

Pride. Self-Will, and Fear

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 30

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Week 1: Three Basic Hindrances to Perfection

Week 2: Self-Will, Free Will, and God's Will

Week 3: Interlocked Triads of Personality Defenses

Week 4: The Spiritual Purpose of Human Limitations

Week 1: Three Basic Hindrances to Your Divine Spark

The three basic hindrances to perfection are self-will, pride, and fear. This applies to everyone alike. Since the fall, these three attributes became stronger and stronger in the measure the fall progressed; they blur your basic light.

It is the purpose of the path of purification not only to sense what your basic light is like -- for it is not the same with everyone -- but it is of utmost importance to realize that self-will, pride, and fear exist in you; to what degree; how they interact, and how one is dependent of the other. For only with this understanding about yourself will you be able to overcome these dark walls that stand in the way between you and your basic light.

PL 30

Exercise 1a: Explore your relationship with each aspect of Pride, Self-Will, and Fear:

Pride in its divine state is truth-based, such as pride in a job well done. False pride is vulnerable to truth and often feels threatened. It requires a lot of maintenance and defense. Notice where you feel the need to 'keep up appearances' or uphold the image that you have created (ref: Idealized Self Image PL 83). Notice where you focus on outer aspects of life, where others might be able to judge you.

Self-will in its divine state is so fundamental to all functions of the Ego that we may not be able to identify it as something separate – like breathing, or our digestion, we may only notice it when it surprises us by acting up, or by its absence. Notice what prompts you to you hurry up or slow down. Notice the process of how desires and urges emerge, the expansive energy of feeling turned on or lighting up. What triggers you into action? What stirs up thoughts and feelings?

Self-will also contracts from anything that feels dangerous or undesirable. We may engage in an aggressive response before making the conscious decision to do so, just like the body's reflexes (a form of body-will!) don't require a thought process. With repetition, Self-Will can create neural pathways that operate habitually without regular input.

Fear is a key element of our biological 'survival kit'. Our animal nature leads us to 'herd together' because that provides safety in numbers, allows us to pool our resources, and provides a comforting sense of connectedness. So we use these techniques anywhere / anytime we feel the need for protection or comfort. Fear is an acceptable social excuse not to do something -- and a social cue that invites others to take care of us, or take over a task.

Fear may be evident in the other aspects, but notice where fear is the central feeling / emotion; where your powers of reasoning and your self-will are almost involuntarily enlisted in order to soothe you, or re-establish a sense of security and safety. (Notice that this may not involve changing reality, only how you 'feel' about something). Also notice if you enlist others to help you feel better.

Lightforces

Lightforces represent every divine aspect in creation, every good quality or virtue you can possibly think of, each as one particular lightforce, and also personified. Each order represents one of these special lightforces, headed by the individualized spirit, and going through the entire plan of salvation in different gradations as a sort of hierarchy.

Each of these forces is represented by a spirit or angel. These orders may also be designated as "Choirs;" they are differentiated from one another by special marks, appearance of robes, etc.

Each created being belongs to one of these particular orders of the lightforces, including each one of you, each human being. For your ground-personality, your basic being is part of one of these lightforces and orders.

PL 30

Each Lightforce is Unique

In deep meditation, if a certain degree of development has been reached, you may find out, you may sense what your ground-being is (which does not exclude of course, other virtues, other qualities, or talents). So it may be possible for you to find out the ground-shade or marked quality of your being

But there is one basic, significant factor in each being, spirit or man. One such basic quality may be courage, another love and kindness, and so on and so forth. I repeat, to have courage does not mean that you do not possess love or the capacity to love. For the highest angel representatives of each force have all other qualities as well; but they have one basic, outstanding quality, that strengthens and furnishes all other divine aspects rather than weakening or excluding them.

PL 30

Exercise 1b: Prophets and mediums have to 'squeeze' spiritual visions into thoughts, then words, that are based upon 3-dimensional references. Explore how you have already expressed the unique quality of your lightforce. What brings so much joy into your life that it overflows?

