

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 2  
An Unedited Lecture  
March 25, 1957

## DECISIONS AND TESTS

Greetings! I bring you God's blessings.

My dear friends, God's love penetrates the entire creation. It is a living energy field, which rotates in circular movement, as all spiritual od must move in circular completeness. All creatures are searching for this energy field, consciously or unconsciously. The longing for this love will push, pull, spur man and spirit, and according to the knowledge man has, he will understand this longing and, consequently, adjust his desires and thinking, or he will not interpret these feelings correctly and act upon these stirring impulses in other ways and thereby often slide into mistakes, not realizing actually what this propelling force, the true meaning of these feelings, this search, and thus frequently wrong findings, are. But he who has already advanced in his development as to understand what these yet inexplicable feelings of longing are has gained a lot because he will also know into which direction he will have to move these feeling currents, and then there will be less mistakes, less misunderstandings about the soul's energy, which had just been misinterpreted.

The love for God, the longing for God is the propelling force in each human being, and even those who have not yet found God or think they don't believe in God feel the same powerful currents in their soul. Whoever experiences this absolute transformation in his spiritual development, recognizing God in consciousness, steps into, I will say, a completely new life. All this can take place within one and the same incarnation. Once you have passed through this door, you will live already in a world of more illumination, but there are still many, many other doors to pass through.

Most human beings, as a matter of fact, do not understand life on earth. They cannot comprehend its meaning and purpose because they can only see what they can behold with their physical eyes and cannot yet bring their spiritual eye into focus. Therefore all seems to be meaningless -- their sorrows, their trials, the loneliness, and many other things. Only he who understands that this earth life is one of many learning periods, one link of a long chain, will, in the beginning, only be able to surmise the coherence, but gradually he will understand life's full meaning so that his goal will no longer be immediate happiness over the fulfillment of his desires, but his goal will be directed towards the totality. Thus it will be easier to carry eventual burdens of this life, thereby passing tests and conditions which enable him to enter a higher existence and continuous happiness which cannot be taken away by outside sources.

Now I would like to talk about that group of human beings who has already passed through the first doors, has already recognized the fundamental truths. Even there we notice that they sometimes do not progress as well as would be possible. Of course, much depends on the free will of the individual whether progress is made at a rapid pace. One just drifts along and may have to reincarnate many, many times in order to overcome or fulfil the same thing, experiencing the same

all over. Another one who has realized these fundamental truths will work out the consequences within himself and will aim at and strive for his spiritual progress, which does not at all mean withdrawal from earthly problems -- on the contrary! Earthly and spiritual problems are quite closely connected, and an earthly problem is actually the expression of a specific spiritual problem. The only difference is that the solution of a problem is sought from another viewpoint. Only if a problem is solved on the spiritual level can it find a true solution on the earth level.

We observe frequently that human beings know this or that, but they do not see the connecting point within themselves. They are still searching for God and recognition through more accumulation of outer knowledge, which in itself is good but not sufficient. There must be a continuous momentum of equalization. Knowledge that is acquired must be applied, digested, and evaluated on a personal level within to attain harmony. Real progress requires attacking from two sides. Outer knowledge should be acquired at the same ratio as that which has been previously taken in and that has been digested and assimilated within. It should not remain theory; it must be the practice that takes roots in the personal life. Yes, man needs knowledge about the truths of creation, the spiritual laws, etc., but this is only one part. Don't stop there. Without the other part, digestion within, there will be no harmony in your progress, no real fulfillment, and thus, as a matter of fact, no true progress.

Therefore you have to get acquainted with yourself, have to devote time to yourself, search yourself, discipline yourself, which seems to be very difficult in the beginning. You have to revise all that which flatters you and which is a subject of self-deceit, and rid yourself of it, something special and different for each one, yet much is similar or the same. Nevertheless, when we speak again and again of spiritual progress, it means something very individual for every one of you. And you, my dear ones, search, "What is hidden within me where I do not yet react in correspondence to the only reality, i.e., the spiritual laws, even if ever so deep within me? Where do I lack clarity about certain things within?" Such self-search should be made at all times. Then man will slowly be able to eliminate that which is not yet right about him. By the same token more happiness can descend, but first he has to realize where his inner blocks are. And for this realization, he needs the search in this direction, the will, yes, the true will and the effort. If you lack happiness in this or that area, you may be sure that it is, directly or indirectly, connected with such a personal inner block. If all your wishes could be granted just so, without having removed these inner blocks, they would never make you really happy. No, you could not build lasting happiness; it would disappear again. Only when you have achieved inner happiness, when the relationship to God is really harmonious in that His laws are met within, the soul is enough matured to experience happiness and harmony.

