

Boehme For Beginners

Lecture One

On Centering Prayer

1. Two reference points that will allow you to get about 80 % of Boehme. (The only trick is to read what he's saying and to recognize its basis in these two reference points.)

A. Two different states of awareness: ordinary and spiritual awareness.

Ordinary awareness: monkey mind

What we think is us, but isn't.

Egoic mind

Thoughts come from everywhere and are centered by the egoic mind.

'What did she mean by that?'

"What is going on here?"

Worry about who I am in the midst of bombardment from out.

Getting lost in the melodrama of one's life. (Tolle)

Conditioning, random thoughts

We get the illusion of having a center because ego orients itself there

Spiritual awareness: something deeper in Self that knows God

What we generally don't recognize as us or we aren't in touch with, but

Which is our deeper self. Not illusory.

For most people it hits only as an occasional nostalgia—you get moved

beyond words beyond explanation and you sense there is

something more...nostalgia for the divine. These moments are

Little intimations of our true identity.

In our spiritual awareness, we experience divine indwelling; the kingdom

of God within us and outside of us.

B. Surrender to God; letting go.

This is the gateway, the bridge, between the two levels.

Two states of awareness

The supersensual and sensual worlds

The student said to the master. "How may I come to the super sensual life so that I can see God and hear him speak?"

The master said, 'If you could sweep up for a moment into that in which no creature dwells, you can hear what God speaks.'

Vocabulary we need: Sweep, up, and creature.

Super sensual (sensible): beyond sensual (relating to the senses)

1. *How can I come to the realm that is beyond what is revealed to me by my five senses?*

Example: We all know there is something beyond five senses. Someone who has quit a job or moved to a new city just because something told you. There is something to call to us that you cannot put into reason. Yet you know it is true. Direct, you-shall-do-this direction from the soul.

Two biblical characters that exemplify this:

Abraham—heard a voice that told him to pick up and leave.

Mary

Sensible—the world accessed by the senses

Sensual—in our present age, really in body and feeling through sexual

Sensible is more metaphysically correct.

2. *Is the super sensual world less or more vivid than the sensual world?*

Super sensual does not mean you are in this ghost-like, subjective space. It is a hyper-vivid world. Not like we are leaving sensual world; ss is more vivid. Example: being in love.

When we can make ss world flow out into the sensual world, the sensual world becomes all the more vivid. And this is the goal.

You have to get this straight so that you don't think you are leaving the "real" world for something less real. The super sensual is more real than the "real" world of objective sensation.

This is beyond dualism—me and God makes sense as a metaphor in the sensual world. But you need to go beyond that. "What does it mean to keep your hands off something."

Me and God language turns God into a creature and then you are back in duality.

The subtle and causal worlds and point vierge

Beyond our sensible world, we have two intermediary realms (before you dip off into infinite nothingness):

The Subtle—Mundus Imaginalis

The Causal—the world of first port

What essentially happen in all apophatic meditation is that it brings us into alignment with the causal. The realm (The Logos, the trinity) where there is an initial impetus to form, but no shape—so it is experienced as the nothing.

We go into the nothing (the causal), then flow back through the subtle to then—and this is the work of human being-- manifest the nothing in the sensible (in form). [We go up two levels to come back down and out—that's what holds the realms together.]

The 'Virgin Point' (Merton)

All that Boehme is talking about when he talks about “before there was nature or creature” is about allowing the core of our being to be at that level. All mystical traditions assert that there is something at the core of our being that can exist there perfectly well. Merton calls it the “virgin point.”

Learning inner surrendering to bridge the worlds

Something that is of the same nature as that causal spark of God within us. When we let go of all thoughts, when we let go, like speaks to like. Or, as the Sufi's say, “**light upon light**” in which “**light rises towards light and light comes down upon light.**”

This is how you have the experience of knowing more than you know when you come out of meditation. But you go up with your little egoic mind and grasp it; rather, in that inner state of alignment so that you become one with the divine as you move back into the realm of form.

God loves form! This is all a mirror of God, a sparkling, reflecting mirror of love. And what the human does who is in alignment with this inner being of God, A being centered in the innermost and , then to flow out through the subtle into the sensible as an agent of creativity and harmony.

There's a way--Thomas teaches this well—that you can let go, without repressing and denying, you can release them for what they are, which is essentially energy, without having to have your whole personal identity from them, because your identity (Self) is much deeper than that.

Centering prayer state is continuous Inner surrender to God, Ecstatic states, inner revelations, and softenings of the heart happen all the time—otherwise we would think God had abandoned us—but, for most people, if we stay within our egoic container, we can't handle them. We turn them into graspable things and identify with them. We make it part of our story instead of letting it take us where it wants to take us. Because we are using too weak a container.

If you can keep your being in this state of inner surrenderedness, then all the higher has the possibility of working with you and dance with you. We learn that art through meditation.

Meditation is a kind of bootcamp for the subtle, inner dynamics of letting go. The whole goal is to be able to apply it in life, to be able to cultivate this Presence.

Don't imagine you could do this all day, to attain ongoing consciousness of this...The attitude to cultivate that orients us towards that innermost "point virgin": The moment-to-moment remembrance, the moment-to-moment letting go. That's the attitude that orients us towards the point virgin; the trick, then, is to carry it out in daily life. The two are complementary practices.

Resigned will vs. ego will

What does true resignation mean? See quote 30 and 31.

Galassenheit---let-be-ness

Equanimity

detachment that is not passivity but which is an active engagement at a deeper level

resigned will, the calm will, the relaxed will, the subtle will

alert, present, but not tight in your boundaries

not a motion of rolling over and playing dead, but an active receptivity to something higher

not bracing and tightening, but yielding, softening, and opening (John Derieder)

Relaxed will vs. egoic will (Boehme is asking us to find this different place

Ordinary egoic mind and will—its always stirred up, monkey mind, fussing and fretting

Boehme is trying to get us to go to a different place, before nature and creature, to engage with life with Galassenheit (the relaxed will):

"When you move silently, then you are that which God was before nature and creature, out of which He created your nature and creature."

As you get better at relaxed will, you begin to discover you can play on inner levels in a different way. You can act energetically without saying things, just by a quality of caring attention.

Most people aren't willing to pay the price: to back off of gratification of immediate psychological responses.

There's a Distinction between what is happening at innermost level and what you do outwardly—inner needs to be relaxed (Boehme: resigned), in a place of deep equanimity

Deep equanimity comes, not from passivity but by taking yourself to that place "before nature and creature"

Level of creature—the level of all these little fights: Patterns don't like other patterns--- people acting in their patterns come into conflict

If you can keep putting your identity back in that place “before nature and creature,” you immediately get a sense of reconnection with the abundance that just is. It knocks the urgency of you to redress this wound, this injustice. Then, in that relaxed state, you have a better chance of cooperating with the divine harmony, which is always surprising, always out of left field. What you will miss is the timing. When you are braced, you will miss the timing. The third force, this new possibility, always comes in timing. If you are not relaxed, you will miss timing.

Braced is scared.

Practice inner relaxing. That's what centering prayer is all about. Let go of the external and recover the place “before nature and creature.”

Outward effects as a relaxed will

That is the inner. Now, on the outer: in this relaxed state of being, you now have the ability to choose what needs to be done. Relaxed state gives you more options because, along with it comes a wider range of perception. You see the picture more clearly. You lose that sense of urgency.

[This is all very similar to Marcel's notion of disponsibilite versus being encumbered and crisped.]

Your smaller self—you don't have to rush in on your white horse and fix things.

Instead, in your relaxed state, you can see how time is working in the situation. Sometimes action has to be taken. And it may cost you. But you see that more clearly when you are in a state of inner relaxedness. You also, then, find the courage to do what needs to be done.

Inner relaxed will has nothing to do with outer passivity.

Being present in your body

Being present in your body.

You have a strong denying force and a strong inner sense of abundance. —You need something that middle grounds them—that lies in your body. Body pulls you into the present.

When you can be present in your body, you won't repress stuff. Meditation also helps; it gets the superego to shut up. Being present enables you to watch both sides of the divide. Being present gives a safe ground so that you can let the stuff you are afraid of out—typically, it is your passion and exuberance. You learn how to put your feet on the ground and lean into your body. Those terrible things then come up inside you in a different way and they aren't so frightening or foreign-seeming.

Eckart Tolle: When you learn to sense the Aliveness of your body, that inner Aliveness connects you directly to the infinite. Connecting with this inner Aliveness helps to connect you with your Self before nature and creature.

Blockages to being before nature and creature

Quote from Boehme:

The student says, what holds me back from coming to this ground (before nature and creature) The master says, Your own willing, seeing, and hearing, and that you strive against that out of which you came. With your own will, you break yourself off from God's will. With your own seeing, you see only in your will. (What I want is what I see.) Your will stops your hearing with the self-interest of material things and leads you into a ground (the mud of your own desiring) and overshadows you with that which you will. (Have you ever wanted something so bad that you could see nothing else? You became obsessed?)

We often try to get out of being pinned with sinful behavior is to say we are doing this for humanity or the common good. That is a delusion.

30. "We have in Lucifer, and also in Adam, the first man, true examples of what the self does when it receives eternal light as its own property so that it is able to enter into its own dominion in reason. One also sees this in learned men; when they get the light of eternal nature as their own possession, nothing results but pride." (Fourth Treatise, 1)

31. "This resulted (getting light of reason in them) in both of them ([Lucifer and Adam] because they allowed the light of understanding to shine in the self in which they could mirror themselves and view themselves into being, through which the self went into the imagination." (Fourth treatise, 4)

External morality vs. operating within God's will

Resigned will

Detachability of will—with your own will, you break off from God's will

You can be doing something that is supposedly righteous, yet doing it as separated from God's will.

The righteousness of God, for us, is to do the moral things. But that is not what it meant in ancient Israel.

The righteousness of God is best envisioned as a forcefield, a sphere of energetic aliveness around the divine. For example, if God is love, love radiates out...that radiating out love creates a forcefield

To be in the righteousness of God is to work within that actual sensed forcefield, to be actually in communion with divine being as you work. No work, even if it is the most worthy of projects, if done apart from that forcefield, it is not being within God's will.

What is actually essential, your will must be actively in God's will.

Boehme: external morality gets you nowhere...because it is done in the absence of direct relationship with God and ego rushes in to fill the void. At the worst case, it is gross manipulation. Even at more subtle levels, it can do bad things. For instance, you “help” a person only by weakening them so that they need your help.

Knowing what is true and false

You can't tell, from the outside, whether something is in the righteousness of God or not. You have to sniff it from the inside. It is subtle. The church has so much “holiness clothing” that you lose track after a while. You can't tell, from the outside, whether something is in the righteousness of God or not.

We have to get beyond the egoic self.

Rene Doumount—Mount Analogue
From the Cosmic Poem: “Man received breath...
Sometimes a man...returns to his source...”

The light of consciousness

Metaphor: Two-way mirror

Human consciousness is a two-way mirror, a magnifying glass.

Freedom: We can point it in two directions. We can point it to the causal...and magnify The Lord

This is what Sufis call “polishing the mirror of the heart”

Resigned will.

We can also turn it inward. That is self-reflexive consciousness. That would be delighting in the changing shapes. That is, in spiritual terms, the dog chasing its tail.

IN this western tradition, we have set up a straw man –sinful self-will...what we want to do is demonizing the ego when it does bad, but delight in it when it does good....that is the schizophrenia of the Christian path.

It wants to enhance its own sense of liveliness.

What's higher in spiritual practice is also deeper.

Facing the infallibility and fallibility of teachers

Boehme was a choleric, an angry man.

There are two levels in life. Psychological level does not always invalidate the spiritual level.

Helen Luke: Wholeness is born out of accepting the conflict between the divine and the human in the individual psyche.

Pendulum swing: a time of spiritual growth can shut you up, both outwardly and inwardly, in blindness...you get blind-sighted by shadow issues.

Intimacy with the teacher

The teacher isn't perfect and this can cause a devastating wound.

You have to have forgiveness and realization of your own freedom from wanting and needing.

People get hooked into teachers: I need something. This person has got it. If I stay with this person, I'll get it to.

You have to own renouncing the goods you are trying to get from the teacher " Okay...I can be unenlightened, but I will be free."

You have to renounce the thing you are trying to get from the teacher. The act of renouncing, not in bitterness, but humility—you get the thing you were seeking.

In the smallest, in the littlest is where you find your freedom.

Lecture Two

1. The violent nature of our own will

Boehme: Our own will is, by its very nature, violent. It inherently feels cut off from every other will and in competition with other wills and is out-of-the-direct flow of the divine will and love.

2, Divine imagination vs. ordinary imagination (i.e., fantasy)

24. "No work outside of God's will can reach God's Kingdom. It is all only a useless carving in the great laboriousness of man."