All beings in creation are perfect in one particular way. If the fall would not have taken place, the lightforce (the divine power that every being has been endowed with) would have served for the purpose of complementing the perfection in other ways as well so as to become really Godlike. Before this state has been reached, Godlikeness can only be partial. Once the plan of salvation will be fulfilled, this further perfection will continue. But as it is now, these orders, with all the many, many beings belonging to them, are particularly perfect in one way. It is simply a matter of uncovering it -- which represents the path of purification.

This may give some of you material for meditation that may be useful for you. For at this stage of your development, important as it is to concentrate on finding out what your lower self really is -- in other words, to find out your faults and to fully realize their existence, their significance, their effect on you and your life -- it is also important at a certain stage of your work, to get to know the special individuality of your higher self, so as to utilize it, to realize its particular force.

PL L30

Week 2: Self-Will, Free Will, and God's Will

There are Distinct differences between Free Will and Self-Will. Free will can be used for good or for bad; free will is important. You cannot say it serves only good purposes, for, as just said, it can also be used for evil ones, but certainly self-development cannot be attained without the full use of free will. The will of God cannot be fulfilled unless you use your free will to do so out of your own accord, out of your own choosing. Free will is the greatest gift you have been endowed with and without which you could never attain a Godlike status.

But self-will is the will of the little self, the little ego. Self-will strives to get what it wants, regardless of the consequences, regardless of harm that may be done to others -- and therefore ultimately also to the self. Only, the little ego is too blind to understand this. And self-will in its blind and immature state is equally too blind to realize that what is desired against spiritual law must bring hardship and imprisonment to the self.

A crass example is a spiritually underdeveloped person, let us say a criminal: he will use his self-will in a very obvious way to serve his immediate seeming advantages, disregarding all laws, spiritual as well as human ones. For what seems advantageous to him, he likes to get. PL 30

Exercise 2a: Explore your thoughts and feelings regarding totally selfish acts.

You might never act these out, but it is crucial to self-development that you be honest with yourself regarding ALL your thoughts and feelings. Then speak the phrase, above in italics.

Notice the distinction between Self-Will (the thoughts and feelings that emanate from the little ego) and Free-Will (making the choice not to act on them). It is a common misunderstanding (and fear) that by acknowledging Self-Will, Lower Self, or negative intentionality, we will be compelled to act these out. Instead, notice if your resolve to act from love, higher self, or your real self feels strengthened by a clearer understanding of Self-Will.

Test your thoughts and feelings

The average human being does not commit crimes or antisocial acts, partly because he realizes that it is wrong -- even if he is unreligious, his sense of ethics is already developed enough to desist from the desires of the lower self that may still have such wishes -- and partly because he is simply afraid to get into conflicts with his surroundings -- not because of a particular sense of ethics and morals.

But we are not discussing the action of the self-will, or following the self-will, for to none of you would this be applicable in such obvious cases. We are discussing the feelings, the emotional currents of self-will, and these are within each of you. For each unpurified being, perhaps unconsciously, desires things that are wrong, things that are against spiritual law. And this conflict between the conscious desire and unconscious desire represents the greatest handicap in your development.

Therefore it is of utmost importance that you muster the courage to test your feelings, and translate them into clear and concise words. PL 30

Exercise 2b: Speak this phrase when you suspect your thoughts or feelings are emanating from Self-Will: *"Here I have a desire coming from my little ego, from my self-will, that does not correspond with the other part of my nature -- that is equally as real as this heretofore hidden part."* PL 30

Passivity actively masks Self-Will

And do not believe for one moment that those people who appear weak and without will on the surface are the ones who use less active force than the obviously strong-willed and self-willed ones. It is often the contrary. The former simply do not display their will on the surface, because of other conflicting psychological trends. But within, everything sizzles because of this frustrated will, for it presses in the wrong direction. Such persons may not be consciously aware of it, but the symptoms must show by their health, their strength, and their peace of mind.

The fundamental factor in this is, of course, again to get to know yourself, to ask yourself pertinent questions. And this is really very simple once you decide for its unavoidable necessity. Each time you feel an unpleasant emotion, anger, anxiety, resentment, or whatever it may be -- and your days are often full of it -- stop rationalizing it away by thinking of the wrongs of others involved. Instead, ask yourself what you really want, because *there is something you want the moment there is emotion in you*. Otherwise you would not feel that way.

