

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 165
1996 Edition
September 13, 1968

EVOLUTIONARY PHASES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REALMS OF FEELINGS, REASON, AND WILL

Greetings and blessings, my dearest, dearest friends. Welcome to all of you at the beginning of this new working season. Our path together will again proceed in a very significant way.

Many of my friends have made outstanding progress, some of you perhaps much more than you realize. Often what you designate as progress is not necessarily real, and what really is progress may seem at first the very opposite. Only retrospectively can you see how the very aspects that may have discouraged you at first were the necessary initial steps in your personal evolution. Progress brings you face to face with your pitfalls, with those things you have so busily ignored. Coming into your own sometimes appears, to the uninitiated and still self-involved, an unwelcome development that one cannot identify as growth. In reality, it may be the key to finding your freedom and your true identity.

This group, this entire spiritual endeavor, is a pulsating, living reality, my friends. It has a spiritual form. I have mentioned this occasionally, especially at certain thresholds. It is indeed a living, growing organism, expanding in a more beautiful way than ever. Just as every living thing grows more aware of itself as it develops, so does this organism. This applies to both individual and collective entities such as nations, groups and common endeavors. The same psychic laws apply to them also. Consciousness must exist to some degree in all living organisms. Group consciousness can be extremely dim, as for example in animals or plants; or it can be very highly developed, provided the individuals forming the group are predominantly in a state of raised consciousness. The degree of consciousness of a group organism reflects the sum total of its individuals, just as the overall consciousness of an individual reflects the sum total of his or her psychic layers, including those that cause inner conflict and pain. When unification occurs, the layers melt into a oneness, which is then activated and moved by the divine kernel.

When the overall organism tends toward growth, purification and union, those discordant layers, the aspects that resist union, gradually die off. Resisting growth is not necessarily a theoretical concept, but may nevertheless occur in practice, since what is really necessary for growth may not be compatible with a hopeful illusion. Thus, when aspects of the organism stem against the necessary stages of growth, the self-selective process of dying off, or exclusion, sets in to protect the whole organism from being affected by life-defeating attitudes so it can continue to grow. Physical death results from the same principle. Physical matter dies off only because underlying life-defeating attitudes fear truth and love. These fears induce decay, which finally manifests outwardly.

Hence, what first appears as destruction is, when viewed with deeper insight, nothing but the destruction of destructiveness. Even though it may be painful to endure at the moment, such death is often the most life-preserving event, borne of the organism's overall health. For the unhealthy

organism could tolerate the life-defeating attitudes much longer. Death is overcome when the whole organism no longer resists life, truth, and love, so that it no longer needs to secrete deadening stuff. This principle is very important to comprehend in all questions of life -- both individual and collective.

Tonight's lecture is, as so often at the beginning of a new work season, both a recapitulation of past guidance recast in terms of the present emphasis and a blueprint for future work. It foreshadows the structure of your work in the year to come. When you retrospectively observe the sequence of both the lectures and the individual pathwork of those who work deeply by overcoming their fear of self, you will see that they more or less follow this blueprint.

I mentioned earlier the various layers of consciousness. Now I should like to discuss particular aspects of these layers. This will open up a new understanding of why it is so exceedingly difficult to let go of overcontrol by the ego. If self-realization is to be attained, a new balance must be found in which the ego assumes an entirely different role.

All of my friends should, once again, consider seriously what this path is. Why are they involved in it? What is its function? Too often vagueness or confusion about the Pathwork's purpose creates unnecessary difficulties and misunderstandings. The function of this path is not to remove a bothersome symptom in a person's life. This is not a treatment of sickness. Nor is the path simply a way of becoming a better person, of developing spiritually. All this happens, of course. But it must be fully understood by all of you, no matter how far you decide to follow it, that the aim of the path is the total realization of the divine kernel. And this is not merely a theory. It is indeed possible, right here and right now.

Let us restate the meaning of self-realization. I shall use new words to reach you in a more dynamic way. Self-realization means to bring forth, as a living reality, the kernel of your spiritual being -- the kernel of self that is eternal. This is, I repeat, not a religious concept for a faraway future. It is immediately available. How can some of the results or manifestations be best described? I might say that a new area is awakened, located in the center of your body, around the solar plexus. From this area new life flows -- new feelings, a new way of perceiving and responding, a new way of knowing life, people, values, and events. Everything is endowed with a new luminosity and a deeper meaningfulness. Beliefs change, or they feel different. The scope of an opinion, conviction, or sensation widens and deepens. Everything becomes fuller. The self becomes at once intensely personal and universal. What appeared to be contradictions suddenly unify without a breach of logic. Fear vanishes, and life becomes unending pleasure just because its opposite is no longer feared. The opposite of the desired state of fulfillment and happiness is not avoided, but its illusory nature is unmasked by going through it. Thus there is nothing to fear. The creative power of the self is available at all times, because of the personality's freedom from fear.

