Pathwork Lecture 83: The Idealized Self-Image

This lecture is given in an expanded poetic format, what I call a Devotional Format of the lecture, and in that sense this is my interpretation of the intent of the lecture. I may have interpreted portions differently from you, and I ask you to ponder the words for your own interpretation. I did this Devotional Format so I can take the words into my heart, phrase by phrase, much as I would in reading poetry – that is, devotionally.

The blessings to me in developing this format have been truly profound, and my wish is that this Devotional Format will be a blessing to others. I invite you to slowly read and ponder this format of the text – with an open heart to experience the Guide’s Presence and Love emerging from among the words such that the wisdom comes to LIVE you.

For clarity: The original text is in bold and italicized. [My adds of commentary/clarification/interpretation are in brackets, italicized, and not bolded.] To learn more of my Devotional Format and see the lectures I have done in this way, go to https://www.garyvollbracht.com/pathwork-lectures/pathwork-lectures-devotional-format/

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03

Greetings.

God bless all of you, my dearest friends.

Welcome are all my
• old and
• new friends gathered here.

04

Let us continue within the series of lectures to help you gain further insight into
• yourself and therefore into
• life.
The two preceding lectures [See Lecture 81: Conflicts in the World of Duality given on March 3, 1961, and Lecture 82: The Conquest of Duality Symbolized in the Life and Death of Jesus given on March 31, 1961 – Good Friday]

dealt with the
• great duality,
the
• struggle between life
and
• death,
the
• illusion that it is a question of either/or [i.e., EITHER life OR death].

The more one is involved in duality, the more one sees life in terms of extremes, such as
• happiness versus
• unhappiness, with
  • happiness standing for life
  and
  • unhappiness for death.

While still struggling in this duality, it is impossible to accept life as necessarily containing both [i.e., as NECESSARILY containing BOTH happiness AND unhappiness, BOTH life AND death].
• Intellectually
  you may
  • accept and
  • believe
  this [i.e., INTELLECTUALLY you may accept and believe that life
  NECESSARILY contains BOTH happiness AND unhappiness, and BOTH life AND death],

          but
          • emotionally
          you do not.

What you feel
is that
if you are unhappy
now,
you will continue to be unhappy
forever.

Then [i.e., Then, feeling that if you are unhappy NOW you
will continue to be unhappy FOREVER.]
the
• tragic,
• unnecessary, and
• destructive
struggle
against
• death or
• unhappiness
begins.

Birth
is a
painful experience
for the infant.

Other painful experiences
are bound to follow,
although
pleasurable experiences
occur as well.
But since
the knowledge of
• unpleasurable experiences,
or
• their possibility,
is always present,
the fear of them [i.e., the ever-present fear of unpleasurable experiences]
creates a
basic problem.

The most significant
countermeasure [i.e., the most significant countermeasure to the
ever-present fear of unpleasurable experiences]
to which people resort
in the false belief
that it [i.e., in the false belief that this countermeasure]
will circumvent
• unhappiness,
• unpleasure, and
• death,
is the
creation of the
idealized self-image
as a
universal pseudo-protection [i.e., as a
universal pseudo-protection from the
ever-present fear of unpleasurable experiences].

They never realize that
this very countermeasure
not only
• does not avoid,
but rather
• brings on
the very thing [i.e., brings on the fear of unpleasurable experiences]
that they
• dread most and
• fight.
However, if you do not fully understand your struggle with duality, about which I spoke in the two preceding lectures [i.e., Lecture 81: Conflicts in the World of Duality and Lecture 82: The Conquest of Duality Symbolized in the Life and Death of Jesus], you cannot fully understand
• the creation and
• the function
of the idealized self-image.

I have occasionally used the term mask self in the past.

The
• mask self and the
• idealized self-image
are really one and the same.

The
• idealized self [i.e., The idealized self-image or the mask self] masks the
• real self.

It [i.e., The idealized self-image or the mask self] pretends to be something you are not.
The idealized self-image
is supposed to be a means of
avoiding
unhappiness.

Since unhappiness
automatically
robs the child of
security,

its [i.e., the child’s]
self-confidence
is diminished
in proportion to
its unhappiness,

though
this unhappiness
cannot be measured
objectively.

What
one personality type
* may be able to cope with quite well
and
* does not experience as drastic unhappiness,

another
* temperament and
* character
feels to be
dismal woe.

