

Pathwork™ Steps

Questions and Answers

Featuring Human Perceptions of Spiritual Reality

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 61qa

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

Week 1: Who incarnates here (and *why*?)

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Week 1: Who incarnates here (and *why*?)

QUESTION: Since the world is getting more and more populated, where do the additional souls come from?

ANSWER: They come from the Spirit World, as all souls do, from various spheres. There is such a vast world in the universe, with so many beings waiting to start the cycle of incarnations, and so many waiting to continue it. There are those who are to begin, those who are in the middle, and those who are at the end of their earth incarnations. Re: *Creation* PL 20 and *The Fall* PL 21.

The reason for more human beings now than ever before is that, as progress continues in the entire creation, accelerated conditions prevail. More souls can begin their earth cycle, and more souls can come back sooner. That is, they need less time in the Spirit World between incarnations. This accounts for the many souls being born. When development takes place within an individual soul, the soul generates more strength, which remains in the reservoir of the soul; therefore, the entity is ready to start earth life after a shorter period of time in the beyond. PL 61qa

Visualization Exercise 1a: In order to transcend dualities around good/bad, consider the Fall as having been an explosion of consciousness, similar to theories about the Big Bang. The Plan of *Salvation* PL 22 would then become a spiritual explanation of why the universe is contracting: consciousness finding its way back to the original state of unity, withing the framework of natural law (such as the forces of gravity).

See a YouTube version: [Timelapse of the Universe; 13 Billion Years in 10 minutes.](#)

Earth can then be seen a ‘way-station’ on the return trajectory, where consciousness has condensed into a form of matter that allows us demonstrate our current level of development, experience the effects of both true and false beliefs, and explore the use of [Free Will](#) PL18.

Purpose of the Earth Sphere

Ever since the Fall, a vast number of beings have to go through their development in order to come back into light. The earth sphere is a very important part of this development. Whenever they are not incarnated, they live in various spheres in the Spirit World. As progress continues, more and more beings from these spiritual realms, in various stages of development, come to the earth sphere - those who have never been incarnated before, as well as those who have. Due to increased strength, they can come back after a shorter period of time in the Spirit World. This is a cycle that will last for a while; then a new cycle may come when fewer beings will come to earth for a while.

It is not that the spirits who are born now have been especially created for that purpose. They have been created before, they just appear on this earth sphere now because they are ready for it. They are either ready to start incarnation, or ready to resume it faster. This may create certain earth problems, but these very problems can be the stepping stones for further development. PL 61qa

Visualization Exercise 1b: Globally, more people are migrating to new locations than ever before, seeking relief from strife and catastrophe and also new opportunities. Visualize this as yet another form of consciousness seeking the unitive, where we collectively create strife – even weather patterns! – in order to help ourselves break through self-created barriers of culture and self-interest.

QUESTION: *You are talking about progress but this applies only to a few, doesn't it? It seems that crime and terrible things go on more than ever.*

ANSWER: This is all relative. You only see a very limited aspect, as it appears on earth, thus ignoring all these factors.

Of course, the forces of darkness are still very strong on the earth sphere. But that is certainly not an indication that spiritual progress has not taken place. These forces of darkness do exist, of course, but they do not exist more than in earlier times - quite the contrary.

The fact that you have more crime is understandable if you consider that there are more people, and therefore more difficult conditions in certain respects, *and more people incarnated from lower spheres*. But, from the overall view, progress is tremendous.

If you had the same number of human beings in former times, the cruelty, crime and wickedness on this earth sphere would have been so much greater that the human race would have found it almost impossible to exist. Exactly because of the spiritual progress, it has become possible for so many beings from lower spheres to go through earth development now. PL 61qa

Visualization Exercise 1c: Imagine earth as a 'one-room schoolhouse' intended to address vastly different levels of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. There is no universal 'test' that can determine how each individual is progressing in different categories – especially once they attain autonomy (70% of the world's population is over 18). Notice how your cultures 'grades' human beings and allows them opportunities to progress.

