and effort.</p> <p>This is the only way you can let go of the phantom-god [the god-image of false religion] and develop the real God – freedom within.</p> <p>The way to Him [the real God – freedom within] is through accepting aloneness.</p> <p>Such acceptance will strengthen the independence and self-responsibility essential to the God-creature [the real God you are within] you wish to become.</p>
23	<p>If you understand these words, not only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• intellectually and• superficially, <p>but after working for a while and coming across corresponding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• emotions,• trends, and• reactions <p>within yourself, you will understand two things a lot better than before.</p>

	<p>One [of the two things you will understand better] is the lecture on <i>duality</i>.**</p> <p>Accepting death and the unknown is the only prerequisite for accepting life and happiness –</p> <p><i>[but this kind of accepting is not spiritual bypassing, i.e., it is]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• not accepting death with a wishful-thinking spirituality, by avoiding your fears and doubts;• not by using religion as a crutch to support you in the face of fear and aloneness, <p>but [rather] recognizing and bravely encountering them [death and the unknown].</p> <p>Only then [by bravely encountering death and the unknown] can true religion and knowledge replace the false religion of escape and the vague beliefs that serve only to cover up your fear.</p>
24	<p>There is a mutuality here. Accepting death and the unknown is connected with acceptance of independence and self-responsibility.</p>

	<p>Both [<i>accepting death and the unknown as well as accepting independence and self-responsibility</i>] indicate <i>spiritual and emotional</i> <i>adulthood,</i> freedom, growth, creativity, strength, trust in the self, and real security.</p> <p>[<i>In contrast to this emotional climate of true religion</i>] The emotional climate of false religion can be expressed in these words: "I am a weak, helpless sinner. I can do nothing without God, without an authority who permits me to be happy. This God has the right to be good or bad to me. But if I obey and appease, <i>[and believe right dogma]</i> chances are that he will be well disposed toward me, or so I hope."</p>
25	<p>From a sense of humiliation [<i>of false religion</i>] you will develop humility [<i>of true religion</i>].</p>

	<p>From clinging appeasement and blind obedience – often without understanding – <i>[encouraged by false religion]</i> you will develop into a strong self-responsible being <i>[as encouraged by true religion],</i> trusting in your own capacity to obtain what you need in life.</p> <p>You need the courage now to let go of the illusion of false religion, of false consolation.</p> <p>And in this transitory state <i>[between the dying false religion and true religion being birthed in you],</i> if you go through it <i>[i.e., this purification and transformational process],</i> your strength will come from the truth.</p>
26	<p>The second point <i>[of the two you will understand a lot better]</i> is the reason why I have often emphasized for quite some time the psychological rather than the spiritual point of view.</p> <p>For none of you are free of the distortion of spirituality; namely, its use <i>[to bypass this growth process, i.e., its use]</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• as escape,• as a substitute for your weaknesses,• as a consolation for your fears,• as an attempt to appease Godto get what you could easily obtain by your own efforts.</p>

When *[false]* religion is a substitute *[for doing your psychological work]*,

- it may help for a while.
- It may assuage unreasonable fear.

But in the long run,
it cripples
you and
your growth.

I sometimes have to refrain from
stating a spiritual truth directly because
your subconscious
would
misunderstand and
misuse it

[e.g., use it as an escape bypassing doing your work or use it as dogma to cling to and obey, or rebel against it, thereby, in all these ways, returning to false religion].

But
the more problems
you resolve *[on your own, through your work on the path]*,
the safer it becomes to
tell you the truth
without the danger of
reinforcing in you the tendency
[to go backwards and thereby]
to succumb to
false religion.

Then *[as you resolve more and more problems on your own]*
true religion
will come
out of your own strength
[from your true divinity within – true religion],
not
out of dogma
[of external authority – false religion].

It *[i.e., true religion]* will come
from within
and not, as you now unconsciously expect it,
from without.

27	<p>Developing your own resources and strengths instead of obtaining them from a being outside of yourself is no less divine <i>[than obtaining resources and strengths from a being outside].</i></p> <p>Quite the contrary.</p> <p>With this understanding, you will not mind my returning occasionally to a more spiritual approach <i>[in order for you]</i> to see where the <i>psychological</i> deviations –<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the images,• the distortions,• the wrong conclusions,• the false solutions –directly contradict the <i>spirituality</i> that you all aim for.</p> <p>Then, and only then, will you fully understand that these <i>[spiritual and psychological aspects]</i> are not two unrelated subjects: one is an integral part of the other.</p>
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28	<p>Now, my friends, are there any questions regarding this topic?</p>
29	<p>QUESTION: Could you explain what true religion is, as compared to the wrong attitude?</p> <p>Where does belief in God come in if you don't feel He is a help? I just don't quite follow this.</p>

