

Pathwork™ Steps

Next Phase on the Path: A Question and Answer Session

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 87

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Week 1: The Inner World is the Only Reality that Counts

Week 2: Facts as Fragments of Truths

Week 3: Energetic and Spiritual Complexity

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Week 1: The Inner World is the Only Reality that Counts

Spiritual knowledge, even spiritual action, is one thing. But spiritual living, feeling, being, and inner experience is an altogether different matter, and this can be only after the inner world of feeling has been explored and understood.

The inner world is the only reality that counts. It determines your spiritual life, and it determines your material life just as much, as you find out more and more on this path. This is proven to be so by the fact that your inner problems are responsible for your outer ones, which you can now see clearly as a consequence of this work.

PL 87

All spiritual teachings and philosophies agree that the world of manifestation is illusory. The only reality exists beyond your earth sphere. This is not a geographical concept but a matter of awareness.

The higher, spiritual, absolute reality cannot be found by a short cut. It can only be attained by changing your inner world of unreality into one of reality. You cannot do this if you are not willing to face the confusions and misconceptions.

[*Reality and illusion*](#) PL 71

From the moment you numb your feelings...

You withdraw from living, loving, experiencing

Your intuitive powers are dulled

Creative faculties are not available to create your fulfillment

The courage to accept that which may be inconvenient means acceptance of reality, loss of fear to love, and therefore the cultivation of your intuition in a growing organism.

[*About the Fear of Loving*](#) PL 72

Exercise 1a: Explore your inner feelings and experiences towards your Pathwork studies. Notice if you recoil or numb out when teachings feel abstract or messy. Do you try to understand mentally before allowing yourself to explore a concept emotionally? Have you explored (or created) opportunities to share and discuss your studies?

References to ‘working seasons’ in this lecture:

Summer breaks were introduced a few years after the lectures began in 1956. PL 87 was delivered June 16th 1961; presentations would resume with PL 88 on September 15th.

Next Phase of the Path

In this coming phase, the principal aim will not be so much that of further theoretical understanding, but a much greater step towards awareness of your emotions. To some degree, this was already accomplished, particularly in the last two years. But more of this is necessary.

Only as you become increasingly aware of emotions and their true significance will you gain the real understanding; that spiritual development has to deal with your subconscious, to a much greater extent than with your actions and thoughts. All the general knowledge you can acquire will not really help your spiritual development. But each apparently insignificant insight about your own reactions and emotions will contribute a major step towards spiritual growth. This is why the emphasis was, and still is, on unconscious factors. That is a psychological approach.

However, the time again will come when the circle will close and we will return to a more spiritual emphasis -- but with a deepened and broadened understanding. We shall come to this point with a different attitude than when we first discussed spiritual laws and factors.

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Exercise 1b: These teachings contradict most societal paradigms. Spend some time in meditation (formal or informal) considering how you feel about being the creator of your inner emotional life – both the pleasurable, fulfilling aspects as well as confusions, conflicts, and unpleasant feelings.

Spirituality includes the Psychological

So my friends, do not for a moment believe that you move away from spirituality by reason of our emphasis on so-called psychological work. The one must include the other, and you will recognize this more and more in the coming phase of our work.

If, purposely, we refrained from evaluating your inner conditions from the viewpoint of spiritual law, we had good reason to do so. As you know, stringent self-judgment, usually in a destructive way, hinders you and must not be encouraged at a time when you cannot yet get away from the childish attitude of "good" and "bad."

This would only strengthen guilt feelings. It would strengthen the unrealistic, exaggerated demands and standards of your idealized self-image. It would hinder you from accepting yourself as you are at this time, and that is the only basis on which growth and change can occur. This requires the "neutral" approach that we adopted.

But in the last analysis, you will return to the realization that your inner life is also to be considered, from spiritual values that you have heretofore applied more to actions and thoughts rather than to feelings.

In order to put the spotlight on the feelings, without facing the dangers I have indicated, more substantial growth has to take place.

PL 87

True development is indicated when your inner life corresponds to that which you all know to be right, good, true, and loving. But since feelings cannot be controlled by direct will

effort, the procedure has to be different from merely influencing and controlling actions and thoughts. Only if, and when, your unconscious reactions are completely understandable and therefore under control, can you safely use a spiritual approach to your emotions.

