

Objectivity and Subjectivity

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 42

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This lecture contains one of three Christmas messages given by the Guide; the others are Christmas Message + Message to the Children + Q&As PL 219, and Christmas Lecture + Q&As PL 239. To be inclusive of a wide range of religious beliefs (which the Guide encouraged and supported) I do not include references to Christ or Christ consciousness in my study guides. Please download the lecture or an [audio version](#) for those sections.]

Week 1: Changing Perspective

Week 2: Subjectivity results from Pride, Self-Will, and Fear

Week 3: The Grain of Truth

Week 4: Questions and Answers

Week 1: Changing Perspective

We in the spirit world are particularly happy about this group, my friends. For most of you have made serious efforts, and these efforts have brought fruits although in some instances you still cannot fully realize the value of your work. But some of you understand, or begin to understand.

You begin to observe in yourself a greater harmony at moments where only a little while ago you felt angry and resentful. These feelings occur now with many of you to a lesser degree, as well as less often. This progress happens only very indirectly.

You could not accomplish this by forcing yourself not to feel disharmony, but rather by going to the roots of your conflicts within yourself. And that is the way you reach this healthy detachment. And it will increase until the time when you can only be touched by love and brotherly understanding -- when you will not be blind to the shortcomings, but these latter will not effect you negatively anymore.

Spiritual 'Sight'

The way spirits see, and the significance of their sight, is different from human sight.

When you see a beautiful landscape, or another beautiful sight, it may be wonderful to behold, but it has nothing to do with you, with your own state of mind, with your peace and inner harmony. But when they see beauty, they realize that this is a world, a state of being, that can be theirs if they live according to these teachings.

Courage

Courage ascribes to a cause, an issue, or another person as much importance as to the self. Therefore courage and love are, in the last analysis, inseparable. By the work you have done so far, it should not be difficult for you to see where you are courageous and where you lack courage. And where you lack courage, you will always find you must lack love as well.

Exercise 1a: “In the spirit world, you see what you hear, and you hear what you see. Try to visualize and to imagine that such a world is here, around you, and in you.” PL 42 Spend some time considering this. Use your imagination! What might sounds look like? What do sights sound like?

Extend this to imagining feelings and thoughts. Visualize anger as it is portrayed in cartoons, with sharp points, being pushy. Visualize love. Visualize wanting or examining something.

Then consider sounds. Listen to the music you like, and like the animated feature film Fantasia, see it inhabited by characters who move and feel and think.

Objectivity and Subjectivity

Objectivity is another essential requisite for the free and harmonious human being. The more unpurified and disharmonious you are, the more you will lack objectivity. Objectivity means truth.

Subjectivity means colored truth or half-truth at best, complete untruth in many cases. Subjectivity means unconscious or nondeliberate untruth (contrary to a conscious lie). All this is forthcoming from the emotional level of one's being. By purifying the depths of your soul, you will first find where untruth exists within yourself; then you will be able to plant truth within yourself after the untruth is ousted.

Needless to say, only this path of stringent self-search will make this discovery and ensuing change possible. This is merely an additional angle to view this process as a whole and yourself in particular, which cannot fail to help you a step further.

Exercise 1b: Spend some time visualizing these two concepts from a spiritual perspective.

Identify interactions and situations in your daily life based upon whether they seek to determine objective truth, or put forward an interpretation of truth in order to support an agenda that is desired, in order to produce a specific outcome.

Daily Review 1.0 from The Call PL 17

You can find out your true reactions about certain things, begin to pull off certain masks and pretenses, find out where you act against a [Spiritual Law](#) [PL 171]. It is like a puzzle you begin, when you cannot as yet see the picture; but if you are patient, you will succeed. Thus you will uncover your hidden anxieties and complexes which of course are responsible for your disease.

Let the whole day pass in front of your eyes, in your memory, and think of everything that has happened that has given you in some way a disharmonious feeling or reaction. No matter how wrong the other person may have been, the moment you have been touched by it, there must be something wrong within you. At first these incidents will appear entirely unconnected and isolated; they will be meaningless for you at the beginning. But later on, you will begin to sense -- at first, and then clearly understand, a pattern.

If you follow this through for some time to come, really faithfully (not just once or twice -- that will not do you any good) but regularly and faithfully for some time, you will, after a while, see a clear pattern coming out of it. Pray for enlightenment and guidance every time you conduct this daily review, [The Call](#) PL 17

Daily Review 3.0 from PL 56

Learn to investigate your reactions, and ask yourself what the meaning and further significance of them may be. What do they imply? What lies behind the emotions you register in the most casual incidents of your life? What is the emotion you register just at first, and what is behind it?

