Twice the Big Book speaks about a mysterious “fourth dimension of existence.” These words appear first in Bill’s Story where Wilson describes his dramatic, spiritual experience in Towns Hospital. “I was soon to be catapulted into what I like to call the fourth dimension of existence.”

Then, a few chapters later, the Big Book authors tell us that entering this new dimension always comes with a price. “Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.”

Two Way Prayer isn’t simply receiving loving thoughts and daily encouragement from our Creator; it also involves the painful work of “letting go.”

By striving to live life by the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love, we die daily to our old selves so we can enter into that fourth dimension of existence to which the Big Book points: a new world of Spirit – a world wherein we experience consciously God’s Presence through prayer.

Robert Johnson isn’t an alcoholic, but a Jungian therapist and noted author. Many students of Two Way Prayer have found his work to be of tremendous help on our spiritual journeys. In his book Transformation, Johnson describes the shift in consciousness that opens us to that fourth level of consciousness.

Johnson writes: “For most people, the transition from three dimensional to four-dimensional consciousness is exceedingly painful. Medieval Christianity called it the dark night of the soul; Dante called it the journey through hell; it was forty days and forty nights in the desert for Jesus; it was a journey in the belly of the fish for many a hero.

“For a modern man it is midlife crisis or, worse, a nervous breakdown; or still worse, physical suicide. The process can be summed up in one sentence: it is the relocating of the center of the personality from the ego to a center greater than one’s self. This super-personal center has been variously called the Self, the Christ nature, the Buddah nature, super-consciousness, cosmic consciousness, satori, and sama-dhi. This relocation appears to be death when viewed from the perspective of the ego. Zen masters observe that satori (their term for a non-personal center of consciousness) can be viewed by the ego as nothing but total disaster. And death it is! The ego loses its supremacy and goes through a short time of violent suffering.

“When someone threatens suicide at this time, I caution him that he must be very careful to do it without harming his body. The relocation of the center of the personality is a form of suicide, and its best done by the ego. Meizumi Roshi, a Zen master in Los Angeles, once said, ‘Why don’t you die now and enjoy the rest of your life?’

“…When the dark night begins to lift, one morning there is an unaccountable touch of joy in the air…. this is the first contact with the four-dimensional consciousness, and one can begin to live from that source of energy. Something of the subtle inner world becomes your center of gravity: poetry, music, a new perceptiveness when you are jogging… Less worthy channels for this new energy are fanaticism, dictatorial religious beliefs, and ego inflations of all kinds. If the new energy flows into such channels, you are quickly sent back…for further boiling in the oil of transformation.”

In practicing the Eleventh Step, the Big Book rightly encourages the reading of “helpful books” and points out, “There are many….” A.A.’s Pioneers would likely number Robert Johnson’s books among them.