These words are inadequate to describe the state called self-realization. But they may give you a glimmer of what is to come; perhaps you have begun to experience this state to a small degree once in a while. It comes gradually, and yet, at times, suddenly. Only when all surface layers and all contradictory trends of consciousness have unified with the innermost being can this state become a steady condition of the soul.

To extend your understanding, it will be helpful to view humanity's spiritual history and evolution from a certain vantage point. At one phase in this history, human beings were godlike, moved entirely by the creative, cosmic forces. They expressed a universal consciousness in every breath and every move of their eternally living existence. At a certain point this human-divine consciousness removed itself from its divine kernel. A chain reaction set in and humanity's striving away from the innermost kernel has led to erroneous ideas, destructive reactions and feelings; spiritual blindness, unhappiness, and suffering followed. Each successive distancing from the divine kernel created a new layer of consciousness, covering the previous one and thus thickening the wall around the kernel. Rather than being nourished by the source, the newly separated layer of consciousness functioned by itself, nourished by the error that brought about the overlayers in the first place. This is why you, and people in general, often feel as if you were going around in circles. Yet the freshness issuing from the source is indivisible and unifies all splits and conflicts. This, in very broad lines, constitutes the spiritual history of humanity that has brought it to its present state.

There came a juncture when all this pain, with no apparent way out, induced violence, rage, greed, separateness, and other destructive emotions. This still exists in the soul: suffering, blindness and hopelessness produce loveless feelings, selfishness, and often the most violent and evil reactions toward the world and others. At the dawn of humankind, when human beings were little more self-aware than animals, they freely acted out these destructive feelings. Primitive humans knew no inhibition and no conscience. They were too disconnected from their fellow creatures to sense others' pain as their own. Their suffering made them too blind because their blindness led them into suffering. Thus, they indulged their destructive impulses.

At later stages, humans learned that acting out their destructiveness brought them into conflict with their environment. Gradually, life experience expanded people's consciousness and the first reasoning processes showed the individual that letting out blindly what he or she felt would eventually produce more pain. Thus a social conscience developed from the instinct of self-preservation. But mere expedience dictates this kind of conscience. It is still far removed from the inner experience of oneness with one's fellow creatures. But eventually the individual comes to the threshold where he or she learns to keep the urge to destroy in abeyance. Through many life experiences, through millennia of living under varied circumstances, each entity learns to develop the faculties of reason, seeing the causes and effects of one's actions and will, using self-discipline to keep from giving in to primitive impulses. You will appreciate the importance of this step in the entity's evolution.

The realm of feelings is, at this point, predominantly a seething mass of denied pain and, therefore, of violence, hate, and malice. Yet the realm of feelings is the most alive and creative faculty. It is also self-perpetuating. As long as the feeling world is predominantly negative and destructive, its self-perpetuating nature creates highly damaging impulses and compulsions. This is why it is so feared. It is held in check only by the power to reason, to use the mind, and by the willpower to hold back, to discipline all spontaneous impulses.

When this consciousness grows and the negativity of the feeling world becomes obvious, people do their best to deny, cover up, and inactivate their feelings. In the process of denial the spiritual self also becomes further removed. For the spiritual self resides directly within the realm of feelings. The creative mass of feelings is the divine, even if it now manifests in a destructive way. So, when reason and will erect a barricade around the realm of feelings to stay safe from its self-

perpetuating negative creativity, they also erect a barricade around the divine kernel, the self-perpetuating positive creative source. Nevertheless, each entity must go through this phase before its direction can be reversed.

This is why you fear the realm of feelings. You have indoctrinated yourself with the safety measure for so long -- and now you must unlearn it. You fear the realm of feelings because it is still, in part, primitive. You are still imbued with the self-command you have learned throughout many existences: "I must keep the destructiveness under control." Yet the more the destructive feelings are denied, the less they can transform themselves back into their original state. Thus a consciousness builds itself based on reason. For a long time, in the history of evolution, reason and will have seemed to be the saving grace that controls, prevents and dominates the realm of feelings.