The Capacity to Wish: Healthy and Unhealthy Motives in Desire PL 56

Week 2: Subjectivity results from Pride, Self-Will, and Fear

Objectivity is another essential requisite for the free and harmonious human being. The more unpurified and disharmonious you are, the more you will lack objectivity. Objectivity means truth. Subjectivity means colored truth or half-truth at best, complete untruth in many cases. Subjectivity means unconscious or nondeliberate untruth (contrary to a conscious lie).

There is the other extreme of subjectivity that comes from the same root, although it manifests in a very different way. Many human beings are very severe with those by whom they feel unloved and criticized, or at least not secure. Then their defense is their own severity with them. If you rest secure in your value, you will not feel insecure, and therefore you will develop a natural tolerance. But most of you are still so insecure that you resort to such defective defense-measures.

It falls into the same category of blindly idealizing the person of whose love you do feel secure. In such cases, you do not see the very trends you object to most strenuously in other people. That is dangerous too, my dear ones. It is all the more dangerous because this tendency lends itself extremely well to the self-deception of love and tolerance. When you close your eyes to the faults of those you love because they love you, you try to tell yourself that you are tolerant and good. No, my friends, that is not true. True love can see reality. And if you are ready to love in the most vital and mature sense, you will not try to close your eyes to the faults of the loved one -- quite the contrary. If you do so persistently, there are two reasons for that.

One is pride.

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Pride, Self-Will, and Fear

Pride means that ego is more important than the other person, not only in the sense that may apply to self-will desiring advantages of any sort, but also in the sense of vanity,

Free Will can be used for good or for bad; free will is important. You cannot say it serves only good purposes, for 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. 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.

But how does that connect with *fear*? If your self-will is strong -- and it can be all the stronger if it is unconscious -- you must constantly be afraid that the desires of this self-will will not be gratified. *As there is self-will, fear must be coupled with it.* 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.

Pride, Self-Will, and Fear PL 30

Exercise 2a: Become aware of conflicts within feelings and emotions, in yourself and in others. Notice where Self-Will may be acting out under the guise of brashness or “but I’m afraid to...”

Real Love vs. Blind Love, Blind Trust

The one whom you have chosen as your loved one, and the one who has chosen you as the loved one, must not have faults you do not consider right. You ignore trends, half-consciously thinking that this attitude proves your love and tolerance, but really it is out of pride.

The second reason is that deep down in your heart you are so insecure about your own ability to love that you need an idealized version of the loved person. But it is not true love when you have to see an idealized picture. No, it is a weakness, and often a bondage.

Real love is freedom, dear friends. It can stand the test of the truth as it prevails at this moment of development in the other person. When you reach that stage, you will be able to see the other who is dear to your heart as he or she really is, not the way you want to see them. As long as you close your eyes to the real picture of the other, you are as yet not capable of love.

Indeed, you are so much aware of this incapacity, on a rather superficial layer of your subconscious, that you go on busily closing your eyes out of fear that if you see the truth, you could not go on loving.

This pride and your present inability for true love make you go from one extreme to the other. Either you close your eyes to the true person of those who are close and very dear to you; or else you judge others too harshly even though the criticism in itself may be justified.

The isolated fact that you object to may be valid, but not your evaluation of the whole person, not many other facets that play a role and that you have no way of knowing.

In the case of a person who persists in blindness of the loved ones, it is often unavoidable that a crisis, a shake-up, and a painful awakening takes place which will hurt you deeply. Actually, it is not the other person who has then disappointed and hurt you, but your own past deliberate blindness. At such a crisis, this is what deep down you resent most of all. Avoid such a crisis, my dear ones. You can do so if you learn to see and love other people as they really are.

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Relevance to Childhood Images

In the last lecture (*Images: The Damage They Do* PL 41), I spoke about the child's mentality that continues to exist in your images. The child knows only good or bad, perfection or imperfection, omnipotence where he can feel secure or utter weakness he must shy away from. The child can love only the first alternative.

When he discovers that a heretofore adored parent has faults and is not omnipotent, he either turns away from the parent, begins to hate and resent him, feels let down, disappointed; or he hides his discovery in his own subconscious, feeling guilty to have discovered something "derogatory" in the parent. These reactions continue to live in a human being's soul and color his reactions and behavior patterns throughout his life, until they have been reviewed and newly evaluated in the light of mature judgment and reality.