PL 30

Exercise 2c: The phrase ‘passive/aggressive’ describes a hidden but active Self-Will. Consider the goal(s) of this tactic: to manipulate more freely, avoid judgment, or be free of responsibility. Is self-will, pride, or fear the most prominent factor?

Type	Quality	Exists
Free Will	Innate power; neutral, can be used for good bad Creative (active) or receptive, as appropriate	Every divine spark has free will. Free will is the force that chooses to begin the process of self-transformation and purification
Self-Will	Exercised by the little ego, blind ego, lower self Active when pulled into a forcing currents Passive (vs receptive) as a covert defensive tactic	Manifestation of the positive desire to transform and purify Represents false beliefs of the soul Purpose: to act out false beliefs in order to experience the pain they cause.
God's Will	Completely free of Self-Will Activate or receptive in support of the Plan of Salvation	Individual must be free of Self-Will in order to access.

Finding God's Will is an act of Free-Will

Now, in order to find out what is God's will, you must certainly be free of self-will. Your active and clean will power must be used -- first, to desire to really find out God's will without wishful thinking and self-deception; second, to leave your self-will aside; and third, to prepare to put your will power even more actively in use after you have found out God's will, so as to be able to follow it.

The only way you can positively know whether a right and good, or a wrong and false instinct guides you, is by the happiness, relief, and freedom, the sense of utter rightness and peace with the world that you have as a result of it -- or the opposite of these feelings. Only if your will is really free of self-pampering, pure and humble, can God's will clearly manifest, no matter how He chooses to reveal Himself to you. But you must be the one to decide "I want to do it wholeheartedly."

Finding God's Will - The Forces of Activity and Passivity PL 29

Exercise 2d: Review your [God Image](#) PL 52 before you consider finding what “it” wants! Self-Will often claims the Higher Self desire to follow God’s will. Yet it will inevitably project a human experience of authority (or its protest against spiritual authority) onto God.

Soul Movements	Self-Will / Forcing Currents
Thoughts, as ‘unfelt feelings’ or fragments of consciousness	Thinking, intellectualizing, rationalizations
Feelings	Emotional reactions
Eros or Desire	Eroticism, craving, unquenchable desire
Imagination	Fantasy as relief and distraction
Dreams during REM sleep	Lucid dreams of Ego desires, daydreams

QUESTION: *Isn’t the will to serve God and to be a better human being also selfish since this means that we become happy?*

ANSWER: Of course it is, with some people at the very beginning, at the first stages of this path, very often a selfish motive. But as long as they begin with this slightly impure motive, it is better than nothing. By continuing on this path, the realization must come sooner or later that you are the next fellow, and the next fellow is you. If you become happy, you must make other people happy. And when I say happy, I do not mean the happiness that you believe in by acquiring the desires of your self-will. No, I mean the greater happiness that must be yours by going on this path of self-purification. So if you reach a certain height on this path, your own happiness will not be the end, the goal, it will be a means to an end. The ultimate purpose is not your own happiness, but the service to others.

PL 30

Exercise 2e: Realize how far away your emotions still are from this prayer of yours. By realizing this discrepancy, and going on praying for that end, and continuing the work of self analysis, self-honesty; one day you will feel one with every creature. PL 30

Question: *How can we tell if a desire comes from the higher or the lower self?*

Answer: By examining the desires and their real motives. Very clearly and very concisely ask yourself the question: *“What is it I want, and why do I want such and such? What is my real motive behind it?”* You see, it is very often this way too: you may have a right desire with a good motive behind, but at the same time there is also, notwithstanding the good motive, an impure motive in it as well. The moment you recognize this, you already have done something for your purification.

Purifying does not merely mean that you are already perfect, but *the process of becoming perfect is already purification*. It is an integral part of this process in saying, *“In addition to my good motive there is also a selfish or vain motive hidden under this good cause.”* By being able to say this to yourself, you have already purified yourself to some extent. A person who does not recognize his own hidden motives cannot conduct his life freely anymore. He is completely enslaved to his lower self, to his unrecognized desires which push and pull the person backward and forward, left and right.