Man often asks himself: "Yes, I believe that such a connection to God's world is possible, but what do I need it for? For what purpose?" Here I would like to say that such connection can give that one part which is necessary for the further development, i.e., the intake from outside sources. Furthermore, it gives hints, help, and points out the direction for the search, for the finding and the application of the outer knowledge for inner benefit, i.e., the second requirement for development. For this, man always needs encouragement, strength, blessings, besides the concrete help which may also be given. Very rarely, there are some great human beings who have this knowledge, and man will be guided to them, but also in such cases, as well as with a medium, God's world is at work, and the human being involved is more or less an instrument of God's world. In the one case, it is inspiration; in the other, it is more direct. But help from the outside, this way or that way,

constitutes an important part without which it does not work. It should be considered material to work with, enabling you to use and evaluate your life to the best possible extent.

In my last lecture, I briefly touched the subject that man has to make decisions during his life. I was asked how man will possibly know what the right action is. I would like to discuss this now. Among other things, it is just that which man has to learn in life even if it sometimes appears to be difficult. Many human beings are able to make a decision outwardly. Some cannot even do this, but a great number of human beings cannot do it inwardly. They are absolutely unable in their emotional currents, in their inner, emotional reactions, to make a decision. They are not even aware of it because all is covered up. Only after they begin to search for their innermost motivations and emotions will they have to realize what their inner attitude had been up to that point, then they can start making decisions from within. This lack of inner decisiveness does not only express itself at all times in problems apparently involving other people, but sometimes just per se, in inner attitude, feelings, and reactions.

It is not possible, right now and here, also due to lack of time, to outline the effects, but there will also be an opportunity so that those friends will understand this better who are not in personal healing contact which enables them to recognize these inner currents through the help given on a personal level. Those among you who cannot very well imagine what these emotional decisions are should wait. The knowledge will be provided in time to come. I will now continue to give a few more details about the subject of being able to make a decision.

Sometimes, especially a human being who is striving his best trying to be just, hesitates to do something that might not please God for fear it could be a wrong decision, and thus he does not decide at all. It is obvious that he does not understand that not deciding is a decision in itself because somehow this attitude will be of some effect since the world and that which you call time does not stand still. Everything moves on in this flux of life, and whatever you do, even your not doing, is consequential. And if man shies away from deciding, it means that in his own soul he has not found as yet a certain key. He lives, maybe not always conscious of it, in a fear. He does not steer the ship of life and believes, hopes -- again not conscious of it -- that God or fate will make the decision for him. Once in a while this may be the case, but in general, God's world is not permitted to interfere then because man must learn especially this, among other things. He must learn to bear the consequences of his decisions. He must learn to make the effort of breaking through such a dark, confusing, truth covering cloud by his personal spiritual endeavors, by increasing self-recognition and discipline, which alone strengthen his spiritual sight. Only then can he uncover what is buried in his own soul as he will also be able to see what is going on outside himself. It is essential for him to learn to look over the whole, be it the most complicated situation, including all that which is at stake for him or others. He must learn to extract the maximum of spiritual development and purification from solving such pending problems.

All this requires a tackle-the-problem-with-courage attitude, not one that is evasive, postponing, stick-the-head-in-the-sand. If after careful contemplation, man finds that he is not yet able to make a decision because the right direction is not yet quite clear, it is something quite different. Then he should continue to ask God for more recognition and be willing to accept it and then act accordingly when recognition has been granted through personal effort.

It is one thing to shy away from a decision, cover up all which is connected with it, and then turn away from the problem altogether, and another thing to reach out for the truth, contemplate it, and then fully aware, as an act of will, to decide not to make a decision as yet until, after more personal effort, recognition of the right decision is granted, which is truly the right decision, leaving no doubt whatsoever within, thus increasing inner peace and happiness of the soul. Man is able to find the pure truth of a situation, the right decision resulting from it but only if he removes all self-flattering cloaks as well as everything that nurtures his indolence, the path of least resistance. Only he who has liberated himself in such a way has removed the obstacles blocking the truth. It is especially this that is expected of man. He is able, of course, but not without effort, not without the sincere willingness and stamina.

If man goes through life avoiding certain decisions, it creates reactions and chain reactions, resulting in a new form, a mark, and in his next life it will be more difficult yet to solve this knot and to learn making decisions. Contemplate these words! Even from your shortsighted human viewpoint, not deciding is of greatest detriment, not only spiritually but also plain earthly speaking, yes, even from your purely selfish viewpoint if you try not to be quite as shortsighted. You have to build your happiness yourself in that you learn to be fully obedient to the spiritual laws. Without that, there is no gain.