At any rate,
* unhappiness and
* lack of belief in oneself
are interconnected.
The creation of the idealized self-image serves to supply the
• missing self-confidence
and to thereby gain
• pleasure supreme.

At least this [i.e., At least this BELIEF that the idealized self-image serves to supply the missing self-confidence and thereby to offer pleasure supreme]
is the unconscious reasoning process,
and it [i.e., and this unconscious reasoning that the idealized self-image serves to supply the missing self-confidence and thereby to offer pleasure supreme]
is not altogether different from the truth.

In
• truth and
• reality,
  • healthy and
  • genuine self-confidence
is peace of mind.

It [i.e., Healthy and genuine self-confidence]
• is
  • security and
  • healthy independence
and
• allows one to achieve
  a maximum of happiness
through
  • developing one's inherent talents,
  • leading a constructive life, and
  • entering into fruitful human relationships with healthy interdependence.
But since the self-confidence established through the idealized self is artificial, the result [i.e., the result of this ARTIFICIAL self-confidence established through the idealized self] cannot possibly be what was expected [i.e., the expected GENUINE self confidence].

Actually, the consequence [i.e., the consequence of using the idealized self-image to establish what can only be an ARTIFICIAL self-confidence] is
• quite the contrary [i.e., quite the contrary to the consequence of having GENUINE self-confidence: peace of mind, security, and true happiness attained from developing one’s talents, leading a constructive life, and having fruitful relationships]

and
• frustrating
  because
  • cause [i.e., having merely ARTIFICIAL self-confidence by relying only on one’s idealized self-image rather than having GENUINE self-confidence from the real self]

  and
  • effect [i.e., unhappiness, fear, and insecurity] are not obvious to you.

It may take a great deal of
• life experience and
• inner will
  to find the truth.

Then, and then only [i.e., only when you find the TRUTH of WHY you are unhappy fearful, and feeling insecure],

will you slowly discover the links between your
• unhappiness
  and your
• idealized self-image.
You need
  • to grasp
    the
    • significance,
    the
    • effects,
    the
    • damages
      that follow in the wake of the
      idealized self-image

and
  • to fully recognize its [i.e., You need to
    fully recognize the idealized self-image’s]
    existence,
    in the particular way it manifests
    in your individual case.

This [i.e., This full understanding the idealized self-image – grasping its
  significance, effects and damages that follow in its wake as
  well as recognizing its existence in the particular way it
  manifests in your individual case]

  requires
    a great deal of work
    for which
      all the preceding work
      was necessary.

The dissolution of
  the idealized self
  is the only possible way
  to find your
    • true self [i.e., to find your true or real self],
  to find
    • serenity and
    • self-respect,
  and
to
    • live your life
      fully.
There is much to be said about this topic, but now I will discuss only the barest fundamentals.

As time goes on, I shall
  • be more specific and
  • go into further details,
but the
  • results and
  • findings
  of your personal work in this respect [i.e., the results and findings of your PERSONAL WORK in respect to your idealized self-image and its dissolution]
  are more important [i.e., are more important than a more specific and more detailed understanding of the idealized self-image per se].

As a child, regardless of what your particular circumstances were, you were indoctrinated with admonitions on the importance of being
  • good,
  • holy,
  • perfect.

When you were not [i.e., When you were NOT good, holy, and perfect], you were often punished in one way or another.
Perhaps the worst punishment
was that
your parents
  • withdrew their affection from you;
they
  • were angry,
and
you had the impression
  you were no longer loved.

No wonder
  • "badness"
    associated itself with
    • punishment and
    • unhappiness,
  • "goodness"
    with
    • reward and
    • happiness.

Hence
to be
  • "good"
and
  • "perfect"
became
  an absolute must;

it [i.e., to be “good” and “perfect”]
became a question of
  • life
or
  • death
  for you.

Still
you knew perfectly well
that you were
  not as
  • good
and as
  • perfect
  as the world seemed to expect you to be.
This truth [i.e., This truth that you were NOT as good and as perfect as the world SEEMED to expect you to be]

had to be hidden;

it [i.e., This truth that you were NOT as good and as perfect as the world SEEMED to expect you to be]

became a guilty secret,

and you started to build a false self.