QUESTION: *Is it necessary in the development of the soul to appear and be reincarnated on more than one planet?*

ANSWER: Yes. Only the terminology may be debatable, for life on other planets may or may not be called an incarnation. The world of matter, as you know it on earth, does not exist in the same form in other realms. PL 61qa

Visualization Exercise 1d: What might an incarnation on a gas planet (like Jupiter or Uranus) look like, feel like? What might it be able to accomplish, in terms of providing an opportunity for spiritual development? Rather than dismiss such speculation as science fiction, consider that science fiction writers, like other artists, are simply tapping into our collective consciousness – which may include incarnations on other-world environments, just like other artists might be able to feel and sense dimensions, colors, sounds and smells that are not (yet) possible on Earth.

Week 2: De-construction precedes Construction

Imagine that you want to build a beautiful house where an old and dilapidated one is standing now. First you have to tear down the old building and clear the foundations before you can build the beautiful new structure. In order to do that, the time has to be ripe. You have to have the necessary material, all the essentials you need for the new structure, before you can set out to do the work.

A person not knowing all these circumstances, just seeing a building being torn down, may think this is destruction, chaos and imbalance. Only with the knowledge of the complete picture will he realize that the momentary destruction is an integral part of construction. This is what constantly takes place in creation, in the entire universe, as an effect of the Fall. It also takes place in the individual soul. PL 61qa

Exercise 2a: Recall times in your life where you needed to ‘backtrack’ or redo something because it needed significant ‘remodeling’ in order to better serve your new interests or realizations. Moving into a new home also requires de-constructing the old one, and the re-constructing in the new environment. Even clearing a storage space can unleash a cascade of unexpected emotions and memories. What parts did you enjoy or welcome? What were the advantages and disadvantages, the highs and lows of each process?

In personal development, you often have to go through the process of destroying something: the old and obsolete and illusory. This will give you the sense of things getting worse, feeling more depressed, more confused. In reality it is part of the growth that can take place after this painful procedure. PL 61qa

Exercise 2b: Compare your examples and answers from 2a (or any other form of material makeover / reset) with major attitude and belief shifts. Notice that in each example, there may be moments of chaos, overwhelm, and even thoughts about reversing the process / ‘going back’.

By the same token, when souls are incarnated into conditions more difficult than other conditions, it may seem to you that this disadvantage is unjust and unbalanced, and therefore a step backward in development. But in the overall picture it is not at all that way. Souls incarnated into these circumstances are, for the most part, spirits who find *through these very difficulties* the conditions most adequate for their present stage of development, affording them the greatest chance to grow out of the particular inner obstacles they have to face.

Whatever appears like a negative aspect, a disadvantage, indicating lack of progress, is often just the opposite. But you could only grasp this if you had the overall view, knowing what is at stake from the point of view of creation. The temporary earthly disadvantages would be recognized for what they are, namely stepping stones to real progress, the progress of the soul, not of the temporary human personality. PL 61qa

Your gauge is always that which feels most uncomfortable and from which you are most tempted to look away. You merely look away because you are geared in the opposite direction.

All you have to do is see and recognize the truth wherever you stand now. All you have to do at this time is see that there may be more than you see, and call upon this inner center, and allow yourself to be open to its intuitive messages to you.

[Unity and Duality](#) PL 143

Exercise 2c: Recall personal experiences where you had to deal with adverse circumstances. What did you learn? Imagine ways you could have learned / developed / broadened your perspective to this same degree, that would have been comfortable, pleasant or easy to navigate.

There are also very evolved souls -- the minority -- born into these conditions. They come to help spread love and truth. They do not only set an example, but also have a particular strength with which they can influence general conditions. They are, each in their own way, leaders of humankind. They are not necessarily famous. PL 61qa

Exercise 2d: Identify members of your family or local community who might be such 'leaders of mankind'. Or, notice examples in human-interest news articles. *They don't have to qualify for sainthood!* Instead, look for ordinary people who influence others by 'walking the talk' of their beliefs vs. by persuasion or coercion. Verbalize what qualities caused you to select these people.

QUESTION: *Why are there more births now in the colored races or in Asia and China, and in all the backward countries (see next question about this term) where people are so undeveloped, than in the western hemisphere?*

Exercise 2d: How do you relate to what the phrase 'backward countries' may have referred to?