25. "All that the self does outside of God's will occurs in fantasy."

See 31.

Divine imagination—real imagination—has to do not with creation, but with perception...trans-personal and objective. It is accessed through a pure heart, silent waiting, and willingness to let go.

Imagination as we think of it is called fantasy. When we go into self and will, our imagination creates fantasy.

Genuine art comes from divine imagination, not fantasy.

26. "All that occurs through the conclusions if the human self is only a mirror of the contending wheel of nature. What good builds up, evil breaks down; and what evil builds up, good breaks down. This is the great sorrow of useless laboriousness."

3. Unblocking our seeing the divine imagination

Much of modern art is done out of small imagination.

Something in you knows...if you are honest, you can tell the difference.

The problem is you won't be honest enough because it would wipe out too many cherished beliefs and fantasies.

Surrender is a start, but not enough. You also need observation (inner witness).

Freefall—in those moments when something rips the veils off who you think you are

--in those moment, you know (That's what happens in your dreams. The dream-giver knows who you are.

4. The candle, tallow-and-wick, and flame metaphor

We exist in process. We weave back and forth.

Image of the candle. What we call the candle is tallow and the wick. But the real being of the candle is the flame. Flame only exists when tallow and wick are sacrificed. What if your egoic existence is just the container that needs to be sacrificed to be.

The flame exists in a different dimension.

Perhaps you are like that. You exist at a different level. You come into being when tallow and wick are being sacrificed.

If we soften at the moments of frustration, we come into being.

The ego is necessary in order to be sacrificed.

The flame is the twin of the candle.

The flame is in the *munis imaginalis* (*mundus imaginalis*?)

The candle is in the sensible world.

5. Energy transmission

Pentacost: Human transformed energy (*baracca*—grace...energetic transmission) is what spread the gospel like fire. It is a transmission of energy lived at the level of the flame

What people are dying to know is a little slice of your being. That's why silent retreats are so powerful. How we find a way of talking that goes right from being. It starts with being flowing into words. Being fully in your being when you speak and seeing what happens next.

6. Practicing surrender in daily life (1:19)

General Framework: Surrendering and resignation into presence.

As you faithfully practice that core gesture of surrender which leads you into "true resignation" in your centering prayer, then practice it in daily life—start with small stuff, like when you are waiting in lines or when you are driving. Surrendering and resignation into presence. How to recoup yourself and yield into the present situation. Practice that motion in small stuff so that then you can practice in big stuff. Practice not becoming unglued. Then one day you will look back and realize you've gone through a big instance and you've not become unglued.

7. Actively being in the God's will

Being in the will of God not as a passive victimization, but as an active growth:
Here's a wonderful metaphor of this in Boehme:

27. "I, God, press through your branches into the sap and bear fruit on your boughs."

Where would God be without the tree?

If you can see the Divine as the life principle working within your finitude and that the will of God is like this thing that presses into the sap and allows you to grow and bear fruit, then you get a much more cooperative attitude with the way things are.

We all begin our spiritual path with a bit of regret—working out of your own will just doesn't work. But there is a sense in us that we wish it would work that way. So you need to move beyond the regret and realize that how it is is actually wonderful because such a greater fruit can be born. It is more fun to have this Divine sap flowing through these old branches than to try to pull yourself through another bare winter. As you just let go your sense that I need to fix this and use this skill and that skill—you begin to encounter sustenance itself. Morris Nichol's interpretation of Christ's three temptations. He talks about turning stone into bread as exactly that. The normal person would like to use his own power to feed himself. But Jesus' refusal to do just that, to say he will wait on the will of God rather than to try to pull himself up by his own bootstraps is a profound renunciation at one level. But as you are able to make this renunciation at one level, you are empowered at another level. Somewhere Boehme says, it doesn't kill you, but rather, you live according to its will.

If you resist the urge to try to get yourself out of jams, if you resist the urge to grasp after your own nourishment, and you just let go and let Divine energy flow through you, then something else begins to happen that would never have happened had you not resisted the urge to do it yourself.

8. Keeping the innermost and outermost lives together (metaphor of two eyes)

Exceeding Precious Gate of the Aurora

(Comes from Bourgeault's favorite work by Boehme—Forty Questions of the Soul)

Strong spiritual practice and vision about how the two realms breathe together.

How you breath out into this world of form. The work we do in tallow-and-wick land has a deeper and divine dimension.

What Boehme does in trying to explain esoteric things is to give you a multitude of metaphors to describe the same thing. For instance, two different metaphors for the act of Creation. Sometimes the metaphors don't all line up—he's not a systematic thinking, but a grab-this, grab-that sort of guy.

This is a spiritual practice designed to help keep life in the innermost and life in the outermost together. Image of the two eyes.—eye of the heart and eye of ordinary perception

Image of the heart with an eye in the middle

Sufi: eye of the heart ...eye with you see God which is the eye with which God sees you

15. Behold, thou beloved soul, if thou wilt attain the light of God and see with the eye of God, and wilt also enjoy the light of this world, and sustain thy body, and seek the wonders of God, then do as God himself doth it.

Remember the two-way mirror? This image could be seen as an extension of that image.

16. Thou hast in thy soul two eyes, which are set together back to back; the one looketh into eternity, the other looketh backward into nature and proceedeth forth always and seeketh in the desire, and maketh one glass [image] after another. Let it be so; it should be so, God will have it so.

Two eyes—

One eye looks into eternity (right eye)

Other one looks backward into nature, then proceeds forth. (left eye)

Proceeds forward—we make mirror images through which we then see life.

This is the eye which can be turned toward fantasy.

Another way of saying it is that we have all these filters through which we see.

Example: You are unhappy and you search around for some solution and

You come across a victim support group and you say, “Ah, I’m a victim.” That’s a filter through which you see the world. AA is a profound example of a filter.

And this filtering is not bad. Boehme says, “Let it be so; it should be so, God will have it so.” Its okay to earn your daily keep and put on the personas that make it possible. Self-reflexive consciousness is in this eye, the left eye.

Nevertheless:

17. But turn not the other eye [the left eye] back into the longing, but with the right eye always draw the left backwards to thee, and let not this eye with the will of the wonders go from thee*<i.e., from that eye which is turned into the Liberty. But draw to thee its wonders which it hath manifested and wrought. 4*

turn not the other eye [the left eye] back into the longing:

to get caught up in the individual content and desirousness...let it not get glued onto things. Let it not covet them.—this is Detachment. Don’t let it get seduced into longing for things of this world. let this outer eye play in the world, and do what it has to, but don’t let it get attached.

but with the right eye always draw the left backwards to thee

With this innermost eye, keep drawing this other eye back to the source.

9. The wonders and the liberty

Two more words we need in our Boehme vocabulary:

The Wonders

The Liberty

The Wonders:

Boehme sees the created world as wondrous; full of miracles and magic.

Example: Snowflake. How could the Divine fire hold a snowflake?

Keep this image, it will give you some sense of the delicacy of the interaction between the human and the divine and that finitude is not just some straightjacket we wear until we die, but is an instrument through which the Divine can touch in a way that infinitude cannot touch.

Infinitude has a hard time touching without swallowing what it touches. One of our profound functions in life is to reap and harvest of wonders for divinity which God can't touch directly.

The world is wondrous. And in our touch, God touches. And in our delight of touching it, God delights in touching it. Marvelous things are created in this interaction, not just here below, but in infinitude.

The Wonders are good. When you are doing your Boehme vocabulary, mark this as a good term.

The wonder has to do with all sorts of mysteries of creation. Suffering is a wonder, a dark wonder. It's not an oh happy day kind of wonder.

The problem with the wonders. You can get lost in the wonders. They can become a siren call. You get lost playing in the garden and forget the gardener.

We must love the wonders, but not succumb to them.

The Liberty: the absolute, Divine freedom. It parallels "the endless unity of God" that the eye of the heart can see.

The eye of the heart that gazes at eternity sees The Liberty.

The eye that gazes at the world sees The Wonders.

This is all good. Both eyes are good.

He doesn't just say to draw the right eye, the eye that sees the world, back to the eye of the heart. He says that this eye, so to speak, should be like a fishing line. It should have a fish on the end of the line. That is to say, when we draw the right eye, the eye that sees the world, back into the heart (the left eye), we should also be drawing the wonders with it: "But draw to thee its wonders which it hath manifested and wrought."

Extended quote:

17. But turn not the other eye [the left eye] back into the longing, but with the right eye always draw the left backwards to thee, and let not this eye with the will of the wonders go from thee*<i.e., from that eye which is turned into the Liberty. But draw to thee its wonders which it hath manifested and wrought. 4*

Also:

18. Let this eye seek food for the earthly body, but let it not enter into the food, that is, into the covetousness, but draw it close to the seeing eye and let it not go.

19. But let the hands labor and get food, and let the eye draw the wonders to it but not denser matter [i.e., covetousness, envy, pride, or anger]; else that which is drawn in will be darkness to thee.

(The Liberty and The Unity—these terms are synonyms in Boehme’s vocabulary.)

The goal is not to have two eyes fixed on eternity but, rather, to have the one eye fixed on eternity and to have this other eye playing in “the wonders,” but then drawing back “the wonders” that it finds there back to infinity.

[My note: And as Henry Corbin says, every soul finds unique wonders, wonders which the Divine can only experience through this one soul. This also reminds me of Abraham Heschel, who says awe and wonder are the beginning of religion. Heschel also embraces the uniqueness of every soul and would agree with Corbin’s understanding of the uniqueness of the soul in its ownmost unique relationship with the divine.]

There is a reciprocity between The Liberty and the magical diversity of the finite. They feed each other. That which is to be explored, found out, fulfilled in finitude, is food for infinitude. This is the core of the covenant. It is here that each of us finds our own dignity, but also our own accountability.

Our job is to go out into the wonders with our left eye and to play with all the joy of our being and bring that back to our right eye which, during the time of this finite life is the watchman, the century at the post of eternity.

Isn’t that a permissive vision?

There are some paths, and particularly the Sufi paths, that insist that you learn how to find that state of inner containment while in a state of outer motion and that if you find the secret of that, you find the state of true humanness.

10. The creature and identification link

That which subsequently becomes a creature is, in itself, neither good nor bad. You make something into a creature by identifying with it. You can take something as great as a divine gift or mode of service to the divine and, if you identify with it, you turn it into a creature. You

can usually tell if you've done that if you can't let it go, you have to keep monitoring it and seeing how its doing.

The problem with creating creatures is that you define your identity at that level. You will lose your ability to be light with it.

To label things as good or bad already sets us up for failure. Most people identify with good things.

Example:

Gurgieff came to America. A man wanted to get into the work and gave Gurgieff a very large check ...a lot of money. Gurgieff just put it in his pocket and said nothing about it. He wanted to see if the money was a gift or a loan. The man went nuts. "Where's the building to be put into my name?" "Where's the expression of gratitude?" He couldn't leave it alone. He wanted to know what was happening to the money. Could the person walk away from it as if he had just flipped a beggar a coin? That is what it would have meant to give the gift without being identified with it.

Identification is subtle stuff. Watching how you make creatures of things is a way of learning how to take back your inner freedom. Whenever you've established a creature relationship with something, you are a slave to it.

Example:

People who get their life-long dream and buy a yacht...known as a hole in the water into which you throw money. All of the sudden, you can't do anything else in life. You can't go out on weekends because you have to work on the boat. You aren't free. You're chained to it.

It is subtle stuff. The only way you can really spot this stuff is to have a huge sense of humor. If we're too earnest about it, we get depressed about it. But we can't beat ourselves up about identification because we all do it. And the culture says it's a good thing. You want to be identified with your school and your team and your job (team player). These are said to be good things in our culture.

We use and manipulate identification. Who, in their right mind, would pay 50 bucks for a t-shirt because it has someone's name on it. Who is this Tommy Hilfiger anyway?

The inner spiritual traditions all say identification is what keeps us chained. You have to break it. You have to see it before you can break it. So you have to get quicker at noticing it. If you can nip it in the bud, it is easier to let go.

11. Letting the outer eye feed the inner eye

18. Let this eye seek food for the earthly body, but let it not enter into the food, that is, into the covetousness, but draw it close to the seeing eye and let it not go.

Covetousness—this word, as Boehme is using it, is very close to identification.

Let it get its food, but don't get identified. Don't get too far away from your inner observer. But is this "seeing eye" (the awakened eye) the left eye or the right eye? Bourgeault says she thinks it needs to be an awake part in the right eye, a vigilance in everyday life (what the Naqshbandi Sufi describe as "watch your step").

There's not something that watches the inner. The inner is the point of watching that goes out. Don't try to watch the inner witness. Take it as a gift that allows you to be a good watcher. Take it as this grace that comes from this inner that allows you to watch the outer.

