

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 171
1996 Edition
February 1, 1969

SPIRITUAL LAWS

In the course of giving these lectures, the Guide has often referred to spiritual laws. In February 1969, Eva decided to compile some of the basic laws to give us further understanding of these very important concepts.

The Law of Personal Responsibility

This is the primary principle that guides the pathwork. At first glance, this principle is sometimes hard to accept. It seems so much easier to accept even defeat if only one can blame the circumstances or bad luck or other people's faults. Accepting the law of personal responsibility wipes out self-pity, resignation, passive endurance, smoldering resentments against the injustices of life, and the masochistic game of harping on one's case against life.

Yet this apparently hard law is the most hopeful, encouraging, liberating, and strengthening truth of all truths. It enables you to resolve whatever problem you may have. It opens up life with all its rich possibilities. It forces you to see things in their true light and, uncomfortable as this may first seem, it leaves you with a lot more self-respect, integrity, and hope than the helpless resignation to circumstances life is supposed to bring about without your doing. It makes defeat unnecessary because it also removes, among other things, your childish illusion of omnipotence, which is just as unrealistic as the illusion of being life's passive victim. Accepting your own limitations and the limitations of others increases your power to direct your life meaningfully.

The law of personal responsibility is the guiding principle in the search for the root of your obstructions. Contemplating the fulfillment or the lack of it in your life gives you a blueprint of the areas where an inner corresponding attitude is responsible for either. This approach is diametrically opposed to the usual way, but it is indeed a reliable and truthful one that must always lead to results, provided you go deeply enough and are truly honest in the endeavor.

Whenever you arrive at a juncture on the path from which there seems no way out, or where you cannot see how to change, how to resolve the problem, you can be quite sure that you have not yet found an important tool to unlock the door, no matter how profound previous insights and changes may have been. A total insight always shows the way out. Thus, recognitions can be differentiated. Are they of the kind mentioned here? Or are they merely leading to them? The former always give a sense of joy, liberation, hope, strength, light. They infuse new energy into your system. The latter may have a temporarily debilitating effect on the personality. The former enable you to recognize the most unflattering facts about yourself without in the least diminishing your sense of worth and integrity -- on the contrary, this sense increases. The latter type burdens the insight with guilt.

When you have experienced the difference between these two types of recognition, you can protect yourself from hopelessness, or at least realize that the hopelessness is in itself a sign that the way out has not yet been found. Rather than weakening you, the hopelessness can then be an incentive to surge on with all your vigor until the real way is open.

When you finally see that an unfulfilled longing or painful conflict of long standing is the result of an inner attitude with concomitant behavior patterns, you are no longer a helpless tool in the hand of fate. If such an attitude is completely seen, observed in action, and accepted for what it is, you may still be unwilling to give it up -- for whatever reasons and misconceptions -- but at least you see a vitally important connection between your inner life and the outer manifestations of it. It is then possible to embark on a special search for the reason why you so stubbornly hold on to a destructive attitude.

Many of the following laws deal more specifically with this same basic principle.

The See-Saw Law or Law of Compensation

Wherever a misconception exists, your balance structure has been disturbed, and an opposite misconception must also exist. Each attitude has an opposite, which can be either a healthy complement or a distortion. Thus, a distortion in one respect creates a distortion in its opposite. When your self-work has made you conscious of only one side of the "see-saw," it is impossible to resolve the problem, no matter how hard you try.

For example, let us say that a man has a tendency to assume too much responsibility for others. He may come to understand clearly and in detail that he does so, what the ramifications are, where the tendency comes from, what other attitudes in him contribute to it and are affected by it, and so on. Still he cannot leave other people's responsibilities to themselves, where they belong. Either he cannot recognize what he is doing when he assumes responsibility for another, which may happen in a subtle way, or he feels extremely uncomfortable and strongly compelled when he refrains from assuming the false responsibility. Such a forced act would be unnatural and incompatible with organic development. Its effects might be worse than giving in to the compulsion.

Real growth leads to effortless, spontaneous change that comes so naturally that it may at first even go unnoticed. This ease will come once he sees the whole see-saw -- in this case that there is an area where he does not want to assume self-responsibility and thus uses others as a substitute for his own conscience or authority. The abdication of responsibility may happen in a different area and so subtly that it is almost imperceptible at first. It may be a purely emotional manifestation. For example, the individual may assume responsibility for others in the sense of feeling guilty when his reason tells him he need not feel guilty. At the same time, he may sell out his integrity to obtain approval and affection from others. He thus makes them responsible for what he must give to himself. Blaming life for one's unhappiness is another way of negating self-responsibility, as mentioned before. Such blame always incurs an opposite, compensatory attitude of accepting burdens not one's own. The interconnection between these two attitudes must be recognized in order to resolve the problem.