ANSWER: Because it is exactly in those conditions that certain souls can find the conditions more favorable for their present incarnation and development -- not favorable from a point of view of earthly comfort, but favorable for what they need at this time in order to grow and develop. All this is neither coincidence nor arbitrary; it happens all according to a very wonderful law which constantly regulates itself, balancing itself. As I said before, you on this earth sphere cannot see the balance and harmonization that take place constantly. In fact, it appears to you as the very opposite. PL 61qa

QUESTION: *In the previous question the word "backward countries" was used, implying that we are forward. Does it seem that way to you?*

ANSWER: Not in all respects. In some respects, yes. But "backward" would certainly apply to earthly human advantages. Spiritually speaking, it is hard to generalize. There are so many aspects of the human personality. In most cases you cannot compare the development of one individual with another. One person may be more developed in one way, the other person in another way. Of course, there also exist definite and crass cases of difference in development. But in many cases this is not so. The same applies to groups, races and nationalities. PL 61qa

Suggestions for slow, low phases of development

QUESTION: *But when you feel low, how can you put together your reactions?*

ANSWER: Speak out your most irrational and seemingly senseless feelings. Pronounce what you feel, why you feel low, what you want, why you would desire such and such. Let out whatever comes to mind, without censorship. That will make you aware of what the inner person, your psyche, thinks, wants and feels. This is often contrary to your outer personality and conscious awareness. And this is important.

You do not need a particular strength for this. All you need is to focus your attention to what is in you, view it, and put it into words. It takes simply a little training. In the so-called image sessions it could be easily done. As many of my friends have already experienced, the negative occasions will prove to be the most productive. 61qa

The Spiritual Principles With Which We Manage Ourselves To Create Heaven On Earth

The Pathwork Purification Process is the way we stay true to spiritual principles.
Excerpts from Pathworker Contributions Document (PC10)

1. Principle: Law of Self-Responsibility

You create your own reality. PL40 Your life experiences are a reflection of the beliefs in your soul. You should never believe for one instance that what you experience is unjust and unfair, no matter how much it may appear that way. In the last analysis, in absolute truth and reality, it is your misconception that has caused it. PL48 Only you create your own happiness and unhappiness. Nothing can come your way that is not self-produced. PL60

2. Principle: Law of Paying the Price

There is a price to be paid for each desired gratification. PL29 Every advantage has its disadvantage. PL41 The disadvantageous side of each alternative or decision has to be faced and accepted. PL32 The price for illusion is extremely high. The more you want to evade paying the natural and fair price, the heavier the toll becomes. This is unalterable law. PL60

3. Principle: Law of Cause and Effect

Every thought and attitude, whether conscious or unconscious, is a definite act. But the more unconscious, the greater the consequence. PL57 The primary result on this Path is the understanding of your own cause and effect and the sense of strength, self-reliance, and justice that this gives to an individual. PL100 It is more difficult to see the same relationship between thoughts and subtle attitudes. The more developed person can perceive cause and effect on these less obvious levels. PL245

4. Principle: Law of Living in Truth (Facing Life)

Not living in truth set you apart from God. PL29 The more you try to deceive, the more will you deepen your feelings of isolation or loneliness. Realistic self-recognition is the foundation of development. PL31 Truth must be experienced, not just known, to have an effect. PL60 To face life's reality means to face yourself as you are, with all your imperfections; embrace life whole-heartedly, without fear, without self-pity or being afraid of being hurt. Say to yourself, *'In order to be come what I would like to be, I must first, without fear or shame or vanity, face what is in me.'* PL25

5. Principle: Law of Brotherhood

To be able to open your heart to another brings spiritual help that you could not receive by yourself. PL26 As long as you keep things hidden within you, it puts everything out of proportion (you exaggerate or underestimate). PL31

6. Principle: Law of Transformation of Negativity

The strength with which your divinity can penetrate the ego structure and manifest depends on the degree evil has been transformed throughout the evolutionary development." PL222

7. Principle: Law of Lack of Awareness

It is one of the immutable spiritual laws that lack of awareness of one area in you prohibits awareness of another. This is why the purification process is above anything else a process of making things conscious. This awareness unifies you. It is the aim of this Path's approach to help towards a reunification of everything that has ever split off. PL193