An untold number of entities now find themselves in precisely this stage. They have sufficiently developed reason and will to keep the realm of feelings under control. They identify and experience themselves almost entirely as the so-called ego -- that part which wills and reasons. This was not a wrong turn, my friends. It was necessary. But now another way must be taken. This new way seems threatening; it seems to conflict with all past endeavors. Every challenge to change direction appears to your unconscious as an enormous threat. Activating the realm of feelings seems entirely too dangerous, baring the most primal, selfish, destructive feelings, which seem bottomless and final. This explains, in the deepest possible way, the enormous threat all individuals experience when they come to a certain crossroads in their development. With some, the threat may be so great that they go on and on overdeveloping their faculties of reason and will, so that their personalities become lopsided.

Humankind as a whole is arrested at exactly this point. This is why your technological and scientific development is out of proportion to your feeling qualities and your capacity to experience spiritually. Your emotions seem far more negative than positive. Even your preaching about love and spirituality generally has little to do with true emotional experience. More often than not, these are ideals and theories, a philosophy you adhere to in principle rather than feeling it. The feeling self still appears to be a great enemy and is accused of being unreliable and even dangerous.

For those who are becoming more alive and real and are no longer frozen, the poverty of real feelings in the average human being is striking. The scant feelings the average human being experiences are always controlled and approached very cautiously -- being unaware of this fact does not alter it. It is part of your path to become aware of it. Even admitting to yourself, "I feel half dead, I could feel more than I do, therefore the potential to do so must exist in me," brings you so much nearer to the state of realization than confusing your desire to feel and love, because you believe in it only as a principle, with actually feeling and loving.

This is the general trend or stage in which humanity finds itself. You have learned, through much effort and many incarnations and experiences, to channel and control the destructive, primitive self that can go berserk and wreak so much havoc if left to its own devices. Every criminal or insane person bears witness to this fact, and everyone who struggles in her or his own development feels threatened by any display of the unchanneled primitive self. This seems a great predicament: How can you attain self-realization unless you learn to cope with the realm of feelings? When you do, you will discover that there is indeed something deeper, the divine kernel itself, because the realm of feelings is not a bottomless well of meaningless bleakness, unknown

terror, reasonless violence, and selfishness. This layer does exist, but only as a thin veneer. Once the reasoning faculties have been sufficiently developed in the course of evolution, and once the entity has learned to exercise self-discipline, there is no longer any danger in encountering the world of feelings. The fear that you will be helplessly swept away by your feelings, once they become conscious, is unfounded. The faculties of reason and will are intact in everyone on this path, for if these faculties were not sufficiently developed, you could not undertake even the rudimentary steps of such pathwork. You would be incapable of disciplining your lives. And where you fail to exercise self-discipline you do so quite deliberately, with an ulterior motive. So your fear of possessing insufficient reason and will to control the feeling world proves to be groundless.

You must go therefore in the direction opposite to the one you have hitherto taken. Instead of holding back your feelings, you must learn to allow them to become conscious, let them be, and observe them without fright. You will see how easy it is to let your feelings be without acting upon them, choosing your actions deliberately instead.

Perhaps it is still not quite clear to you why you must constrain those impulses in the first place when you must eventually let them go. The answer is really simple and important to comprehend. When you observe a primitive person or an animal, you see that their consciousness does not yet allow for either reasoning or willing. These faculties therefore cannot be put to use, so that when impulses come to the surface, they dominate. Will and reason are underdeveloped and therefore cannot stem the flood of destructive emotions. Humans must spend many lifetimes training reason and will. Only when these faculties have been developed is it safe to allow primitive, destructive feelings to the surface without being compelled into action by them. The self-discipline and reasoning needed to overcome the ingrained fear and consequent resistance are a built-in safety measure of the path. Even if reason and will still have weak spots, they are inadvertently and organically strengthened by the courage, honesty, self-discipline and willpower necessary to reach this juncture. That is why there is nothing to fear.

Humankind's unconscious imprints are still so powerful that all of you are using reason and will to deny your feelings' existence. You do not comprehend that you no longer need these controls, provided you are on a meaningful path of honest self-confrontation. Now, using your will and reason for honest and humble self-confrontation, you can safely allow yourself to feel what you feel, without having to act on the feeling. You can now recognize the feeling. You can now execute your relaxed willpower. This is where you are, my friends, or where you could be.

