

Pathwork on  
**War and Capital Punishment**

From Pathwork Lecture 29 The Forces of Activity and Passivity – Finding God’s Will

41	<p style="text-align: center;">...</p> <p>QUESTION: In the case of war, is the act of killing by a soldier contrary to divine law?</p>
42	<p>ANSWER: No, it is not. For as Jesus Christ has said, render unto God what is God's and render unto Caesar that which is due to him. If human beings on the earth sphere are still so far behind in development that war is necessary, then people have to fight for their country. Even if all people refused to fight, evil would not be eliminated. War may be temporarily eliminated, but certainly not evil. War is only one of many other expressions of evil. War is not the cause: it is only an effect. It would be the same if a father allowed a murderer to come into his house and kill his wife and children without defending them. He must defend those he loves and evil has to be fought against. In your present state of development, unfortunately, war often is still your means of fighting evil. As spiritual development grows, you will learn to go more to the roots of the problems and fight against evil in better ways. As it stands now, humanity is often forced to battle against forces that abuse free will and divine law. If people take the power upon themselves to prevent other people from living as God wants them to live, and if your world has not found other means as yet to eliminate this wrong, then war is the lesser evil.</p>
43	<p>You know from the spiritual point of view that death is not the worst thing that can happen. Spiritual death is the worst, not physical death. Every person is judged individually, and the judgement comprises also the circumstances and the environment in which he or she lives. In the spirit world, the real motives count more than the act, and judgment is not passed generally or collectively. Everyone is judged separately, and if a man goes to war simply to defend his country, this will not count against him. What counts is a person's inner attitudes, feelings, reactions, motives, and sense of responsibility.</p>
44	<p>QUESTION: How does spiritual law correspond with human law in the case of a death sentence for a murderer?</p>
45	<p>ANSWER: From the spiritual point of view, capital punishment is wrong. That may sound like a contradiction when compared with the last answer, but it is not. In the case of war, it is a question of defending a nation and humanity. For humanity, war is often the last resort. And even the people living in the aggressor nation are often convinced that they are only doing their duty; they do not see the whole picture. They have to abide by the laws of their society. Otherwise they might cause more hardship, not only to themselves, thereby becoming incapable of fulfilling their lives, but also to others around them.</p>

	Again, we cannot generalize, for there may be instances when it is the duty of a person to violate a human law in order to fulfill a law of God. But these instances are rare and only expected of strong and highly developed beings sent to earth with a special mission. In general, this does not hold true.
46	Capital punishment is not a necessity. However, war often is in your present state of development. You have not yet found the way to eliminate war. The only way to do so is when resentment, hate, and fear do not live in the individual soul any more. That is the only basis for peace. But capital punishment is not necessary.

56	QUESTION: A question in connection with war and killing: How are we to regard a conscientious objector who sincerely follows the admonition not to kill and considers the whole of the universe as his fellow-men rather than only the part he is called upon to defend?
57	ANSWER: In the first place, a man is not defending a part of geography but his immediate fellow-creatures. By refusing to go to war, he may in the long run cause more harm than good. With this I certainly do not wish to give the impression that I advocate war. By no means. But war cannot be eliminated by refusing it. This cancer has to be treated in another way and slowly has to cease in all individuals. A conscientious objector, provided his motives are pure, will be judged accordingly. Then this will certainly not be held against him, the same as killing in a war by a soldier will not be held against him, if his heart is pure and his conviction sincere. But that does not alter the fact that his judgment is wrong. More precisely, his goal or endeavor is a good one, just as the goal of a sincere soldier may be a good one, but he selects the wrong means to oust an evil.
58	Refusing to go to war could not be the right curative means against war. For as long as there is hatred within the individual soul, and as long as there is blindness caused through lack of self-knowledge, and as long as people do not purify themselves and strive upward to God, and as long as people cannot refine their feelings, there cannot be peace. It is impossible. War is an outpicturing of what goes on in so many individual personalities. It cannot be eliminated by collective means alone, well meant as they may be, unless they are supported by the right spiritual attitudes. The cure has to start from within by each individual. Otherwise you will only succeed in eliminating one effect, and another symptom will come.
59	It is just the same with disease, my friends. War is nothing else but a disease. Your human history and your human science show you how many ways medicine has found to eliminate disease. Many diseases that existed a relatively very short time ago are not possible anymore. But other diseases have sprung up that you cannot cure, and new diseases will continue to do so until a greater

	<p>degree of purification exists on this earth, no matter what wonderful progress science and medicine make. As long as the disease is not cured from within, war or other diseases will exist. If it is not war, it will be something else equally terrible.</p>
60	<p>In the case of an individual, it is possible to make a mistake in judgment and this in itself is not held against you as long as you are sincere and do not delude yourself and color your motives. You all make mistakes in judgment. People have very firm opinions about any subject from religion to politics. The moment these opinions are fanatical and inflexible, people should test their real inner motives and then they may find out that these opinions are not as objective as they may have thought at first. If you dig deeply and honestly, you will be surprised how often you find a personal, emotional, subjective reason behind your convictions.</p>