The bottom line: our earthly form provides a protective shell around us while we do our inner work. When the body perishes, the shape of what we actually are is revealed. What is in the dark, in hell, disappears. And what is in the light is revealed and made manifest in all its fullness. There is something more that happens after death. All is contained in essence here, and we are called to "die before you die". But something happens when we are released from the body.

12. Using body awareness to not draw in the passions (i.e., dense matter)

19. But let the hands labor and get food, and let the eye draw the wonders to it but not denser matter [i.e., covetousness, envy, pride, or anger]; else that which is drawn in will be darkness to thee.

Denser matter—dark, heavy emotions...the passions

Do what you have to do in life, but do it without emotional toxicity. (Don't feed the pain body. Tolle) Whenever we hang onto victimization. We play our tapes. We become automatic. This is feeding the pain body. Whenever we work in mechanicality, in identification, that is what happens.

If you draw it in or else it will be darkness TO thee. Notice he doesn't say "in thee."

Analogy: When you take a lot of drugs and alcohol, you blow your brain cells. Analogously, when you take this dark matter into yourself you blow your being cells, eschatologically.

Every time you give into mechanicality, there is less and less of you there, less being.

When you break off the will of God, you get on the slippery slope.

The will of God, as you live connected, it nurtures being. When you are in the will of God genuinely, flowing in it, your being is being bathed with life, truth, love, dignity, coherence. It is getting deep being nutrients, and it grows.

Learn that inner motion of releasing. Learn to recognize the sensation of tightening up on something and release it. Your head is never going to be quick enough to know when you are getting trapped. You need to catch it in the level of sensation, when you are inner tightening up on something, the bells will go off inside—“uh, oh, a little dishonesty here”—and you release your grip.

That is why it is so important to practice that loosening, so that

You are a lot quicker at the level of sensation. You know when you are tightening up. If you are inwardly tense, you know there is identification going on. If you relax your muscles, the identification will fall away. Your body will tell you, infallibly, when you are being dishonest.

Schizophrenic cat analogy: Bourgeault had a cat whose tail would start twitching when it got angry. But the cat would still be purring until, all of the sudden, the anger caught up with it. That’s a good image of how we get blind-sided by tensing.

A lot of the reason we can’t break identification is that we don’t notice it fast enough.

13. Dedicating toxic energies to the suffering of Christ

How do we know when we are caught in someone else’s toxicity?

If you get caught in someone’s toxicity, you can release it. It helps to be able to recognize the energy pattern that you put yourself in a place of willingness—am I willing to bear this? Rather than trying to release it as an act of personal cleansing, dedicate it to the suffering of Christ and allow it to flow through you. What you don’t want is to feel poisoned and then, out of fear, try to get away from the toxicity. A fear stance is not helpful, even when you are cleansing.

To become conscious quickly of what’s going on around you energetically, to change it or remove yourself from the situation if you can, but if you can’t, to let it flow into the greater suffering of Christ. Allow the pain to flow through, to willingly bear what needs to be born and to offer it into the sacrifice of Christ.

Example: A psychiatrist who was working long hours—12 hr. days—with clients. He took in enormous toxicity. Tried to relieve it by going to the gym, but that wasn’t enough. He learned to let it flow into the suffering of Christ and he felt great relief. What he realized, in the process, was the level of identification he had been experiencing.

14. External and internal considering

While you are moving in the world to become aware of the energetic field in which you move. It is crucially important to see, not with your guilt and old tapes, but actually how you are related with others,. and also, how the world moves in response to your being.

External considering: you are aware of the environment around you and how your presence interacts with it.

Internal considering: You are completely wrapped up in your own being. You are out-of-touch with your body in this state. (Marcel's "crispation.")

This is about mindfulness—it means knowing where you are in the universe vis a vie others and the web of interaction.

Example: Someone comes into a meditation group and is totally oblivious to others Around him. It's just him and God and it is as if nobody else is there.

When you don't see beyond your own orbit, when you don't even know where your feet are, how can you possibly know where anyone else's being is.

When you are in that state, you create constant energetic backaces and you don't even know it.

External considering is not thinking. It is much more instinctive. It can only happen if you are in your body and you have bodily awareness....containment.

Be aware of the energies around you.

Example. Bourgeault tells a story where there was a need to clear dishes from a room Quickly. She was bustling to do so, carrying a tray of cups quickly. But there was A woman who was unloading the cups who was intent on being mindful of every Movement she made and was unloading the cups painstakingly slow. A third Person, without any judgmental attitude in her movements, was able to bridge Between these two persons, taking the cups quickly from Cynthia's tray, shifting Her energy mid-air, and setting them down in pace with the person who was Practicing her mindfulness. This is a person who was aware of both her Own energetic body and that of others around her, and was able to skillfully Intertwine them harmoniously. Completely present in her body, she knew how to harmonize the different energies.

Your goal, in becoming aware of energies around you, is to serve the harmony in the environment. You never serve the environment with your head. You never serve it with your ideology. You serve it with your body, being present to what is needed and being able to give and take with what is present.

Not in judgment, not judging yourself, but being aware in a serving way of everything around you, the more you will move as a peacemaker.

Lecture 3

1 – Making majesty in the liberty in the wonders

20. *Let the devil roar at thee, making a noise before thy left eye; he cannot get in unless thou sufferest thine eye to receive in dense matter.*

Dense matter—the passions.

The devil can roar, but can't get in unless you open the door of the passions.

21. *Thus, when thy earthly body perishes, thou shalt see with thy right eye all the wonders in the left eye which thou hast wrought and found out here; and when the earthly life is gone, then thy left eye is free from the nature of wrath.*

The eschaton—end of time

Eschatological—things of the end times

“the wonders that thou hast wrought and found out here”—

That's our business in life; we make of wonders and we discover wonders.

Wonders aren't just good things. They're the depth and the intensity and colors of things.

A kind of “cross-eyed” reunion and transfusion going on here. The right eye has, all along the way in life, been fixed on the divine will and, in a sense, has not broken from the divine will to look at itself. It looks like it has missed the chance to pick up all the wonders. But no, the left eye has been roaming about the world, catching up the wonders, which it then feeds to the right eye all the wonders—all the good things that have happened in life... the stuff that you've made...the majesty that your life has become...what you have actualized. The left eye gives that to the right eye. At the end of earthly, the left eye is freed up from “the nature of wrath.” The left eye, then, is no longer vulnerable to the passions.

22. *And although it hath nature (for it is nature itself which awakens and retains the wonders), yet then it is with the wonders in the eternal liberty: seeing it hath taken in nothing of matter, therefore it is free.*

This is a complex phenomenon.

Nature, for Boehme, is the imprint of your createdness. The thing you are, the valence of your being, by virtue of being a finite thing; it has a created essence; a created quality of aliveness. It does NOT mean physical matter; our essential nature never means the physical matter itself. It is much lighter.

Tincture—the word Boehme uses to describe this quality of aliveness; the Kabbalah calls it the *tiferet*. It is the beingness of a creature that transcends matter.

Although this left eye has a quality of aliveness—it is nature, and this is what allows for any wonders to be at all—then, yet it is “with the wonders in the eternal liberty, seeing it hath taken nothing in of matter, therefore it is free.” That is to say, to the extent it hasn’t “blown its being cells” by depleting it in mechanicality and passions and darkness. It is free in the liberty and, miraculously, has brought back something of the imprint of those wonders back into the liberty.

23. And nature with its wonders is a fiery sharpness, and takes hold of the eternal liberty, and so makes Majesty in the liberty in the wonders; whence the right eye (which is as it were dead here in this life) becomes enlightened and rejoices with the left eye forever in the exceedingly joyful Majesty, and [the soul] sees God with both eyes eternally.

Majesty, for Boehme, means fullness. Something that has become majestic has filled out to its potential.

Analogy: The full moon and the crescent. The crescent has the essence of the moon, but the full moon has its majesty. Majesty comes about through the actualization of essence.

Bringing the wonders home—

It is as if God laid out an eternal blueprint in an archetype and, in life, you lived and worked in that archetype, articulated it, developed its quality and bring it back into the formlessness fleshed out. It not only makes you grow; it makes God grow.

That’s a sense the mystics have—the last thing B. Griffith said, before he died, “receive the growing Christ” ...his sense must have been that when his being was received into the eternal, the body of Christ grew.

When a human soul has done well here, has actualize its essential nature—which has nothing to do with fulfilling your career. It has to do with being in touch with what your nature is...this little seed of essence of you, growing it through faithful tending in life, keeping it pure by not contaminating it with the passions and mechanicality, and then bringing it back and giving it back to God. It’s a gift of your being into God which becomes an enlivenment and enlargement of the Divine fullness. [My comment: Read this as an interpretation of the Parable of the Talents!]

Does it imply godliness, since it is capitalized? Sparrow's edition does tend to capitalize it. It does so because this is an important term. We are clothed in Majesty. It is the wedding garment one has at the nuptial banquet.

...whence the right eye (which is as it were dead here in this life) becomes enlightened and rejoices with the left eye forever in the exceedingly joyful Majesty, and [the soul] sees God with both eyes eternally.

They work together to bring everything back into unity. The end of cosmic stigmatism!

24. This is the gate. He that sees and knows this rightly in the spirit sees all that God is and can do.

It is a huge vision. One of the reasons it is hard to figure it out is that you can hardly believe the words on the page are saying what they are saying. It is so incredibly bolder than you can believe. Audience member's comment: "It is almost like it is too good for us.

So, for me what this means,...it's a beautiful image of a way for us to work together...we are always working in this tension between diversity and unity, form and formlessness...its exactly where God put us. There is an incredibly profound alchemical work that needs to be done here. There's something that needs to be fused here in bodily life, and Boehme calls it the Wonders. That's what we are here for.

He reminds us the way we really do this work of finding out and discovering the wonders is to live in this world with that left eye, wisely and well, doing what needs to be done, manifesting as needs to be manifest, but not getting identified, not getting hooked, not taking in the toxicity. As you do that, you will be building being, working in the wonders, discovering your own identity (Self) and making manifest what God is in that identity on this earth. Meanwhile, that eye [and ear!] of the heart (the right eye) keeps **focused in** God all the time...not On God, but IN God. The model breaks down if you think of it as looking AT God, because that sounds like you are breaking down your attentional field. [It is more about dwelling, I think. You dwell with God in the right eye/ear while you dwell on earth with the left eye/ear.]

You can really weaken that right eye's ability to dwell in God if you've got so much static and toxicity going on at the outward level of that other eye. I don't think you ever lose it.

Keep the right eye fixed where it wants to go and work here with the left eye, then you can say, when the earthly body is shed, there is a kind of "reunion of being" that happens. It can be foretasted here. But Boehme makes it clear that there is a qualitative change of state when you shed the earthly body.

2. Qualities that contain your being

The way one develops and stays in touch with that fixedness in God—the way one stays in touch with the eye of the heart, the right eye—of the prayer of letting go, of the prayer of releasing, relaxing. That maintains that connectedness with the divine. Whatever your current life situation is, it is never as big as the divine reality.

(You know, we take our spiritual path just so far. Then it comes to a collision path with “real” life and we drop the spiritual path to “deal” with the problems. And then, once the dust has settled from dealing with life’s problems, we pick up the path again.)

Being comes to us from an unstinting source. It is larger than any life situation. There is no situation that has the right or power to push you out of being. Your situation do not create or diminish your being, though some situations make it easier to stay centered in your being than other situations.

Keep yourself connected with being. Then you will be able to do your best in the situation without feeling so frantic when life situations seem to divert you from your spiritual path.

I, myself, make the same mistake all the time. I believe that my situation will either enhance me or diminish me. I think I have to get the right situation, because I think certain situations will let me stay centered in my being and other situations won’t. This SOUNDS logical, but it is completely false and backwards, spiritually. To think a situation could either make or break your being is a cowardly estimation of the power of being.

If we can go far enough back to the Source of being, then the situations which life can demean us in are seen as situations, pure and simple. Then you can separate your being from situations then you have freedom to move in integrity wherever you are.

Audience question: If situations don’t contribute to or diminish your being, what does?

Answer: God. Surrender, awareness, willingness, tenderness—all of those things, which can be found in any situation. These are the things you can do that put you in touch with God in any situation, and which then can allow for the sustaining and enriching of being in any situation.

It’s hard because one of the false beliefs hoisted on us by our culture is the idea that situations can make or break us. If we are in toxic or abusive or victimizing situations, we have to get out of them. The effects of this are that, for instance, people walk out of marriages (“Honey, I’m sorry. But you are toxic to me and I’ve got to get away from you or you’ll destroy me.”).

What this results in is a kind of spiritual adolescence or narcissism, because it leads to a situation where you feel you have to have the right kinds of situations—Gim me, gim me, gim me. You try to shape life to try to get it to give you your being. But it won’t do it. Life situations can’t give you your being. If people go on thinking this way—thinking that they have to have safe situations so that they can express themselves--what you get are angry, manipulative, abusive victims.