Human beings whose overall development has readied them to realize their divine kernel must now establish a new balance-structure. The primitive human is lopsided in being completely controlled by emotions: Will and reason are still too frail to enter into the process of living. For today's human, whose reason and will generally are overgrown and whose emotional life is thwarted, union with the divine kernel is as difficult -- although not as far removed -- as for the primitive human. For the divine kernel is a living, pulsating, energizing mass of the highest consciousness and wisdom, self-perpetuating and self-creating. There is no word to describe its intense and potent aliveness. When you fear and deny your feelings, your aliveness is by necessity also denied, whether or not you are aware of the connection. Reason and will by themselves can never bring aliveness into the personality, nor can they bring into you the consciousness of the divine nucleus. This is why people who are most dominated by reason and will and have their feelings most controlled are those whose aliveness is very precarious.

You, my friends, who really want to come into your divine nature, must not confuse spirituality with mere spiritual ideas. You must bring your living, feeling self into play, even if this cannot happen in any other way than by meeting destructiveness and pain. When you fully experience the hate and the pain in you without flinching, you will be surprised by what happens. Much sooner than you think, hate, violence and pain will dissolve and give way to a new aliveness. A sea of feeling will crystallize pleasure supreme, the capacity to experience heights of joy that you never dreamed possible. If you make room for it, a new sense of cosmic reality will arise within you. You are indeed strong enough, all of you, to do this. The danger of being forced into actions against your reason and will is truly an illusion in the state you are in now. The immediate danger is your difficulty in admitting that you are not yet who you want to be. But what an expensive price you pay for living life "as if"! Once you decide to meet yourself as you are and go through the pain of some feelings, you will convince yourself very quickly that the realm of feelings is not bottomless, and its veneer is relatively superficial. Once you learn to cope with these feelings by just letting them be, they will dissolve quickly, and you will come to feel the new aliveness and delight very soon. This is the road we shall concentrate on this coming year.

I would now like to discuss another approach you can use that constitutes an important aspect of our path. When you have reached a certain awareness of your emotions, you will see what you are constantly doing with many of your feelings. You are using the busy mind, the overemphasized reasoning faculty, to fit your feelings into pictures, to build theories about why you feel a certain way. The mind is so trained in overusing reason that you think you need a reason to feel a certain way. Thus, your real motives and the actual situation often escape you. Since you fear feelings and see reason as the saving measure, you concoct reasons for feeling. You are always full of explanations of why you feel a certain way, until no feeling remains -- only theory and explanation. This is so important, my friends, because if you learn to see through these "explanations" it will teach you the art of self-observation.

Let us say, for example, that you feel hurt. In many instances, you completely deny the hurt, even to yourself. You often manipulate it into an elaborate accusation -- sometimes even using distorted facts about the perpetrator of the hurt. But this can be at best only a tiny part of the whole picture of your personality or the motives for the hurting act. There is thus no longer any reality behind the elaborate, reasonable-sounding explanations. The denied hurt turns into anger, which is also denied. You explain the anger away by theorizing about what caused the hurtful action. All the explanations and theorizing make it impossible to really experience the hurt. And when you deny an actual experience, you cannot put it truly behind you. You cannot really be done with it. And so you often build on top of this structure a false, exaggerated hurt -- the game of, "See what you have done to me? My hurt now will force you to act differently." This kind of artificially exaggerated hurt results from all the false layers that separate your consciousness from the original hurt. The false hurt creates an unbearable pain that leads to desperation and never to a satisfactory conclusion. The real hurt is a gentle, soft experience, never unbearable, always leaving the essence of the personality intact.

If you can let yourself feel such a hurt, simply and without adornment, stating the fact and why it hurts you, you create a new pattern. You learn to deal safely not only with your feelings but also with your surroundings. At the same time, you establish a new lifeline to your creative nucleus, your true identity. If you can endure your real hurt and let it be -- even if you do not know or

understand what hurts you -- you will not have to become angry or destructive. These are merely reactions to a feeling you do not want to endure. This is the harm of denial: It builds further layers that remove and alienate you from your true self.

Learn to calm your mind and stop denying your feelings by agitatedly fitting the hurtful event into fixed images and theories. Let it be! Feel what you feel, without having either to act on it or to reason it out. Then you will experience a wonderful process: The negative, painful feeling will dissolve naturally, as every living process dissolves into its original state if its natural course is not obstructed. The original state is not pain but pleasure, not suffering but joy, not deadness but forever expanding abundance of life. Yet these desirable experiences cannot be stuffed forcibly into a self, if they are to be real and enduring. They must come organically when one does not flinch from what one really feels. They come gradually, to the degree that you experience your actual sensations and feelings without either denying or exaggerating them. Thus you awaken your spiritual center, which will fill your entire being with a sense of safety, strength and beautiful new feelings, and eventually with new insights, perceptions and intuitions -- even new faculties. They will spring from deep within, filling you with the sense that they are truly you, not pretenses or faculties whose manifestations depend on others or on circumstances outside your control. You will gain an understanding based on very different dynamics from what you used to do: artificially fitting feelings into a superstructure of explanations and reasoning. We see these superstructures as spiritual forms that most human beings go around with, huge lopsided forms growing out of their subtle bodies, causing much heaviness. They must be dissolved in the process of evolving spiritually.