The differentiation between "spiritual" and "psychological" is arbitrary and, in reality, nonexistent. But since you do think along these lines, it is necessary to explain the difference of approach. When you become aware of how you "use" spiritual values to castigate yourself into a false perfection; when you understand the unguineness of the motivations; when you see the pride and pretense, contrary to your belief of goodness; when you are aware of the real aims you wish to pursue with your desire for spiritual perfection; then and only then can we return to spiritual evaluation and consideration of your inner problems without damage and obstruction.

And now, my friends, I am ready for the questions you have prepared for me.

PL 87

Exercise 1b: What questions would you ask the Pathwork Guide today? Make a list! Then use the search tools, below, to explore whether your questions may have been addressed, to some degree.

Explore ALL of the Questions & Answers

As the original Pathwork community grew, formal presentations alternated with sessions devoted exclusively to answering individual questions – which often covered a wide range of topics. When a Q&A session focused on a specific topic or announced something specific (like PL 87) they were given a title. *After PL 97, 105 non-specific sessions were not included in the regular numerical sequence; they were catalogued as extensions, i.e. PL 98qa)*

Jill Loree's Index to all Q&As: theguidespeaks.com

To search the online 1996 Edited Lectures

copy and paste the following sentence into the search box:

"your phrase" site:pathwork.org/

Then, replace the words "your phrase" with the word or phrase you are searching for (*remember to retain the quotes*). You may also use "your phrase" site:janrigsby.org/ to search my website.

Explore topics and concepts:

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[PL 28 Suggestions and Forms](#)

Week 2: Facts as Fragments of Truths

QUESTION: What does the phrase "artistic truth" mean, and how does that bear upon such things as objective truth and subjective truth and psychic truth?

ANSWER: There really is no such thing as "subjective truth." I know such terminology may be used when finding a distortion, or an inner error, or wrong conclusion. It is true that a certain misconception exists and it needs to be recognized and faced. Then it is said that one has come across a "subjective truth," but actually this term is a contradiction. Truth is objective.

Artistic truth is the result of the truthfulness of a person. If a person is basically untruthful with himself and with life, he cannot, in spite of creative talent and ability, produce artistic truth. There is no separation. The overwhelming existence of truthfulness will produce an overwhelming result of artistic truthfulness. PL 87

QUESTION: What is the best technique for distinguishing between truth and opinion? Or fact and opinion?

ANSWER: There is a substantial difference between a fact and truth. **A fact is a segment of truth.** You may be in possession of a fact, but you ignore additional factors. Therefore you are not in possession of a true outlook of a situation.

Let us assume you witness that one person insults another. This is a fact. But judging this fact alone may be misleading because you ignore what led to this insult. Only the knowledge of all relevant factors can show the truth of the situation.

To see truth is a very difficult task. As long as you are aware of this difficulty, you will not be tempted to believe you are in truth when you are merely in possession of facts. This knowledge will increase your own truthfulness, whereas believing that you are in truth when you are not can only increase untruthfulness.

The ability to acquire a deeper, wider, and greater perception of truth is determined by a person's ability to face himself truthfully and sincerely, no matter how unpleasant this may be. To the degree that you succeed in facing yourself, to that degree does your ability to perceive truth as such automatically grow. It cannot grow by a direct technique or process. It is an indirect outcome of inner growth, of self-awareness, and of self-facing. PL 87

Exercise 2a: Take some time to observe how often facts are isolated in order to bolster narratives, justify beliefs, gain an advantage, or gratify needs or desires. Then explore how you 'edit' facts internally, selecting which ones to believe in or rely upon. What is your overall agenda?

Using PL Concepts about Images

QUESTION: Will you give us light on the interrelationship and interaction between the *Main Image* [PL 93](#), the *Idealized Self-Image* [PL 83](#) and the *God Image* [PL 52](#), particularly in regard to *Prayer* [PL36](#)? How does this conglomerate interfere with our ability to pray?

ANSWER: Any conflict, distortion, or illusion interferes with any creative process or any activity of truth or any constructive endeavor, whether it is prayer or anything else. Regardless of

how much real talent, inclination, healthy desire, or serious striving exists, the severity of the conflict proportionately influences activity, thought, feeling, execution, and motive. This may occur in a subtle coloring of self-deception, and it may be so crass as to make prayer or any other constructive activities impossible.