Of course I am speaking generally, I have no right to give you the answer. It would weaken you. It will serve your development to find out for yourself. And you can, quite easily, with what I am teaching you.

Exercise 2f: Notice your own desire that ‘someone’ give you answers. Explore how self-will might seek to weaken others, consciously or unconsciously, in order to increase one’s sense of self-importance, superiority, or dominance. How does assisting, helping, or coaching differ?

Week 3: Interlocked Triads of Personality Defenses

You might ask: how do self-will, pride, and fear connect? Why is one unthinkable without the other? For so it is, my friends, if you have one, you must have all of these attributes. You may have one stronger than the other or more apparent or more conscious, but it is impossible that you have only two, let us say, and the third is entirely missing. PL 30

Interlocked Triads of Personality Defenses

PL	Issue	Reason Type:	Will Type:	Love Type:
14/8	Mask / ISI	Serenity	Power	Love
30	Primary Fault	Pride	Self-Will	Fear
84	Lower Self	Withdrawal	Aggression	Submission
248	Primary Distortion	Materialism / Proof	Separation	Half-Truths
43	Primary Fear	Chaos / Injustice	Helplessness	Disconnection
43	Higher Self	Wisdom	Courage	Love
43	Primary Gift	Clarity, Order	Leadership	Connection
107	Way to NOT love	Disconnection	Outer Values	Overwhelm

Understanding the different aspects of personality in the chart above can accelerate our incarnatory task of transformation, by helping us understand the specific false beliefs, misconceptions, and distortions that we have incarnated to address. Studying the difference aspects commonly summarized as “Personality Types of Reason, Will and Emotion” can help because these offer:

- Clues to your own personal misconceptions / your personal ‘brand’ of duality
- Clues to the structure of your human personality
- Clues to your personal transformation process.

It may be useful to think of these personality aspects as ingredients that can be used by different people in different ways, changing throughout a single lifetime or staying remarkably focused. The key is that each personality is inspired by a unique divine essence / lightforce, and has a very specific task to accomplish during each incarnatory cycle. We will intuitively gravitate towards the materials that allow our essence / lightforce to accomplish our task. jr

Exercise 3a: Notice what feels familiar (or attracts you) in the chart above Delineate between what you remember experiencing in the past vs. what you feel describes how you operate today. Then spend a few moments envisioning your future - who you may be afraid of becoming, vs. the person you aspire to be.

Vicious Circles of Self-Will and Fear

If your self-will is strong -- and it can be all the stronger if it is unconscious, be sure about that -- you must constantly be afraid that the desires of this self-will will not be gratified. So as there is self-will, fear must be coupled with it. For deep down in your heart, you do know that all the wishes of your self-will can never be fulfilled; they are for the most part impossible, unreasonable wishes. Perhaps not unreasonable as such, perhaps what you desire exists with other people, but in your own particular case, due to your own previous lives and the hindrances you have put into your soul (that you have concocted yourself), what you wish cannot be fulfilled, at least not at this time -- unless you find out these hindrances so as to eliminate them.

So the currents within you run in different directions. The self-will current desires very strongly something that is wrong or impossible or contradictory to other currents within you; and at the same

time, there is the knowledge within you of your deeper, more profound being, let us say the higher self, that knows very well that these are unfulfillable wishes. And this knowledge, since the self-will is not eliminated, creates a fear.

Perhaps if you meditate on these words, my friends, you will gain a great deal more insight into your soul, your life, and your present situation. Again it is not sufficient that you hear these words once in order to really understand them. So if you meditate over them and apply them to you personally, search within you for where you may have such wishes, and for how the fear comes automatically, due to these wishes of the self-will. You will thus get a step further on the ladder upwards; but you must have the courage of searching in that direction, for only there lies your liberation, the liberation of your own chains.

PL 30

Exercise 3b: In your daily mediation (or using Daily Review PL 28) review the moments during the day when you experienced fear. Notice if any aspects of Self-Will may have prompted the fear. Then look at moments of Self-Will, and explore if fear was used as a rationale to take action.

