

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 4
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WORLD WEARINESS VERSUS LOVE; PRAYER

I greet you in God's name and bring you His blessings!

My dear friends, since some of you are pondering the subject of world weariness -- an undefinable longing or woefulness or sadness, which may at times take hold of you -- I would like to choose this as the theme of my lecture today.

The underlying element of this feeling comprises a variety of roots and possibilities which then combined, cause world weariness. Of course, the mere longing for God and perfection is part of it, consciously or unconsciously. And it also has to do with the longing for the spiritual home, which is innate in all human beings because deep down you know that you are visitors on earth, that it is not your true home. But this alone is never the main reason for world weariness. There is a more complicated background to it, which I would like to outline now.

If man in any way deviates in his soul from God's laws -- and all the more, the less aware he is of it -- then this vague feeling of longing and sadness can temporarily take hold of him. It is then more or less the answer or a soft push of his higher self that something is not quite right within himself. For instance, man does not always know how to unfold the feeling of true love. He may not be able to convey this vital feeling in the right way, and thus it is not returned in the right manner and satisfactorily. Then this world weariness is his soul's answer. Man often believes that he is quite capable of love -- and it really may be so -- but this love capacity does not flow smoothly because other soul movements prevent it, a variety of movements such as fear, self-centeredness, etc. Frequently it can be observed that a human being is longing for and willing to give love but only when such love is given first to him. But this safe tradeoff not only locks the door but also causes the soul twists which I have mentioned and which then produce the feelings of world weariness, because with such an attitude he remains lonely.

This inner fear tells him: "My pride could be hurt; I might be injured; I might be rebuffed if I give first without being sure." Fear of disappointment is a sign of self-pity, and self-pity in turn is the sign of centering around self in the wrong sense. In this whole inner turnover, the ego is the aim. This disperses the current of real love or moves away in opposite directions. This is a law, and thus the soul suffers when breaking it. Here again, when man turns the inner switch, fighting his vulnerability by taking his low self less seriously, then he will be able to give real love genuinely because the other soul, what it lacks and desires, becomes more important than the ego with all its vanity and pride. Thereby the feeling of emptiness, of the vague longing will disappear because man is then fulfilling a vital function and thus in harmony with God and his own higher self, at least in this respect.

Please don't misunderstand me. By no means do I want to imply that such a person is egoistic. There is a difference between egoism and egocentricity. Both are wrong, and one does not necessitate the other. Neither does it mean that such a person does not want to give, is petty or thrifty. It is just that the real, genuine feelings were pushed into a wrong direction by the ignorant low self of man.

You will also find that a human being fitting the above description might very well be able to love a few other beings quite wholeheartedly. And yet he will encounter these wrong currents. If his love feelings, even for the most beloved ones, were in the right duct, he would not flood a few individual beings with this love, but he would be capable of extending the totality of love to all who amicably touch his soul, without the fear of risking and with the same expansion of feeling that he owes to himself. This is not self-understood, my friends, because, as much as you may agree with these words in principle and intellectually, there is a wide gap between such mental comprehension and your actual emotional reactions. There are very few exceptions. Of course, the totality of love is expressed differently in each individual encounter. Furthermore, you take it for granted that you love some beings much more than others, and this may have to remain this way for the time being, as long as you are on certain levels of development requiring earth incarnation. And you also know that you love your mother differently than your mate, your brother or sister, or your son, daughter, father, or friend, or to one friend you express your love quite differently than to another. There is such a variety of love currents, which are form and substance in spirit. All these colors, shades, sounds, and fragrances are different. But the love capacity would be sufficient to produce all these varying love currents, if the unhealthy ego tendencies would not prevent it.