30	<p>ANSWER: <i>You will <u>feel</u> that</i> <i>God is a help</i> <i>when you come to</i> <i>true religion</i> <i>after abandoning</i> <i>the crutch [of clinging to false religion],</i> <i>but [you will feel God's help in true religion]</i> <i>in a completely different sense.</i></p> <p>Now <i>[while you still cling to false religion as a crutch]</i> you need God's help because you <i>make yourself</i> helpless.</p> <p>Then <i>[when you come to experience true religion]</i> you will feel God's help because you will perceive the perfection of the universe and its laws, of which you are an integral, contributing part.</p> <p><i>You will feel that</i> <i>you are the driving force</i> <i>of your life.</i></p> <p>You can help yourself if you really want to, if you are ready to sacrifice something.</p>
31	<p>Let us say, you want happiness in a certain direction – and this is not some vague feeling, but a clearly defined goal.</p>

[In true religion]

You will

**seek and
find**

how *you* have

prevented

this happiness so far

and what *you* can now do

to obtain it *by*

your own endeavors.

You will understand what

this *[removing blocks to happiness you have put in place]*

demands

of you *[, i.e., what the price of your happiness is,*

or what "sacrifice" you will have to make],

and it will be

up to you

either

to fulfill these demands

because you decide

they are worthwhile *[and worth the price]*

or

abstain from *[fulfilling]* them

***[assessing that obtaining happiness is not worth
the price or sacrifice demanded of you.]***

But *[if you choose to not pay the price]* there will not be

a gnawing feeling

in your soul

that you are a

neglected and

unjustly treated

child.

True religion is

spiritual and

emotional

maturity

[i.e., true religion is psychological and spiritual adulthood].

God's role *[in true religion]* is not to

provide you

with things you do not wish

[to expend the effort required]

to obtain

for yourself.

	<p>But <i>[in true religion]</i> the God-consciousness will reveal to you that His world is wonderful and that you have much more power <i>[from your divine essence]</i> than you have yet realized, if only you set it <i>[this Divine power from within]</i> in motion by removing your own obstacles to fulfillment <i>[by doing the psychological work required].</i></p>
32	<p>The false religious attitude arises when you ask God to help you overcome a hardship in your life and then you sit down and wait. <i>[You do not do the psychological work required to remove obstacles to your happiness.]</i> <i>You do not examine sufficiently why you have this hardship.</i> You may do so peremptorily, because someone else in authority has told you to do so. But even while you attempt this examination, <i>[unconsciously]</i> you tend to try to prove that you have nothing to do with the hardship. <i>[You insist that you are a helpless unfortunate victim and that]</i> It <i>[the hardship]</i> has just fallen upon you undeservedly, and there is no way of getting out of it unless God intervenes with an act of grace.</p>

	<p>You do not muster the inner will and stamina to find how you can really get what you want out of your own creativity.</p>
33	<p>God <i>is in you.</i> The divine forces <i>are in you</i> <i>[and accessible] if you</i> mobilize them, rather than wait for them to come in from the outside.</p> <p>And the mobilization of these forces can happen only if you let go of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• some [unconscious] damaging attitude,• something destructive [in you of which you are unconscious] that, again, is up to you to find. <p><i>[In true religion]</i> The <ul style="list-style-type: none">• strength and• securitycoming from this attitude [of doing your own work] will give you an entirely different relationship to God, as well as an entirely different God-concept.</p> <p>Emotionally, the words may often remain the same [in true and false religion] but the concept and the inner climate will be different.</p>

34

**The words are often the same
for both
true and
false
religion,**
but
*the inner experience is
entirely different.*

**Both
the false and
the true
religions say that
God's grace exists.**
**Even though you are on your own [in true religion],
the grace still exists.**
**But this understanding [in true religion]
will not come
until you
assume responsibility
for yourself.**

**As long as you [stay in false religion and]
expect God's grace to
make up for
your human
• laziness and
• greed,
you must be disappointed,
whether or not
you admit this to yourself.**

**So [in false religion]
you become
• hurt and
• angry and
• rebellious.**

	<p><i>[When false religion thus fails you]</i> You then either turn away from God altogether, denying His very existence in the universe, or you consider yourself an isolated case of neglect, partly <i>unworthy</i> of His grace and help and partly <i>unjustly treated</i>.</p> <p>So <i>[in false religion]</i> you wallow in • guilt and • self-pity. This makes you <i>[even]</i> more • dependent and • helpless – and so <i>the vicious circle continues</i> in atoning for your rebellion against God by appeasing Him even more with fearful obedience that is entirely on the surface and caused by the sickest motivations.</p>
35	<p>QUESTION: I understand. But how can we go about it? This God-image is so embedded in us after so many decades of learning the false attitude <i>[of false religion]</i>. Wouldn't prayer change too if we discarded this concept <i>[of false religion]</i>? Wouldn't everything change?</p>
36	<p>ANSWER: Yes, of course. But you see, my child, you <i>cannot [simply]</i> say, <i>"Now I will discard my God-image."</i> It is not something you can simply decide in your mind. It does not work that way.</p>

Its [i.e., your God-image's damaging and blocking] emotional impact would remain if you tried to change it by a mere outer decision [of your mind or will].