Pride

Pride means that ego is more important than the other person, not only in the sense that may apply to self-will (namely that you desire advantages of any sort), but also in the sense of vanity. He who feels the humiliation of another person less than his own, still has too much pride. And who does not feel that way, my friends? Who is really and truly equal in his reactions to other people's humiliations as he is to his own? None of you.

All of you feel that if you yourself are humiliated, you are hurt; if the other person is humiliated in the same way, you may feel sorry, but it certainly gives you an entirely different reaction -- no matter how much you try to tell yourself that this is not so. Be honest with yourself, and this honesty will surely do more for you than the self-deception that you have the same reaction to another person's humiliation as to your own.

Exercise 3c: Take a moment to recall where you have felt *schadenfreude* – pleasure in someone else's misfortune. Notice the element of pride in these experiences.

Feelings change indirectly; not by force, not by simply trying to tell yourself that you feel the way you do not! And this self-appraisal will be the best means to gradually change your feelings in this respect. If you learn to be more detached about this vanity of yours, then and then only will you have the proper proportion from yourself to others, and therefore have the same reactions for others as for yourself. That is what is meant by loving your brother as you love yourself. But as long as you feel differently for your brother than for yourself, it means, the violation of the spiritual law of justice, along with the law of brotherhood.

For your reactions are surely not just. You may act in justice, that is true; that is already something for some people, but perhaps not enough for you. You know that your actions, and even your thoughts, are not sufficient for the pure emanation to penetrate; your lightforce cannot be liberated as long as your feelings do not correspond to these laws. So thus you do feel injustice; you put yourself emotionally on a higher plane than your brother. And the moment your vanity and pride has such an importance, again you must be in constant fear, being afraid that the gratification of your pride will not be granted to you by your surroundings.

So you must give up this desire to have your own person on an elevated level compared to your fellow creatures, emotionally speaking. Only in that way will you be free of fear. PL 30

Exercise 3d: Imagine living on a plane of development were all of our thoughts and feelings were as evident as 'the nose on our face' is on the earth plane. How would your behavior change? *Why?*

Connections between Self-Will and Pride

Find this yourself, as a meditation exercise; but do not do it abstractly or impersonally. Try to apply it immediately to yourself; try to see where you feel that way. Each single day brings you a number of possibilities to observe your feelings in exactly this way.

Only, unfortunately you pass by most of these opportunities for self-knowledge and purification. You let them slip by. And if an unpleasant feeling comes up in you, you are very quick to put it aside. In many instances there will be easy excuses at hand: the faults and imperfections of other people are supposed to be responsible for your own disharmony and your own inner conflicts. But there are times when you cannot even find anyone to blame. So you just cover it up, and you are quick with explanations: you are just in a bad mood; you do not know why you feel disturbed; or it is a difficult life in general; or perhaps it is even the weather.

No, my friends! whenever there is something that bothers you, you will find the answer in the light of what I have just told you. And by looking at it from this point of view, you will do a great deal for your self perfection and for your liberation, my friends.

For as long as you are caught within the snare of self-will, pride, and fear, you cannot ever be happy. It is impossible. You may fight all you want, you may do what you want on the outside. You only remove the symptom, you do not cut out the cancer within you. So think about these words, meditate about them. For with them, you indeed have a treasure of material, a key to your own problems. Anyone can use them. PL 30

Exercise 3e: Some people are able to notice evidence of Self-Will by focusing on key words, such has 'have to' or 'must', that indicate a forcing current to attain something or a resistance to change. Pride often relies upon proof, with facts valued over feelings, or borrowing authority by referencing others using 'should'. Those sensitive to body language might notice push/pull signals, or a sense of 'being above' the situation. Use the tool of Daily Review PL 28 to track your observations.

To the degree you are committed, what you do will be pleasurable, free from conflict, fruitful, and rewarding. It will be one-pointed in direction; it will have depth and meaning; it will be successful; and it will bear the stamp and feeling of blessedness.

[Commitment: Cause and Effect](#) PL 196

Daily Review 2.0 PL 28

<http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/028-DailyReview-Suggestions.pdf>

Track your daily experiences of disharmonies. After keeping logs for several weeks, see if you can find a common denominator.