This [i.e., This building of a false self to hide the truth that you were NOT as good and as perfect as the world SEEMED to expect you to be],

you thought,

was your

• protection and

your

• means of attaining what you
desperately wanted –

• life,
• happiness,
• security,
• self-confidence.

The awareness of this false front began to vanish,

but you

• were and

• are permanently

permeated with the guilt of pretending to be something you are not.
You strain
harder
and harder
to become
this
• false self,
this
• idealized self.

You
• were,
and
unconsciously
• still are,
convinced
that
if you strain hard enough,
one day
you will
be
that self [i.e., BE that IDEALIZED SELF].

But
• this artificial squeezing-into-something-you-are-not process
can never attain
• genuine
• self-improvement,
• self-purification and
• growth,
because
you started building
an unreal self [i.e., building an idealized unreal self]
on a false foundation [i.e., on the false foundation of
something you are not now: your idealized self-image]
and leave your
real self [i.e., leave who you really and truly
are NOW – your REAL self] out.

In fact,
you are
desperately hiding
it [i.e., you are desperately HIDING the REAL self that you are NOW].
The idealized self-image may assume many forms.

It [i.e., The idealized self-image] does not always dictate standards of recognized perfection.

Oh yes, much of the idealized self-image dictates highly moral standards, making it all the more difficult to question its [i.e., making it more DIFFICULT to question the idealized self-image's] validity.

"But isn't it right to want • to be always • decent, • loving, • understanding, never • angry, and • to have no • faults, but try • to attain • perfection?"

Isn't this [i.e., Isn't this STRIVING for PERFECTION] what we are supposed to do?"
Such considerations [i.e., Such considerations regarding your having to be perfect in every way all the time] will make it difficult for you to discover:

- the compulsive attitude that denies present imperfection,
- the pride and lack of humility that prevents you from accepting yourself as you are now,
- and above all, the pretense [i.e., above all makes it difficult for you to discover the exaggerated claims you make about yourself, the pretense] with its resulting:
  - shame,
  - fear of exposure,
  - secretiveness,
  - tension,
  - strain,
  - guilt,
  - anxiety.

It will take some progress in this work before you begin to experience the difference in feeling between the genuine desire to gradually work toward growth, and the ungenerous pretense [i.e., the exaggerated claims of perfection you feel you have to make about yourself] imposed upon you by the dictates of your idealized self.
You will discover
the deeply hidden fear
that says
your world will come to an end
if you do not live up to
its standards.

You will
• sense and
• know
many other
• aspects and
• differences
between
• the genuine
and
• the unguenuine
self.

And you will also discover
what
your
particular
idealized self
demands.

There are also
facets of the idealized self,
depending on
• personality,
• life conditions and
• early influences,
which
• are not
and
• cannot be considered
• good,
• ethical, or
• moral.
• Aggressive,
• hostile,
• proud,
• overambitious
trends
are
• glorified, or
• idealized.

It is true
that these
negative tendencies [i.e., negative tendencies of aggressiveness, hostility, pride, and overambitiousness]
exist behind
all
idealized self-images.

But they [i.e., But these negative tendencies] are hidden,
and since they crassly contradict the
morally high standards of the particular idealized self,
they [i.e., [i.e., these negative tendencies of aggressiveness, hostility, pride, and overambitiousness that are HIDDEN parts of ALL idealized self-images] cause
additional anxiety,
in that the idealized self will be exposed for the fraud it is.
The person who glorifies such negative tendencies [i.e., who glorifies such negative tendencies as aggressiveness, hostility, pride, and overambitiousness],
believing them to prove
• strength and
• independence,
• superiority and
• aloofness,
• would be deeply ashamed of [i.e., ashamed to have and exhibit in himself or herself] the "goodness"
another person's idealized self
• would consider it [i.e., and would consider the more passive, more tranquil, more humble, and less ambitious "goodness" seen in the other person's idealized self]
as
• weakness,
• vulnerability, and
• dependency in an unhealthy sense.

Such a person [i.e., such a person who glorifies such negative tendencies as aggressiveness, hostility, pride, and overambitiousness] entirely overlooks the fact that
nothing makes a person as vulnerable as
• pride;
nothing causes so much fear [i.e., nothing causes so much fear as pride].
In most cases these two tendencies [i.e., 1) the tendency of having UNREALIZABLE levels of perfection as standards in POSITIVE traits in one’s idealized self-image and 2) the tendency of falsely thinking certain NEGATIVE traits such as pride are positive and hence should be in one’s idealized self image] are combined:

- overexacting moral standards impossible to live up to
- pride
  - in being
  - invulnerable, aloof, and superior.