A human being who loves one person very much feels, somehow, he is taking away from another one whom he might want to love more yet. And he has this same feeling if somebody loves him less or more than another one. It appears to him that one of them comes off badly when the love is divided. Genuine and healthy love is indivisible, never decreasing, but the more it is activated within you, the more it multiplies its speed and expansion by its own propagation. This is the immutable law, and man must find its application from within. Thus it is with God who loves his innumerable number of children, always more, never less. Here, too, I do not want to be misunderstood; my words do not refer to erotic and sexual experience!

How can this genuine, healthy love be attained? Not by trying to force it, this cannot be done. It can only be achieved in an indirect way. Start with yourself. Search your whole being thoroughly without self-deceit. Discover the obstructions: egocentricity, self-pity, vanity, pride. Once you realize their extent, you are on your way to attain true, genuine love. At the same time, the feeling of world weariness -- the longing, the sadness, and homesickness, and whatever else -- will dissolve. Check your soul currents, and if you find out that something is wrong, you know that your soul needs healing.

If you concentrate your entire love around one single being and, as outlined before, this is done in the wrong way, indicating the soul's illness in this area, then this love for such being weakens you. Maybe you fear to lose the other one's love so that you try to change your personality, which, however, leads to humiliation -- to yourself and the other one, but in an unhealthy way, in weakness, fear, not strength. Sometimes you may think that this is the sign of true and great love, but it is self-deceit, while others are just as afraid of this and thus cut themselves off from any true and genuine love feeling. If you feel healthy and genuine love, you never compromise your dignity.

Abandon these thoughts that involve fear or pride, while you should realize that you are giving up some previously cherished things for love's sake to gain what you are willing to relinquish. This is the immutable law. Man will thus have to make the decision in his soul that he has to abolish his pride, the importance of his ego, but not the faithfulness to his real self.

You may not easily recognize the difference, but meditate upon my words, and you will come close to the understanding. Those who are able to feel this real and genuine love, disregarding the little pride, the minor woes, and possible disadvantages, maintaining their inner integrity, not giving it up for fear of losing the other one's love, those will never be maltreated. Genuine love will always keep its dignity. You may suffer disappointment, but not undue humiliation. This love rests in itself; this dignity will create respect, not abasement or misuse. Healthy love -- since it is seeing, not blind, strong, not weak -- will always be true to your inner self just because, by eliminating the little ego, it does not aim at the fulfillment of its selfish desires. Thus the real love is free from all masochistic or sadistic tendencies; it is healthy and without egocentricity or other unhealthy, personality choking currents. You will notice that there are always two extremely opposite, unhealthy currents. Study this carefully, my friends!

Fear -- this undercover agent in man's soul -- is a major obstacle to attain real love, and it can only be present when man loves himself too much, takes himself too important, cares too much for his own well-being, thus clinging instead of giving freely of himself in the right and healthy manner. If you take yourself overly important, you will have to be afraid. If you give your own ego less consideration, you do not need to be afraid that "something might happen" when you genuinely love. Fear covers your eyes with a heavy veil and blinds you. You can neither see yourself nor others.

Genuine love has true sight because it can only manifest in a fearless soul. It will be strong enough to react in the right way, while a "wrong" love attitude has weaknesses and weakens and thus necessitates wrong reactions. As aforementioned, real love creates a natural dignity, while wrong attitudes lead to the "bluff" dignity which is based on pride and vanity. When the soul registers such wrong currents, it produces danger signals such as the feelings experienced in world weariness.

Another intricate source of world weariness is man's withdrawal into a self-created, lonely world of his own. Again there is fear not to give up self, not to risk anything; sometimes it is actual egoism. Perhaps he cherishes obvious, yet temporary, advantages in that he does not have to be responsible for anybody else and can live his life exclusively and without compromise to his own taste. Yet he has to pay a higher price than he realizes in the beginning. Here, too, he acts contrary to the spiritual laws, and the higher self talks in its own way to him by impressing such world weariness upon man's soul. Off and on, such a human being will be quite dissatisfied and feel lonely, alone and abandoned.