8. Principle: Law of Consciousness Reflects Experience

Working out of abundance, produces abundance; but working out of poverty and need produces more poverty and need. PL132

9. Principle: Law of Fully Inhabiting a State of Consciousness in Order to Grow

You have to reach a certain state, and fully be in that state before it can be abandoned for a further state. It is often overlooked by man; even more often, totally ignored. This is one of the great, important laws for man to know and deeply comprehend. PL132

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Week 3: Self-Responsibility - being influenced by others

QUESTION: *In the last lecture [Abyss of Illusion -- Freedom & Self-Responsibility](#) PL 60 you stated that the imperfections of another person cannot harm us. How about the imperfections of a teaching, a doctrine, a wrong method being practiced by, let us say, a physician or an analyst? We seek an authority because we are weak and in need of help. And the wrong help can make us mentally or physically even more distorted.*

ANSWER: No outer influence can ever make you more distorted.

This is one of the most flagrant illusions on the earth plane. Distortions can only be brought to the fore from within. With a good method, a teaching of truth, they are brought to the fore with a direct view as to what is distortion and what is truth. With a teaching or method of half-truth, this often happens in a more roundabout way. An outer influence may temporarily fortify a wrong concept, just as other influences in life constantly seem to do. But this lasts only as long as the person desires to run away from himself. PL 61qa

Exercise 3a: Who have you blamed for how your life has unfolded, decisions you have made, or even desires that you have not been able to manage?

Acceptable 'Proof' is determined by Unconscious Beliefs

Whenever people decide to face themselves in truth and honesty, no teaching, method or influence can encourage wrong inner concepts any longer. In other words, the more people tend to run away from themselves, the more will they be drawn to influences which apparently foster tendencies of escape.

Or they will pick out especially those aspects of the influence which encourage turning away from the root of the problems, while other parts of the very same teaching, which may help them to turn into the right direction, will be overlooked. PL 61qa

Exercise 3b: Who do you interact with who is able (*or willing to try*) to call your attention to words or behavior that contradict beliefs that you hold? Is anyone you know willing to challenge your views or beliefs? Notice how many of us are 'yes people in the sense of wanting to avoid confrontation in any form -- even if it might be in our best interests to hear their perspective.

If it were true that any outer influence can really harm you, life would be impossible. That would be such a hazard, so arbitrary and such an injustice that you would consequently have to believe in a chaotic and godless world. You would be constantly prone to injuries you cannot do anything about. If you think things through to the very end, it is inconceivable to believe in a Creator of love and justice, and at the same time assume that ignorance and imperfection on the part of other people can harm you.

I know that it is not easy for most of you to truly understand how you are not harmed by the influence of others. But if your spirit and your soul are to become really healthy and free, the understanding of this truth is essential for you. Without this understanding you stand nowhere, and God will never be a reality for you. PL 61qa

Exercise 3c: Make action that people might take against you that are realistic. Then, list 3-4 likely next steps you would take. If the harm would still be ongoing, what would you do about it?

This principle applies also to the physical aspect of your question, although you may find my answer even more difficult to understand. Let me say only this: if you truly want to get well, to recuperate from an illness, you will find the physician who can help you, or you will choose to accept part of the advice of one physician and reject another part. You will interpret the advice in the right way. Lack of intellectual understanding and inability to weigh, judge and discriminate are the very result of a desire to escape from and to deceive oneself. PL 61qa

The Law of Paying the Price

There is a price to be paid for each desired gratification. PL29 Every advantage has its disadvantage. PL41 The disadvantageous side of each alternative or decision has to be faced and accepted. PL32 The price for illusion is extremely high. The more you want to evade paying the natural and fair price, the heavier the toll becomes. This is unalterable law.

[*The Abyss of Illusion*](#) PL60

Exercise 3d: Notice if any ongoing harm from your answers to 3c might be due to an unwillingness to Pay the Price of making your own way through life.