The co-existence of these mutually exclusive ways presents a particular hardship for the psyche.

Needless to say, the conscious awareness of this contradiction is missing until this particular work [i.e., until this particular work with the idealized self-image] is well in progress.

There are many more facets, possibilities, individual pseudo-solutions combining all sorts of mutually exclusive trends.

All this has to be found individually.
Let us now consider some of the general effects of the existence of the idealized self and some of the implications.

Since the standards and dictates of the idealized self are impossible to realize, and yet you never give up the attempt to uphold them, you cultivate within yourself an inner tyranny of the worst order.

You do not realize the impossibility of being as perfect as your idealized self demands, and never give up whipping yourself, castigating yourself, and feeling a complete failure whenever it is proven that you cannot live up to its [i.e., cannot live up to your idealized self’s] demands.
A sense of
  abject worthlessness
  • comes over you
    whenever
    you fall short of these fantastic demands
  and
  • engulfs you in
    misery.

This misery
  may at times
  be conscious
but
  most of the time
  it is not [i.e., most of the time this misery that engulfs you
  is NOT conscious].

Even if it is [i.e., Even if this misery that engulfs you IS conscious],
you do not realize
  • the entire significance,
  • the impossibility
    of what you
    expect from yourself.

When you try to
  hide your reactions to
  your own "failure,"
you use
  special means
  to avoid seeing it [i.e., to avoid seeing your own “failure”].

One of the
  most common devices [i.e., One of the most common devices to avoid seeing
  your own “failure”]
  is to
  project
  the blame
  for "failure"
  into the
  • outer world,
  onto
  • others,
  onto
  • life.
The more you try to identify with your idealized self-image, the harder the disillusionment whenever life brings you into a position where this masquerade can no longer be maintained.

Many a personal crisis is based on
- this dilemma [i.e., this dilemma of facing the disillusionment of your idealized self-image with which you are identified],
- outer difficulties.

These difficulties [i.e., These outer difficulties] then [i.e., then, encountered while you are still trying desperately to maintain the masquerade of your idealized self-image.] become
an added menace [i.e., an added menace to your life]
beyond their objective hardship.

The existence of the difficulties is a proof to you that you are not your idealized self,

and this [i.e., and this fact that you now realize that you are NOT your idealized self] robs you of the false self-confidence you falsely tried to establish with the creation of the idealized self.
There are other personality types who know perfectly well that they cannot identify with their idealized self.

But they do not know this [i.e., But they do NOT hold this knowledge that they cannot identify with and live up to the standards of their idealized self-image] in a healthy way.

They [i.e., Those who know perfectly well that they cannot live up to the standards of their idealized self-image] despair.

They believe they ought to be able to live up to it [i.e., they believe they OUGHT to be able to live up to their idealized self-image].

Their whole life [i.e., The whole life of those who know perfectly well that they cannot live up to the standards of their idealized self-image] is permeated with a sense of failure,

while the former type [i.e., while the life of those who never give up their attempt to uphold the standards of their idealized self-image] experiences it [i.e., experiences a sense of failure] only on more conscious levels when
- outer and
- inner
conditions culminate in showing up the phantom of the idealized self for what it really is – an
- illusion
a
- pretense,
a
- dishonesty.
[For those of this former type who never give up their attempt to uphold the standards of their idealized self-image]

It amounts to saying:

"I know I am imperfect, but I make believe I am not."

Not to recognize this dishonesty [i.e., NOT TO RECOGNIZE this dishonesty of PRETENDING NOT to be imperfect when one knows one IS in fact imperfect]

is comparatively easy when rationalized by

• conscientiousness,

• honorable

• standards and

• goals,

and a

• desire to be good.

The genuine [i.e., GENUINE rather than disingenuous or pretentious]

desire to better oneself leads one to accept [i.e., ACCEPT WITHOUT shame or guilt RATHER THAN deny, hide, or experience shame or guilt regarding]

the personality as it is now.
If this basic premise [i.e., this basic premise of FULLY ACCEPTING the personality as it is NOW while simultaneously DESIRING to BETTER oneself] is the main governing force of your motivation for perfection, any discovery of where you fall short of your ideals will not throw you into
• depression,
• anxiety, and
• guilt,
but will rather
• strengthen you.