Deep down in his soul, each human being longs to give, fulfill, even sacrifice himself. Where the unhealthy, blind, and immature soul movements prevent this, two crossing currents develop which offset each other. One part of the soul wants to give love and thus also receive love because what you give will return to you as an eternally rotating circle. But start with giving, not, as so often, wait that you will be given to first. One part of the soul wants to relinquish self, fulfill, sacrifice; is eager to abide by the divine laws with every inner feeling-current; wants to forget his selfish desires, his vanity, pride, advantages because this longing is implanted by his higher self which knows that

only then fulfillment, happiness, harmony, perfection can manifest. This benign undercurrent sweeps even through the less developed souls and sometimes breaks through at rare occasion.

The other part of the soul wants comfort without sacrifice. It even shies away from the splendor of happiness and withdraws into a grey, lonely world with no risks involved ("no risks," at least so it seems to the blind portion in man). It is impossible to harmonize both currents because they flow into opposite directions. These crossing currents cause more conflict in man than he is readily aware of. And when man cannot bear these conflicts (marked by symptoms) any longer he goes to a healer of the soul since he does not know what the real basis for these conflicts is. Would he recognize the basis, he could work on resolving the conflicts. When he becomes aware of these crosscurrents, after a while he will be able to decide for one of the two directions, knowing what he has to give up here to gain there.

As a rule, man has sufficient intellectual knowledge to tell himself: "If I take this direction, I cannot go into the opposite one. Thus I have to decide where I want to go." When I recently spoke about inner decision, I mentioned that I would, some day, outline the real meaning by giving examples, and here again you have such example. An inner decision can only be made when you (1) acquire the knowledge of such existing hidden feeling currents, (2) become aware of your own hidden currents and find out where and how they are channeled wrongly or cross. These crossing feeling currents do not only cause emotional and spiritual short circuits and obstacles but can also manifest in physical debilitation: fatigue, weakness, or even illness. As these crosscurrents clash continuously, they suck man's strength, strength which, when channeled beneficially, can be used as a life builder, thus renewing itself as its own propelling agent.

Man knows much intellectually, but very little when it involves unhealthy emotions which, as long as they remain in the unconscious, cloud healthy thinking. Aside from the spiritual truths of God's laws to which every soul is subjected and by which it must abide in order to live healthily and in harmony, a fairly sound mind should realize that walking west and east at the same time is impossible. Thus the realization process is of basic necessity, even if it requires much discipline, because many human beings are hesitant to search within. You admit that an emotionally ill person is immature, at least in those areas where the soul current is unhealthy. This immaturity acts like the child that requests the impossible because it does not understand yet and cannot see that each act or nonacting entails its own consequences, which the mature human being will knowingly and willingly take upon himself, giving up voluntarily that which is not in his reach, while the immature soul wants the advantages of both alternatives and none of the disadvantages. And when he then faces the fact that this is impossible, his inner rebellion increases, and the conflicts as well, because revolting against the unchangeable as such is an unhealthy current. Such major inner conflicts are apt to show reflections and unpleasant manifestation in daily life.

There are many kinds of such crosscurrents, not only those outlined before; and the indefinite longing and sadness, called world weariness, may be caused by a short circuit action. If such soul weariness returns frequently, search for the source. It is not so easy to uncover these deeply embedded currents. It must be firmly willed with utmost discipline to remove resistance. Although the longing for God and the spiritual home is not the only feeling involved, it is true that this soul weariness stems from an unfulfilled longing for God, but in a different sense than you commonly assume. Only when man lives in perfect inner harmony with God's laws, is this longing for God stilled. Feeling close to God, in harmony with Him, requires the removal of obstacles. Yes, then the

soul will experience at oneness with God. If you could only see how your present earth life would change when you try to please God to your best ability, according to your personal task and level of development, you could be free of inner disharmony -- no torment, bitterness, tension, sadness, world weariness.