Three Cosmic Principles: Expansion, Contraction, Stasis

As to philosophies, religions, teachings and methods of self-development, there are none on this earth which are one hundred percent truth, perfection, and without error, since you are living on this imperfect earth plane and dealing at all times with the imperfections of people. By the same token, you will hardly ever find a philosophy which contains no truth whatsoever. It is possible that a person remains with a teaching of relatively little truth, yet will get the maximum of truth out of it because he or she will assimilate what he receives in the right manner. PL 61qa

On the other hand, people may follow a teaching of relatively more truth than many another, but they will get a minimum out of it because their inner self does not want to accept it. In such a case, they will constantly misinterpret truth; and when life and their own disinclination to face themselves catch up with them, they may then blame the actual deviation from truth on that particular philosophy and hold it responsible for their failure and unhappiness. At first such a person embraces this authority unquestioningly. Then he or she goes to the other extreme.

PL 61qa

Every soul is governed by these three principles. No created being in the entire universe is uninfluenced by it. All three principles must work together harmoniously, must sustain, complement, and further one another if the person is harmonious. They exist on all levels and all forms, from the subtlest to the coarsest.

[*Expansion, Contraction, Stasis*](#) PL 55

Exercise 3e: Notice who or what fueled expansive periods in your developmental process. Notice if ‘bad teachers’ or ‘bad influences’ triggered periods of contraction, or inspired even more expansion! Notice where / when / how often you take ‘rest breaks = periods of stasis, sometimes referred to as Mental Health Days in work benefit packages.

If a consciously chosen teacher or philosophy or physician could harm you as an adult person, how much more could a parent or a teacher harm you in your youth! A child is hardly able to discriminate, yet it is subject to influences which may be quite far removed from truth.

The impressionability of a child is infinitely greater than that of any adult, and therefore the child is greatly influenced for his or her whole life by certain occurrences and conditions in childhood and youth. Hence, it certainly appears as though the parents had harmed the child, nevertheless, in reality it is not so. *The universe would be supremely unjust if this were so.*

PL 61qa

Exercise 3f: How do you understand the last sentence above? In any successful self-search, the personality will recognize that he has blamed one or both parents for his current unhappiness, even though this blame may have been unconscious. Consider what insights and lessons you gleaned from authority figures throughout your life who did not act in your best interests.

The next step must inevitably be to gain the insight of no longer putting the blame where it does not belong, no matter how much the parents were actually at fault. I might say that this is one of the most important criteria in growth, health and freedom. When this has been accomplished, the constant repetition of this unhappy pattern will cease and the proper proportion will prevail in judging other people, principles or whatever.

61qa

The solution must always lie with the individual. Whenever an entity is ready to face himself, thereby assuming true self-responsibility, he or she will increasingly be drawn into spheres where one is enabled to do just that, in spite of the inevitable flaws in perfection and truth that exist anywhere on earth.

As long as an entity is not ready to do this, or only partly ready -- which also happens quite often -- he or she will constantly encounter damaging influences. These damaging influences have no effect on the person who is ready to grow up inwardly. The very reluctance to assume adulthood and self-responsibility makes a person prey to the fear of harmful influences from outside.

Let me stress that this state of maturity does not have to be fully reached in order to be "safe." It is sufficient that you are on the road toward it and understand the principle..

PL 61qa

Exercise 3g: Look back at your own experiences, seeing them in an expanded understanding of 'when the student is ready, the teacher appears' that includes a *readiness to be deceived* -- for the ultimate purpose of realizing why that path is a false one.

QUESTION: *We are all responsible for what happens to us if we deal with one person, but sometimes two or three or even more people are involved. Then who is responsible?*

ANSWER: It does not make the slightest bit of difference whether you deal with one person or a hundred. As long as self-responsibility appears to be dependent on the number of people you have to deal with, the truth of this principle has not been understood.

In fact, every human being is constantly dependent -- in the apparent and manifest way -- on a score of people, some of whom you have never even seen. Government and many other groups of people seem to influence your life. If you think this through, you must see that you could constantly say, *"If thus and thus were different, my life would take another form."*

PL 61qa

Exercise 3h: Where do you say this?

