

Pathwork on
Phases of Spiritual Development

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 105 *Humanity's Relationship to God in Various Stages of Development*, gives five Phases of Spiritual Development:

- Phase 1 – **Atheism Level 1** – Being Without Awareness, Instinctual Survival
- Phase 2 – **Wonderment** – Initial Authentic God Experience, Longing to Relate
- Phase 3 – **Birth of Religious Dogma, Rules, Beliefs** – God as projection of man
- Phase 4 – **Atheism Level 2** – Birth of Self-Responsibility, Death of God
- Phase 5 – **True Spiritual Development** – authentic relationship with authentic God

[Note Blue Text contains my annotation and is not in the lecture]

06	<p>[Phase 1 Atheism Level 1 Living in the Now, but without awareness – instinctual survival]</p> <p>... I wish to discuss man's relationship to God in the cycle of development, in the various stages of this cycle that man goes through. In the last lecture I discussed the state of being without awareness, as the first stage in the great cycle. Primitive man, during his first few incarnations, is still near to this state of being without awareness. He lives unto the day, tending to his immediate needs. As yet the mind is not developed and therefore not equipped to ask questions, to doubt, to think, to discriminate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">He lives in the now, but without awareness.</p> <p>[Goal: Live in the Now WITH Awareness]</p> <p>In order to live in the now <u>in</u> awareness, various stages have to be gone through.</p>
07	<p>[Phase 2 Wonderment, Initial Authentic God Experience, Longing to relate to God]</p> <p>As man continues to develop his mind, he will first use it for his immediate needs that become more pressing in a growing civilization. In other words, he first uses the mind concretely. But later, he begins to use it abstractly. He begins to ask the important questions that have preoccupied mankind ever since the beginning of time.</p> <p>These questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Where do I come from? • Where do I go? • What is the meaning of life? • What is the significance of this universe?"

	<p>Man begins to perceive nature, her laws. He observes the magnificence of nature's laws.</p> <p>And he begins to wonder. This first wonderment represents the first conscious steps towards relating to the Creator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Who created these laws? • Who made all this? • Is any superior mind responsible for this creation?" <p>With such questions, the first ideas about God come into existence. Thus, when he then concludes that there must be someone of such infinite superiority, wisdom, intelligence,</p> <p>he feels he must relate to this supreme Being.</p>
08	<p>[Phase 3 -- Birth of Religious Dogma, Rules, Beliefs – God as projection of man]</p> <p>But simultaneously, man's spiritual and emotional immaturity producing fear and many other problematic emotions, colors this concept of a superior Creator.</p> <p>On the one hand he wants an authority who thinks for him, who decides for him and is thus responsible for him. He clings to this authority in the hope of being relieved of self-responsibility.</p> <p>On the other hand, his fears of life and his inadequacy to cope with it, project onto this God. He senses the power of this immensely wise and resourceful Creator of all the natural laws that he can see.</p> <p>Since he cannot yet separate power from cruelty, he begins to fear this God of his own projection.</p> <p>Thus he begins to appease, to cajole, to submit to, and become subdued by, this imaginary God-image.</p>
09	<p>To recapitulate: the first state of awakening causes man to wonder. In this spontaneous experience of wonder and perception, he often has a genuine God-experience and relationship.</p> <p>But then, as he grows more conflicted and fearful, after his desires become more urgent, all these emotions and attitudes color this first God-experience and he relates no longer according to a genuine, spontaneous, creative experience, but to a projection of himself.</p>
10	<p>The more the mind grows in one direction only, without being used to resolve its problems and conflicts which remain hidden away from awareness, the more does his relationship to God become false. False, because it is based on personal needs, on wishful thinking, and on fear. The more this proceeds, the false the concept of God</p>

	<p>becomes -- consciously or unconsciously. In the end, it will become a superstition, with less truth and more dogma.</p>
11	<p>[Phase 4 – Atheism Level 2 Birth of Self Responsibility, Death of God]</p> <p>When this goes on and on, man comes to a point, after his original genuine experience and perception turns to a superstition, that makes a farce out of God; when he can no longer continue in this trend, his intelligence, which has grown in the meantime, will prevent him from going on in this way indefinitely.</p> <p>The intelligence will then say "it cannot possibly be that there is a Father who leads life for us. It is up to us. It is our responsibility. We have free will." And a counter-reaction sets in. And then, man often turns to the other extreme and becomes an atheist.</p>
12	<p>The state of atheism exists in two ways:</p> <p>1) an absolute lack of awareness and perception of life and nature, her laws and the significance of creation. [Atheism Phase 1]</p> <p>2) a reaction to the superstitious God-Image and self-projection of man, denying self-responsibility. [Atheism Phase 2]</p> <p>This latter state of atheism, erroneous in itself as it is, is still indicative of a further state of development other than a belief in God. This comes predominantly from fear, evasion, escapism, wishful-thinking, denial of self-responsibility. The latter is often a necessary transitory period on the way to a more realistic and genuine experience of and relationship to God.</p> <p>During this stage, faculties are cultivated in man that are of utmost importance for his individual growth.</p> <p>This does not mean that I advocate atheism. This is no more the case than that I advocate a childish, clinging, belief in God. Both are stages. In each stage there is something important that the soul learns.</p> <p>Something is imprinted in the soul that is productive and lasting, long after the superficial layers of the mind have dispensed with the falsity of both extremes.</p>
13	<p>In this second stage of atheism, man learns to assume self-responsibility. He lets go of the wished-for hand that leads life for him, absolves him from the consequences of his own mistakes. It makes him give up the expectation of being rewarded for being obedient to rules. Simultaneously, it frees him from fear of being punished. In some ways, it brings him back to himself.</p>
14	<p>[Phase 5 True Spiritual Development – Authentic Relationship With Authentic God]</p> <p>But when a certain point is passed in this stage, it is no longer possible to</p>

	<p>maintain the concept of atheism. The more any thought, concept, scientific fact, or philosophy is carried to its logical end and conclusion, the less is it possible to maintain an untruth or half-truth; or even a temporary state that had its healthy function at a certain period.</p> <p>When man passes through these various stages briefly discussed here, he is bound to arrive at the point when he uses his mind to question his own motives; to look at and into himself. Thus he cultivates awareness by facing the reality within. As he proceeds to do this, forever deeper levels of his psyche become liberated. In this liberation, genuine God-experience is the inevitable outcome.</p> <p>This genuine God-experience is very different from the childish belief in a self-projected God which the mind has created out of fear, weakness, and wishful-thinking. He no longer acts because he feels God demands or expects it of him.</p> <p>He lives in the now. He does not fear his imperfection and does not fear God's punishing him for it. He can see it without becoming frantic.</p> <p>Yet understanding its harm, but not fearing it, he will then see that not the imperfection itself is so harmful, but</p> <p>the lack of awareness of it; the fear of being punished for it; the pride of wanting to be above it.</p> <p>Being not frantic to get over it, he will have the calm to observe it, thereby understanding its background and its reason for existence.</p> <p>In this process, he grows out of it. As man cultivates this attitude, he makes a genuine experience of God possible.</p> <p>On the other hand, it is the occasional glimpse and sense of it that facilitates the proper attitude toward one's self.</p>
15	<p>This genuine God-experience is being. God is not perceived as acting -- punishment or reward, or guidance along certain ways in order to take away the effort of man.</p> <p>He realizes that God is.</p> <p>This is very difficult to explain in words, my friends. But it is the only way I can say it. You cannot come to this feeling that God is, if you do not first face what is in you right now, imperfect, faulty, childish as it may be.</p>