In order to make an *inner* decision [as required in true religion], the procedure has to be the same it has always been in this [psychological] work.

[Here is the work required in true religion]

- **Find these attitudes and**
- **understand them more fully.**

**If this is done deeply,
not just superficially,
you will all be surprised to find
how far you have gone to
forcefully perpetuate infancy.**

Once you

- **analyze and**
- **understand**
certain *[heretofore mostly unconscious]*
emotional behavior patterns,

you will realize

- **how preposterous they are;**
- **how incompatible**
with your *conscious* belief;
- **how contrary to**
your own best interests;
- **how logically impossible.**

After

**seeing and
understanding
all this, [in true religion]
the change happens organically,
by itself, as it were.**

[In true religion] **A certain period of
self-observation is necessary
in order to
gain full insight and then
be able to change.**

37

**You must find these
subtle and
unobtrusive
emotional reactions.**

	<p>They <i>[i.e., these emotional reactions]</i> are neither obvious nor strong. Nor are they <i>completely unconscious.</i></p> <p>They are there but they are subtle, and <i>you are so used to them</i> <i>that you do not even see</i> <i>anything amiss.</i></p> <p>To find them and analyze them is the first step <i>[in true religion], and then</i> see them in light of this discussion.</p> <p>This will help to dissolve the God-image <i>[reinforced in you by false religion]</i> because <i>[in true religion]</i> your attitude will naturally change.</p> <p><i>You will, for instance, find</i> <i>what your expectations really are,</i> <i>how you inwardly complain.</i></p> <p><i>You will find</i> <i>what you yourself could do</i> <i>to make these expectations a reality,</i> <i>and you will understand</i> <i>why you have not done so.</i></p> <p>This should be the procedure <i>[for going from false religion to true religion].</i></p>
38	<p>The very fact that you are aware of this God-image makes you extremely fortunate; many others are not aware of it at all.</p> <p><i>[Rather]</i> They are convinced they do not have any distortion in this respect.</p> <p><i>They do not connect</i> <i>certain emotional reactions</i> <i>with this God-image,</i> <i>with the false religious attitude.</i></p>

**They are filled with their conscious right beliefs [from false religion],
while their unconscious concepts
are still too far from awareness.**

39 **QUESTION:
What religion is farthest away from the truth?**

40 **ANSWER:
One cannot make such a statement.
It may be that
 one religious denomination
 has more truthful *teachings*,
but
 another that has fewer
 may, in its overall *attitude*,
 be closer to truth.**

**Apart from being dangerous
to draw such comparisons,
the question is not important.**

41 **QUESTION:
One of the last words of Christ was,
 "Father, Thy will be done."
Taken as an example,
 this could have meant
 obedience,
 or it could have meant
 freedom.**

42 **ANSWER:

Exactly.
As I said before,
 the words [in true and false religion] are often the same.**

**Truth can so easily be
misinterpreted because
 *the essence of truth
 is the
 willingness and
 capacity
 to understand.***

**For example,
from what I have discussed tonight,
you could easily infer
that there can be no grace of God.**

**If you are supposed to be
free and
independent**

[as you are in true religion],

where does grace come in

[in true religion]?

You would not even need it [i.e., grace]

[in true religion].

[But] This is not true.

Grace does exist [in true religion].

But no words

can convey

the concept of grace

unless you have first reached

this true inner religious experience

[of true religion].

**When you no longer need grace [as portrayed in false religion]
as a substitute**

for your own weakness,

when you do not make

an asset out of

your weakness [as you do in false religion],

then you will become strong.

For a while

[in the in-between period after having given up false religion

but not yet having reached true religion]

you will live

without any understanding

of grace,

but then the true concept [of grace in true religion]

will dawn on you.

In other words,

this interim state of aloneness

[between having left behind false religion

and not yet having arrived at true religion]

must first be experienced.

The great mystics designate it as

the "dark night of the soul."