Are there any questions?

QUESTION: Since early youth, I am suffering from not directly depressed but decreased energy and cheerfulness during the month of March. This month I also felt it very strongly. I felt that my spiritual friends were not close. Can you tell me something about it, also about the "Ides of March," known since Caesar's death?

ANSWER: First I would like to say that each human being has his own individual currents. You also call this planetary constellations or the horoscope. It is a certain rhythm which, as it may seem to you, could be interrupted once in a while. However, since your view behind the veil is limited, you cannot see that this rhythm is not at all broken but continues in its own way, according to a system, if I may say so, which you cannot yet see in its totality. Man, according to his horoscope, experiences favorable as well as difficult periods, both of which have their special meanings. When you feel the less favorable planetary currents, it is the period of trial, which for the spiritually developing human being is the most important period of learning. Without these difficult periods, no progress could be made.

As to the general idea involved here, also called the "Ides of March," I will say that, from the viewpoint of spirit, this is the time of rebirth, of the year, of the season. Spring is the symbol of early youth, winter of old age. Giving birth is painful, always, even spiritual birth. When man creates for himself a new spiritual life, advancing to a higher degree, it cannot be without pain. It needs discipline and self-recognition, which alone is spiritually painful, as any healing process involves pain. It is the same with nature. The entire earthly creation experiences labor pain, not only such as the gales of early spring but also spiritual currents.

QUESTION: Is it possible that this beginning is connected with the Resurrection of Christ?

ANSWER: It is not coincidence that it was at this time. Everything had to be as it came about, from the exact time to the last detail.

QUESTION: If man experiences the low tide and the high tide, must the low tide be the time where there seems to be no spiritual protection?

ANSWER: Of course, that may be so. When you go through a trial, you must learn to attain with the protection that which you are aiming at. Then the protection steps a little aside, and you are left to yourself, standing, so to speak, with equal distance between the divine forces and the dark forces, and you have to stand the test in such a way that you act right by will. Then when this is learned, the dark forces will at times get close (but divine protection is always near to see that no harm is done!) so that you will prove, by withstanding, your advancement. Only then you are strong enough that God can depend on you; only then you can be sure that you have mastered self in those weaknesses which needed such testing. This is the procedure, and in periods where you seem left to yourself, where the dark currents touch you, you feel the "low tide." The so-called favorable periods serve to replenish your inner strength for the next trial and to enjoy the results of spiritual acquisitions, to get stabilized in them. I want to say here that when dark forces touch you, they know "how to play the violin" of your faults and weakness because they are specialized in the particular field. The dark world, as the divine world, has experts in all areas. A dark current can never get hold of you in an area which is not in your emotional make-up, nor if you resist strongly enough its evil influence.

QUESTION: What I don't understand here is that it frequently does not even involve a problem or weaknesses, faults being tested at that time from the outside. No, it is just a feeling that spiritual protection is absent; one is tired, listless, or depressed.

ANSWER: It is not even necessary that new problems and faults have to be tested. It may always be the same problem that has to be tested and tested again to give you certainty. If you are going through such a time and the heavy feeling does not subside, it very frequently is just a sign that you have not yet recognized the very special meaning of the test, regardless whether the "specialty" is new or already known to you. Because whenever the full reason of a test is recognized -- and each difficult time represents such a test -- then the heaviness will automatically decrease to a considerable extent, merely by the full realization of the meaning of such test. This is a rule which is very important to be remembered because it may, so to speak, serve as a yardstick as to what should be searched for in meditation. And it is impossible that at each time of trial all weaknesses and faults are involved. It will always be a certain area, then in the next phase, another area, etc., until it starts all over again from the beginning in order to fortify and deepen that which has already been more or less accomplished. All who walk this path with profound effort will be able to confirm this.

It does not depend on you personally what area is aggravated because outside events which you have to face activate a weakness or a fault in you for testing purposes. You will feel exactly what the spiritual world brings before you when you consider the outer event from this viewpoint and when you keep your daily reflection in the right way.

QUESTION: But concurrently in such times, health decreases, there is lack of physical resistance, and somehow one does not see clearly.

ANSWER: Of course, one is closely connected with the other. It is a negative circle which can only be broken by your discipline and will power. As soon as it is broken by tackling a spiritual problem, physical well-being and resistance will increase. There is no physical illness that does not originate from the spiritual, whatever physical explanations there may be.

QUESTION: Even cancer and other incurable diseases have spiritual causes?