Once again, referring to making inner decisions, I would like to say that even if a human being makes a negative decision and takes upon himself all consequences and related tasks, he is better off, because his mind will shift in the new direction and his emotions will adjust to it, than if he makes no decision at all by trying to catch both impossibilities, seeing their advantages but refusing to accept the disadvantages resulting from the indecision. For instance, if man decides for withdrawal and solitude because he is afraid of giving love, then he should resign to the fact that he has to live alone and without love and, by the same token, he has to give up certain joys and satisfaction voluntarily. If such decision is made, even though rather negative, it is a step closer to emotional well-being than this indecision, this "I want both!" At least, then there is one inner direction; he no longer is torn by these two opposite currents.

Even a negative decision, as above mentioned, requires effort and facing self honestly. To uncover unconscious currents, to give up some things, to pay at least one price, even though it may not be an advantageous one, or the wrong one, it is a step towards emotional well-being, although not ideal. If such a human being chooses solitude, outwardly or inwardly (sometimes it is just an inner closing-off), because his egoism, fear, self-pity, pride, or whatever are stronger, then he will easily recognize the consequences and get down to the problem when he is confronted with it, with the longing for love, fulfillment, illumination, brotherhood, uniting with another soul. He will tell himself, "I have chosen; this is the price which I have preferred to pay."

Assuming now that he has invested scrupulous spiritual effort to arrive at this negating conclusion, weighing both sides carefully, then it will be very simple later on, should he realize that he made a wrong decision, to switch to the opposite direction because he previously had recognized the advantages and disadvantages of it already. The worst attitude is drifting in indecision, letting all these clashing currents float unrecognized in the unconscious without an effort of self-realization. That inner state will tear the soul apart, will quite certainly lead to conflicts, will tire the soul, will sap more and more strength so that then not enough strength remains to fulfill life, spiritually and materially, in other vital areas.

Such clashing currents or short circuits are not present in all human beings equally strong; there are different degrees. It is not a question of either/or. But sometimes these contrasting emotions clash violently because the demands of the soul go in both directions, and then these frustrating inner frictions close in on man so that he cannot cope with life anymore. Well, it might be the only "remedy," for then he might feel so ill inside that he voluntarily submits to be shown a way of healing, which otherwise might not be the case unless he is already on a higher spiritual level. If these inner conflicts do not produce quite such violent torment -- one current more in the foreground than the other -- man will still feel the countercurrents at least from time to time, and his strength decreases. And most of all, there cannot be the perfect balance of his soul forces.

There are a number of other reasons for the feeling of world weariness. They all stem from dissonance of soul forces for other than the discussed reasons, and I will not continue with it now. I have given enough today so that all who hear or read these words have sufficient material to digest,

to dig within. Whoever wants personal help, the way is always open. If you have such feeling of indefinite longing, be aware that in your unconscious feeling currents there is a lack of well-being and freedom. Give more consideration to your soul, to your entire personality in order to uncover these hidden obstructions; and give less importance to your woes, your vanity, your fears, etc., because if they overrun you, you cannot even dig beneficially. Catch yourself, then you will gather the courage to uncover what is hidden, do away with pretense, and revise, sublimate your true feelings.

The only other current which I yet want to touch superficially today, because it is related to our today's theme, is self-pity, which frequently intensifies the feeling of world weariness. It is "bathing in woes." Man takes delight in it, and he convinces himself that he has to bear it because it is his destiny. And it may not at all be the case. As I explained, it may just be any of the crosscurrents or a short circuit, which man is empowered to rectify. This sickly taking pleasure in woes -- you call it masochism -- is a result of a few tendencies: running away from the real problems which man does not want to face, compensating for the lacks of life with pitying himself. These lacks may be part of his predetermined course of events, but quite often they can be removed with courage and will power if only man would open his inner door.