Download a 1-page version of

[The Spiritual Principles With Which We Manage Ourselves To Create Heaven On Earth](http://www.janrigsby.org) PC10

Week 4: Self-Responsibility - aspects of development

What comes forth from your soul will come back to you. It will affect others you are directly or indirectly dealing with or dependent on. Certain levels of your subconscious will affect the corresponding levels of other people. And if more than one person is involved, it must even itself out, if I may express myself in this way.

All measures, laws and regulations apparently affect you, and over these you have no influence whatsoever. All these conditions are apparently true. They are part of the manifest world of matter. But in reality you are not dependent and influenced.

This means that even though the problems, assets and liabilities, unconscious destructive or constructive desires of everyone concerned may differ vastly, the outcome must be according to this universal psychological law; and as such it must work properly for everyone concerned.

PL 61qa

Principle: Law of Self-Responsibility: You create your own reality. PL40

Your life experiences are a reflection of the beliefs in your soul. You should never believe for one instance that what you experience is unjust and unfair, no matter how much it may appear that way. In the last analysis, in absolute truth and reality, it is your misconception that has caused it. PL48

Only you create your own happiness and unhappiness. Nothing can come your way that is not self-produced. PL60

[The Spiritual Principles With Which We Manage Ourselves To Create Heaven On Earth](#) PC10

Exercise 4a: PL 061qa references spiritual law and justice on several occasions. What are your beliefs about these? As an exercise, review *the 9 Spiritual Principles* PC10 / page 5 of this study guide and notice which ones you object to or can't understand. Consider either response indicates that principle might need to be explored. Even something as innocuous as a lack of interest can be a 'trick of the ego' to avoid looking deeper. Ref [Meaning of the Ego](#) PL 199

QUESTION: *But since there is some negativity in all the other people, would it not have to affect the one person?*

ANSWER: It cannot affect you if it does not strike some corresponding note in your own soul. Negative does not necessarily mean evil or wicked. It can be self-destructive, life-defeating; it can be guilt or fear. But the negative in you must exist, otherwise the negative in all the other twelve people could not come to you. Then it would not work itself out against you. Then a positive and healthy reaction would come out of the people in question, or the negative decision would turn out to be positive for you.

You cannot try to understand this principle by applying it to the number of people you are apparently dependent on. You must tackle it from the other side, that is, by analyzing your innermost emotions in each individual case; finding those desires that may run contrary to your conscious desire, or other currents and conflicting reactions in you that will help you understand the incident. This alone will give you the understanding of the principle. Is this clear to you, my friends?

PL 61qa

Exercise 4b: Notice where you use phrases like 'you make me feel...' or 'you force me to...'.

QUESTION: *You said in your last lecture, "You are helpless because you make yourself that way by trying to shift responsibility from yourself." But a child cannot assume self-responsibility.* PL 61qa

If you think this through thoroughly, you will surely see that this is an impossibility. It is utopia! You cannot be free and at the same time have no responsibility. In the measure that you shift responsibility from yourself, in that measure do you curtail your own freedom. You put yourself in slavery. It is as simple as that. [*The Abyss of Illusion*](#) PL 60

ANSWER: It is understandable why you would think that it is unjust for a child to be born into conditions so imperfect that it is subject to influences it cannot handle properly. You can understand this only if you realize that one life is but a small part of a long chain.

The child brings along unsolved problems, which can find solution in the very conditions that bring them to the fore. When a person grows up, these problems can be solved, but hardly ever during the period of childhood.

This is the reason for life, my friends. If a problem does not exist in the soul of a child, the same conditions that accelerate conflicts in another child will not create any disturbance. You can observe this again and again. PL 61qa

Exercise 4c: Consider this remarkable summary of the reason for life – to examine unsolved problems that we bring with us. Review issues from your childhood from this perspective.

QUESTION: *Is it not a fact that responsibility can be undertaken only after you have solved these problems?*

ANSWER: You can also put it the other way around: By assuming self-responsibility, you solve the problems.

Exercise 4d: How do the issues you looked at in 4c match this statement? If you have taken responsibility for ‘fixing what was done’, has that solved some problems for you?