When you approach your present relationships from this point of view, the process will be painful at first. But it is not half as bad as your resisting subconscious will make you believe. Do not heed it; go on in the search for truth. I can promise you that you will evolve a much happier, freer, and securer person. This is the only cure, my dear ones.

And, I beg of you, do not say that you see the faults of your loved ones. Yes, you may see some of their faults, but perhaps only those that you can tolerate. Others you may not allow yourself to see. Thus you have no conception of the entire personality of the loved one; you see a distorted picture, just as distorted as many of you are who are too severe and intolerant with others.

The picture is out of focus in both instances. Both are mirrors that do not reflect reality, each mirror distorts in a different way. You are scared to approach the sight of reality, because the childish emotion still lives within you that seeing an unpleasant truth in the beloved person forces you to withdraw your love. But that is not true at all! If you approach this particular search with the knowledge that your love, instead of weakening, must grow and mature, you can counteract your resistance to finding the reality.

Each one of you must know which one of the two extremes of subjectivity mentioned are more important to tackle first. Both alternatives will apply to all of you, but one always stands in the foreground and therefore needs to be worked and concentrated on to begin with.

Objectivity needs courage too, my friends. Mature love means to love the other in spite of their faults, knowing them, seeing them, not closing one's eyes to them -- and then to build on the good in the person. Immature love means a complete "either/or". It is equally immature to judge as though all human beings were on the same level of development. But it may not even be the case that the other person is less developed than you are. He or she may simply be developed in another respect. Therefore you cannot compare or judge, but you should simply see! If you cannot see without anger, you should realize that this reaction comes from the same origin as the other extreme discussed here, namely that you cannot accept imperfection and are thus still a child emotionally.

Exercise 2b: a. Think of the people you love most in this world, and then make a list of their qualities and of their faults, as you have done for yourself.

-- Go ask other friends, mutual friends, *"Please tell me, what do you really think, am I right? I would appreciate your telling me your opinion about his or her qualities and faults and whether you see the other as I see him or her. I will not be insulted, I will not take it as nasty criticism, I ask this for the purpose of development."* If it can be done together, if both are on the path, all the better.

-- Compare the faults you see and those others see, who are perhaps more detached and objective than you are.

-- Observe your own reaction when you hear faults that you could (or would not) conceive of in the other. When you become angry and hurt inside, this should be a sign that you are not objective, that you fear the truth -- and most probably, because of the two aforementioned reasons: pride and your own inability to love the other as he or she really is. For otherwise you would remain calm, even if your beloved is accused of a fault he or she does not possess.

In this way you will learn to evaluate the people you love, whereupon your love will mature and grow in stature. Thus you will grow out of the immature state, where you love like a frightened child that cannot see the truth.

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Week 3: The Grain of Truth (also ref: [Study Guide from November 2020](#))

Let us first take the common phenomenon that what you see in others as a grave fault, you often do not see in yourself; whether you have the same faults in the same way and the same strength or in a slightly different and modified form makes no difference.

What you observe in others and what you so strenuously object to may even be right in itself. Yet it is a half-truth because you judge and do not see where in yourself you deviate from what is right and good in a quite similar way.

Furthermore, the fault of the other may coexist with qualities which you do not possess yourself. Thus your judgment is colored, for your objection concentrates on the one sore point you focus on, while you leave many other facets out of sight which would be necessary to complete a comprehensive overall picture.

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Exercise 3a: Whenever you judge others in your mind, whenever you resent their faults, please my dear friends, think well: *"Don't I have, in a different way perhaps, but nevertheless, a similar fault? And does not the other person I judge so harshly have qualities I lack?"* Then:

1. Think of such qualities the other has and you do not possess.
 2. Think whether you do not have different faults than the person you judge and resent.
- All this will help you to view your anger at other people's faults more objectively.

Should, by any chance, the outcome of such deliberations really be that your faults are so much less, your qualities so much superior to the other, all the more reason for you to cultivate your tolerance and understanding. For then you would be indeed in a higher state of development which gives you, above all, the obligation to be understanding and forgiving. If you lack that ability, all your superior qualities, all your lesser faults mean nothing! If you make serious endeavors in that direction, God will help you to be more objective. Thus you will definitely have more peace, and what bothers you so very much will cease to upset you.