You will not need to exaggerate the "badness" of the trait in question [i.e., exaggerate the “badness” of the trait where you fall short of your ideals], nor will you defend yourself against it [i.e., against the trait where you fall short of your ideals] with the excuse that it [i.e., with the excuse that the trait where you fall short of your ideals] is the fault of
• others,
• life,
• fate.

You will gain an objective view of yourself in this respect [i.e., in respect to this trait where you fall short of your ideals]

and this view [i.e., and this honest and objective view of yourself] will liberate you.
You will fully assume responsibility for the faulty attitude [i.e., for this faulty attitude, an attitude where you fall short of your ideals], being willing to take the consequences [i.e., take the consequences of having this faulty attitude upon yourself.

When you act out your idealized self, you dread nothing more than that [i.e., you dread nothing more than assuming responsibility of and taking the consequences for having this faulty attitude], for taking the responsibility of your shortcomings upon yourself is tantamount to saying, "I am not my idealized self."

A sense of failure, frustration, and compulsion, as well as guilt and shame, are the most outstanding indications that your idealized self is at work.

These [i.e., A sense of failure, frustration, compulsion, guilt and shame] are the consciously felt emotions out of all those [i.e., out of all those emotions] that lie hidden underneath.
The idealized self
has been called into existence
in order to
attain
• self-confidence
  and therefore, finally,
• happiness,
• pleasure supreme.

The stronger
  its presence [i.e., The stronger the presence of the idealized self],
the more
genuine
  self-confidence
  fades away.

Since
  you cannot live up to
  its standards [i.e., the standards of your idealized self-image],
you think
  even less of yourself
  than you originally did.

It is therefore obvious
that
genuine
  self-confidence
  can be established
  only when
  you remove
  the superstructure
  which is this merciless tyrant,
  your idealized self.
Yes,
    you could have self-confidence
    • if the idealized self
      were really you;
    and
    • if you could live up to
      these standards.

Since
    • this [i.e., Since being the idealized self and living up to its standards] is impossible
and since, deep down,
    • you know perfectly well
      you are not anything like
      what you
      think you are
      supposed to be,
with this "super self"
    • you build up
      additional insecurity,
    and
    • further vicious circles
      come into existence.

The
    original
    insecurity
    which was supposedly
    whisked away
    by the establishment of
    the idealized self,
    steadily increases.

It [i.e., The original insecurity]
    snowballs,
    and becomes worse
    and worse.
• The more insecure
  you feel,
• the more stringent
  the demands of the
  • superstructure or
  • idealized self,
• the less
  you are able to
  live up to it [i.e., live up to the more stringent demands
  of the idealized self], and
• the more insecure
  you feel.

It is very important to see
how this vicious circle
works.

But this [i.e., But seeing how this vicious circle works] cannnot be done
until and unless
you become
  fully aware of the
  • devious,
  • subtle,
  • unconscious
  ways
  in which
  this idealized self-image
  exists
  in your
  particular
  case.

Ask yourself
• in what
  particular areas
  it [i.e., YOUR idealized self-image]
  manifests.

• What
  • causes and
  • effects
  are connected with it [i.e., connected with YOUR idealized self-image]?
A further and drastic result of this problem [i.e., this problem of striving for the standards set by your idealized self-image] is the constantly increasing estrangement from the real self.

The idealized self is a falsity.

It [i.e., The idealized self] is a rigid, artificially constructed imitation of a live human being.

You may invest it [i.e., You may invest the idealized self] with many aspects of your real being; nevertheless, it [i.e., nevertheless the idealized self] remains an artificial construction.

The more you invest your energies, your personality, your thought processes, concepts, ideas, and ideals into it [i.e., into the idealized self], the more strength you take from the center of your being, which alone is amenable to growth.
This center of your being
is
• the only part of you,
• the real you,
  that can
  • live,
  • grow, and
  • be.

It [i.e., This center of your being, the real you, your REAL SELF]
is the only part
  that can
  properly
  guide you.