As far as the interrelationship and interaction of these three factors is concerned, this is a very good question. The God Image, as you may remember from PL 52, is not an actual concept of God to all human beings. The God Image may be of life, the rules of life, or it may be of authority -- at any rate, authority in the sense of "must" as the significant factor. PL 87

Exercise 2b: Illustrate your relationship with authority by imagining a cast of characters, drawings, objects or symbols. Cast 'God' as having powers you do not have, that can control your pleasure and limit your self-will. What is your attitude towards such power: do you submit, rebel, or hide, by denying it affects you? Does your public behavior match your private attitude?

Main Image formed by Relationship with Authority

The main problem in life, resulting in the Main Image, is always the feeling of helplessness towards a difficult life; the child finds impossible to cope with it, unless special defenses are established. In building these defenses, the God Image plays a major role whether it be a vague authority or an actual, imaginary, severe, punishing God. The decrees of this powerful authority (= the world at large) make safety and happiness impossible, cause frustration and unhappiness.

Here you are, the helpless, unloved child (whether actually unloved or feeling unloved makes no difference) feeling lonely, misunderstood, not accepted for your own sake, insecure, frightened. Only by adhering to certain rules do you have a chance to be safe, and have a minimal amount of pleasure. Or, -- if this is your Main Image in principle -- by breaking the rules through exercising power, and yourself becoming the dictator in your environment, you believe that you have the safety and pleasure you need for survival.

In either case, the God Image is the first obstacle; and, according to character, personality, and environment, you either comply with it or try to become it.

Neither of these alternatives works. Broadly speaking, either one of these two attitudes to the God Image determines the type of Idealized Self-Image that you establish; for this attitude represents your pseudo-solution. Your pseudo-solution in turn represents the predominant factor of your Idealized Self-Image. PL 87

Exercise 2c: What were your early experiences of authority? Did you seek safety by submitting (becoming a Law-Upholder) even if you resented obeying? Or rebelling (becoming a Law-Breaker) and creating your own rules?

Idealized Self-Image Gradually Merges with the God Image

The establishment of the idealized self-image has a further purpose in connection with the God Image. To obey the hated rules against one's will would be a very humiliating procedure. Therefore the psyche pretends to accept these rules for the sake of perfection per se. In other

words, the rigid standards and demands of the Idealized Self-Image not only serve the purpose of coping with a hostile, dangerous world, but also cover up the helplessness of having to adopt rules one inwardly rebels against.

This holds true even if the idealized self-image is predominantly rebellious and antisocial, because the rebelling "minority" also represents "rules," but of a different order. The rule then may be ruthlessness, dominion over others, selfishness. This then is regarded as "intelligent," and those not following these particular rules are "stupid."

In such a case, the God Image will subtly merge with the Idealized Self-Image. You try to become one, and identify that which you fear most. Such emotional reactions can be found constantly in your self-search. They exist with the predominantly power-driven person as well as with the predominantly submissive type. Each does it in a different way.

To obey the feared God Image, in addition to the separation and loneliness that this distortion generates, there is the added yoke of feeling that you have to obey whether you want to or not. The Idealized Self-Image serves the additional purpose of easing the brunt of this yoke.

So you see the link between the basic helplessness creating the fundamental problem with its pseudo-solutions. The pseudo-solutions are adopted in order to cope with the God Image, and that in turn creates the Idealized Self-Image. PL 87

Conflicted Feelings towards Authority

QUESTION: How should I regard my guilt feelings over the joy I feel about the assassination of Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic?

ANSWER: If you ask a personal question, I will give you a personal answer.

The guilt feeling comes from the unrecognized desire in yourself to be a Trujillo, to have that kind of power. Oh, you may have recognized such emotions already, to a degree, but not to their full extent, -- and you do not yet understand their significance. You wish to gain safety and pleasure through a strong power drive, which is simultaneously counteracted by an equally strong submissive attitude. The guilt is the reaction of your submissiveness to your power drive.