And incidentally, whenever you are upset about another person's faults, there must be something in you that is not right either. You know that, friends, but you forget it again and again when such opportunities come up. If you truly wish to find out what it is in you, again, God will help you! And here you should not be concerned with the fact that the other person may be so obviously in the wrong, so much more wrong than you are.

Try to find **the little grain** in yourself instead of concentrating on the mountain of the other. For your own unhealthy seed robs your peace, and never the mountain of wrong of the other person!

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Exercise 3b: The one grain of truth in what is said may open a new door of understanding for you. It may not even be something entirely new for you, but it is often necessary to consider the same fault or trait from new angles, under a different light, so as to understand the various effects this same fault may have on your surroundings. When you say your daily prayer and do your meditation, this is what you should concentrate on.

Finding your Faults PL 26

Whenever you are on the defensive, your primary aim cannot be truth. You do not ask yourself at such moments, ***"Is it right? Is there a grain of truth in it?"*** Your concern at the moment is *"Am I right, or is the other person right?"* It is this limited *"I versus the other person"* that befores the issue of what is right or true. There is a great difference when this is done as a defense of one's own undesirable traits -- or in truth, and for the sake of truth.

QUESTION: But what if we get annoyed at being unjustly criticized?

ANSWER: The very feeling of annoyance is the proof and expression of your defensiveness. Without defense, you would not be annoyed. How could you be? You would evaluate and either find that in it there may be some truth, little truth, or none at all.

All too often, you are convinced it is unjustified before you even have a chance to find out, or rather before you give yourself the chance to find the possible grain of truth.

And if there is no trace of truth in it, why would you have to get annoyed? What can this criticism do to you that causes annoyance?

[The Defense: Path to the Real Self](#) PRS 19

Search if there is not some **grain of truth** involved. The moment you find it, the justified or unjustified disapproval will no longer be a hurt. In this attitude, you will not have the fear of criticism or disapproval; your forcing current will dissolve

[Reality and Illusion](#) PL 71

Exercise 3c: Before you can work on not being in defense, you may have to spend some time realizing when you are in defense! Notice what causes you to become tense or fearful. Pay attention to when you are thinking and feeling dualistically: me vs them, right vs. wrong, even good vs. a better way! Ref *[The Defense](#)* PL 101 and *[Unity and Duality](#)* PL 143.

Then practice saying, to yourself, some of the phrases above that are in bold italics. Notice what, if anything, changes.

The fear of criticism is an illusion you can only dispel when you expose yourself to it again and again deliberately—in your groups, for example. There is no other way to come out of anything unless you go into it. I have said that many times—that you open yourself up to the pain; that you experience the pain; that you then question yourself,

"I want to be mainly committed to the truth. If what I hear has a grain of truth, I want to see it. And if it is not true, I will feel that pain of the unjust criticism."

In that way, you will totally lose your fear, and you will become vulnerable -- and invulnerable, through that. Then your positive intent to give the best of the universe to the people you instruct—to be a tool, to be an instrument (and not to serve your ego)—will have a more powerful acceleration.

Psychic Nuclear Points PL 214 Q&A

Exercise 3d: Open-mindedness has to be always present on this path. A person has to devote much work, willpower, and time to reach this state of mind. If you have not invested all that, then you need to ask yourself,

"What are my imperfections? Where are my faults? What is my greatest fault, which might be the greatest obstacle to my spiritual ascent? What are the faults which I have already recognized, but about whose consequences and extent I have not given myself a clear account? And what are the faults with which my fellow-humans have confronted me?"

Think about them. You will find yourself saying, *"This is unjust, it is not true that I have these faults"* -- and you might even be right!

Mediumship -- How to Contact God's Spirit World PL 8

Week 4: Questions and Answers

[Note: Many additional topics were briefly covered during the bi-weekly Q&A sessions that followed each lecture. The 1996 edited versions available to the public often edit these out. A CD of all unedited versions plus all Q&As is available at www.pathwork.org.]

QUESTION: *Is silent prayer without the uttering of words is sufficient, or are the formulation and verbalization of words aloud in prayer is of greater effect?*

ANSWER: Silent prayer, if the words are concisely thought, are of course just as effective. There is no doubt about it. For the thought is a form just as much as the spoken word. In fact, if a spoken word is said lightly without the impact of emotion and meaning, it has much less power and effect and is therefore a much weaker form than the word that is thought and deeply felt.

