

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 60
An Unedited Lecture
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THE ABYSS OF ILLUSION; UTOPIA; FREEDOM AND SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessed be this evening, blessings for all of you. This lecture will be a continuation of the last one (No. 58 -- Desire for Happiness and Unhappiness). Those of you who have missed it, may find this difficult to follow. However, you may get some benefit out of it, especially if you familiarize yourself with the subject of the last lecture.

You all know, my friends, that thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and convictions create forms -- forms that are just as real as your earth matter. The deeper and stronger a conviction is, the more lasting and substantial are these forms. These forms exist in your soul, and they exist at the same time in the world of the spirit. If you harbor attitudes, opinions, convictions, and emotions of truth and reality, these forms will exist in a world of light, and they will, in your own soul, create and bring you happiness, harmony, and what you may call luck. Soul forms of truth are made of "material" that lasts permanently. They will never dissolve, they can never be destroyed.

Convictions and emotions of untruth or unreality have the opposite effect. They may last a while, but their durability is limited to the length of time that these attitudes in the personality prevail. The stronger they are -- these convictions and attitudes, thoughts and emotions -- the greater is their impact, the more substantial their form.

Some may remember that at times I described the path you are taking by outlining landscapes as you know them on earth. There are shrubs and thickets, narrow ledges and cliffs. At times, the going is rough and tedious, the way is steep and stony. At other times, you find yourselves on a meadow of rest and light until you are ready to tackle the next hurdle. All this is not merely symbolical. These forms truly exist. They are the product of your inner attitudes and convictions, thoughts and emotions. Many of these create obstacles through which you have to grope your way.

The more unconscious such attitudes, convictions, and erroneous conclusions are, the more powerful are they. This is logical, for anything that is out in the light of conscious awareness, if wrong, is open for correction. It is laid open for consideration and thereby made flexible and possible of change. In your daily life, you may experience happenings that may change a conscious conviction. However, if you are unaware of a conclusion or attitude, it is not exposed for the possibility of reconsideration and change. It is rigid, and the more rigid a form, the stronger is its substance. If this is so with a form of untruth, you will easily see that it must create a tremendous obstacle in your life. If you could but visualize that all thoughts and emotions are actual forms, objects, and things, you would better understand why it is so important for you to uncover your unconscious and to look at what it contains. These forms vary in substance, strength, and shape according to what they represent, how strong the convictions are, and what is linked with them. And this in turn depends on the character and temperament of the person.

Now I should like to discuss one common soul form which, to some degree, exists in every human being. I will call this the "abyss of illusion." There is an abyss in each one of you. This abyss is utterly unreal, and yet it seems very real as long as you have not taken the necessary steps to discover its illusory character.

When you cannot let go of your self-will (this does not mean that you necessarily want something bad or harmful), when you cannot accept the imperfection of this world, when you cannot have life and people according to your very own way, even if yours may be the right way, it seems to you that you have fallen into an abyss. You may never have translated these feelings into such terms. But if you analyze your feelings, you will see that this is so. There is a strong fear in you that whatever happens contrary to your will must spell danger. Needless to say, this applies not to everything and not to your entire personality, nor to all areas of your life. It is sufficient that it does exist in some respect. By working in this direction and examining your emotional reactions to certain incidents, you will become aware of the abyss of illusion in you. I ask you not to take my word for it. Experience the truth of it!

This abyss varies in depth and in width. Only by becoming aware of its existence and gradually discovering its unreality will this form dissolve little by little. This can happen only if, at one time or another, you give yourself up to it. In other words, what seems so hard to give up, what seems like a personal threat is really no threat at all. Let us say someone else does not accept you or acts in any way contrary to your conviction, or even the actual acceptance of your own inadequacy -- in itself, it is no threat. You cannot find out that this is not a threat unless you go right through it. Only after accepting your own or the other's inadequacy in the areas where heretofore you could hardly do so, only after giving up your own will where it seemed as though your life were at stake will you be able to truly convince yourself that nothing adverse happens to you. As long as this abyss exists in your soul, in all such incidents it seems to you that you are gravely endangered if you do give up or let go. In other words, you seem to fall down into the abyss. The abyss can only disappear if you let yourself sink into it. Then and then only will you learn that you do not crash and perish, but that you float beautifully. You will then see that what made you tense with fear and anxiety was as illusory as this abyss.

So I repeat, the abyss cannot disappear by itself. It can only vanish from your soul and your life if you have once made the plunge into it. The first time, it may call for great effort on your part, but each time you try it anew, it will be easier.