Graphic created by Shakila F

Daily Review				
DATE	SITUATION	REACTION	BEHAVIOR/RESPONSE	JUDGMENT
	Facts/Circumstances of Disturbance	Feelings, thoughts, emotions	How You Acted (Exaggerated/Minimized)	Affirmed/Negated My Belief That...
10/01/20	Late for work	Fear/anxiety about job	Yelled at kids	I'm a bad mom
10/01/20	Fight re dinner cleanup	Felt let down by family	Didn't speak for hours	People are inconsiderate

Week 4 The Spiritual Purpose of Human Limitations

QUESTION: *What is clearly the definition of spiritual death?*

ANSWER: The clear definition of spiritual death is separateness from God, denying God and/or His laws, turning away into darkness, entangling oneself into the vicious cycles of the world of darkness, which happens to some degree with all beings who do not fulfill the maximum possibility in their development, who persist in self-blindness because it is the line of least resistance. That is spiritual death.

There is no finality. It could not be. Because if there were, the theory of eternal damnation would be right, which you know it is not. [For example] An atheist may be temporarily incarnated into an environment which does not influence him religiously. By development, his God consciousness may not be weaker than a superficial belief of another person who has been incarnated into a superficially religious family and whose own belief in God is superficial. A person can therefore be an atheist and still fulfill his very best according to what can be expected of him. He may be on the upward path in his own way; and then one day the real and profound belief will come to him. Atheism might also be spiritual death, of course. It depends very much on the case. PL 30

Exercise 4a: Does your life here on earth ever feel like a form of banishment, abandonment, punishment – or something chaotic, uncontrolled, and unfair? Consider that all these images / interpretations assume that there is some form of spiritual death, that you have either been judged as deserving or means that there is no spiritual justice.

The purpose of spiritual amnesia

QUESTION: If our soul is taught during our sleep, why don't we remember in an awakened state what our soul has learned?

ANSWER: There are many good reasons for that.

In the first place, the same reasons hold true here as for why the memory is taken away from one incarnation to the other or from the existence in the spiritual worlds between incarnations. If this knowledge of the spirit world, of the existence of spirits, of the vast worlds that exist beyond your earth sphere, and of the fact of reincarnation would be so easily accessible, you could not possibly fulfill your life.

It would be too easy, for this highest treasure of knowledge must be fought for and paid for with the price of self-development and victories over the lower self. No matter how much you have read about the subject, you will never be convinced if you have not gained divine enlightenment. In this divine enlightenment is something you have to work for; you have to pay the price and deserve it for this highest gift. If this knowledge would be just placed into your lap, either by retaining your memory or by other means, there would not be any fight and therefore no development.

On the other hand, it might also be a hindrance to know certain factors of your previous lives. As long as you are not ripe for it -- and this can only happen through development -- it may be harmful for you to know certain things.

During your sleep, when your spirit is in the spirit world, you often have insight into your previous incarnations, into the reason of this present life and what you are supposed to accomplish.

There may be painful knowledge connected with it which you cannot use constructively at this time; it may depress you and hold you back in development.

God has given you the opportunity to start with a clean slate, without any burden. According with your merits on this earth sphere, you will receive instruction, guidance, and advice in the spirit world when your body is asleep and your spirit is free. This knowledge remains in your subconscious and can affect you indirectly when you are awake, even though you do not know why you react in a certain way, why you make certain decisions, etc.

But consciously, you have to fight for everything, for knowledge as well as for spiritual development. And by fighting, of course you do understand -- I mean it in the sense of fighting your lower self. Also, during the hours of sleep, if someone is already developed to a certain extent, he may fulfill tasks with other spirits, either out of the body or with other human beings who are also sleeping. This instruction and exercise will help others and therefore the entire plan of salvation. But there must not be clear knowledge, unless there is an exception.

PL 30

Exercise 4b: Explore these concepts by recalling your own experiences. Notice how you value goals / achievements that represent long-term effort on your part, or required some kind of sacrifice or personal cost. Then notice your attitudes towards what comes easily. For instance, when you are lauded for a trait or talent that feels effortless, a gift you received, or 'luck'.