An additional aspect is the tendency of submitting to the very person you fear most. In other words, it is the attitude discussed in the previous answer. There is a tendency of cringing, appeasing, complying with, and submitting to the most feared person. This is your way of coping with danger, and this is why the strong submissive attitude was originally chosen. But since the power drive also exists, it reacts to such self-effacing submissiveness with self-contempt and guilt of a different nature.

On one hand, you have the desire to be like such a person. On the other hand, you tend to submit to such a person. And in the third place, the desire exists to free yourself of the yoke of such a person -- and this happens through fantasies of glory as to your own omnipotence.

All this creates guilt, from whatever angle you look at it. It creates the false guilt of not being so good and obedient as the submissive attitude demands, the false guilt of daring to rebel and to hate, that which contradicts the image of obedience and goodness. It creates the further wrong guilt of not living up to your fantasies of glory; of not being strong and powerful, but actually cringing. And it creates the real guilt of the intrinsic self-centeredness, pride, and pretense that all these aspects and attitudes really represent.

If you fully acknowledge, accept, understand, and follow through these feelings, you are bound to grow out of these pseudo-solutions, and therefore you will free yourself of the guilt, which is but one symptom. PL 87

Week 3: Energetic and Spiritual Complexity

QUESTION: Why is it that one is often more restless when pleasant things occur? In depressions, one may be calm. In happy incidents, one becomes overstimulated, disharmonious.

ANSWER: The obvious answer would be self-punishment, guilt feelings, fear of success. But such answers will not bring you further understanding. Although some of these factors may contribute to the complex, in themselves they do not clear up anything for you. You will understand their origin and their erroneous purpose only if you become aware of the more basic reason.

I'm quite sure that each one of you is experiencing such emotions. If you question yourself truly, you will ultimately find the answer to this question to be that if a happy incident occurs that makes you feel restless and apparently overstimulated and, in a way, disharmonious, it is because a goal has been attained, whether in a little or in a big way, that represents a false value. That does not mean that the goal is wicked or wrong in itself. But it must be something that is connected with your search for glory, with your idealized self-image, no matter how subtly or unobtrusively it may occur in combination with true aims. PL 87

Exercise 3a: Pause here and come up with some examples from your own life where you feel pleasure, success or understanding yet can't quite shake disharmonious feelings about the same example. Try to find at least 3; write them down. Then, make notes about what false values might have become attached or interwoven.

All Solutions are Pseudo-solutions

When you receive the gratification of a false aim and value, you are bound to be left empty. False aims are illusions, and even if, at times, they materialize, they will not really satisfy you. These aims and values are resorted to as pseudo-solutions.

When the aim actually comes through, it is proven that the solution was an imagined one. And then the soul is stunned and even more confused. If you pursue a goal, believing that the attainment of it will solve your problems, in a sense it feels better to believe the goal in itself is still valid, but for one reason or another, you were prevented from attaining it. On the other hand, if you actually do succeed, and then the victory turns sour on you by its failure to solve your problems (by leaving you still insecure, frightened, and restless) you are at a loss. You feel worse because now you do not know what to do, what solution to adopt, where to turn.

Since this entire process is vague and hazy and utterly unconscious, you are unaware of the implications. You are even unaware of the acute disappointment of now having attained a partial goal -- and still feel yourself not so different than before, when you thought that the attainment of the goal will make all the difference in the world. Even small gratifications and satisfactions of this sort -- let us say a success in social life -- will generate this process of reaction within your subconscious. Only close analysis of the incident and your reaction to it will reveal the truth of the matter, and prove of utmost importance for your further development because it will bring into clear focus what the false value and pseudo-solution is, and that it is illusory.

PL 87

Exercise 3b: Review the list you made for 3a. If these no longer apply, search for a new set of experiences that match the 'yo-yo' emotional roller coaster cycle described above.

False Goals lead to Feelings of Restlessness and Disharmony

When you are depressed, it happens because the pseudo-solution and goal seem difficult to attain, but you believe you have a direction and aim - even though it may be a wrong one. But when it is proven that your aim is wrong, whether or not you consciously realize it, you become more frustrated, and inner haste and pressure is generated (without knowing in which direction to turn). It seems more pressing than ever to find a solution, only now you do not know where or how.