43	<p>The saying you just mentioned, <i>"Thy will be done,"</i> means, rightly understood, <i>"I let go</i> <i>of my small self-will,</i> <i>of my limited outlook,</i> <i>and I open myself</i> <i>so that the divine</i> <i>can come to me."</i></p> <p>It will not come from without but from within, as a <i>deep knowledge and</i> <i>certainty,</i> but [<i>will come in this way</i>] only if you will not disassociate yourself from this realization.</p> <p><i>Experience of unity with the divine</i> <i>[that is experienced in true religion]</i> <i>can happen only</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>if you learn to let go,</i>• <i>if you cease to be rigid.</i></p>
44	<p>The false meaning [<i>in false religion</i>] of "Thy will be done" makes humanity seem weak and stupid, so that you need another being [<i>here God</i>] to act and decide instead of you.</p> <p>This other being is often a human authority or church authority claiming to act on behalf of God.</p>

"Thy will be done"
does not mean
obedience *[to an external authority, here God, as is its meaning in false religion];*
[rather, in true religion] it [i.e., "Thy will be done"] means
opening yourself
to the fullest possible extent so that
the greater wisdom
will become a part of you.

45

QUESTION:
From what you say, it becomes clear that
religion is a matter of
each individual soul
developing to its optimum point
by way of

- search and
- self-realization.

The Churches have played
a dominant role for many years,
however, so it would seem that
their function would eventually fall away.

46

ANSWER:
Yes, indeed it will.

When more people
follow a path of
self-recognition,
growing and
developing
their own resources,
they will no longer need authority.

As for those
who are not yet far enough in their development
[and whose inner authority is, therefore,
still too immature and undeveloped],
human law
will suffice
to protect society from their
untamed and
destructive impulses.

*The truly divine
can function
only in free souls,
and this will happen.*

The whole trend of history points in this direction
[as true religion emerges more completely and false religion dies away].

47 **QUESTION:**
You spoke about companionship.
At times one has to be alone.
How can you tell when that's appropriate?

48 **ANSWER:**
There is a simple answer to that [in true religion],
although it's not always easy to know.

When you
investigate your emotional reactions
and
find that you want *companionship*
out of *fear*
of *being alone*,
then the need for companionship springs, at least partly,
from a poor motive.

[Conversely]
If you want to be *alone*
out of *fear*
of involvement
because you have a strong tendency
to withdraw,
then your desire to be alone springs, again at least in part,
from a poor motive.

In other words,
either tendency
can be
healthy
as well as
unhealthy.

	<p>Even if you should succeed [<i>via self-discipline</i>], another, perhaps more harmful, symptom will come forth.</p> <p>Rather, use such manifestations [<i>in your psychological work of self-search</i>] as the useful [<i>and revealing</i>] symptoms they are.</p>
52	<p>QUESTION: Can I do it in trying to evaluate the words [<i>I am using</i>]?</p>
53	<p>ANSWER: Certainly. That would be part of your private work: which words you use and why.</p>
54	<p>QUESTION: Often it is very easy for one subconscious to communicate with another.</p> <p>But there are [<i>other</i>] times when there is such a strong barrier that one cannot penetrate [<i>the other</i>].</p> <p>The other person asks for the answer yet doesn't listen, and you fail to convey your message.</p>
55	<p>ANSWER: Such people want only a qualified answer; that is, an answer compatible with their defenses.</p>

**They do not want an answer
that they find unpleasant.
This [unpleasant answer] would cause
an inner resistance
so strong that
they could not hear your call.
[At this present time with this resistance, hence] They cannot absorb
what is being said to them.**

**The attitude
toward a person
in this frame of mind
is
not to try to force
the issue.
The more you want to
penetrate the resistance,
the more
frustration and
impatience
you will feel.**

**And this *[your frustration and impatience]*
is bound to affect the other person *[negatively]* and
increase the resistance even more.
Moreover, *[in true religion]* it will be
extremely useful *[to your self-understanding]*
to analyze
the reason for your own
frustration and
impatience.**

**It *[Your desire to communicate with the other]*
may be more than
the goodwill to help.**

**In some way
your sense of competence may be involved.**

**Or
the other's acceptance of the truth
may have an urgency for you
that is not realistic.**

**Whenever such currents exist *[between two people]*,
a mutually negative effect
is established
that worsens the inner problems
of both parties.**

	<p>But finding what inner hidden role you play will be beneficial, possibly even for both parties.</p> <p>If you had no negative or problematic tendencies, you could easily accept another person's limitation. You know that.</p> <p>Now, this is a general answer, applying to many.</p>
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56	<p>If there is anything unclear in what I discussed tonight, I will be only too glad to elaborate on it next time.</p>
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57	<p>May these words raise echoes in your emotions.</p> <p>As you let this lecture affect you, it will stir up so much! This is good.</p> <p>I go from you with all our blessings for the coming year for the work that is before you.</p> <p>Yes, help is given to you, but do try to recognize that you might <i>[not yet experience true religion and hence will still]</i> perceive it <i>[i.e., the help]</i> as coming from outside, unconnected with your own endeavors and strivings, and not as something that you mobilize, first of all, in yourself.</p>
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58	<p style="text-align: center;">With this, my dearest ones, be blessed!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Love and peace unto all of you.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Be in God!</i></p>
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* Lecture #52, The God Image

** Lecture #81, Conflicts in the World of Duality

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