I hope I will not be misunderstood. I do not refer to giving up something needlessly or merely because it makes you happy. I do not even refer to giving up something you have or possess. Nor do I speak of the realistic fears that you can face up to constructively. I refer only to the subtle little fears in your soul, to the frustration and anxiety you cannot quite understand and for which you often find such poor rationalizations. Let us say, a person near you does not agree with you or has certain faults. You may feel all tense and full of anxiety. If you analyze these feelings, you will discover that it amounts to feeling endangered because your world of utopia is proven unreal. And that is the phantom fear in which you believe your life is at stake. Otherwise you would not be so fearful. And that is the abyss into which you should plunge in order to find yourself floating instead of perishing.

Last time I discussed the world of utopia in the human personality. I said that the infant in you desires everything the way it wants it, how it wants it, and when it wants it. But it goes further than that. This includes also having complete freedom without responsibility. You may not be aware that you desire just this. But I am sure, by investigating some of your reactions and asking yourself what they truly mean, when you come to the root of it, you will undoubtedly find that this part of your being desires just that. You desire a benign authority above you who conducts your life in all ways as you desire it. You wish complete freedom in every way; you want to make independent decisions and choices. If these prove good, it is to your credit. However, you do not wish to be responsible for anything bad that happens. Then you refuse to see the connection between such a happening and your own actions and attitudes. You are so successful in covering up these connections that, after a time, it takes indeed a great deal of effort to bring the connection out into the open. This is so because you wish to make this authority responsible for the negative things only.

Many of my friends who are well advanced on this path will readily confirm that this part exists in them. If you follow through this unconscious thought or attitude, it amounts to just that. You wish freedom without self-responsibility. Thus you wish a pampering, indulgent god, like a parent who spoils his child. If this god cannot be found -- and of course he cannot -- he becomes a monster in your eyes, and you turn away from God altogether.

The same expectations you have of this god, you often also project onto human beings, either to a specific one or a group of human beings or to a philosophy, to a creed, to a teacher. It does not matter who or what. At any rate, the God image you have worked on will not be complete for your understanding unless you include this very basic element in it.

It is of great importance that you find in yourself the part where you desire just that: freedom without self-responsibility. In the method of our work, it should not be too difficult to find the many areas where you desire just that. It can go very far although it is often hidden and can only be approached in an indirect way. I cannot show you now how it should be done because the approach varies with each individual. I shall be glad to point out the way to each of you if you so desire. There cannot be a single exception. You all have, at least in some way, just this hope and desire: freedom without self-responsibility to the full extent. Yes, you may wish to assume self-responsibility in some areas of your life, often mostly in superficial and outer actions. But in the last and deepest and most important attitude towards life as a whole, you still refuse it, yet you desire utter freedom.

If you think this through thoroughly, you will surely see that this is an impossibility. It is utopia! You cannot be free and at the same time have no responsibility. In the measure that you shift responsibility from yourself, in that measure do you curtail your own freedom. You put yourself in slavery. It is as simple as that.

Even in the animal world, you will observe the same law at work. A pet has no freedom, but it is not responsible in obtaining its own food and shelter. A wild animal is free, or freer. But it has the responsibility of looking out for itself. This must apply much more to humanity. Wherever you look, you will see that it cannot be otherwise: the more freedom, the more responsibility. If you do not desire responsibility to the degree of your capacity, you have to forfeit freedom. In a superficial way, this applies to your choice of profession, in the choice of government, in practically everything.

But where humanity has overlooked this basic truth so far is in the human soul and in man's attitude towards life as such.

The infant in you does not see this and does not want to see it. It wants it both ways. What it wants does not exist; it is illusion or utopia. The price for illusion is extremely high. The more you want to evade paying the natural and fair price -- in this case self-responsibility for freedom -- the heavier the toll becomes. This, too, is unalterable law. The more you understand about the human soul, the more clearly will you observe this. All diseases of the soul are based on just that: evasion in payment of the rightful price, desire and insistence on having it both ways, the easy way.

The price you pay is so heavy, so steep, my friends. You are not aware of this yet, but you will be if you follow this particular road. A part of this price is the constant effort you waste in trying to force life into the mold of your illusion in this respect. If you could but see all this inner, emotional effort, you would shudder because all this strength could be used quite differently. To let go of this illusion, to assume full self-responsibility seems to you so hard that it becomes a good part of the abyss. You seem to think that you will fall right in if you really assume self-responsibility. Therefore you constantly strain away from it, stemming against it. And this consumes strength.