QUESTION: *Yes, except in the case of a child and a disaster. Are there within the child already these positive and negative forces which it projects and by which it is affected?*

ANSWER: But of course. The child has brought its entire life plan, its cycle of incarnations into this life. Everything is engraved in its soul, what kind of life it is going to lead, its basic design, and also the duration of this life -- which can sometimes be altered during a lifetime, but not always. Do you understand?

Q: *I understand you. But this brings up the question: If there is such predetermination...*

A: It is not predetermination. I have to interrupt you here because the word predetermination puts an entirely wrong slant on the issue. What I say has nothing to do with what usually people think of as fate, preordained by God who determines it that way. PL 061qa

Exercise 4e: Past civilizations and some current cultural beliefs hold that one’s fate is pre-determined. Explore how / why would that seem to provide a sense of comfort and safety.

The law of cause and effect is constantly at work

And the individual himself or herself has set it in motion. Let us assume a person commits a crime through which he gets into difficulties. It is easy to see the connection between

cause and effect in such a case. In more subtle, hidden and unconscious ways, the same thing holds true, only the person cannot connect cause and effect, -- unless and until he uncovers his unconscious motives, desires and conflicts. Then, as you all experience it, cause and effect become apparent.

Before these connections are uncovered, you might call the effects of your inner causes fate. Any other label might serve the purpose. Thus you simply explain something away you do not understand. The same holds true from one incarnation to another, and in relation to the duration of a lifetime, and for certain occurrences outside your control in your present existence.

It all operates within the same law of cause and effect. With the events outside your control, you cannot draw the connection, but this is not even necessary for your self-understanding. For, if you are truly on the path, you will find certain hidden aspects of yourself that have at one time 'caused the cause' of the present effects. That is sufficient to give you freedom from fear in the knowledge of a just world in which you shape your own fate.

So it is not a question of preordainment or predetermination in the sense these words are usually understood. It is always a question of cause and effect, how you have unwittingly, unwillingly and ignorantly brought it about. When you understand that, the word "fate" will take on a completely different meaning for you, and even the word "karma." PL 61qa

No Accidents or Coincidences!

QUESTION: *Is accidental death also brought about by one's own causes?*

ANSWER: Death must come to every human being at one time or another. The very fact that humanity has to go through death and birth and death and birth and so on and on, is the result of many basic misconceptions in the human race. Whether death comes one way or another depends on the individual case. PL 61qa

There is no coincidence possible. Nothing is just left to itself. And when it says in the Bible that God has counted each hair on your head, it is no exaggeration, my friends. This saying is to be understood in this sense. For every smallest detail has to correspond and has a meaning, a much deeper meaning and significance than you can possibly imagine. All this is not arbitrary or left to coincidence. [Preparation for Reincarnation](#) PL 34

The Superstition of Pessimism

There is what I may call a superstition of pessimism. When you reach a certain level of awareness, you will come across an attitude that says, *"If I believe in the positive, I will be disappointed, and by my very belief in it, I may chase it away. So I may just as well not believe in it. It may be smarter on my part to believe that nothing good can happen to me, that I cannot ever change, that I cannot ever grow out of my obstructions."* The obvious kind of superstitiousness is much more primitive, and most of you do not adhere to this on an outer level. But a superstitiousness of a much subtler nature does exist in all of you.

[The Superstition of Pessimism](#) PL 236

Exercise 4d: If every hair on our heads is determined based upon what will support our spiritual development, consider what belief(s) would underly the idea that more significant details of an incarnation – such as death – can be accidental.

Week 5: Spiritual Reasons for Human Aberration

QUESTION: *Can you tell us the psychological reasons of kleptomania?*

ANSWER: Before I attempt to answer this question, I want to emphasize that all generalizations should be taken with great care. You should abstain from applying my answer to each case you may hear about. Nothing of that sort can ever be generalized.

So many personal aspects, individual influences and reactions play a part. In many cases, a person becomes a kleptomaniac out of a misunderstood, falsely interpreted current of *"I want to have. When I have, I am happy."* In other words, the rulership principle I discussed recently manifests in this particular way. PL 61qa

Exercise 5a: Find the Kleptomaniac in yourself! Even if it's only a passing thought, and you never act it out, find your desire rule over others, if only on a material level.