Life must call forth from you a way of making a connection with the higher qualities of gentleness, grace, compassion, forgiveness, . . . It's the **qualities** that contain your being.

Of course there are times when you have to leave certain situations. But a situation cannot destroy you.

3. Transformation of darkness, where light (i.e., creation) begins

This is the core piece of Boehme's cosmology.

The basic constituents first. Later on, what does this have to do with me?

The key point is: the same process that set creation in motion is also at work in me. This is in keeping with the alchemical principle of correspondences—"as above, so below"

What came to Boehme as a tremendous, overpowering swoop of revelation—a 15 minute download of divine revelation—then took him 12 years to put down into words. A lot of what happened in that time, in some ways, represents a loss of the original vision. This happens to all of us. You have a great revelation. But then you try to bring it down into concrete reality and you lose a lot of the intensity. Inconsistencies come in. [This happens, for instance, when we try to put dreams into words. The vision was powerful; the words, less so. And so much of the dream vision just can't be reduced to words.]

I believe what I am about to lay out for you is the core revelation that Boehme received. And it simply doesn't correlate with theological constructs we hold in common. It is his unique vision. I think a lot of the confusions in trying to make sense of Boehme is a product of him, himself, trying to make something he was given fit within conventions that can't hold it. Analogy: the sisters in the fairy tale of Cinderella, trying to fit their feet into the magical shoe that was made, not for them, but for another.

So, this piece is the primordial one.

As I've said before, Boehme is the only person I've ever read that satisfactorily explains why there's evil in the world, darkness in the world, as a part of the being of divinity without getting into the Gnostic dualism of the bad god and the good god.

I think that the same reason why Boehme saw there is this dark force, this wrath within God, is the same reason we can see there is this wrath within me. Why is there this dark turmoil with me? More importantly, how do I work with it. Because Boehme's whole theory of what happens that brings creation into existence and sustains it begins in the darkness and transforms the darkness into light.

The darkness, then, is not the mistake.

Example of failure to accept this principle: A father, who was a psychologist, believed children develop false selves because a lack of parental nurturance. So, he decided he would raise his children with such love that they wouldn't develop false selves. I asked him how it was going

and he said it was fine until his daughter turned 13 and decided to shave her head. “Daddy I want to look the way I want to look, not the way you think I should look.” At which point, he threw up his hands and said, “There must be something in us.” Augustine says, “Yeah...its called original sin...bad, bad, bad.” But what Boehme suggests is that this is the fuel of transformation. To use the analogy we suggested the other day, this is the tallow and wick by means of which and through which the light of our being is set ablaze.

So, the real essence is not to get rid of the tallow and wick but, rather, how we transform it. That is good news!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

So, here is the background. Having this sense of how what we are going to describe next relates to you and your life will help you understand how all this abstruse stuff is relevant for your life.

4. Asking why and how God split into form

Bourgeault references a diagram she will be trying to explain. Diagram not available.

You don't have to know alchemy to understand Boehme

Mystic is not just someone who wants to know God but one who wants to travel up the ray of the created world back to the source, back to the question What was and is there before creation? What is this being and willing before your own being and willing began?

Because of this instinct, Boehme asks, What made God create in the first place? And how does the endless unity bring itself into somethingness?

Boehme thinks you can ask and, to some extent, answer this question.

Boehme's cosmology is erected around the answer of the question of how the endless unity bring itself into form and diversity? IN the how, you discover the why.

5. Introduction to Boehme's cosmology

The whole process is divided into three principles and seven properties.

Three Principles:

The Dark: hence God the father is called a jealous and angry God and a consuming fire

The Light: hence God the Son, the word, the heart of God is called a loving and merciful God

The World (including imaginal and possibly the causal world): the world of the four elements which is produced out of the two inward worlds (the light and the dark) and is a glass of them

wherein light and darkness, good and evil, are mixed and it is not eternal, but hath a beginning and end.

(Glass- for Boehme, an image, a reflection, a mirror image.)

While this sounds like classical dualism, we will see that it is not dualism because of what happens between these two worlds of light and dark.

Within these two worlds are the seven properties, also known as the seven forms or the seven fountain spirits. (Two problems: first, Boehme wasn't consistent in terminology; second, different translators translate terms differentially.)

Seven Properties—Seven Stage Process

These describe, not things, but a process by which nothingness come into somethingness. It is a sequential process. (Gurgieff students will recognize a similarity between them and G's seven laws.)

First Principle: Desiring.

Bernouilli's Principle—what makes water flow? When you constrict, you get flow (siphoning is an example).

How the divine equilibrium begins to move. IN order to begin, you have to start with a constriction.

6. The first principle and first three properties: desire, stinging, anguish

First principle: the divine will compresses itself so that it forms into desiring. Now, instead of infinite equilibrium spread throughout the expanse of the divine, you have unequal pressure. The more intense pressure is now called the first property—desiring. But there is not yet something to be desired. This endless, insatiable desiring creates irritation and anguish because there is nothing for the desiring to grab hold of.

Example

Bathtub drain—the drain hole is the first principle, as it sucks and desires the water, a whirlpool is created. This pulling is the second principle: the stinging.

Second Principle: The Stinging.

It isn't attraction and repulsion. Rather, it is desiring and an aggravation of the desiring, because the desire can't be fulfilled (because the object of desiring is not there).

Example from the human realm:

Woman became widow suddenly. (Husband died within three months of pancreatic cancer diagnosis.) She was managing her grief well. The hardest time was around 5PM, which was the time of day they would have sat down and had a cocktail and talked about the day. Recognizing this would be a hard time of day for her, she scheduled to be on the racketball court at that

time of day. Except, one February, she was stranded in the house—roads impassable, no electricity. There she was, alone. She began the welcoming prayer. She watched the process. First, there was the yearning for her husband to come back. Then she experienced the Stinging because her husband could not come back.

The Third Property: The Anguish.

This is the outcome of the desiring and the stinging—the experience of anguish or turmoil. This is caused by the war between the desire and the impossibility of fulfillment.

(The movements between each of these principles is subtle. If you don't look closely, you'll just think it is one thing. But they are three distinct components.)

These first three principles pretty much constitute The Dark World. It is a world of incredible pain. In Clavis's Users Guide to Boehme, he talks about a property of God called the Scientia, the science. He suggests that God knows what God wants (the desiring is not directionless) but he can't have it because it doesn't yet exist.

The object of desiring isn't always known

Example from human experience: An anguish created by a sense that you know what you have is not what you need, but you don't know what it is that you need. You just have a sense of not having what your desire is wanting. Existential angst.

7. Anguish and feeling one's aliveness: creating sensibility

This third principle is probably the most difficult to follow.

What the outcome is at this stage, is perceptivity (perception).

In other words, when you are in anguish, you can feel your aliveness. That's why people stay in their victimization. In victimization, at least they sense they are alive. We know we are alive when we are suffering.

But we can also sense our aliveness through spiritual work. But it is a subtler sense. People are often caught in this place of liminality, of transition. They are used to experiencing their aliveness through the suffering of their psychological self. They know that is not all there is, but they don't know how to recognize this more subtle sense of I am-ness. They want to be led to understand it, so they begin to dip into spiritual practices because they are a stabilizing influence. But whenever things blow up in the world, they go right back to the pain and suffering because that's their comfort zone for experiencing their own aliveness. There's a real reluctance to let go of the anguish, because they think they then won't be able to sense their own aliveness. We're terrified of what seems to us to be psychologically brain-dead when there are no feelings bubbling through.

What Boehme did that was his single-most stroke of genius: It was and is so, even for God.

As God moved from infinite equilibrium of unity into form and diversity, the intermediary step is to feel aliveness. What God initially wanted, with all this desiring and sucking-anguish, was precisely this—to feel God's own aliveness.

This isn't an entirely unknown concept. It is all over the Sufi tradition: "I was a hidden treasure, and I longed to be known." You are the mirror in which God sees God's self. There is a reflective sense that is essential. There is a sense of what God aches for is to feel God's own aliveness. Feeling your own aliveness requires form and diversity and it is easier in anguish.

This is summarized in the following Cosmological teaching:

32. The Cosmological Teaching, in a nutshell: "Pain must be a ground and cause of motion." "If there were no sharpness and no motion, there would be no sensibility." (Clavis, #74) "And so the eternal delight became perceivable, and the perceiving of the Unity is called love." (Clavis, #95)

What really gets created through this compression is the capacity for sensibility, the circumstance which will bring into possibility that God can mirror and reflect God's own aliveness. God can know God.

This, then is the Dark World. The cosmological insight is that you've got to go through the desiring and the anguishing, the turmoil the muck the darkness in order for sensibility to become a reality. This property of sensibility, then, is the property through which the final transformation and mirroring will become possible.

8. The fourth property: spark

The fourth step happens in an instant. It divides—or unites, depending on how you want to look at it-- the dark from the light world.

Boehme has two metaphor sets to understand this step. But the easier of the two is the metaphor of friction (the fourth property—spark).

The turmoil of the anguish prompted by the unfulfilled and unfulfillable desire eventually creates a spark.

There are two aspects to the spark: fire (heat) and light (fruit of the spark). Flame always has these two properties. You don't get the light (the illumination) without the fire, which is a product of the darkness and the burning and the friction.

There's a spark and a turmoil and heat—and suddenly there is light.

Light becomes what was desired—the mirroring, the birth of the true reflection. Now, with the light, God can see what God looks like.

But this seeing takes place in a different space than the unity. The seeing takes place in the dimension of perceptivity. Out of the unity, there was compression and the awakening of desire which prompted turmoil and anguish, out of which there then came a spark which produced light. Light becomes the mirror that can be held up in which God sees God's self.

“And so the eternal delight becomes perceivable and the perceiving of the unity is called love.”

What Boehme is saying is that this most intimate quality of God (Love) is not a quality that cannot exist in any realm of unity. It is a quality that is born of perceptivity, out of the perceiving of the unity.

9. The fifth property: love

Love begins to become valid at the stage where the original unity is mirrored and captured in diversity, multiplicity, sensibility.

The fifth property then is love. This is the core building block out of which the rest of the world—visible, energetic, psychic—comes into manifestation. Boehme calls it “the holy element.”

Love is what God is in the dimension of knowing through what Boehme calls “separability” (knowing in the bits).

Analogy: stained glass window [She says stained glass window, but what I think she means is a prism.]

Light, as we interact with it, is invisible. But when it hits an object and resistance, it breaks and shows forth what it is in its multiplicity—the spectrum of the rainbow. The rainbow can be seen as light knowing itself in separability and multiplicity. It's what light looks like when you break it down into its parts.

In similar fashion, love is what God looks like when you break God down into God's parts. It's the parts, then, that create the world.

Love has the possibility of going out into the world.

Go back to the light analogy—From the invisible (from white) it splits and shatters into an infinite variety of color. This is the physical substance of the created.

Suppose, then, someone were to take those little bits of color and put them back together again in the form of a stained glass window. This would be human art. Suppose then, we put

that stained glass window in a wall and the invisible light of the divine were to shine through it. Then you would have a perfect picture of how the created and the uncreated worlds work together.

Love is that which is the ground and sustenance of the divisible, the created, the world in all its diversity. It is directly equivalent to light revealed as colors. It is the same light, but now in the dimension of separability.

10. The sixth property: sound; the seventh property: the divine hologram

The sixth property is sound, the logos.
Sound means the creative stirring, energetic vibration.
What he's describing here is the Logos.

Seven is something almost impossible to see.
He calls it the substance. It is the blending of all the other six properties.
It is the divine hologram—the whole is in the part. You could call this the dna for the replication of the unity in the realm of form and diversity happens.

If you paired Boehme down to the simplest form, this principle is Sophia (Wisdom). It is the ground that contains the hologram of what happened before and then allows it to flow out at any level of manifestation.

Wisdom—the creative ground that was with God in the beginning and is the matrix in the world came to be and also the creative principle by which it happened.

Sophia—The Wisdom Literature got written in Greek. Sophia is the Greek word for wisdom. This fundamental ground and creative principle that is within this divine inwardness (within principles one and two—the recapitulation of all that happened there). But when turned outward to the world in the third principle, it becomes the ground and creative principle for what happens there.

Sophia is not a goddess (as some feminist theologians try to make it.)
In sound (principle 6), you have the archetype of the male principle.
In substance (principle 7), you have the archetype of the female principle.
These will later become the two cosmological principles. But it would be inappropriate to say, at this stage of Boehme's thought, that they have become that.

This becomes the template—the two principles and the seven properties—with which anything that is created is created. It exists deep within the inwardness of God, but can then flow out at any level. This didn't happen way back when. It is ongoing in every moment at the causal level.

It is happening inside us, in the world, in the smallest and in the greatest.