Giving up the world of utopia represents the abyss. Utopia includes, among others things, the hope that freedom can exist without self-responsibility. To give up his world of utopia seems to you the greatest danger in all its aspects. You stem against it with all the might of your spiritual muscles. You lean away from the abyss and thus lose valuable strength for nothing. It seems to you that to give up your world of utopia is dire misery. The world becomes bleak and hopeless with no chance for happiness. Your concept of happiness, in this part of your unconscious mind, means utter perfection in all ways. But this is not true. To give up utopia does not make for a bleak world. You need not despair of letting go a desire and to go into what often seems fearsome to you. The only way you can discover the illusion of this fear, or this abyss, and its phantom quality is first to visualize, feel, and experience its existence in you in the various manifestations and reactions of your daily life and then to jump into it. Otherwise it cannot dissolve.

There is a very important general misconception about life. It constitutes the main result of this unreasonable desire for freedom without self-responsibility. It is the idea that you can come to harm through the arbitrariness of the god of your image, of life, or fate, or through the cruelty, the ignorance, and the selfishness of others. This fear is as illusory as the abyss. This fear can exist only because you deny your self-responsibility. Therefore others have to be responsible. If you would not cling tenaciously to the utopia of having both freedom and no self-responsibility, you could easily perceive that you are indeed independent. You are the master of your life and fate; you, and no one else, create your own happiness and unhappiness. Observation of these manifold connections and chain reactions would automatically eliminate your fear of others, of becoming a victim. You could link up all unfavorable incidents with your own wrong attitudes, no matter how wrong the other person also may be. But his wrongness cannot affect you. This would become clear to you, and you would then lose your fear of being helpless. You are helpless because you make yourself that way by trying to shift responsibility from yourself. So you see that fear is the heavy price you must pay for insisting on your world of utopia.

In truth and reality, you cannot possibly come to harm by any shortcomings or wrong actions of another person, no matter how much it may seem that way at first glance. He who judges on the

surface will not find truth and reality. Many of you may judge in some ways profoundly, going to the roots of things; in other ways, however, you are conditioned to judge on the surface. In this particular respect, many of you refuse to let go of judging on the surface because you still hope that the world of utopia can be a reality. Therefore you have to fear other people, their judgment, their wrongdoings. In this part of your being, you like to consider yourself a victim for the very reason I stated previously. This trend in itself is a sign of refusal to accept self-responsibility.

If you are truly willing and prepared to accept full self-responsibility, the vision of truth will have to come to you, namely, that harm cannot come to you through others. I can foresee many questions coming up in this connection. But let me assure you, my friends, that even a mass disaster, of which there have been many in the history of humanity, will miraculously spare some and not others. This cannot be explained away either by coincidence or by the act of a monstrous god of your image who favors a few and punishes some less fortunate creatures according to his whim or arbitrary liking. Nor is less monstrous the God concept that says, "You were a good child, therefore I reward you by sparing you a difficult fate, while another person has to be tested and has to go through certain hardships." This, too, is a distortion of truth.

God is in you, and that part of the divine in you regulates things in such a wonderful way that all your wrong attitudes will come to the fore, most strongly at some times, less strongly at other times of your life. Due to the apparent faults and misdeeds of others, your own wrong attitudes and inner errors will be affected. You cannot be affected by any wrongdoing or actions of other people if you do not have within yourself something that responds as one note responds to another.

Again, you certainly should not take my word for it. Anyone on the path is bound to find out the truth if he really wants to. Sincerely investigate your everyday occurrences, irritations, and annoyances. Find out what in yourself responds or corresponds either to a similar characteristic (although perhaps on a quite different plane) or to the exactly opposite extreme of the person who has provoked you. If you truly find the corresponding note in yourself, you will automatically cease to feel victimized. Although a part of you enjoys just that, it is a doubtful joy. It weakens you and is bound to make you fearful. It enchains you utterly. By seeing the connection between your inner wrong currents and attitudes and the outer unwelcome occurrence, you will come face to face with your inadequacy, but instead of weakening you, this will make you strong and free.

You are so conditioned to the habit of going through life concentrating on the apparent wrong of the other person that you feel victimized by it. You put blame left and right and thus never find the corresponding note in yourself. This explains how you could be adversely affected. Even those of my friends who have learned to investigate themselves with some degree of honesty often fail to do so in the most apparent everyday incidents. It takes training to condition yourself to follow this road all the way. When you discover your own contribution, no matter how subtle, in going through an unwelcome experience, you will cease being afraid of the world.