ANSWER: Of course. Do you think that man would have such destiny if he would not have to learn something from it? Is there any effect without cause? How could it be accidental that man is stricken in such a way when not even the minutest details are left to accident? But it is a just and kindly destiny because the human being concerned may not be able otherwise but through long suffering, where sorrow may not come at once but slowly, to attain permanent happiness and liberation. He needs something that pulls him through or else he would fall back again and again. But frequently it may be the case that a being chooses, before incarnation, such a heavy lot, realizing that thus his spiritual rise is quickened.

QUESTION: But in such times, one cannot find the right prayer; in fact, it is difficult to pray at all.

ANSWER: That is a matter of discipline. Whoever is fully aware that these times demand something specific from you will not easily give in and, with impetus though difficult, continue in his spiritual search, keep his daily reflection, meditate, ask for recognition, struggle for breakthrough with all his might. Only then you can gain victory, break the negative circles, be strengthened each time, and meet each test better by discovering its meaning. Then you also do not need to speak such beautiful prayers as you may do in other times, but once you truly will that such recognition be granted to understand the tests, to better find yourself in them, then this is the most important. Naturally, these times are difficult, but nobody needs to carry more than he is capable of. And if a human being has reached a certain level, he then also has more obligations than his weaker brothers and sisters. He will gain most comprehending the meaning of these tests, while his weaker brothers and sisters will never really understand the meaning of life's difficult times. Because of his deep insights, man will suffer less since the supposed senselessness of life claimed by the weak ones is in itself the worst suffering. Therefore, don't drift, don't give in even if it seems inevitable off and on, even if it seems to be beyond your strength to pull yourself together. Try it more so the next day. You will make it with God's help, with His strength and His blessings, for which you may always ask. For this reason, learning all about the spiritual laws is so very important, to absorb them, understand them, and let them penetrate through the deeper layers of your consciousness so that you are able to apply this knowledge in the most difficult times and to walk through life with more ease. For instance, if one family member has a trying period, all other members of the family will have to learn something from it, according to his personality and his weaknesses.

QUESTION: The souls in the lower spirit realms must suffer a lot of torment. On the other hand, Lucifer, the worst of all evil spirits, does not go through all this torment. Where is justice here?

ANSWER: You human beings always believe pain is the worst of all suffering. But there is worse suffering, i.e., before a soul is able to feel pain. Experiencing pain is already coming one step closer to God. I will explain the whole procedure, and thereby you may realize the absolute glory of

creation, how the dark forces ultimately play into God's hands. I will give you this example. Lucifer has his helpmates; the dark realms have their hierarchy with very powerful and less powerful beings. If a powerful being is assigned a task which he cannot fulfill, maybe he cannot get a human being off the path to God (thus such human being has contributed by his will power to resist temptation). The evil being, not succeeding to get a human being off the path to God, loses more and more of his power until finally he himself will be tormented by the more powerful dark forces. Any being in torment draws nearer to God because often it cries out for God's help just then. The decrease in power in the dark world thus actually results in a stepping up nearer to God. The further removed such evil force is from torment, the less harmony is in such being, and Lucifer is in the worst disharmony. The more torment such being then feels, the more inner currents will have to harmonize until such being, some day, may recognize that it can increase harmony without the torment. Thereafter, he learns that discipline replaces torment, and at last even this is no longer needed.

You human beings are also able to imagine this procedure if you just think about it. How often, when in pain, man feels more harmony within than, although not in physical pain, in a time of inner rebellion, resistance, emotional torment, and disharmony. The more beings return to the knowledge of the spiritual laws, the less helpers Lucifer will have in time to come.

QUESTION: And what is Lucifer's punishment?

ANSWER: That time has not come yet. He is still the existence of utmost disharmony, which he could only remove by changing his general attitudes, and this will have to be through torment. Is this understandable to you?

QUESTION: Only partly; it looks as if the main battle takes place between the evil and the good forces, and man is just a playball?

ANSWER: Oh no, man, if he wants to, fights also. If he, just as a spirit on an in-between level, chooses the path of least resistance, he will become a playball, swaying toward the dark side even if he is not fully aware of it.

QUESTION: What happens if, accidentally, the evil forces are the stronger ones?

ANSWER: Man is only then a playball if he turns away from the spiritual laws. The knowledge he has about these spiritual laws should serve as a weapon to fight the adversities. It is up to him to think of this weapon at all times and use it. Not even the darkest force can scratch you if you do not permit it. Profoundly fighting your low self is your best protection against it. It is just that which you should do -- partake in the battle! This may be expected of you. And I show you the way how to partake in this battle -- by more self-realization, discovering the truth within you, uncovering the innermost feelings in order to rectify and revise them, adapt them to the divine laws, also removing subterfuge and self-deceit. Then, no dark forces will ever have dominion over you. Do you understand this?