You may note that for the longest time our path was concerned with meeting your actions, thoughts and attitudes with honesty. Now you must learn to honestly register and endure your feelings. The gentle hurt first appears more difficult to bear than the artificially aggrandized one, because the latter seems to promise dramatic action from without. The drama is a direct expression of saying no to the real, much more gentle hurt. No destructiveness will arise when the soft and gentle original hurt is accepted. Out of it soft and gentle good feelings will arise, swelling stronger and rooting more securely, carrying the self into a most fruitful and creative life.

Begin right now to emphasize in your meditations, "I would like to know, experience, and feel what I really feel." Beware of either talking yourself out of your feeling by suspecting an irrationality, or talking yourself into it by building a case. Both imply too active a mind. Let your mind be passive and gently, gently let your feeling come up -- whatever it may be. The calmer and the more relaxed you are, intently listening to your feeling, the more it will turn out to be the original feeling, not the covering one. When you permit yourself the original impact of feeling, you are so much nearer to the life center out of which all good flows. Meditate and request guidance. Meditate that you have the strength to endure a little real pain. Tell yourself that the real pain is the gateway to pleasure and fulfillment.

What I have given you here is a vital key for all of you. In our next lecture I will discuss another facet that will help you to stop fearing the realm of feelings. I will explain how to genuinely eliminate the destructiveness you fear so much that you shut out life itself.

Do not fight the pain; in fighting it, you avoid the experience whose full acceptance is necessary to outgrow it and become stronger and happier. Learn to recognize the subtle yet enormous difference between genuine and dishonest manufactured emotions.

May you all remind yourself, again and again, that there is no problem that cannot be resolved; there is no point on which the path needs to stop -- for anyone. The expansion of creative living and the capacity to experience the goodness of life are truly infinite. The path ceases to be threatening or laborious when you meet your obstructions and illusions; it becomes liberation itself. Even self-realization is no specific, finite goal. The person with the gravest afflictions and distortions who says, "I will go all the way, there is no stopping me because the creative force in me will go to work to the extent I let it," is nearer fulfillment and realization of his or her true self than the one whose reason and will function sufficiently to hide the inner alienation and who therefore thinks that he or she does not need to go through the pain.

Let the divine consciousness infiltrate your entire being, my friends. The way I show and guide you will make this more than a hope or a faraway goal. The state of divine consciousness can be yours, every one of you, if you really want it. Your mind has the choice. This year, again, great and wonderful forces are brought here and stream forth. They are partly the result of your sincere good efforts and of the love feelings that are here; they are partly an influx from the spiritual realms that further important ventures on this earth.

I bless all of you -- all my new friends as well who have recently joined this path and who have the excitement and adventure ahead of them: the path of discovering a new and beautiful world, even if the illusion of pain must occasionally be briefly endured. Blessings for my familiar friends also, with whom I am proud and happy to work. Blessings for you all, for this entire year to come -- be in God!

For information to find and participate in Pathwork activities world wide, please write:

The Pathwork® Foundation
PO Box 6010
Charlottesville, VA 22906-6010, USA
Call: 1-800-PATHWORK, or
Visit: www.pathwork.org

The following notices are for your guidance in the use of the Pathwork® name and this lecture material.

Trademark/Service Mark

Pathwork® is a registered service mark owned by The Pathwork Foundation, and may not be used without the express written permission of the Foundation. The Foundation may, in its sole discretion, authorize use of the Pathwork® mark by other organizations or persons, such as affiliate organizations and chapters.

Copyright

The copyright of the Pathwork Guide material is the sole property of The Pathwork Foundation. This lecture may be reproduced, in compliance with the Foundation Trademark, Service Mark and Copyright Policy, but the text may not be altered or abbreviated in any way, nor may the copyright, trademark, service mark, or any other notices be removed. Recipients may be charged the cost of reproduction and distribution only.

Any person or organization using The Pathwork Foundation service mark or copyrighted material is deemed to have agreed to comply with the Foundation Trademark, Service Mark and Copyright Policy. To obtain information or a copy of this policy, please contact the Foundation.