If your fear of life and the inadequacy of others is not to some degree eliminated after such findings, you have not even scratched the surface. Yes, you may have found some contributing factors, but if it has not the desired effect on you, you are still dealing with subterfuge. What you find must make the knowledge grow that you cannot be truly affected by others, that you are the master of your life. Therefore you need have no fear. In other words, your findings must make you

see the truth and the significance of self-responsibility. In addition, self-responsibility will cease to be something to shy away from.

If this work is done in the right way, you will not feel guilty about it. In the right approach, there is no room for guilt feelings. The very nature of a guilt feeling that stifles your determined effort to find out more about yourself is like saying, "I cannot help it, I have to feel guilty for something I cannot help." Therefore, inevitably a guilt feeling contains an element of self-pity. Without self-pity, there could be no guilt feeling. The true and constructive way of searching within yourself must uncover many errors, many wrong conclusions, many faults and faulty attitudes. But you will encounter them without a trace of guilt. In the proper attitude, you accept your inadequacies and face up to them. In the world of utopia, you do not.

This is a good part of the reason why you reject self-responsibility. By making independent decisions, you are bound to make mistakes. The child in you, clinging to the world of utopia, believes you must never make a mistake. Making a mistake means falling into the abyss. This is another instance of jumping in and finding yourself afloat. You then see it is no tragedy to have made a mistake, while the infant thinks you must perish if you do. Therefore no independent decisions must be made for which one is responsible. It should be noted that this may manifest only in a very hidden and subtle way.

Obviously the illusion that you must not be inadequate leads to your rejection of self-responsibility and to the continued wish to be free. The world of utopia, as well as the fearsome abyss of illusion therefore depend upon whether or not you learn to accept your inadequacy and whether or not you learn to free yourself of the phantom that you cannot err. The guilt and fear of making mistakes is so hard to bear that you set up all sorts of phantoms and soul forms that make your life miserable.

In your intellect, you may know all I say here. You may readily admit to a variety of faults without the slightest guilt or fear. In this particular respect, you have freed yourself of the abyss of illusion and the world of utopia. But there doubtlessly are areas where you do not feel in accord with your knowledge. With this, we have to be concerned. It is quite possible that you have some faults which are infinitely graver than others, and yet you do not have this feeling of shame and guilt. You can admit them to yourself and even discuss them with others. Here, you are free. Other faults, perhaps less severe and at times not even really faults, but a mere attitude, a certain shame, a kind of anxiety or reaction, may give you an acute feeling of shame or guilt. You cannot face it, you look away, you struggle to avoid seeing it. This means that in this respect, for one reason or another, you live in your world of utopia and therefore struggle against the abyss of illusion.

Your whole life must change in many ways if you discover the truth of what I say here. It is not sufficient that you accept these words intellectually; you have to experience them in yourself. This can only be done by hard work in the proper direction and by your utter will to find out this particular truth. On the other hand, you need not have completely dissolved the abyss in order to be liberated to a large degree. It is sufficient that you see and observe its existence, its effect on you, and that you have made some attempts in the right direction. It is sufficient to see the connection between your erroneous attitudes and outer happenings that heretofore seemed arbitrary. Once you realize your fear of giving up utopia in all its ramifications, you will have taken a tremendous step towards real freedom and true independence.

This will free you of your basic fear of life. It will release heretofore wasted forces for constructive purposes, and it will bring forth in you a creativity you never dreamed possible. Once you realize what I say here, once it is your own and not superimposed knowledge, you will go through life with a completely new attitude, as a free being without fear. You will know, with that deep conviction that no word and no teaching can ever give you better than your own realization, that nothing can come your way that is not self-produced. You do not have to be ashamed of it. You can make the outpicturing of it and the unfortunate circumstance you may have to go through a very constructive and productive medicine for yourself. This will serve to liberate you rather than to enslave you. You will realize that you have nothing to be afraid of. You are not the victim of others; you do not have to fight for the perfection of others because their imperfection cannot harm you.

Some of you may think it is strange indeed that this basic spiritual truth has been so obscured throughout the ages. But there is a good reason for that, my friends. Humanity in its development is required to reach a certain basic spiritual understanding before it can use this knowledge in the right way. For, misunderstood, it could indeed be very harmful. If man's lower nature remains dominant, he might say: "I can kill and plunder and be selfish all I want. My wrong actions cannot harm anyone else." And of course, that is not true, not in the sense I mean. I realize, my friends, this seems like an utter contradiction. I say here, on one hand, the wrongdoings of another person cannot harm you. I say, on the other hand, that if you go ahead, following your lowest instincts, it is harmful. Both are true, my friends. But both can be untrue if you understand this in the wrong sense. It is extremely difficult for me to explain how these apparent paradoxes still hold true. However, I will at a future occasion make an attempt to make this clear if you still need clarification. But I believe any of you who go into this particular road on your path and experience the truth of my words personally will know that both are true and that these two statements are not contradictions at all.