Regardless of the past burdens of your present or previous lives, regardless of what you are presently going through, if you meet the inner requirements which I have been explaining, i.e., heal your soul, your emotions (not only thoughts and deeds), harmonize them with the spiritual laws, then you will be able to lead an emotionally rich, harmonious, and thus happy life which brings you fulfillment on whatever level you may be.

Last but not least, I want to mention something which I have outlined previously so often -- how much inner discord man feels when he rebels against that which cannot be changed. It will never harm the soul to accept a heavy burden. He will, should, and must not be glad; that would be impossible, but he should accept it without rebellion and bitterness. The resulting sadness will somehow liberate the soul. I believe that you all have felt this every so often. When man bathes in self-pity, he is semiconsciously reminded how he reacted when a real burden was upon him. And now he wants to produce such feeling again. But now it is artificially produced because with just a little effort he could change the situation. So you see, one and the same feeling can be rightly of liberating depth (when going through a trial) or sickly and superficially imposed when in a blue mood of self-pity. Try to recognize the difference.

A number of such unhealthy currents may tear and wear out the soul at the same time (those which I mentioned and others not yet discussed). One interconnecting with the other, one sick current cranks the other in an unhealthy way. The words I brought you today are not easy to understand, and I beg you to study them thoroughly. And now I will gladly turn to your questions and answer them to the best of my ability.

QUESTION: I still cannot tackle the problem of praying and meditating. Without intending it, I get trapped in some kind of routine. Quite some time ago you have demonstrated how to build a prayer. I followed your advice and was satisfied for a long time. I felt it really came from within. I had to do some construction work to acquire a certain discipline. But now I feel it is not quite right yet. I feel the routine, there is a lack of spontaneity. But on the other hand, if I deviate from this structure, I forget easily what I wanted to pray for. We also learned that no prayer is said in

vain. There is so much to pray for that it takes me at times a whole hour before I finish. Now, if I disregard my structure, I know, or fear, that I will get careless and would not pray for a certain number of things. How can I get out of this split?

ANSWER: When man is in the beginning of a spiritual path and maybe has not yet acquired the right method of regular prayer, which is so important, and when in addition he does not like discipline -- and thus there is danger that he becomes negligent -- then it is of utmost importance that he makes a plan. It is so important because no prayer, no good thoughts are sent out in vain. All thoughts have form in the spiritual plane and will be of some effect. But it is also important for man to thereby learn discipline and concentration. This daily prayer should be considered a daily meditation exercise. At first, most human beings have difficulty to keep their thoughts in line, and it must be learned not to get discouraged over this. Just return quietly to the point where the thoughts deviated. This is a valuable exercise, in addition to the good thought-forms you are building.

You should also realize that this is only a passing stage. Prayer, as everything that is alive, should never come to a standstill. It must always be in step with the development of the entire personality. Thus this initial exercise is of such specific importance, and it should be handled as you did. Oh, you learn a lot from it! Man should make it a point to devote a certain time daily to his spiritual life. After a while, it is so ingrained that he cannot live without it.

Then you have reached the next step, and you can expand your prayers. You will learn to pray for other people, spirits, development in general, for peace, etc., with more depth. All this brings you closer to God and the world of spirit. But when you have reached this new phase -- that the daily prayer is a must-- then you have to watch that it does not turn to a lip prayer routine. It is part of the constant battle in which man is involved if he wants to walk the right middle path, which is such a difficult one.

The other extreme is neglect, often justified with the words: "Prayer is of value only when I am in the mood." But the desire for prayer can be cultivated, and should be, just as tenderly as everything else in your life. Give yourself a little push, discipline yourself.

My friend, your case is the other extreme: too much routine. Your prayer seems like a burden, a chain now. However, man tends to consider the extreme an easier burden because, following a set pattern, he does not think as much. There is no need to constantly examine his inner self, to revise, to rectify, and his conscience may find the doctrines of orthodox religious bodies more appealing. But a human being striving for spiritual growth in the truest sense of the word should not just routinely cling to extremes and doctrines because they quiet his conscience. I will advise you, my friend, let it not bother you when you say a prayer differently from what you had intended to even if you forget this or that, now and then. Your prayer was right for your previous phase, but revise your plan now. It is now the lesser evil, if I may say so here, to forget something once in a while than to be caught in the chain of routine, thus blocking spontaneity and also the liberation of your soul.