The healthy version of these opposites is a harmonious balance of proper self-responsibility and a freedom from assuming the burdens of others, which has nothing to do with a free and loving act of wanting to help.

Another example might be a woman who is too self-effacing and unable to change this tendency without going to the equally destructive opposite extreme of rebellious, hostile defiance. She will be able to change effortlessly when she finds that, perhaps in a concealed way, she is too demanding. She may never openly express these silent demands; she may not even be clearly aware of them or of her seething resentment when they are not fulfilled. Healthy, openly expressed self-assertion and flexible giving in constitute a balance, which is disturbed by immature self-centeredness. The balance will be effortlessly achieved when the see-saw law is deeply experienced.

Too much ego on the surface often indicates an inner weakness of ego. Conversely, a weak ego on the surface always means that under the surface the ego is too rigidly upheld.¹

The Lever Law

This law is related to the See-Saw Law. The difference is that the latter deals with opposite sides of the same basic principle or attitude. The Lever Law applies when a particular distortion can be relinquished only when a completely different attitude is found and changed. Changing the latter attitude becomes the "lever" the person needs to open the locked gate.

For example, a person suffers from loneliness and lovelessness. It may have taken considerable effort to uncover these feelings, which might have been denied and masked by apparent certainty, contentment, sociability. Such a revelation can seem like a major recognition, for it comes only after battling a great deal of resistance. It is nevertheless not the major recognition needed. Yet the See-Saw Law may not apply, for the willingness to love may exist -- at least to the extent that love is possible when distortions tie up vital energy. The lever may be found elsewhere: a violation of integrity may exist, for example, in any number of ways that seem to have little to do with the problem of loneliness, but the violation of integrity gives the person a sense of not deserving happiness and love. The vague feeling of being undeserving that may surface when confronting the self deeply should not be glossed over lightly as irrational. One should search where there may actually exist such a violation of integrity. The violation is not necessarily in overt action; it may lie in emotional attitudes, such as an expectation to get more than one is willing to give. When this violation is fully recognized and the person can give up the attitude that removes self-respect, a new sense of self and of deserving will ultimately remove the lack of fulfillment.

Misconception-Split-Vicious Circle

Every misconception creates duality and inner conflict, which in turn create a vicious circle. An examination of any inner problem and conflict must reveal this sequence. The sequence must be worked through, both in intellectual understanding and in emotional experience, before the process can be reversed; a truthful concept creates unity which creates a benign circle of pleasure and happiness.

¹ See also Lecture #169

For example, a young man recently discovered his insecurity about his masculinity. He had to overcome considerable resistance to penetrate the mask of false security he had been assuming. He now finds that he has unconsciously held the common misconception that sex is dirty. The resulting inner split was that either he gave in to his masculine sexuality and felt adequate as a man, for which the price was guilt and a feeling of being sinful and unclean, or he was clean and decent according to these unconscious standards, but had to forsake being a man. He constantly tried to compromise between these two undesirable alternatives. A tug of war was going on in him. He could not commit himself wholeheartedly either to being a man or to being a decent human being. This unnecessary division resulted from a simple, unconscious misconception.

The misconception that sex is dirty led to the above-mentioned conflict, which led to the following vicious circle: the more he tries to be masculine and thus feels guilty, the less love feelings he can express in his sexuality. Therefore, the sexuality produces real guilt, as any loveless action must do, as well as false guilt for being "dirty." The cut-off sexuality becomes therefore more and more permeated with hostility and rage. When people are subtly infused with such emotions but cannot face them, all their feelings are affected. The frustration and hopelessness that result from such conflicts increase hostility, which compounds the justified guilt feelings. The loveless, hostile sex makes the taboo against it seem justified -- and this is the worst of the problem, because it makes such people go around in circles. The more entangled a man becomes in this apparently insoluble conflict, the more he must hold back his natural, spontaneous feelings. The more he holds back, the less he can love. The less he loves, the less real masculinity he has, and consequently the more insecure and inferior he feels. He must hide his insecurity and sense of inferiority from the world and himself, which increases repression and pretenses. And on and on it goes.