Expanding our Perception of Self

QUESTION: *I would like a clear definition of what the soul is.*

ANSWER: As you know, there are many interpretations of the soul, and they may all be quite accurate. If they seem contradictory, it is because words are so limited to describe an inner process that is on a different dimension than human language. Therefore it is so easy to become confused with words and verbal explanation. This is the reason that higher dimensions can never be made accessible by verbal learning, but only by inner experience, which in turn becomes possible if and when inner error and distortion is dissolved.

Let me explain the soul as we use it here. The soul is the sum total of the inner personality: the thinking, the feeling, the concepts, the potentials, the attitudes, the patterns, the characteristics, the temperament, the emotions, the idiosyncrasies -- everything that is behind the physical being. It also includes, of course, unresolved problems. But it does not include the cover-up for the unresolved problems, the pseudo-solutions, the false defenses. This is not the soul itself. But the particular choice of the pseudo-solution is an *expression* or *manifestation* or *indication* of the soul behind.

Karma is the result of all previous incarnations. Karma is the *effect* the soul has produced.

Soul Substance: Coping with Demands PL 111

It may be useful to think of relationships between the spirit, soul, personality, and physical form like a series of nesting dolls (wooden Russian Matryoshka). Each doll is contained by the next larger, and may only be fully conscious of the levels inside itself. = Spirit condenses part of itself into soul substance, for the intention to transform an aspect of its attachments to untruth as well as develop its unique lightforce. Soul substance used for a specific incarnation represents the inner personality, but creates a more limited version in order to magnify the aspect of untruth to be transformed. The human personality creates the physical form ('matter follows consciousness' PL) which manifests (somaticizes) its truths as well as the the negativity of untruths. The soul, personality, and physical

may also have to deal with Karmic consequences created in previous incarnations, often without any conscious knowledge or understanding. Jr

Nationalism and Free Will

QUESTION: *Is there a reason that a certain nationality has certain traits?*

ANSWER: To a certain extent you can make some generalizations. Spirits who have the same traits incarnate together because they fit together. Like attracts like. Perhaps in the next incarnation they will fluctuate into another country where other trends that have been hidden in them so far, but are coming out now, will then correspond to this new environment. PL 30

QUESTION: *Do they flock together for their own better development?*

ANSWER: It is not always for their better development. It may be in certain cases, but in certain cases it would be better for their development if a person could free himself of a very strong bondage of nationality. There are incarnations of beings that take place repeatedly into the same country or the same religion, if that is the bondage.

A certain freedom is left to each soul because it is realized in the higher realms of the spirit world that only by their own experiences may they come to the conclusion that their former attitude may not have been quite right. So it happens that spirits fluctuate into the same environment, not because it is particularly good for their development, but because they could not have brought themselves yet to open up to other things, other ways, other beliefs, other likes. But it is very easy for you to recognize when you deal with human beings -- and you do not even have to know them exceedingly well -- whether this is a type that is very stuck on his own ideas or whether this is just a temporary incarnation which happened because it simply fulfills the present needs best. You can educate your intuition easily to recognize this in others, as well as in yourself, if you look out in that way.

PL 30

Exercise 4c: While we are encouraged to focus on our own development, an individual is just one 'data point' in the range of human experience. Explore these concepts by recognizing how they may manifest in the experiences of others (avoiding judgment or any sense of superiority.).

Limited Perception of Spiritual Realities

QUESTION: *Spirits who are still undeveloped, in what form do they see higher spirits?*

ANSWER: Undeveloped spirits, when they come into contact with higher spirits, they do not see them as angels or light creatures. That would be much too easy

How many human beings accept something that a respected authority says, and yet if the same words are spoken by someone whom they seem to have reason to look down on, they reject the very same words. That does not mean development. Development means also independence, selecting truth from untruth. Therefore the spirits in the lower spheres do not see the angels as they really are. But there are at certain times and in certain instances exceptions in this respect too. PL 30

Exercise 4d: When you cannot seem to accept spiritual guidance, even when it comes from your own inner voice / inner knowing, do you say the equivalent of, *"If I could see God or if I could see an angel, I would believe."* If such 'proof' would matter, explore why – since, after all, it would be based upon your perception ('vision') vs. objective standards that other humans could validate.

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