QUESTION: Only partly, because you said before that there are times when God does not help.

ANSWER: Oh, these times need the fully surrendered will of man which empowers him to help himself without assistance. Man's will-force is of great importance, but he will never be tried beyond capacity.

QUESTION: But there are so many people who suffer and do not bring up this strength, for instance, a person who knows for sure that his illness will be fatal. What should a person like this do?

ANSWER: You will observe frequently that such a person recognizes the test much more often than an average human being who is drifting along. Those who are heavily burdened are often more capable of passing their tests in that they take them for what they are and learn from them what is necessary, "bearing their cross" instead of grunting over their lot. I have to emphasize again and again that God does never burden a human being with more than he can carry and fulfill, or could fulfill if he would be willing. It is impossible for you human beings to judge the capacity of someone else because you do not know the other one's strength reserve which is latent in him or which he has to rechannel from former wrong directions. Furthermore, you make the mistake to think that pain and physical death are the worst that can happen to you. I mean physical death, which really should not be considered a punishment. Spiritual death is the worst and is ultimately the result of the path of least resistance.

Two different people will not have to carry the same lot. For instance, you may have to suffer less than one human being, but more than another one. Your cupful will be yours and yours alone, infallibly, at the perfect ratio.

QUESTION: Dear spirit friend, you said that each birth, be it physical or spiritual, is by necessity connected with pain. I cannot see this, and I think that, quite certainly, all kinds of giving birth are not necessarily involving pain.

ANSWER: Because your science has found painkilling remedies? It does not change facts. Even if a woman does not feel real physical pain, there is a tremendous change in the whole system which nevertheless amounts to pain. She is ill, has to lie down, cannot attend to her routine activities. The whole body reacts to the pain even though it's not actually felt. If you have to undergo an operation, you do not consciously feel the pain, but the effect is felt in the body. You should not take this literally. When I speak about pain, I do not always mean the physical aches such as a broken bone or a cut finger aches. I mean all symptoms of pain, the heaviness, or, as far as the spiritual is concerned, the discipline, etc. An artist will confirm, for instance, that creating an art work is like giving birth, without real physical pain, but an artist feels something like labor pain when creating his work of art.

QUESTION: You also said that in bad times there is always a way to pray. Very honestly, when I am going through a hard time, I don't feel like praying at all. I have no desire. I only pray when I am going through a good time.

ANSWER: For a human being, it is easiest to pray when all is very well or very bad, as a matter of fact, really bad, not trouble or bitterness, but when he is in real danger or in such agony that his soul is in uproar. It is most difficult to pray in that so-so state of mind when general conditions of life are irritating because especially then the soul's strength is hidden behind these

clouds. Therefore he must then fight to reach through to his own inner keys. This battling is very beneficial and strengthening. Truly it is most difficult in these times because his low self pulls him away from his connection to God, because it shies away from discipline and is inclined to choose the path of least resistance, of drifting, etc. All these negative currents, the giving in to weakness, to rebellion, and whatever else there may be in the human psyche that pulls him away from the connection with God and His world. If a human being from whom such a strong connection would be expected gives in to the low currents again and again, they will always have to be fought, repetitiously. For this reason, it would be so important to decide for this discipline which, once started, once willed, will not be as difficult as it seems at first. Man needs the discipline especially in those areas where it is most difficult for him to accomplish.

QUESTION: I had a dream last night when I had the distinct feeling that I had come a long way and then could not find my way around. Can you tell me something about it?

ANSWER: Last night in your hour of repose, you were, for the first time, in a higher sphere. You have received some instructions and also a certain strength. It is heaven's reward for your efforts. You will feel the effects of this strength more and more in time to come. But I will also tell you that more obligations are connected with it for you. Each happiness has its price; each newly acquired right brings along a new duty; each reward is one result of the battle; all gains will have to be merited by effort. This sounds thornier than it is because the more you develop, the more you will rejoice in these duties. The new sphere which you have acquired will show more of its bliss to you if you continue in your endeavors.

Maybe our new friends want to ask something?

QUESTION: I would like to ask whether spiritual death exists and what it means.

ANSWER: Spiritual death is the giving over entirely to the dark forces, be it consciously or unconsciously. It is complete separation from God's world. There are not only spirit forces but also human beings who are disjoined from God, who do not fit in His order because they prefer the path of least resistance, of surrendering to their weaknesses. Thus they belong to the world of the dead. This is spiritual death, which, however, by no means is eternal!

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](http://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.