False Guilt Produces Real Guilt and Vice Versa

The case history demonstrating the law of Misconception-Split-Vicious Circle also demonstrates the interdependence of false and real guilt. A childish misunderstanding often produces false guilt. The false guilt produces emotions, defenses, and pretenses that lead to justified guilt because they violate a spiritual law. Misconception is unreality, and unreality cannot help but produce negative emotions such as anger, hopelessness, and distrust. Moreover, misconception must lead to unfulfillment and therefore frustration and disappointment -- which, in turn, produce resentments, bitterness, anger. The sense of futility inherent in all conflict arising out of misconception leads to a feeling of helplessness and the passivity that prevents the individual from doing what is necessary to attain what she or he needs and wants. The helplessness and the feeling of being victimized are themselves misconceptions. The false blame launched against the world makes the world responsible for the unhappy state.

The real self sends the message into the consciousness, "You are wrong to be so resentful." The consciousness of the person is usually unable to interpret such messages correctly, only sensing vaguely that something is wrong about his or her self-pity, accusations, and anger.

Whenever you find false guilt in the course of self-confrontation, you must never let it go at that. Somewhere a real guilt is concealed behind it. It is as though your personality, unwilling to face up to the real guilt but pressed by your conscience, produces an unjustified guilt to mask the real one. The false guilt also may be hidden at first, but when you discover it, you can say to yourself, "See I have discovered it. I don't have to go on looking for what makes me feel really bad

about myself. See how honest and conscientious I am that I feel so guilty, even about unreal issues." When discovery does not lead to lasting relief, change, and greater inner and outer freedom, you can safely assume that some guilts have not been faced.

Childhood Trauma Not Directly Responsible for Neurosis

A childhood trauma produces deprivation, unhappiness, destructive feelings and behavior -- in short, neurosis -- only indirectly. It is not in itself responsible for all that. The healthy soul also experiences early unhappiness but throws off the effects without deeply imprinting negative patterns. It is these negative patterns that are directly responsible for the unhappy experience in the present. You must understand this point clearly and work through the negative patterns to overcome that which holds you back from life. Your parents are not finally responsible for your misconceptions. Resentment against them violates the law of self-responsibility. Similarly, you are not responsible for the neurotic patterns of your own child. Excessive guilt for your child's problems is based on a misconception, although you are responsible for your own distortions that might affect the child. Thus, dwelling on the childhood experience alone can give at best a partial understanding; it cannot produce vital and significant change. The latter is possible only when you profoundly understand your destructive patterns and drastically change them.

Stepping-Stone or Stumbling Block?

Personal freedom is at once relative, limited, and total. Since we must experience the products of our past attitudes and actions, we cannot avoid hardship now when our past attitudes and actions were based on illusion and thus were destructive. As long as we are oblivious of them, we are blind to the causes of current hardship. But we do possess the total freedom to choose our attitudes to our self-produced fate. We can dwell in self-pity, resentments, and helplessness and thus increase our weakness, paralysis, dependence, and destructiveness. Or we can decide to want to make the best of the experience, learn the utmost from it, grow in awareness through it. When we choose such an attitude, the apparent stumbling block assumes a new meaning and becomes vital, strengthening, and liberating. When we see that the stumbling block was the direct result of our distortions, we prevent similar -- perhaps worse -- experience in the future. We make the result of the past a stepping-stone.

Outer Situation Reveals Inner Reality

No matter what we consciously believe we want, our life situation, in its negative manifestations, reveals a contradictory unconscious desire. Life cannot be cheated, and whether we like it or not, a person's life is exactly what the conscious and unconscious personality produces. No matter how undesirable the result is, it nevertheless is what we childishly, blindly, or fearfully express into life. Not knowing this principle -- or not wanting to know it -- will produce bitterness and the sense of being victimized. Choosing to feel victimized only increases blindness and makes us retain the destructive attitude that produced it in the first place. Or we can choose another attitude, which is at first more difficult: even though one does not see how the undesirable life situation is self-produced -- this notion may even seem preposterous -- we can choose to probe this possibility in a spirit of openness and humility, with the wisdom that knows the human soul is complicated and many-faceted. This latter course will bring amazing new vistas and freedom.

If we use the outer life situation as a gauge to what may be amiss within the personality, we have found a significant shortcut. One may even discover that there are fewer hidden negative attitudes than overt healthy attitudes. But by virtue of being unconscious, the negative attitudes exert much greater power than the conscious positive attitudes.

It is therefore imperative to make the unconscious conscious. Vague emotional reactions or passing thoughts one usually ignores may reveal more about the unconscious state than seems possible at first. When we focus our attention on these vague reactions, the contradictory wishes, hidden fears, and negative desires will surface. When they are recognized, they can be reconciled with realistic conscious goals.