11. Love in the physical dimension

We are now ready for the external world, which is a mirror of this internal principle, but now, in the form of solidity, of form and matter. It's as if God said, "Hey, I wonder what love would look like if, instead of using the medium of watercolor, we used the medium of clay."

At its deepest level, the created order is what love looks like in physical form. That's what the world should be—a perfect hologram of what love looks like when you use this medium called matter.

In the analogy above, a watercolor picture is what love might look like at the imaginal level. Light, airy.

Each of these so-called worlds bears the hologram of God. It is simply a different manifestation of that same indivisible love that is God.

12. Good and evil and God's sacrifice

Regarding the split between good and evil:

One commentator/editor to one of Boehme's volumes said this:

You might consider the first three, the dark world, is the underbelly. It was never intended to be revealed in the created universe.

Analogy:

Grossmore national park in Newfoundland:

A strange and mysterious layer of the earth that was never intended to come to the surface—it was intended to be internal—somehow got coughed up by a fissure, onto the surface. It is this strange, orange sulfurish bed of rocks that nothing will grow on. It was never intended to come up to the surface. It forms a necessary layer of the sedimentary layers that makes life on the outer world possible. But it was never intended to come into manifestation. It peaked up and got revealed because of an earthquake that went so deep that it got coughed up to the surface.

That is something of a metaphor for how this first-principle got dominion on the earth. You can nail it to the sin of Adam and Lucifer—that they took the light and turned it on themselves—but one commentator on Boehme suggests that if all had gone as intended-- that whatever we got ahold of and harnessed to use for our own power and satisfaction and feeling our own being—if that hadn't happened, the world would work exactly as it ought to. We would go through those first three stages but the world would finally be mirroring love. The darkness and the cruelty, the anguish, the conflicts...were not intended to happen...maybe they were inevitable...but not intended.

This, of course, is conjecture. It is one interpreter's idea of what happened. Another opinion is that is exactly how it ought to be, that it is the only way things could be.

Virtually all the cosmology, and Boehme is part of this, says that yes, there was a fall, that paradise was lost. Boehme joins with many other of the vision of what is called "the land that belongs to the saints," a world in which physicality is not an impediment, a veil, but is a window...the way love works in the dimension of form.

As we now experience it, we live in an outer world that is unbalanced. The dark principle has too much force, too much empowerment, more than was intended. We spend too much time mucking about in that darkness without recapitulating the transformation. The world spends too much time mucking about in it. It only gets to the light force and to the world of harmony in little bits and fits and supports. A tremendous tragedy. The physical world is supposed to be able to bear the light of divine becoming.

Question: But aren't you just saying the initial desiring was wrong? That the flaw was in God?

Response: There's nothing wrong with the desiring. It is necessary. What is "wrong" is the inability to make the transition, right there at the turn, from dark to light...to get stuck in the dark...if we do things in a proper sequence, the dark is always there, but it gets transformed into light...that's the business of our life individually. But we get stuck—as soon as that light comes—at that fore junction, where you have fire and light and you can go either way—instead of turning the light and becoming mirrors of love, we turn it back and we say "Let's look at all this darkness. Let's enjoy it. Let's play with it." That's what is meant the thing about Adam and Lucifer getting the light in them and wanting to look at their own being. That's where we get stuck. And the process doesn't move on. And that's where the world gets stuck as well.

Question: Did God also, initially, have a shadow?

Response: That is a very interesting question. I think you have to start we all know the terminology. Desire is not bad. It is absolutely necessary. So, all the eastern orthodox tradition have said the initial thing that makes creation possible at all is a sacrifice within God. I like to look at desire that way. What a wonderful sacrifice to take the divine equilibrium and to pull it back into what is going to become the anguish of desiring in order that there might be, out of this, the created world and created being. That is the sacrifice of God. And when we share in the suffering of Christ, it is a little bit of that—sometimes we have to go into these things because they are the terms through which transformation happens. So, I think that using terminology like saying God has a shadow-side is a bit prejudicial, a bit of anthropomorphism of God. It is slightly unbalanced.

These are analogies by which we are trying to understand mysteries. They aren't mathematical formulas. Linearity is the only way we can talk about it. But, for instance, how do you talk about process when there is no such thing as time (in the realm of infinity.) You kind of have to think about it like the big bang theory. There's a process going on, but it is so fast that it

seems like it is simultaneous. That's the other thing that the seventh process says—read simultaneous. This is the process that is happening all the time in the now and is always, in any bit, recapitulating the whole.

The key to that one is in the way we looked at matter the other day. Boehme says, "Don't take into yourself matter." Matter doesn't mean physical being. It means passions. When Adam fell into physical, it doesn't mean he fell into the body. It means he fell into covetousness and lusting and couldn't get out of it.

We're going to unpack, this evening, what does this mean for us? Are we fallen? Are we imbalanced. It wasn't so much God wanted to see Godself in love; rather, it is that God wanted to BE Godself in love. There's a much more dynamic aspect to it that the reflection is also a way of being. These images we have of God wanting to see himself sounds like God as Narcissus, wanting to see his own image in the pool. God, the ultimate egomaniac. But it isn't that. It is much more dynamic. You flow through the dimensions and you experience and see it by doing it. I think we have to reclaim some of the language by which we understand this stuff.

Lecture Four

1. As above so below: The great opportunity of our life

The core hermetic principle: as above so below.

According to this principle, this 7-step model is directly applicable to our lives.

Cosmic process and my own spiritual path mirror one another.

Bourgeault reads from a draft of her essay titled “Boehme for Beginners”:

The significance of boehme’s work lies in the perfect melding of the macro and the micro, the cosmic process and my own spiritual path. IN both, the journey passes through the same narrow spot, the transformation of anguish. Boehme’s deep humanity and spiritual genius lies in his understanding that will, desire, pain, anguish are all the raw materials through which something more wondrous is fashioned. Love is itself the triumphant issue of a process whose eternal, hidden building blocks are desire and anguish.

Just as God has to go through constriction, experience anguish, and somehow break through that to transformation that yields light, that’s also what we have to do as well. Our own spiritual and psychological journey is most graciously accessed through that insight rather than to assume some form of original sin that needs to be made right.

Boehme has a much more beautiful conception—all this woundedness, conditioning, yearning, infirmity is all the raw material that must be used for transformation.

2. Defining psyche and soul

Boehme places the human soul in the first principle, in the wrath. By soul, he means psyche.

We certainly can see this when we think of the false self, the self that is always in turmoil. But this is just the outer edge.

The soul is born in desire and anguish and the program is transformation.

You have a light within you (second principle): the point vierge (Merton)

“At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin or aversion, a point of truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God which is never at our disposal from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our mind or the brutalities of our will. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God within us. It is, so to speak, his name written in us as our poverty, our indigence, our dependence, as our sonship. It is like a pure diamond blazing with the light of heaven. It is in everybody. And if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face of the blazing sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of

life vanish completely. “ Merton, “A Member of the Human Race,” Conjectures of Guilty Bystander (also republished in A Thomas Merton Reader)

Sufis call the p. Vierge the Sier—inmost secret of the heart. All the great mystics believe there is that at the center of human being that belongs to God. We have restricted access to it. The rule is—it can only flow from the center out...you can't go in with your ego and grab it. If you bring yourself into alignment with it, though, it can then dance through and become your being.

The heart will be the thing that mediates the soul and the point vierge.

We are organisms that are hard-wired for transformation. An untransformed soul is like a seed that has failed to germinate. The goal has something to do with how these two fit together.

The psyche is the raw material, the fuel that has been given to then be transformed.

This is one reason why you find in many branches of inner teaching—you don't come into life with soul ...you only create soul in life...but there is a play on words here. You do come into life with psyche, but your essential being is revealed by how you play out the hand you are given in life. Your birth, your genetic make-up, your inabilities, your foibles—all these things that constrict you. Your agenda is to make something of this raw material, to transform it into something of light, to make Soul with a capital S.

3. The hermetic vs. traditional Christian understanding of the soul

soul with small s—psychic self

Soul with capital S—essential self; what Jung calls the Self

What Christians tend to call the soul, Sufis call the nafs—the lower passionate soul. It contains your human created nature, your dna, your history (fate)...the thing that flashes in front of your face when you die.

The false self is the outer edge of the nafs. Even if you are relatively free of false self, but you remain the center of your life, you remain cut off, discrete.

The key to the thing:

Transcendence of false self is only the first step.

Then, essence must be transcended. Psyche, nafs, all this must give way to the higher Self, the true Soul.

There are inconsistencies throughout inner traditions, but the essential hermetic perspective out of which Boehme works is this:

False self, essence—all belong to the soul with a small s and it belongs in this first principle.

That doesn't mean it is useless; it is a necessary stage.

Spirit is in connection with and belongs more to the Divine Spirit. It dwells with you and interpenetrates you at that point vierge. Heart will hold them together.

Soul is a problematic concept. Gurgieff would not allow people to talk about soul because it means so many different things to different people. He talked about essence and personality (false self) and real I (essential Self).

We are not using traditional Christian categories here. Boehme is talking out of a Hermetic tradition. He is more consistent with the broader mystical traditions, the universal inner teachings. Boehme overlaps with Jungian and Sufi traditions more than with Christian traditions.

4. Standing firm in the now

This is a key to spiritual practice:

11. "Here, now, is the right place for you to wrestle before the Divine face. If you remain firm, if you do not bend, you will see and perceive great wonders. You will discover how Christ will storm the hell in you and will break your beasts."

Boehme is basically describing something similar to the Welcoming practice (Mrozowski)

Summary of the Welcoming Practice:

The welcoming practice is a method that can be used in conjunction with centering prayer at times when we are being overwhelmed by an emotion during our prayer and can't get centered or at any time in our daily lives when we are troubled by our feelings. When we find that it is difficult if not impossible to let go of an emotion or state of being, we can instead move deeper into that state. This is a way of accepting what is rather than trying to run away from it.

These are the steps of the practice:

- 1) **Focusing** – Notice the sensation in your body of the emotion or state of being. Where is it? What does it feel like? Is it moving around? Are you tensing parts of your body or breathing differently than usual? Is it a familiar sensation? Try to be fully present to this sensation rather than pushing it away. You don't need to analyze or explain the sensation, just notice it.
- 2) **Welcoming** – Welcome the feeling by giving it a name and saying for example, "Welcome anger," "Welcome frustration," "Welcome anxiety." Accept that it is there and that you can just be the way you are without trying to change.
- 3) **Move back and forth between these two steps** for as long as you need to until the feeling begins to dissipate naturally. Don't try to make it go away; just notice and welcome until the overwhelming quality of the feeling begins to subside.
- 4) **Letting Go** – Then when you are ready, gently let go of the feeling, saying, "I let go of my anger." You are not letting go of it forever, you will certainly feel angry again sometime. As Cynthia Bourgeault puts it, "This is not a final, forever renunciation of your anger or fear; it's simply a way of gently waving farewell as the emotion starts to recede."

Welcoming Practice is the practice that actively lets go of thoughts and feelings that support the false-self system. It embraces painful emotions experienced in the body rather than avoiding them or trying to suppress them. It does not embrace the suffering as such but the presence of the Holy Spirit in the particular pain, whether physical, emotional, or mental. Thus, it is the full acceptance of the content of the present moment. In giving the experience over to the Holy Spirit, the false-self system is gradually undermined and the true self liberated.

Thomas Keating]

What Boehme means by “If you remain firm, if you do not bend” is surrender. Imagine our lives as a cross.

The horizontal axis: the events that happen to us in linear time and our emotional reaction to these events. That’s the axis most of us live on most of the time.

The vertical axis: The “sweeping up” axis (see first lecture)---the axis of our understanding of the Divine

In every moment, these two axes cross one another.

Where they cross is in the NOW. If you are alert in the Now, you can be in the place where time and the timeless intersect, and there is the only place your essential Self can manifest while you are still in bodily form.

When you are going along your horizontal axis and you hit something disturbing.

The normal thing that happens next is that you become upset, enraged, unglued...you “lose it.” THAT is what Boehme labels as not holding firm (because you are taking the path of least resistance). And what feels to you like defending your dignity is actually wishy-washy. You are simply being taken by the law of gravity. There is no standing. Analogy: a sailboat when a hard wind comes up and you just let go of the sails and go downwind.

It’s an absence of pressure. It feels effortless. But you are no longer going toward your goal.

To stand firm, in Boehme’s terms, means a refusal to collapse the two axes. You don’t melt down into psychological reactions. You stay present in and to the NOW. He regards this as wrestling before the divine face because it isn’t easy. Easier just to go with your reaction. If you are asleep or tired, you will probably just let go and go downstream into reaction.

For Boehme, the way to stand firm is by means of attentive surrender. Eckart Tolle: only the surrendered person has real spiritual power.