Rulership principle:

A primitive and distorted concept of happiness actually amounts to a desire for omnipotent rulership, unquestioned obedience by the surrounding world, a special place elevated way above all other beings since others are supposed to fulfill what the person desires. When this wish cannot be gratified -- and it never can be -- the frustration becomes absolute.

The rulership principle is inherent in every soul, and it needs to be faced, my friends, before you can really outgrow your chains. There is no exception, there is no human being who is completely free of what I have just described. ... Peace will be yours only if you learn to see, face, and give up this infant concept of happiness, rulership, and perfection.
The Desire for Happiness and the Desire for Unhappiness PL 58

Exercise 5b Find your desire for rulership. Speak this mediation:

"Since I can attain happiness only by being an omnipotent ruler, I have to be a god myself. Therefore I want to be God. Why should I submit to this cruel, vindictive, vengeful, inadequate God who inflicts so much suffering on us? I could do it so much better. I would be more benign than he is if my will were done, if I were loved and approved of. I have no intention of being cruel if people do what I want. Therefore I know better than God, and so I want to assume rulership of my little universe." *The Desire for Happiness and the Desire for Unhappiness* PL 58

Unconscious Needs

It may be that the child was constantly frustrated in getting what it desired, most particularly objects, perhaps. This frustration, in addition to certain other personality disturbances strengthening this current, and in addition to the temperament and character of the person in question, results in a constant compulsive and senseless action of acquiring objects. This action is almost like an automatism which the person cannot understand.

Such people need to re-experience the relevant emotions of their childhood. When they feel how much it hurt not to get what they desired, and how they suppressed the hurt (making the compulsive need all the stronger) they will begin to understand their compulsive actions. By that process, they will cease repeating them.

Once the unconscious aim is understood, the consciousness will see that enacting the compulsion does not bring happiness; quite the contrary. By seeing that the unconscious aim is based on a wrong conclusion, they will be cured of this disease, really cured -- not superficially by restraining the action, while the feelings continue in that direction. That I do not call a cure.

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Exercise 5c: Notice where, when, how your unconscious needs surface.

Compulsive Acquisitiveness

QUESTION: *But a kleptomaniac is one who steals without need....*

ANSWER: Exactly. It is a symbolic outer act. The other cases may have a similar origin, but other factors play a role, so the symptoms change. People who steal because they are in need may be in an altogether different category. Entirely different currents and reactions may bring them to do that.

Compulsive acquisitiveness in those who have what they need may have a similar origin, but not necessarily. There, the desire to be approved may play a much greater part. In this case, one acquires things of actual material value, through which one may get some power and admiration -- or so one hopes.

Whereas in kleptomania, the acquisition of things has nothing to do with actual material value with which to impress others. It is completely irrational. It out-pictures symbolically the petrified impression in the soul, that *"only by having what the world denies me, taking it myself, can I become happy."* These objects may either be the same as, or in some way remind the person by association of, objects the baby wanted to play with or to hold but was not allowed to.

It is the very compulsiveness of acquiring things that have absolutely no value which indicates that it is a re-enactment of frustrated childhood experience. Such a person unconsciously wants to make up for it for the rest of his or her life. A more rational personality converts it into a less irrational, although perhaps more unethical act.

PL 61qa

Exercise 5d: All human traits represent an energy that we share, to some degree or another. Notice any thoughts or desires to take things, or to expand your authority or your sphere of influence, without getting specific authorization or agreement from others.

QUESTION: *Where is it combined with elements of dishonesty?*

ANSWER: When you examine the soul the way you do on this path, you inevitably find that all deviations, so-called neuroses and sicknesses are in one form or another always a dishonesty. Because it is untruth, unreality, wanting to get something for nothing, not paying the price. If a person wants to receive love without wishing to invest in the risk of loving on his or her part, such a person is dishonest. In that sense, everything that causes emotional problems is dishonest. Only humans draw a sharp borderline between the outer and obvious dishonesty and the subtle inner one.

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Exercise 5e Where are you dishonest in life, wanting to get something without 'paying the price'? What standards do you use to gauge this fault of character?