Let us suppose the false goal, the pseudo-solution that you attempt, is **to be approved of, to be admired and envied, and to be powerful**. Now an incident occurs where you receive gratification in this respect. People do act according to this desire of yours. Consciously, you may feel you had a very pleasant time. But if you analyze your feelings, you will find that some of the goal of your idealized self was actually gratified in this "pleasant situation." This may very well happen along with the actual and real values that are attained and lived up to.

But it is enough that the gratification of a false value occurs, to make you restless and disharmonious. Now then, the psyche feels, *"I have gotten what I thought I needed, and I am still unhappy, alone, and insecure. I still lack something, I still have nothing secure to hold on to. Where do I have to go now in order to alleviate this condition? What to do now?"* So, insecurity and inner haste increase, just *because* the false value and desire have been gratified. Outwardly you may be quite content, but the inner restlessness is a sign of the procedure just described.

These are subtle processes, and when explained in crude language, they appear exaggerated. You have to uncover, feel, and experience the truth of these words. When you really question yourself honestly, you are bound to find the answer as an inner truth. PL 87

QUESTION: Is this something similar to what is called "Weltschmerz?"

ANSWER: Not necessarily. Usually in what is called "Weltschmerz," self-pity is predominant, while the emotion we just discussed is one of joy without harmony. It applies to happy incidents, not causing sadness but rather the opposite while still being in a state of restlessness, inner haste, impatience, and a kind of nervousness. PL 87

Exercise 3c: Notice if you would prefer simpler emotions! Schadenfreude is another German term for an idealized goal (enjoying feelings superiority or success by seeing others struggle or fail). Again, find examples of such uncomfortable feelings, and track down the false goals and pseudo-solutions that let to them.

Spirit entities may not know the whole truth / whole story

QUESTION: Last time in our discussion after the lecture, the subject of reincarnation again was touched. The fact of reincarnation as an hypothesis was doubted and rejected by someone, and the statement was made that this was also confirmed by communications from the other side -- that reincarnation takes place only in certain instances.

ANSWER: Not all spirits know everything, especially if an entity during his lifetime had a very strong conviction. Such strong convictions will not automatically disappear. They may linger on for decades and even centuries. When such a being then notices a reincarnation taking place, he prefers to believe that it is an exceptional case. Otherwise, such spirits may be highly evolved. Yet there exists a block in certain areas.

In this subject, as well as in any other, you may always encounter contrary opinions from various groups, people, or spirits. In itself, it is not even important what a person believes. The important thing remains always his own development and the clearing up of inner conflicts.

If you independently think things through and ponder on this subject, you will come to the conclusion that reincarnation is logical and in keeping with the universal laws of the cosmos. The argument can be advanced that other planets also afford opportunity for growth and development. That is quite true. However, each planet or sphere represents different conditions so that different lessons have to be learned. None can be completed within just one life span, neither the ones on earth nor the ones in other spheres.

Particularly, conditions on earth that are called forth through the respective general development are impossible of mastery in one life span. By the same token, it is true that repeated returns to other planets are equally necessary. Time, if I may use this wrong term, for lack of a better one, is unlimited in creation, and repeated lessons are necessary in every stage of the overall development, regardless of what sphere it may be. PL 87

Exercise 3d: Consider the wisdom of the system of incarnatory ‘re-cycling’ vs. ‘one and done’. Do you have a secret wish for this life to be your last earth visit? Your last learning experience?

Birth as an Ongoing Spiritual Process

It is true that the final whole being of the spirit entity, in a very substantial and decisive way, enters the body at the time of physical birth. If this decisive entry were to occur earlier, it would be impossible to survive without oxygen.

But there are additional periods of completion before birth as well as afterwards. But these are smaller, or less decisive, stages. You all know from occult science that there is not just one subtle body, but several. Actually, the division goes further than is known to mankind. There are different layers. In a psychological sense, these layers are examined in the work you are now doing on the path. These psychological layers exist as various substances of radiant matter. Such stages occur at certain intervals before birth as well as after until maturity has been attained. But the most important major step of full incarnation into the body, enabling the entity to live on earth, occurs at the time of birth. It is no coincidence that this event is especially obvious, noticeable, and decisive in change for the mother as well as for the infant. This event of physical birth must correspond with something equally decisive, spiritually.