What, then, does wrestling remind us of? The friction (spark—step 4).

In this quote (#11), we see Boehme recapitulating the seven processes of creation within the context of the human struggle with life. There’s the craving, the woundedness, the dissatisfaction, the desiring. But “... ***If you remain firm, if you do not bend, you will see and***

perceive great wonders. You will discover how Christ will storm the hell in you and will break your beasts."

5. The moment the light of Christ comes into the world

Recall the story of the friend whose husband died and just had to sit there and deal with grief. She said, "One moment, I couldn't stand it. The next moment, I could." You think you can't stand it. The next moment, you can. This is a crucial moment. You need to watch it.

Good way to do this—take a frustration. Or an addiction. There becomes this moment—on one side is the roiling; the next moment, consciousness has taken you through it and it loses its sting.

You need to have that experience in your data bank.

Work from that moment back to the macrocosm. That is the moment when friction becomes spark. It is this moment when the Christ light comes on. "The light of Christ has come into the world." That's the moment in our own life, which we can experience viscerally, when we get swept up into the second principle.

Each time we go through this transformation, it gets easier and easier because the light force gets stronger in us and becomes more and more powerfully part of our being.

That moment of the turn, actually and absolutely, a Christo-centric moment not just for yourself, but for the world. Rafe used to teach me, no conscious act is ever wasted. We don't know where or how it helps. But any time a human who is sliding down that horizontal axis, kicking and screaming, wakes up, opens, yields, softens, reinstates that mandala of the cross within them—the two axes—that is a moment of quantitative and qualitative enlightenment for the world.

So don't think your little struggles within your own psyche are only about you. They really are acts by which, through all these individual points of light, the whole becomes manifest.

6. How our anguish generates the divine power

Here's how Boehme says what we've just been describing:

16. "The anguished work of the creature is an opening and generation of divine power, by which God's power becomes moving and working."

Anguished work of the creature—standing there, not bending in the face of the horizontal pull downwards. And it is work! It is much, much easier to just go with your psychological emotions.

Every time you stand firm in resisting that pull "is an opening and generation of divine power."

Question: Why anguish? Isn't the first disturbance the initial pressure of unfulfilled desire? Why don't we say God welcomes pressure?

Answer: Anguish is the third of the properties. Not just any old emotion. When we open, we are welcoming. But it is a welcoming that takes place on the ground of anguish. Most of us don't start to do the welcoming practice until we already are in anguish. We don't tend to go to the welcoming practice when we are experiencing well-being!

If we begin this practice at all, it is in a place of frustration. Boehme says that is how it has got to be, because it is the frustration/anguish that is the jump-off point—its that third step of the experience of the anguish that's the jump-off point to the transformation. For a time (for example), the alcoholic enjoys drinking himself silly. Until you feel the anguish of that, nothing can happen.

So, anguish has to do with rock-bottom, being totally hog-tied in the impossibility of the whole thing.

What we are asked to do in life—not to say this psyche is illusory and that we need to just get rid of it...it is real...it is your fuel.

7. Love as the counterstroke of the endless unity

Question: My essence...I thought it was immortal. How, then, do I take it along?

Answer: Metaphor of the candle. Tallow, wick...let's suppose it was a Bayberry candle. When it is lit, the essence of the scent is released. But the essence is in the tallow and wick.

So...each of us is a differentially scented candle, a different form of essence. We have all these indescribable scents or, in Boehme's term, tincture. Each of us has our own tincture. It is released and becomes expressive and the way you carry it into that next dimension is through the burning.

Counterstroke (Boehme's term: gegenwurf) :

Boehme's profession: cobbler. Pop it through with an awl, then you pull it up...everything has a stroke and a counterstroke.

The stroke and the counterstroke create a pattern that is a mirror-image. The topside of the stitching is the mirror-image of underside. They are just different dimensions.

That's the image. So here is how Boehme uses it.

The way that things work is through these series of counterstrokes. (He also uses the word "glass"—he means one of those symmetrical mirror images that is created by moving into a new dimension.

When you take the endless unity of God (the Liberty) and look at it through the lense of "separability," what you see is love. What this means for Boehme is that love is the

counterstroke of liberty in the realm of perceptivity (separability). Love is the counterstroke of unity. It's the same thing in a different dimension.

White light. Then white light hits the rainbow (the prism). It is the same light. But it appears differently after it has hit object and resistance.

The rainbow is the counterstroke of the white light in the realm of separability. Likewise, Love is the counterstroke of the endless unity in the dimension of separability (perceptivity).

We can't experience the endless unity directly. We CAN see love. When Christianity says "God is love," it is talking about the God we can experience.

Counterstroke, for Boehme, means a mirror-image of something in a different dimension.

8. The true Self as the counterstroke of one's true essence

The reason nobody can find the true Self the real I, and while all your efforts to polish the self and get rid of the false self won't work is because the true Self is a counterstroke of your essence (your Nafs) in the dimension of mundus imaginalis, in the dimension of the wider, eternal archetypal realm.

Your true Self is a counterstroke of your Nafs, your essence, your little s soul. It is truly and really related to the small soul in the imaginal world (mundus imaginalis, the communion of saints) . That's where your true self is. As you set flame, through the process of taking the raw material of your life, offering it up in the flame, with the spirit of becoming, what burns in the real and the imaginal is your true Self, your essence.

Some other ways to look at what is going on here:

It is sacrificial, sacrifice being a way of making something holy. To make holy means to make whole.

It is energetic. It is like the work of Labor, of giving birth.

In response to Margaret's earlier question about where the essence of Self is:

Yes, the essence of Margaret-ness relates, but it is released in the burning of Margaret to let the essence out. To the degree you have already captured your identity in true Self, in the counterstroke, in mundus imaginalis, to the extent you are there already , that is where Margaret lives, that's where her "I" has found a home, while in bodily life. Then the dropping away of the physical body does not disturb your essence. You are already there. You have simply been using your physical body to manifest your true Self in this realm.

Near his death, Rafe (Cynthia's teacher) would say to me that his body was a hindrance to him. He'd succeeded in completely stabilizing his "I" in the counterstroke. He works infinitely more powerfully without it. (Cynthia claims to remain in relationship with Rafe to this day.)

Cynthia thinks the same thing happened to Thomas Merton. He died suddenly because he was already done with the body. He had established his identity in the eternal. He is far more effective now than he was in bodily existence. Just take a look at how many people continue to be inspired by his writings and his teachings.

If you manage to complete that transformation in bodily life, then you move into the life without a body as a Cosmic Servant.

Cosmic Servant—

One of the basic principles of the hermetic tradition and, in particular, of Boehme, is that what continues afterlife HAS to begin here. Boehme says this over and over and over again. You begin here.

If it reaches a critical stage within this life, one of two things will happen: either you die fast (which is what happened to Boehme) and move on to exercise your Majesty within the imaginal realm (where it has a hell of a lot more scope) or you remain behind as a bodhisattva. A classic example of this is Irena Tweedie (as described in her book titled Daughters of Fire). Another example: Helen Luke.

We can experience the Self in the sensible world. You can also, as you develop your own empowerment, you begin to learn to communicate with the communion of saints. As your own being is transformed more and more into that dimension, the more you realize you have this capacity. When I talked with Rafe about my study of Mary Magdalene, he said “Oh, yeah...she’s a good one!” And I wasn’t kidding when I said I expected Boehme to be around this weekend. I was aware of his presence this morning. These people hasn’t just vanished into fresh air.

There is a point of decision, in a person’s essence, between the essence and the divine that makes that decision about when it is time to go. Its in the program before you even come down into this realm of manifestation. Some souls touch down lightly in the realm of manifestation, to do one thing that has to be done. Thomas Merton is a case in point. As soon as he got his call, he went with it, and it was not long after he achieved stable enlightenment that he was taken from this realm. But he’s still working as a Cosmic Servant.

I don’t speak of things of which I don’t have experience. But I will say that there is a belief out there in the mystical traditions that says that a person who has attained full consciousness participates in this choice.

9. Giving birth to the real “I”

Audience member describes a near-death experience in which she engaged in the welcoming prayer, welcoming death. But she says that, through the experience, she knew that she would come through it, back to life, because she had a sure sense that there were things she needed to do in life that remained undone.

Bourgeault's response: That's very interesting!so you came in touch, in that darkest hour, with your own inmost knowing of your destiny. You saw...for a moment...the book of your life....with the eye of your heart...and that gave you confidence.

This other world—mundus imaginalis—is not other than, but simultaneous with this life. It surrounds us now. All the worlds exist in simultaneity now. Once we lose bodily existence, we do end up there, in the mundus imaginalis, because we pass out of the sensible realm, but all these worlds are around us all here and now.

So...talk of dying before you die—that's not about giving up on existence but, rather, transforming your experience of existence. If you want to hold onto that little one, that psyche, that small self, if all you are going to do is to play around with your little history in temporal time, then you lose the chance to actualize, here and now, your lived experience of the larger.

The little self has to die, but the way it has to die is important. The process of dying has its function. We don't say it has to be executed. It has to die over and over and over again. But the way it has to die is as fuel that is burnt up. It is a sacrifice, a giving of that self-stuff over to the flame. It is a gradual dying and a repetition, again and again, of little deaths. The dying in every moment, what seems like annihilation, is actually a rebirth—a releasing of the fragrance and the light, here and now, of your aliveness. The more you can find yourself in that aliveness, the more you have already become a citizen of heaven. As a citizen of the kingdom of heaven while still in bodily life, you work powerfully for the building up of this beautiful, broken sphere. You become part of the light force that is needed so much. That's where you work and that is where your destiny is found.

Second to last paragraph in Bourgeault's Boehme for Beginners essay (a paragraph which may or may not have gotten into the final version:

This realization about the counterstroke and how the little self is not the real self...paves the way for the strongest rationale I have ever seen for resignation, for not remaining in the satisfaction of the desires of the creatures...for to remain in that place, to turn one's light only on oneself—to see one's light and to delight in its changing shapes—is to remain in one principle only and, hence, to fail to germinate in this life...which requires the interplay of the two principles. Our task in this life—actually, our supreme invitation—is to accomplish that counterstroke of ourselves, to give birth to real "I", the child of both principles who alone can carry back to God the wonders thou has found and wrought here, to the glory of His name and our own imperishable joy.

If you see this resignation and if you keep this counterstroke idea that how we experience things in this life from the point of view of our psychological world is the counterstroke, the upside down mirror image but still directly connect to the other side. So what we experience here as a dying, what we experience here as passivity—I give up, the opening, the yielding, the letting go—is, in the other world is the thing that lights the spark, that activates the two

principles, that sets the essence of what you are aflame, illuminated in that realm it truly belongs to...the imaginal.

As you become strong, proficient, and invited to the work, that light which at first burns in secret begins to come back, radiate through your physical being, and manifest here in the realm of perceptivity. That's why they put nimbuses (halos) around saints heads. So that light, so that what's up there and always going on, comes to be actualized in your being, in the way you move, here and now. And then you become sacrament to and with others.

That's the highest destiny I can imagine for bodily life...to be able to live with an inner authenticity that allows my being to be known in secret, in God, and allows that secret to come down back into life. And we all experience bits and pieces of it.

10. Instructions for singing "Slowly Blooms the Rose Within"

"A Rosary for the Rose of Life"

God from God; light from light.

Slowly blooms the rose within." (Lynn Bowman)

Lecture Five

1. The inward orientation to truth

Where is all this in relationship love.

Yesterday we talked about this in terms of “enlightened self-interest.”

This is the way Christians end up talking about these things. The idea is that there is something to be done here in this life. And if you get with the program and do it, life will go better for you in the hereafter—either beyond this life or in the larger universe in which you now participate.

When you begin the spiritual journey from the standpoint of ego—and this is the only place you CAN begin it, because the ego is your functional tool in this world—is like those two disciples who sent their mother to Jesus, “how can I arrange things so that my sons sit on your right and left hand in the Kingdom...”

The gospel, from this perspective, begins to sound like a deal...delayed gratification for the ego. It will give you the right outward orientation, but not the inward orientation.

The right inward orientation is finally and only reached when the only and absolute pleasure is to give it all away in every moment.

Then, what you care about is not what you get out of it, but what you care about is that you are in alignment with the truth, in alignment with your innermost heart beamed on that divine will and in alignment with the situation. The rest can drop out. If you had a choice in life, to get that seat at the right-hand of Christ, but all you had to do was to betray the truth one little time, you wouldn't do it...because you would know that the gesture you would have to make would screw up the whole thing.

With this shift from delayed gratification to embrace of the truth, that whole program of delayed gratification cancels out and, with that, the freedom you've been looking for all your life comes about. There is nothing to get to; there is no higher and lower; there is simply the being-one with the gesture of love, in every instance, small and large, in the NOW.