Recreating Soul Substance by Changing Negative Imprints to Positive Imprints

After you become thoroughly conscious of your misconceptions and actively experience your negative emotions without acting out the negativity, the recreating can begin. The courage and honesty that was necessary to become conscious of the misconceptions and negativity -- and that will have increased with the new self-acceptance -- must now be used to institute change.

You must formulate your desire and the intention to change in clear, concise thought forms. You need to create a clear vision of how the healthy, productive personality would function, as opposed to the past destructive patterns. Although the outer ego personality, with its will and intelligence, must initiate these steps, the ego must also recognize its limited power and invoke the universal self to guide, inspire, and help at every step of the way. Thus the function of the conscious ego personality is double: (1) It must initiate the change, strengthen its own will, formulate thoughts, impress the distorted soul substance with the truth, with the picture of benign circles; and (2) it must actively call upon the greater inner power and become receptive and listen. It must step out of the way for a while to let the inner power reveal itself -- which often happens when least expected, since a relaxed attitude is necessary.

Balancing Ego Functions and the Involuntary Manifestations of Universal Guidance

It is not always easy to find the constantly fluctuating balance between inner action and the conscious ego-mind. You must learn to sense when to be active in formulating new imprints and when to step aside and keep the self calm and receptive. The feeling for this increases as you experience the reality of the universal self more frequently. One of the universal self's remarkable attributes is that it can be activated even for the purpose of sensing more accurately how to perceive it, and for the inspiration and depth of feeling to meditate in a meaningful way. Each phase of your work may require a different kind of meditation, and thus you may need to invoke different aspects of the universal power. All this power can come from within when it is asked for. The mind's limitations decrease as these limitations are recognized and the "vaster brain" in the solar plexus is consulted. The ego must learn to alternate between being active and passive, initiating and receptive. Gradually a harmonious, self-regulating integration will occur.

You Must Lose What You Want to Gain

This statement was made by the Guide in one of the earliest lectures. It has the same meaning as Jesus' statement that you must be willing to lose your life to gain it eternally. Psychologically, it

means that without the willingness to let go, there is such inner tension and fear that the good of life cannot come or be received. Only when one can lose without terror is winning possible: The one who is terrified of losing is never truly open to win.

The Unitive Law

It is never true that one opposite is good and the other bad. Each can be either. Each alternative may be healthy and productive or unhealthy and destructive. The following examples will help to illustrate the principle:

To live fruitfully, one must be both active and passive in a harmonious interaction. When one of the modes is assumed to be right and the other wrong, distortion and imbalance result. One end of the active-passive spectrum will be exaggerated which inevitably will affect the other end.

Introspection can be productive and growth-bringing or self-centered and separating. Its opposite, concern for others, can express genuine love, or it can be a means of evading the self. If introspection is healthy, a healthy concern for others will also automatically exist. Conversely, if one of the two is distorted, its opposite must be distorted as well.

Self-assertion can be an expression of healthy autonomy or of rebellion and hostile opposition. Flexible adaptability can be the manifestation of a healthy psyche, or it can be submission and a disguise for masochistic self-denial. Again, if self-assertion is healthy, the adaptability will be, too, and vice versa. Yet, how often do people say, "It is right to be self-assertive," for example, when they merely cover up the unhealthy distortion of it. By the same token, how often does a person claim to be good-natured and loving by constantly giving in, when he or she is merely refusing to be self-assertive and independent and wishes to cling to another person, who must be "bought" through submission. Such people enslave themselves -- with the secret aim of thus enslaving the other person.

Outgoingness, if genuine, is a spontaneous expression of a warm, loving personality who wants to connect with others and is capable of relating to others. Its negative, distorted version is pushiness, the manifestation of the inability to be by oneself. Being self-contained is the other side of the coin. In a healthy personality it is the basic self-reliance that enables the person to spend time with herself or himself. Only then is it possible to relate genuinely to others. In distortion, these two aspects become mutually exclusive alternatives, where one is accepted as good and the other as bad depending on the particular errors of the person. The unhealthy distortion of the self-sufficient person is the recluse who cannot cope with people and thus escapes into solitude, rationalizing the escape as healthy. Such a person will often denigrate all outgoingness -- the healthy as well as the distorted version -- as shallow.

These and many, many other examples illustrate the illusion of partisanship, of judging one side or aspect of a wholeness as right and the other as wrong. A distortion that is very strong is relatively easy to recognize. But often it can be passed off as the apparently healthy version. The deeper one goes on this path, the less one is inclined to take one opposite and put it up against the other. One sees more and more that both form an integral whole. This demonstrates how duality must lead into the unitive principle in the course of this pathwork.

Many years ago, in a private session, the Guide said:

If you do not want to be more than you are,
you will never fear to be less than you are.

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