There is just one thing I would like to add. First, it may appear that it has nothing to do with the apparent paradox, yet when you think more profoundly about it, you will clearly see that it has. I have often said, and many of you have experienced it, that your subconscious affects the subconscious of another person. This is so true and so apparent that all you have to do is open your eyes to have it constantly confirmed in your life. You know that the human personality consists of various levels, or expressed in a different way, of various subtle bodies. According to the level you give out, you affect that particular level of the other person. What comes out of your true being, your real self, will affect the real self of the other person. What comes out of any layer of your mask self will affect the similar or corresponding mask self or defense mechanism of the other person.

I will give you just one example at random that I am sure many of you have experienced. When you are shy and reticent, it creates in the other person a similar effect although he may express it in an entirely different manner. If you are not genuine or if you act out of a level of pride, the other person will respond automatically in kind. If you are spontaneous and genuine, you will find just such an immediate response in the other person. All you have to do is observe this. For that, you have to observe yourself, of course, in order to establish from what layer of your personality you have acted. Only then can you take the other person's behavior and mannerisms and compare. You will soon stop being deceived by appearances. Your shyness may be open; the other person's shyness may be covered under a mask of brashness. However, you will recognize the same level.

This is so important, my friends, and it has very much to do with the apparent paradox that you cannot be harmed by other people and yet it would be harmful to go ahead on that assumption and indulge in the lowest instincts.

Now, my friends, if there are any questions, I shall be glad to answer them.

QUESTION: A few times you mentioned guilt and shame. Couldn't one be ashamed of something without having guilt feelings?

ANSWER: Yes, of course. This is always a question of terminology. There is a healthy kind of shame that is constructive and strengthening. You can also call it repentance. If you recognize that you have unwillingly hurt others by one of your wrong tendencies and you feel truly sorry about it and this gives you incentive to change, it is good. If shame does not weaken you, but if it strengthens you, it contains no guilt. If it is free of self-pity, of the flavor of "poor me, I could not help it, I should be helped, people are unfair to me," etc., then it is a healthy kind of repentance that has nothing whatever to do with guilt. So it is indeed possible that shame exists without guilt. And it is also possible the other way around, namely that a person has an acute guilt feeling and is not necessarily ashamed.

QUESTION: Many times you stated that our psyche is in some way an electromagnetic field. Is there, from your point of view, any similarity with the electromagnetic fields of modern physics? Or are they different in vibration rate?

ANSWER: The rate of vibration or frequency can be very different. It depends on what or who it is. The frequency rate of vibration varies between an animal and a plant, between two animals, between two human beings, let alone all other things. Everything that has energy -- and you know that even your material objects are full of energy -- has or is an electromagnetic, energy field. These fields vary also between one object and the other. It depends on the material of which it is constructed, and it even varies between two objects of the same material because many, many other factors also play a role. But the basic principle is the same, of course. It exists in everything, from what is apparently a dead object to what is obviously a live organism. But their emanation, their frequency, the rate of vibration, color, tone, scent, and all the other attributes or manifestations, many of which I could not even describe, for you have not yet discovered them, and therefore they are unnamed in the human language -- some you may never discover on this earth plane -- all these vary according to a great number of factors that influence this magnetic field. But in principle, it is certainly the same.

QUESTION: Could it also be applied in our tonal system within the range and over the range of our auditory perception?

ANSWER: Yes, absolutely, I can foresee a time on your earth plane -- some of you may still see the beginnings of it -- when you will have machines with which to measure a personality's frequency rate of vibration in tone, in color, and in certain other manifestations, also in energy emanation, if I may call it that.

QUESTION: Also in scent?

ANSWER: That may take longer. It would be much harder to establish technically. But it may come too, eventually. Such a machine will prove extremely helpful.

QUESTION: Could it also be used for therapy?

ANSWER: Physical as well as mental therapy. It could be used for all sorts of other things, not to speak of the importance of proving the existence of man beyond the physical. Since we have a question session next time, it would be very constructive if you present some questions dealing with our subject tonight.

I retire with my blessings for each and every one of you, my friends. The strength and the light I am allowed to bring from my world is flowing now to each one of you. May it help you wherever you are on your path, whatever your problems are. May you feel the love with which we come to you. Be blessed, be in God!

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