Yet, even this decisive moment does not indicate complete integration into a oneness. This can be only accomplished through the development the work of self-search affords you. Wherever unsolved problems and conflicts exist in the soul, this means that a part of the entity is not at one with the rest of it.

Each resolution and victory on the path makes you less alienated from yourself. What does that mean? I have used this expression quite often. And it is an expression that is used even in traditional human psychology. without any awareness of the spiritual significance of this word. For, alienation of self means that in some way some part or parts of yourself are not within you. They are outside of you.

Every step towards maturity unifies more within yourself -- and this is, in principle, a process similar to the unification of the body of matter and to the substantial part of the subtle bodies. That is why there is always the feeling of a "new birth" when you grow out of illusions that keep you separated, or alienated, from yourself. PL 87

Exercise 3e: Reflect upon moments of ‘rebirth’ in your life. Are there any feelings that you can relate to having more ‘wholeness’ / being or feeling more ‘you’ than before?

Week 4: Our Combined Inner Spiritual Realities Create the Outer World

QUESTION: In a previous lecture, you briefly touched on the subject of myth, which you defined as universal truth in picture form. There are many myths in Genesis, but there is one in particular that I would like you to interpret. It is the one about the Tower of Babel, especially now when we are living in an age of confusion of tongues.

Genesis Chapter 11 verses 1-9, from [New Int'l Version](#) / NIV:

1. Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. 3. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 4. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." 5. But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 6. The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." 8. So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 9. That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

ANSWER: In order to fully explain only the passage you have just read, books could be written -- books about philosophy, psychology, and religion. There is so much contained in it, so very much! However, I will give you some clarification on it, as briefly as this can be done and from the viewpoint that is now of most interest to you. Mind you, this is just one aspect that I discuss now. There are many more that I cannot possibly go into at this time.

As you know, at one time, the entity was a whole being, completely integrated, in harmony with himself, without conflict, without contradictions. This means "of one language." The expression of the spirit was focused to one point and not as is now the case with humanity, wherein so many contradictory aims and attitudes exist. After all, you who are on this path now know as fact how many contradictory attitudes exist in you.

Due to these contradictions, which can be symbolized as "different languages," you do not understand yourself. Chaos comes into your life. The outer confusions and problems, conditioned by the inner ones, are enigmatic to you because you ignore the reason. You ignore the contradictory aims, attitudes, and desires within yourself. You can no longer link cause and effect, and you will not clear up this "Babel" until you explore the meaning of heretofore unconscious emotions.

Since this Tower of Babel exists within your own soul, it must also exist outwardly in the world. For world conditions are the sum total of all of man's inner conditions. Lack of understanding, confusion, unawareness of cause and effect, contradictory aims, wrong conclusions make up the inner and outer world of man. This is the Tower of Babel.

If you cannot understand yourself, how can you understand others? The more that distortions and confusions exist within you, the less will you be able to communicate with others. You cannot understand them, reach them, or make them understand you. This, too, is the Tower of Babel. It symbolizes your inner world and the result of it in the outer world -- difficulty of communication.

PL 87

Exercise 4a: Consider the need for religious stories / cultural myths. Imagine how difficult it might be to explain scientific principles (or Pathwork concepts) to everyday folk in 4,000 B.C.E.!

Human Quest is activated by Original Perfection

The East, whence you came, symbolizes one point of eternity, if I may express myself in this very paradoxical way. The West is the goal. The East was the perfection you once had. The West is the perfection you will have regained. Yet, in reality, they are one. Only, in your eyes, they may appear as two different directions.

Evolution is always a circle closing. This applies to the huge overall picture -- such as perfection. And it applies also to the work on the path. There are many closing circles. Tonight I only mentioned the one about commencing with spiritual emphasis, then going away from it, only to return to it later but with new understanding gained while having been away from it. You return to the same point, not to a different one. Only, it is not quite the same point because you have become richer and wiser.

It is the same as with the perfection that you once had, and as with the one you will regain after you have explored the depth, having in the interim been away from perfection.

On this depth of the curve, humanity is stationed where the symbols of your inner problems exist in different groups, nations, religions, languages. All this is a symbol of the inner world. The world of reality, the world that determines your life, is the inner world. That is always the cause. The world of matter is always the effect.