I will also tell you that for the general prayer (everything that does not involve your own self), you do not need to be so wordy. Even if you choose the most beautiful words, which at first carried much power, after a while, because routinely repeated, they are time consuming and lose their originally intended effect. It is better and more purposeful if you picture strongly in your mind what

you want to pray for and then condense this desire wholeheartedly in one thought sentence. Thus you express it quite effectively. Listen quietly within whether you really and truly want this wish to be fulfilled. Then this one prayer sentence carries more power than the many words you could have said. As far as you personally are concerned, prepare no fixed formula because each day presents different inner and outer stimuli. You feel as you develop that one day a particular fault is uncovered, the next day another one, then a wrong emotional current, and again on another day you are stuck with something that you don't understand about yourself. In this way, it is always an up-to-date prayer, varying and thus more personal. Combine it with your daily meditative reflection.

To further develop, you should daily talk to God via your spirit friends of His sphere. But in order not to scatter, you should have a certain structure how to go about it, if I may say so. First, include all faults and wrong emotional reactions into your prayer; formulate resolutions, and then ask God for more recognition and strength to overcome. After a while, you will find the point of centralization because the more you develop, the quicker you will realize that the many faults and faulty currents originate from just a few basic roots. But beware that counting your faults, etc., does not become routine because it serves the good purpose of impregnating, at the same time uncovering, these faults and thus recognizing every time the reason for failure a little better. Face daily ups and downs truthfully, and discuss them with God. And then be still, listen. Sometimes the answer is given instantly. Try it in this way.

QUESTION: I have a bad conscience when I pray so much for myself and my affairs instead of praying for others.

ANSWER: It depends entirely on the how! Would your prayers just be a craving for the fulfillment of this or that desire, it might be wrong per se. But realize that for others you cannot do more than send them mercy, love, forgiveness with your best wishes for them, including your enemies. You are not empowered to do more, my dear one, but you are empowered to change within, to develop, and it needs all your concentrated effort, much time, and God's help, which is given to those when the true willingness is there. Just realize that your inner will can propel changes and your development, then you will not have a bad conscience when you talk to God about yourself at length. Then it is not egoistic.

There is so much that you human beings don't understand about yourself. To understand more requires recognition, which can be gained by concentrated effort, devotion of time, and with the help of God. Absorb the thought that you do not only desire purification and healing of the soul to become a happier human being and as a spirit to get into a higher sphere, but more so to be a light in God's plan of salvation and to radiate what God gives you for your development. If you want progress for the world, salvation of souls, human beings, and spirits, as you express it in your prayer, then you can effectuate this far better when you yourself have grown, are freer and healthier. You don't even have an inkling what difference this makes and how it radiates. With such an attitude you are generating a productive current, and you will not only forget about your bad conscience but also will receive more help because you can assist others better. You can solve this problem only in this manner because man's best prayers are his actions. And right action, above all, is healing his own soul, where it is ill, and that requires a lot of self-honesty and discipline. Thus man fulfills and lives his prayers vivaciously.

Of course, the spoken prayer is necessary; it is the cornerstone. Take your time, then you will learn what is essential for your development. Be aware that your own development, for which you need much knowledge and recognition about your inner self, serves others more than many beautiful prayer words. But I do not want to say that you should not pray for others at all; no, find a proportional middle path, try to balance.

QUESTION: Somehow I find it difficult to discontinue what I so carefully built.