However, if for instance in a group gathering a person finds it difficult to pray in front of others, there is something to look into. For that means a block... that is, when you pray to God, you quite naturally feel humble. And to appear so humble in front of others makes you feel as though you were humiliated... So if you cannot pray with your heart in front of others. This is the very thing that should be overcome, perhaps not necessarily by forcing yourself to do so, although this may be an additional help -- it is always good to reach the goal from two sides, the outside and the inside -- but by looking into your psychological reactions and evaluating them in the light of your own present truth.

Exercise 4a: Notice any element of Pride with activities you prefer to practice alone. Then, notice the Pride when feel pleasure at being seen in other activities! Negative aspects of our personality often hide under the 'cover' of those we consider positive.

Q: *Couldn't it be shyness too?*

A: Oh, you can rationalize it and cover it with many explanations.

What is shyness anyway? What is an inferiority complex for that matter? It is nothing else but a form of pride. For he who is so afraid of how he will appear to others, he who is so much concerned with the impression he makes, is proud. Or if you prefer to call it vain, it is the same. So shyness is one manifestation of an inferiority complex. Brashness is another. And all inferiority complexes have the one common denominator: pride -- and self-will.

It is self-will because you want the gratification of your pride so very much that you either act more secure than you feel (thus being untrue to yourself) or the strength of your self-will paralyzes you, which makes you shy. And where pride and self-will exist, fear must exist too. If you would be entirely unconcerned with what other people think and rest secure in yourself, being true to yourself as you now are, and have the courage to be what you are, no fear can exist.

Unconsciously you are afraid that others will see that you are not what your outward actions pretend you are. You fear that your pride and self-will will not be gratified. If this were not the case, no inferiority complex would exist, and therefore you could not be shy.

An inferiority complex is not determined by one's actual worth and value; it exists solely because one wants to be more than one is. So if my friends examine their inferiority feelings from that point of view, they will get much further along on the road of liberation of their fears and anxieties.

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Exercise 4b: Notice how Pride, Self-Will, and Fear act out in yourself and others. Ask questions. Notice any resistance to considering that that how we behave can be changed.

Q: What is the connection, that an inferiority complex is really a guilt complex, the wrong reaction about faults? On another occasion you gave a different explanation.

A: You are quite right. The connection is this. Isn't it natural that when you are proud -- which is, after all, a fault -- that you feel guilty?

The personality will say in the subconscious: *"I am proud, I know it is not good to be proud, I do not want to have this pride, therefore I hide it from myself."*

Your concern about other people's opinion makes you violate your own personality. You are not true to yourself, which is perhaps one of the greatest sins out of which many other sins come.

And that makes you feel guilty. That is the connection.

Q: What is the connection and the difference between fearing disapproval and wanting approval, as against fearing public opinion?

A: There is not necessarily a difference here, but there might be one.

If a person is so very much concerned with public opinion, it is certainly because one wants the approval of public opinion. One feels safe in that way, one cannot be criticized. You do not want to be separate in this sense.

A child, for instance, suffers whenever it feels different from other children. For the child, being different means being inferior.

With a grown-up person, this trend sometimes remains and manifests in an over-adherence to the standards of the masses, of the opinion of the majority whether it is right or wrong. Public opinion may be right in many instances, but if a person adheres to it without examining first his own opinion, it becomes a bondage.

The free person who is unconcerned with the opinion of others, who rests secure in the self, accounting to his own conscience and to his God, will examine each issue separately and then freely choose his conduct. Thus he may adhere to public opinion in some instances, but this adherence is an entirely different one than the person who is in bondage of it. In other instances, he will forsake public opinion because thus he would not be true to himself. He would be willing to pay this price. That is the healthy attitude.

Q: In what way is it different from wanting approval?

A: It is not different. I would say it is a part, a facet of it. In some types of personality, the strong desire to be approved by others will manifest in a dependence on public opinion. In other types, approval of others is gained by the exact opposite behavior. Such a person may always act against public opinion for the same motive as the one who is bound to it. Either way may be unhealthy, either way may be mature and harmonious.

Only, with the mature and harmonious person, there is no pattern. In one instance he will act with public opinion, in another instance against it. But the one who acts preponderantly with or against it can safely be suspected of having sickly motives. Often, two people will not react the same way to the same occurrence under the same conditions.

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Exercise 4c: Notice any pattern to when/where you seek approval, even if your desire is modest.