Whether you take the phenomenon of the difference of nations, languages, religions, etc., or whether you take atmospheric conditions, it makes no difference. All of it is an expression of the harmony or disharmony of the soul. If you look at your earth life from any conceivable point of view, you will see and learn and sense that it truly is the other way around from what you always thought. PL 87

Exercise 4b: Continue to reflect on the spiritual meanings of myths for the rest of this section.

Outer Events Reflect Inner Beliefs

You are deeply convinced, in spite of occasional appearances that seem the contrary, that the outer world is the cause and the inner world is the effect. No, it is just the opposite, and as you advance in your own growth and development, you will perceive cause and effect in truth.

For instance, what you see in a landscape is the expression of all souls: the beauty on one hand, or pollution, dirt, barrenness on the other hand. There is also a significance -- that nature and atmospheric conditions express a purer picture of the sum total of man's soul life than world conditions and interrelationships of nations. This is not hard to figure out.

Man's greatest problem is to get along with others by reason of his immature egocentricity. Alone, by himself, he is now advanced enough, generally speaking, more or less, to get along with himself.

Nature and atmosphere represent that part of man's soul in which he thinks, meditates, contemplates, and raises his thoughts to higher things. That is much easier than truly getting along, the putting of one's ego out of the picture.

Nature symbolizes certain aspects of the human soul. Art and artificiality symbolize other aspects. You will learn to sense anything in material existence and perceive it as a symbol of the soul forces of inner attitudes. PL 87

Outer Barriers Reflect Inner Walls

You all know that the true barrier between peoples is not the difference of languages. Thereby you can see that the difference of languages on earth is indeed a true symbol of something more profound. But when the real, the inner barriers to one's real self are removed, to that degree will outer barriers decrease and disappear.

Much of this can already be observed in your age. In spite of so much that is wanting, humanity as a whole has come a long way. The very technical means often invented for the purpose of destruction -- representing and symbolizing the inner pseudo-defenses, that are so destructive for the individual -- have nevertheless contributed to remove the barriers between peoples. What you can contribute to better world conditions in every respect is the removal of your own inner barriers -- your own Tower of Babel, your own wrong defense mechanisms that are so damaging to yourself and to others. PL 87

The Tower of Babel as an Idealized Self Image

In the passage my friend just read, it also says that these people tried to build the tower so high that it would reach the heavens. Of course, they did not and could not succeed. Does not the attempt to reach the heavens clearly symbolize your idealized self-image?

While you struggle within yourself, being at war with yourself, you nevertheless wish to attain heights of perfection and superiority quite incongruous with your present inner state.

The people in the story attempted this venture out of pride. They wanted to reach the heights in the wrong way, by the wrong method, and out of the wrong motives -- the same as with the idealized self-image. Therefore, it cannot succeed, and is bound to crumble, again as with the idealized self-image.

When you realize that you cannot succeed and live up to these goals and demands, your pride collapses. You are crushed, and you feel defeated. To reach perfection (the heavens) in a hurry and by short cuts (through material ways, as by the building of a tower) is bound to end in failure. For, it is unrealistic. It is illusory, just as illusory as to build a tower that reaches the heavens. It cannot be done. Development and growth need ways that are different for their attainment. It calls for ways much less pretentious and ostentatious, such as the idealized self-image (such as the Tower of Babel).

It is your idealized self-image, your Tower of Babel, that divides you within and estranges you from yourself. The estrangement symbolizes the foreign language you do not understand. You cannot understand yourself since you are estranged from your real self. Consciously, you have one desire. You act upon it, but without realizing how an undercurrent flows into the very opposite direction and produces a result just the reverse from your conscious aim. Again, this is symbolized in the story of the Tower of Babel. Here you have just a few symbols of this important myth. PL 87

Week 5: The Desire to Judge Others

QUESTION: Can one draw a conclusion as to character between a person who loves animals and nature and a person who does not care for either?

ANSWER: Generalizations, my friends, are very dangerous. Anything is a symptom of something. But beware of ready-made opinions and generalizations. They are very misleading.

If it is assumed that the person who loves animals and nature is a better person than the other, it is very wrong. It might very well be that in this respect a person is more receptive to one manifestation of divine life.