ANSWER: The fact that this is so difficult for you is a sign that it already became some kind of burden or a chain. In the beginning this plan, this structure was excellent, but now it is important that you free yourself from the burden to give your prayers new life again, in step with your daily needs. I want to give an example. A person who was never trained to take a bath or a shower every day will have, in the beginning, a hard time to make it a habit. He has to overcome the initial resistance as he feels it requires too much discipline and is time consuming. But after a while, he gets so used to it that he could hardly live without the daily cleansing of the entire body. Even the extreme could happen, that he neglects other important matters because he spends too much time in the bathtub, feeling that it is such a pleasure. Or he might endanger his health when during an illness he is not allowed to take a bath. So he feels compelled to attend to that, now so considered, daily need. However, if he has acquired this healthy habit, he will keep it without compulsion or pressure, not falling into extremes, not considering it a duty in the wrong sense, and thus it will not be a chain. It is a matter of course, in a relaxed and harmoniously simple attitude, almost effortless.

You, my dear, still struggle with this soul bath, the prayer, while you could relax because praying daily is already your second nature. Don't calm your conscience with tense struggle.

QUESTION: Will you please tell me the next time whether I have made progress in this direction?

ANSWER: Yes, gladly. And you know, my friends, as Christ said, there is great depth in the Lord's Prayer. One could meditate an hour about the Lord's Prayer. Don't just rattle it off -- neither your own prayers. When you contemplate each line of the Lord's Prayer, it will certainly be not a lip prayer, but you will perceive its power and purity. All essentials are condensed therein quite wondrously. It just depends on whether you comprehend the meaning of the words. Once before, I have given you an explanation about the meaning of the words of this wonderful prayer, and I may do it again in a different way to show you that this one prayer can be prayed in many different ways when you try to grasp the aliveness and its multiple elucidations. Of course, you do not need to say only this prayer; avoid static, routine lip prayer. Alternate, once your own prayer, then the Lord's Prayer, then both, etc.

Make sure that your prayers center around your own development, your problems, your search. As you change, so your prayers should change, moving toward a higher level. The most intimate and the most important matter in man's life, his prayers, must keep in step with the advancement of his general growth.

QUESTION: I would like to say something in regard to the comparison of prayer and bathing. Cleansing the body shows a visible result, prayer does not. The difficulty with prayer is that one does not always feel it has reached its aim. I do not only mean that it is fulfilled, but also if

it is heard at all. The Indian people have their prayer wheels while they continuously repeat holy words. Of course, it is just rattling them off, but especially the East Indians are considered very close to nature and God.

ANSWER: Not as a whole, by no means, and not because they say "holy words" continuously. "Holy words" are not a formula. A word may be holy when the soul utters it in purity, which will never be a mechanically repeated word. Repetition is far simpler than this constant battle to find the middle path. Therefore there will always be human beings who think they can prevent this battle by clinging to certain formulas and fixed rules. As far as the other part of your question is concerned, I want to tell you that this is not so. There are people who always look clean even if they did not take a bath. There are also degrees. Of course, if a person would never take a bath, you could see it. But if he does it irregularly, it may not show at all. Maybe he does not look super clean or hardly different than one who does it daily. And it is similar with prayer. You may not always and instantly see the result in the form of fulfillment or answer. But as you feel cleaner after taking a bath -- whether others can see this or not is immaterial -- you will feel cleansed after a prayer "bath" for the soul when you have said the right prayer. If a human being wants evidence instantly that he did not say his prayer in vain, it is a sign that it was not the right prayer, also that the contact was lacking. If a prayer is said with vigorous soul force and if you do not center so much around desire, if you direct your prayers towards your spiritual growth, desiring to love and give more and to fathom God's will and your own inner truth, then your prayers will show results, sometimes very quickly, when there is the constant and real will-force behind it, for instance, when you try to apply what you have learned. And when you then feel a crosscurrent or a resistance coming up -- which is unavoidable -- it can be seen how powerful this will-force is and whether the resistance will be conquered.