When you reach that point, you've reached the inner ground of your own eternal Liberty. The two things that dog you the most, that keep you in that first realm are: anxiety and competitiveness. They drop right out. You no longer have to do something. You are also no longer in competition with all your fellow critters. You can walk away...because you really and truly don't need to get the goods.

You are willing to say, even if I am deformed and am lacking, and if something cosmic that was supposed to happen doesn't happen because of my deformity, that's okay. I give my deformed and lacking-ness back. When you hit that place, you hit the place of profound, inner rest.

And in that place, all the rest of the stuff we are looking at, we can finally see. All those things we first looked at from the egoic eyes—about how this helps the whole cosmic program—its still true...but we see it from a whole different perspective. But now we will be able to take part of what we once gazed at only from a distance.

It is objectively true that what we do and how we do it in this time of the body does make a difference, both later and now. It is true that those who have mastered the essential art of living in love and truth while in this time of bodily life are in a position, once bodily life is over, to continue to flow with force and dignity and identity in those great streams of love. But the catch is, that the only way you can get into the stream in this life is to renounce all those pleasures.

It is one of those wonderful catch-22's...your head says, "what...no"...but your heart knows how to do it... if you give it space.

2. Preparing for the ego to recognize its master

Passage of 6th treatise

Your first principle (ego) is the ground of motion.

Some people, particularly those who have had near death experience and have had a wider perspective, can start from the heart. Sometimes you have souls that seem to be in the point of regular human life to be most damaged—people with downs syndrome, schizophrenics, people whose ego is not in the "right" place in terms of normal social conditioning—can also start directly from the heart.

Most people start in this egoic configuration, but with this distant restlessness and yearning and sense that there's got to be more. The path seems to give you a taste of something that you want more of. But your ego is your tool.

So what your ego does is say, Oh...it's a curriculum...I can master it. Helminski has this wonderful description...the ego goes happily along, not realizing it has begun a path of its own undoing.

Boehme helps us to see why this is so and why the important thing on the path is not to turn around and try to dismantle it. Because it is your tool for a while. If you just keep going by nurturing the heart through the process of surrender, there will come a time when the ego is ready to be a servant...because the true master will appear.

It is a lot more efficient, then, to just go along with the ego and, as the Sufi's would say, "prepare the abode for the master." Nurture your heart by practicing the gestures of stillness, willingness, openness, quietude, resignation. That is what is involved in preparing the abode for the master.

Who is the master? Your essential self, your Christ-self...we don't have to put a precise name on it.

As the Master takes possession of your first principle, your egoic chemistry...one of the lovely things about the ego, it longs to bow the knee of the heart to the master. The ego is not a villain. The ego is just a very good devil's advocate. And yes, it has its problems, because it is scared of dying. But I think it is ultimately not afraid of dying [I would say "submitting" here, because the ego doesn't actually die...it just becomes a servant] when it recognizes the master.

3. Using the ego for manifestation rather than for identification

Experience that changed my life that occurred early on with Rafe:

I had a medical problem. There was an emergency surgery during which a tumor was removed. Then there was a phone call message that was left at the central office: "Call the doctor immediately." I got it in the evening and I worked myself up into a terror: "Oh, they've done the biopsy and I've got cancer." I went up to Rafe's cabin early the next morning. He was startled to see me so early in the day. When I stammered out what was wrong, he reached out his arms and hugged me. At that moment, the most amazing thing happened to me. I suddenly realized all fear of dying was gone. It was okay. I was home. That was the moment when I first had this sense that love is stronger than death. At that point, the egoic stranglehold died. It died in a very lovely way because it wasn't scared anymore. It was like a frightened child that had been reassured enough—because I had such a strong sense that the love surrounds everything else. Once it was okay to die...the poor little thing....experiencing itself as so finite...with such a heavy duty on it...it has to save this mess...it has to do something right or everything perishes...so it's frightened. When it finds home, the most remarkable thing happens: It DOESN'T die. It becomes a good servant instead.

You can use your whole egoic mechanism for manifestation rather than for identity.

You are no longer trying to do everything to find and express and discover and assert who you are. Instead, Who I am is being held (just as I was being held by Rafe that day). Who I am is being held, hidden with Christ in God (Ephesians).

With that, then, this essence nature that I have in bodily life can simply flow out to dance God...in whatever way the dance wants to work...and there's no ego attached to it...there's nothing to make, there's nothing to make...there's nothing to protect...so there's a delicious freedom....like Papageno dancing (Magic Flute)...as the servant suddenly gets to play.



For me, the real joy is not transcending the ego, but watching it happy ...and in delight, removed from the burden, and able to be innocent again...like a child (laughter)...I'm not saying this is my usual state of being...but I do know the taste of it.

It's those things that are being talked about these four sections I want to talk about:

30. How may I grasp it without dying to my will? (The it is this love, this supersensual life.) The master says, if you want to grasp it for yourself, it will flee from you. But if you give yourself wholly and completely to it, you are dead to your own will and it will then be the life of your nature."

This gesture of giving yourself to it is what we've been talking about as surrender or true resignation. We've practiced in Centering Prayer in letting go of thoughts. We've practiced it in the work sessions by letting go of the frictions and the tensions when they come up. We've practiced it by patterning it in our mind through the teaching, so that we can visualize what we've actually done and give it a name. We've practiced it with the sensing, the being aware of your feet, the allowing your eyes to stay in the head, to practice the NOW.

This is the gesture by which you give yourself wholly and completely to life.

You are dead to your own will—the self will that is ripped off from God and do its own thing...so you make this deal with God "I'll do your will if you let me do the thinking."—then it will be the light of your nature. It does not kill you. But it makes you alive according to its life. Then, you live, but not you, but it's will for your will becomes your will.

It's slight nuance on Paul's statement that "its not I who lives but Christ who lives in me." Except that that sounds a bit like channeling. But this has a more active dimension. It's not I who lives, but Christ becomes my own will.

I am perfectly alive, perfectly authentic and whole..its not that I become a zombie and Christ rolls around in me like an empty shell...but Christ uses the whole being of me and that is my will

and that is my own authentic being, experienced as that which is most intimate and personal in me.

Question: What is the “it” being referred to here?
It is the supersensual life...the divine love.

4. Confusing your path to truth as the truth

The student says: “How is it so that so few men find it, but so many eagerly wish to have it—this Divine Love and Grace.”

There are so few people get off the egoic path, but so many on the path, practicing their path mindfully chopping their carrots, doing their good deeds

John Deruder mercilessly castigates people on a path, practicing their acts of compassion...in spoonfuls...having their cake and eating it too.

The master said: “They all seek it in something as formed meaning in a desire. For they nearly all have their own natural lust.”

They seek it in something. For instance, compassion. “Oh, I practice COMPASSION!” I seek the love in compassion...in the word, in the title. I seek IT in centering prayer. I seek IT in such-and-such teacher. You put a name to the thing you’re seeking IT in—a quality, a virtue, an idea, a movement. In other words, you seek it in the something.

“formed meaning in a desire.” The way that you seek it in the something is that that something, which becomes a creature, creates desiring. “I practice compassion!” And immediately, then, I become proud. I strangle it like a little bird. It becomes so important. “This is my identity...my church, my organization, my tradition.” And you can feel all the lust coming into it. “I seek IT in my church. I seek IT in the Eucharistic prayer...and not a word of the prayer can be changed because I seek IT there.

When we seek IT in the something, we cannot avoid identification. And identification breeds violence. And where there is violence, there is no love.

No matter how earnestly you feel about whatever virtue, religion, or practice...as long as you say “That’s my path,” you are seeking it in the something...it will flee from you...

This is hard teaching. And it is self-cancelling teaching because we come right back to the ego. And the ego seeks something. That’s okay as a learning curve. But we ***have to be able to leave it at some point.***

A great roshi developed disciples and they would get all excited and want to start organizing and build buildings...and he would then kick it all over and move on, because he wanted them to not stop short.

The parable is right there in the experience of the Israelites. Moses goes up the mountain to receive the commandments, but the people can't hold on. They build an idol.

If you seek it in the something, you will commit idolatry.

Rafe used to say, "When the building is built, you no longer need the scaffolding." All the Buddhists say the same thing. "When you get to the top of the mountain, dismount." "When you get across the river, leave the boat behind."

But people say, we have responsibilities! We have to leave a legacy for the future. These become inner lies. The mark of spiritual virginity is that you have absolutely no responsibility to the next generation except to open your heart and to be in truth and sincerity now. That's the gift. All the other external building become insidious traps.

You can't put up the building without the scaffolding in place. It is useful. But it is so much easier to leave the scaffolding in place when you are finished, rather than trust yourself to what's been created...particularly when what's been created, particularly when what has been created is the nothing.

Scaffolding: metaphorically represents, your path, your practice...the means you use to get there...beyond egoic supremacy.

Periodically, you have to kick over the scaffolding. [This reminds me of Bhai Sabb's refusal to allow himself to get into habits. Habits become things we possess.] If you don't kick it over, violence results. With respect to your inner being, you become confused. You lose your clear beat on what truth is and you keep trying to find life in the scaffolding. You know you can't; but you won't let yourself know why you can't.

All this violence then gets perpetrated on the world—when you run around, trying to keep things alive by heroic means and respirators things who time is over.

Audience Question: How do you know when you are stuck on scaffolding?

Response: Your innermost being knows that. But it takes a long time for you to be courageous enough to know that. Because it is easier to pretend you don't know it.

When you commit the center of your being to the path of truth, "Look out!"...because you will see, left and right, where you thought was necessary, indispensable...yah, you knew there were a couple of dings that weren't quite right [like in Woody Allen's Crimes and MISDEMEANORS] ...you begin to see why that is so. But there is a cost to you of a complete openness to truth.

But it's there. It's not something lacking that you don't already have. It's an awareness you already have, but which you need to have the courage to open up to from within.

5. The created "something" vs. the pure "nothing"

"They all seek it in the something for they all have their own natural lust."

(Bourgeault: That's what we talked about earlier...about how we all want to break off our will rather than staying in the will of God.) ***Though it offers itself (this love) to them, it can find no place in them. For the imaginativeness of self-willing has put itself in their place.***

Here's this love trying to get in. But we have erected this huge castle of our core beliefs, our needs, our assertions, our fantasies, our identifications. We've got it all lock up inside there. And this love can find no way to get in. Because when it comes troubling, the initial thing that happens is we feel this incredible attraction outward. But then we jerk back. The typical way that jerking back happens is that we fall asleep.

Most people cannot abide the thought that they are hypocritical, that there are two sides to them...or maybe two hundred sides to them. From an egoic point of view, you are consistent, you are whole, you are always one thing from one moment to the next.

So when there is a level shift in you, the first thing that happens is that you fall asleep...so you don't see it happening. I watched this in a hilarious way one day when I preached a sermon in this church in Aspen. They were really moved and touched and they were in that space and wanted to talk about it. They said, "Let's go out to lunch and talk about it." It was a lovely, delicious kind of mood. And then, down at the other end of the table—like the cat's tail beginning to twitch at the other end...you begin to hear things about real estate...and these people are real estate agents and they are talking about deals and then they are into politics and then they're talking about what's wrong with the church. There's been a level shift. And nobody saw it. I said, what just happened. And one other woman caught it.

You'll be sitting in centering prayer, all joyful, all peaceful, all full of love and oneness. Then you go into the kitchen and someone has moved your coffee cup—you fly into a rage. What just happened? Where is the I.

We do this all the time. I don't know what we do mentally. I know the process is that we move from that deeper self to the psychological self. And we don't see ourselves moving there. We just pick up our bags and put it there. All of the sudden we are completely identified with our usual psychological self. We've lost that vertical axis. And we don't see it.

So, most of the work is just teaching you to see it, see it, see it. See when you make a level shift. Own it. Then it can begin to work itself out in you.

Whenever you are in that psychological self with all its needs and its wants, and its core beliefs and its programs, love can find no place in you. I mean, you may have a worthy cause. You

may have a bonifide history of victimization and abuse. When you are in your issue, love can find no place in you. You can have one or the other. You can't have both.

So, Boehme says: ***"it flees them (this love), for it lives only in the nothing. Therefore, the self-will cannot find it."***

Remember when we read this thing from Thomas Merton about this spark, this invisible aliveness, but it only lives only in the nothing? A point or spark of pure nothingness, he calls it ...a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God ...this little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty, is the pure glory of God in us...in the nothingness.

Another quote from Merton: "In the midst of our own nothingness, we find the infinitely real."

This is why all the Apophatic vocabulary in Christian mysticism—from the Cloud of Unknowing to Eckhart to Boehme—is always around this: the nothing, the nothing. And the self-will is the something, with an energy and a desire and an identify...and it repels love...or...it manipulates it. That's the stinking thing, the slimy thing. In a snarky voice: "I'm Miss Anglican Priest. How may I help you?" (laughter).