But this very same person may be utterly closed to another manifestation, while the person who does not love animals and nature is otherwise receptive and open. For instance, the latter may be less afraid of people than the former and therefore love and understand them better.

However, it is equally wrong to judge that just because someone does not love animals, he automatically loves people more than those who do love animals. There is no rule, and every case has to be judged individually. PL 87

QUESTION: I have a deep distrust for a person who does not care for animals and nature. I feel there must be something wrong with such a person.

ANSWER: Anyone who does not love and understand the manifestation of creation has "something wrong" with him. But that does not mean it is more warranted or justified to distrust a person with this particular limitation than other people who have other limitations which you do not even perceive or see. PL 87

Exercise 5a: Notice your own judgements about others that you may base upon your evaluation of their poor judgment / the ideas and philosophies they espouse. Consider the source -- the 'judge' of this 'case'. Explore your fears (of anyone different than yourself, not being able to control what happens around you, etc.). Then imagine 3 scenarios where the other person's choices would be perfect as 1) an exploration of a false belief, by experiencing making certain choices 2) evidence of a reaction to a previous false belief; i.e. where they are overcompensating for a prior false belief (and that this is an important part of learning in itself) and 3) an honest expression of their positive intention to grow and transform, through exploring committed love (for *anything* = stop worrying about the *rightness* of the *object* of their love!).

QUESTION: If a person was born illegitimately, does that have an effect on his subconscious even though he may not even know it?

ANSWER: Your deep subconscious knows everything pertaining to your life condition. But that does not necessarily mean there is a negative effect on such a person's life. In case of illegitimate birth, certain souls, with specific problems, are chosen. This fate will enable the entity to work out the particular problem with the ensuing difficulties. However, if circumstances occur that remove the difficulty (such as ignorance of this fact), life conditions produce sufficient material to work out the existing problems without this added burden.

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Exercise 5b: Extend this example to any ‘fact’ about a person: that it would have an effect, whether conscious or unconscious, known or unknown. Reflect upon how you may place extra weight on a fact that becomes known, based upon assumptions (and daydreams) about what influence it may have had while it was unconscious. (That is, spiritually the fact is potent for its own reasons, whether conscious or unconscious.) Then consider how the moment of realization might add potency to a fact = that a ‘minor’ fact might prove more powerful in that case than something ‘larger’. (Plus, it may be decided that this never needs to become consciously known!)

Benediction

Looking back at the past working season, we recognize that it was indeed a very fruitful period of work for all of my friends. You have developed. You have, in some cases, grown more than you are aware of at this time. If you try to evaluate where you stood a year ago and where you stand now, if you consider your development not so much in terms of actual perfection, but rather from the viewpoint of having become more aware of what your problems and conflicts are, you will truly see that this was a very decisive period for most of you.

In the next working season, we, together with you, hope to accomplish further insight, further growth, further self-understanding. In order to accomplish this without unnecessary delay, do not consider as a period of stagnation this interval of no actual activities in the group and in private work. This need not be, but it depends on you. You can all relax and rest and enjoy yourselves as much as possible, and yet continue your search and self-observation. Make this period, in its own way, a time of further growth even though this may be accomplished in a different way. Let it be a time of preparation and of increased training of awareness of what your emotional reactions signify.

May you all absorb the powerful rays of love, of truth, of strength and purity that are given unto each one of you and your dear ones. Do not think for a moment during the coming time of interruption that you are cut off from us.

It will depend very much on your endeavors and your outlook whether there will be continued contact with our world or not. If you proceed in your sincere self-facing, you will learn and you will be guided by us. Particular blessings are given unto you. I think that most of you can sense and feel their reality. May they have a lasting effect. May you continue to grow as you have grown, in the immediate months ahead as well as in the coming season when we enter into an important new phase of work.

Be blessed, my dearest friends. Our love envelopes and penetrates you. Be in peace. Be in God!
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Exercise 5c: Starting in 1959, 3-month summer breaks were introduced, so that the community’s ‘working year’ ended with this lecture on June 16, 1962, and would resume September 15th. Consider why so much care was taken in this lecture to assure group members (some new, others possibly feeling a bit fragile about having undergone or beginning transformative processes) that the interruption would be brief