If there is the powerful force, there will be great relief, a wonderful peace and harmony, a feeling of victory and purification, and thus contact is established so that there is no question that the prayer was heard. Thus when you pray wholeheartedly to uncover some trend within your soul although there is a great resistance, and you conquer this resistance, truly desirous to do God's will to see your inner truth, then prayer is effective, alive.

This prayer effect may come very quickly, maybe not the first time. Perhaps we of God's world want to observe first whether you are sincere and that you will not cease trying. When God's spirit world is certain that man really has made up his mind, then the direct contact will be felt. What do you not understand?

QUESTION: The fact that every day billions of people pray and their prayers apparently are not heard, because otherwise the world would not be as it is.

ANSWER: The how of prayer is the most essential part of it, such as the farmer praying for rain, the hotel owner for sunshine, another person praying for this, another for that. Such lip prayers are of very little, if any, effect, as all lip prayers are "wrong" prayers -- just rattling off something.

The truly right prayer, of course, is asking for spiritual growth and to see and do God's will even if it is contrary to the will of self. If you are wholeheartedly desirous to "Do Thy will, I will fulfill Thy will, whatever it may be, because You, dear Lord, are love and wisdom," then you pray in

the right way, and then you will receive the answer. And how very few human beings do pray in this way -- very, very few! That's why your world is as it is. The will of self is so much stronger in most human beings than the desire to see and do God's will. Everything else, we do not really call prayer. It is a vague form of duty-bound address to God; sometimes it is even sheer egoism. It is not at all strength producing, nor does it have much meaning. The main theme of each prayer should be deliverance of the will of self to God's will. That must be the basis.

If you, every day anew in your prayer hour, ask yourself: "What is it that God might want from me which I don't see because my own will seems to steer into another direction? Do I have such a harmonious relationship with God that I completely subject my will to His even where it might be difficult? And if I receive an answer from His world which I don't like, am I willing to accept it? What is my attitude here?" Then the doors will be opened. As long as the will of self is stronger, God's will cannot penetrate, and thus the contact will remain missing. This is, in essence, the meat of prayer. Everything else is a conglomeration of beautiful words that bear no fruits. If you can free yourself from the chain of your own strong will centering around the desires of self, you have opened the door, and your life will wondrously change. This I promise each one of you.

QUESTION: But is there not a certain contradiction between the idea of free will and the task of the free will? Because as soon as I say, "Thy will be done," my own will ceases.

ANSWER: You have a free will: to subject your will under God's will, or not. You and everyone else have this choice, and it means more than you can readily see. Man's fall (expulsion from paradise) is based on this principle.

Decide to say: "I voluntarily submit the free will God has given me to His will, not by force (this is just what God does not want), but because I, a free human being, have chosen it. I want to realize God's will more than my own," just as one being submits his will voluntarily to that of another one, or not. Let us say a wife says: "My husband, I want that this will be done according to your will." She is not forced to say so, but she may if she wants to. To subject your will voluntarily to that of another one is by no means a suspension of the free will. It is one way to use the free will.

QUESTION: I find it most difficult to recognize God's will.

ANSWER: When you make up your mind to always recognize God's will and act accordingly, you will be shown it. Think of your faults, how strongly you cling to them. Think whether you are doing everything that is required for spiritual growth, whether you make the effort to overcome the resistances involved in self-recognition, i.e., everything that caused conflict in your life. Then think whether you are willing to give up self in order to do God's will.

Of course, you must repeatedly make this resolution because otherwise the spiritual form is too weak. It scatters when such thoughts pass through the mind superficially, occasionally, without depth. This thought form must be cultivated like a precious plant. Meditate on this, in general and on a personal level, where and why such decision will penetrate and affect the most secret feelings.

QUESTION: But if it is done too regularly, then this too becomes a routine?

ANSWER: No, quite certainly not unless it is a superficial thought, but never when you fill your whole being with it and when you are truly willing to apply it throughout your entire life. Think of this practical application every day and how and where it may be applied.

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