That's the something, trying to take over and domesticate the nothing. It won't work. You can hoodwink yourself for a good long time. But you know something isn't quite right. And its only when you finally give up the cake that you are trying to have and to eat too, that you find it—just eat it, Forget the having it.

We go towards reality, but we hit a contradict. And it doesn't work. And we feel pain. But the pain is caused not because truth is missing, but because we are trying to access it and still hold onto our outer assumptions—and you can't do it.

So he says that you really rejoice in this. ***"Moreover, its flame is so great that it will not leave you. You rejoice in the flame so that you would sooner kill yourself than go into the something."***

That's the experience I had that day with Rafe—when I caught the scent of what it means to be home. Death was no longer an issue. I would gladly die in that homeness. And I would RATHER die than lose that sense.

"It's flame is so great it will not leave you. Even if it costs you your mortal life, it goes with you in its fire into death."

6. Consistency and arriving home where all is restored

It takes a long time before consistency takes hold. Consistency is the real virtue of life. We do things in fits and starts. We get a great inspiration. But then we fall back into our psychological issues...sometimes for years. We find a place where we can apply it in little things,

like when our kid comes home late and we are fretting. But we can't apply it in big things, like when the kid is taken to Juvenile court. We can do it when we are standing in line at the grocery store. But we can't apply it when someone criticizes us or pushes one of our core buttons.

We need to gradually up the ante, seeing if we can push it a bit farther without being pulled back down into the psychological, seeing if we can stay with that place. If we do this, little by little, we get more stable, less flappable, more able to serve outwardly.

Finally, there comes a point where it is unshakeable. You get to a point where, even in the face of unspeakable tragedy—the worse thing that you can possibly imagine—you are able to let go. When you find that place, you are home. You are one. You are single.

This is not stoicism. That is just repression. What you discover, in true surrender, that anything you have let go is not lost. You still have everything. That child that was lost, that died? He is still with you.

IN that state of profound surrender, the wall between the realms melts. In the other realm, all being and all goodness is with you always. I learned this with Rafe—not gone. But the moment I go into self-pity and mourning—the wall goes up again.

Utter resignation is also the epochotastitis (spelling)—the final restoration of all things at the end of time. All that you thought you had lost or had been held from you is there all along. But you have to go through the eye of the needle before you get there.

7. The protective vs. blocking functions of the physical body

In the teaching on Heaven and Hell, Boehme says that what we place our deepest being in is what we become. If, in this world, we resign and give ourselves to love, love begins to press through us and the light force becomes actualized in us. So that when we die, like recognizes like and we are one with the light force.

If, on the other hand, in this period of life, we have made our bed-fellows with the passions (the creatures)—with violence, anger, envy, covetousness, self-pity...all of those things—if we have ingested that darkness, the toxin of our psychological coloration, when the protective coloration of bodily form is removed at death, we are revealed as darkness.

Boehme (and the Eastern Orthodox) have this image of **the body as protective coloration**. We are here because learning to develop this motion of intimate surrender is a vulnerable motion and the body in the sensible world cloaks us and protects us from unbounded grace (doxa) which would consume us because our whole being is not strong enough to stand in glory. That's what a lot of kids discovered with the drug trips. LSD is a shortcut to doxa...but your body can't handle it. Your brains get blown.

We gradually learn, through the process of surrender, to develop an integrated being that is strong enough to “bear the beams of love.” (Blake). Blake was a devotee of Boehme.

When the time of bodily life is over, it is like taking a slip casting out of the mold, and you can see what you’ve got. If the whole inner psyche has learned to be with light and has developed an internal depth can hold itself in that place—you become light.

But the downside of the body as protective coloration is that it allows you to get away with it in this life. It allows you to go on in your spending and your dealings, and your he-who-dies-with-the-most-toys attitude and your competition and your arrogance and your violence and your issues. It even kind of tells you that this is the point of life. And it doesn’t give you a wake-up call soon enough that, from a spiritual standpoint, you are not only wasting the one precious opportunity that you have, but you are also poisoning your nest.

Don’t do it. It’s not worth the price. The vindication of who you would get when you vent—“I just need to tell you, you’ve demeaned my being”—that kind of justification and illusory sense of self you get out of staking your terms here IS NOT WORTH IT! Let it go! Get with the light program now. Not only do you get to be light later and forever. You get to be light now. And that’s the fun of it.

8. Attending to your own path and the question of evangelism

St. Anthony. A disciple asked him, What are we doing out here, saving our skins in the desert, when there are so many people suffering in Antioch?

Anthony: Keep your attention in yourself.

What you are given that you are stewarding is your own consciousness. Worrying about other people is a wonderful way of diverting attention from what will make itself true if you keep attention focused on yourself.

No conscious act is ever wasted. We all work on behalf of one another. It could very well be that the person who you perceive, on the surface, as an ordinary Joe who is oblivious to deeper things is actually, internally, doing deep spiritual work. God leads each person along the path they need to be on. God throws the people in our way, for better or worse, that need to be met.

There’s a subtle difference between making something available to people—making yourself open and accessible—and pushing something onto them. The latter is just pushing your own interests.

Evangelism, as usually practiced by the church, is inherently violent. It tromps on people’s lives AND it tromps on God’s own timing, doing harm to the relationship between the soul and God.

9. On stress and death

Death is the ultimate “you can’t have your cake and eat it to.”

All spiritual practice is about teaching you the illusoriness of death so that death becomes no longer the stopping point. As long as death has supremacy, survival of the fittest is the law. When death no longer has dominion over you, you can live as a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Finding that place, and knowing that your practice will take you right through death without disrupting anything is a wonderful place of liberty, because then you can play by the real rules of the game.

Stress. How do I live in my so that I don’t build up so much stress that when I stop, I get sick.

Orthodox Christianity: “Death is God’s great mercy so that sin should not be eternal.”

10. Keeping your eyes in the boat or the sacrament of hierarchy

Work in community. You can’t get there on your own. Analogy: Rowing in a 28 foot long boat. Each person has one oar. Each person is facing backwards. You don’t see where you are going. But the person who is steering the boat does. If anyone lets up on his oar, the boat slows down. And you need to concentrate—don’t be looking around. Keep your eyes in the boat. But why subject yourself to such a loss of liberty and autonomy? For the sake of the larger goal. This is the lesson of working in community.

Great loss in our communal path in the west is that persons in leadership roles have not been responsible. They haven’t been true to their call to being guides. But the antidote to that is not the individualistic spiritualism of this age. Everyone on their own ski-doe. You can only get there in the communal boat. There is a sacramental nature of hierarchy because this echoes the hierarchy of God.

11. “I Have Such a Teacher”: The lesson of poverty

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Quotable Quotes from Jacob Boehme

(most taken from *The Way to Christ, The Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press 1978*)

1. "God has not created us for self-dominion, but as instruments of his wonder."
2. "As you leave the world, you will come into that out of which the world was made."
3. "Where God's will wills in a thing, there God is revealed."
4. "What now seems hard to you, you will later learn to love the most."
5. "Christ's Kingdom is not of this world, but in Heaven. Therefore you must be in continual ascension if you wish to imitate Christ properly."
6. "God's spirit acts only in resigned humility which neither seeks nor desires itself."
7. "Christ lives essentially in the faith of those who have given themselves completely to him."
8. "I am a string in the concert of God's joy."
9. "If you could be silent from all willing and thinking for one hour, you would hear God's inexpressible words."
10. "With you own seeing, you see only in your own will."
11. "Here, now, is the right place for you to wrestle before the Divine face. If you remain firm, if you do not bend, you will see and perceive great wonders. You will discover how Christ will storm the hell in you and will break your beasts."
12. "Heaven is nothing other than a revelation of the Eternal One, where everything works and wills in silent love."
13. "When God's love completely dwells in a soul, it is in heaven and is itself God's heaven in which He dwells."
14. "No life can express, nor mouth describe, the fire of the inflaming love of God."
15. "Where you according to your own self and will do not dwell, there the angels dwell over and in you."
16. "The anguished work of the creature is an opening and generation of divine power, by which God's power becomes moving and working."
17. "The soul must remain in resigned humility just as the fountain relies on its source."
18. "You must grow again into the image of God both from above and from below, as a young tree is moved by the wind and must stand in heat and cold, and in such turmoil draws its power to itself above and below and must endure many windstorms and stand in great danger before it becomes a tree that bears fruit."
19. "If you have left the way of images and rule in the silence out of which all creatures were created, then nothing can harm you for you are like all things and nothing is unlike you."
20. "When you move silently, then you are that which God was before nature and creature, out of which He created your nature and creature."
21. "When you remain silent from the thinking and willing of self, the Eternal hearing and seeing and speaking will be revealed in you, and God will see and hear through you."
22. "If your will could break away from all creatures for one hour and sweep up to where no creature is, it would be dressed over with the highest brightness of God's glory and would taste in itself the sweetest love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

23. "God's love lives in the resigned will, by which the soul is made holy and comes to divine rest. When the body breaks up, the soul is pressed through with divine love and illuminated with God's light, as fire glows through iron."
24. "No work outside of God's will can reach God's Kingdom. It is all only a useless carving in the great laboriousness of man."
25. "All that the self does outside of God's will occurs in fantasy."
26. "All that occurs through the conclusions if the human self is only a mirror of the contending wheel of nature. What good builds up, evil breaks down; and what evil builds up, good breaks down. This is the great sorrow of useless laboriousness."
27. "I, God, press through your branches into the sap and bear fruit on your boughs."
28. "For it is the young tree grown out of the old root which shall illuminate what the old tree has been in its wonders."
29. "All things long after the heart, so that they may be freed from the vanity."
30. "We have in Lucifer, and also in Adam, the first man, true examples of what the self does when it receives eternal light as its own property so that it is able to enter into its own dominion in reason. One also sees this in learned men; when they get the light of eternal nature as their own possession, nothing results but pride." (Fourth Treatise, 1)
31. "This resulted in both of them ([Lucifer and Adam] because they allowed the light of understanding to shine in the self in which they could mirror themselves and view themselves into being, through which the self went into the imagination." (Fourth treatise, 4)
32. The Cosmological Teaching, in a nutshell: "Pain must be a ground and cause of motion." "If there were no sharpness and no motion, there would be no sensibility." (Clavis, #74) "And so the eternal delight became perceivable, and the perceiving of the Unity is called love." (Clavis, #95)

THE EXCEEDING PRECIOUS GATE OF THE AURORA (From The Forty Questions of the Soul, question 12)

15. Behold, thou beloved soul, if thou wilt attain the light of God and see with the eye of God, and wilt also enjoy the light of this world, and sustain thy body, and seek the wonders of God, then do as God himself doth it.
16. Thou hast in thy soul two eyes, which are set together back to back; the one looketh into eternity, the other looketh backward into nature and proceedeth forth always and seeketh in the desire, and maketh one glass [image] after another. Let it be so; it should be so, God will have it so.
17. But turn not the other eye [the left eye] back into the longing, but with the right eye always draw the left backwards to thee, and let not this eye with the will of the wonders go from thee [i.e., from that eye which is turned into the Liberty]. But draw to thee its wonders which it hath manifested and wrought. 4
18. Let this eye seek food for the earthly body, but let it not enter into the food, that is, into the covetousness, but draw it close to the seeing eye and let it not go.
19. But let the hands labor and get food, and let the eye draw the wonders to it but not denser matter [i.e., covetousness, envy, pride, or anger]; else that which is drawn in will be darkness to thee.

20. Let the devil roar at thee, making a noise before thy left eye; he cannot get in unless thou sufferest thine eye to receive in dense matter.
21. Thus, when thy earthly body perishes, thou shalt see with thy right eye all the wonders in the left eye which thou hast wrought and found out here; and when the earthly life is gone, then thy left eye is free from the nature of wrath.
22. And although it hath nature (for it is nature itself which awakens and retains the wonders), yet then it is with the wonders in the eternal liberty: seeing it hath taken in nothing of matter, therefore it is free.
23. And nature with its wonders is a fiery sharpness, and takes hold of the eternal liberty, and so makes Majesty in the liberty in the wonders; whence the right eye (which is as it were dead here in this life) becomes enlightened and rejoices with the left eye forever in the exceedingly joyful Majesty, and [the soul] sees God with both eyes eternally.
24. This is the gate. He that sees and knows this rightly in the spirit sees all that God is and can do.

Some reference used in this teaching:

Boehme: The Way to Christ

Boehme: Forty questions of the Soul.

Boehme: The Fall of Lucifer

Ladislav Boros: The Mystery of Death

Bourgeault: Cosmological Teachings in a Nutshell

Clavis: Users Guide to Boehme

Rene Dumas: Mount Analogue

Helen Luke: Old Age

John Sparrow: Threefold Life of Man

Irina Tweedie: Daughter of Fire