It alone [i.e., This center of your being, the real you, your REAL SELF, alone]
functions with
  all
  your capacities.

It [i.e., This center of your being, the real you, your REAL SELF]
is
• flexible and
• intuitive.

Its feelings alone [i.e., The feelings of this center of your being,
  the feelings of the real you, your REAL SELF, ALONE]
are
• true and
• valid
  even if,
  for the moment,
  they
  are not yet
  fully
  in
  • truth and
  • reality,
  in
  • perfection and
  • purity.
But the feelings of the real self
function in perfection
• relative to what you are now,
• not being able to be more,
in any given situation of your life.

The more you take out of that live center in order to invest into the robot you have created,
the more estranged you become from the real self and the more you
• weaken and
• impoverish it [i.e., the more you weaken and impoverish the REAL SELF].

In the course of this work, you have sometimes come upon the
• puzzling and
• often frightening question:
"Who am I really?"

This [i.e., Having this puzzling and often frightening question come up: "Who am I really?"]
is the result of the
• discrepancy and
• struggle between
• the real and
• the false self.
Only upon solving this most vital and profound question [i.e., Only in solving this most vital and profound question: “Who am I really?”]

will your
• live center
• respond and
• function to its full capacity,

will your
• intuition begin to function to its full capacity,
will you become
• spontaneous,
• free of all compulsions,

will you
• trust in your feelings because they [i.e., because your true inner feelings] will have an opportunity to
• mature and
• grow.

• Feelings will become every bit as reliable to you as your
• reasoning power
and your
• intellect.
All this [i.e., All this:
1) your LIVE CENTER responding and functioning to its full capacity,
2) your INTUITION functioning to its full capacity,
3) being SPONTANEOUS and FREE OF ALL COMPULSIONS,
4) TRUSTING your FEELINGS so that they can continuously mature]

is the

final

finding of self [i.e., the final finding of your REAL SELF].

Before this can be done,

a great many hurdles

have to be overcome.

It seems to you

that this [i.e., that this living from your LIVE CENTER and INTUITION, being
SPONTANEOUS and FREE of COMPULSIONS,
and TRUSTING your FEELINGS – being your REAL SELF]

is a

life or death

struggle.

You still believe you need

the idealized self

in order to

• live and
• be happy.

Once you understand that

this [i.e., that this belief that you need the idealized self in order to live
and be happy]

is not so,

you will be able to
give up the

pseudo-defense

that makes the
• maintenance and
• cultivation
of the idealized self
seem
necessary.
Once you understand that the idealized self was supposed to solve the particular problems in your life above and beyond your need [i.e., problems BEYOND your REAL NEED] for

• happiness,
• pleasure, and
• security,

you will come to see the wrong conclusion of this theory.

Once you
• go a step still further [i.e., a step beyond seeing your WRONG CONCLUSION, your wrong conclusion that you NEED the IDEALIZED SELF to be HAPPY]

and
• recognize the damage the idealized self has brought into your life,

you will shed it [i.e., you will shed the idealized self-image] as the burden it is.
No

• conviction,
• theory, or
• words you hear
will

make you
give it up [i.e., will MAKE you give up your idealized self-image],

but

the recognition of

what

• specifically it was supposed to solve [i.e., recognition of what
SPECIFIC PROBLEMS the idealized self was supposed to solve,
problems connected with false needs and hence problems that were
BEYOND your REAL NEED for happiness, pleasure, and security]

and

what

• damage it [i.e., what damage your ideal self-image]
  • has done and
  • is continuing to do

will enable you to dissolve this
image of all images.

Needless to say,
you also have to recognize

• most particularly and
• in detail
what your
specific
• demands and
• standards
are,

and, further,
you have to see
their

• unreasonableness [i.e., see the unreasonableness of your demands
and standards that are associated with YOUR idealized self-image],

their

• impossibility [i.e., see the impossibility of your demands
and standards that are associated with YOUR idealized self-image].
When you have a feeling of
  • acute anxiety and
  • depression,
consider the fact that your idealized self may feel
  • questioned and
  • threatened, either by
    • your own limitations,
    by
    • others,
  or by
    • life.

Recognize the self-contempt [i.e., self-distain, self-despising] that underlies the
  • anxiety or
  • depression.

When you are compulsively angry at others, consider the possibility that this [i.e., that this compulsive anger at others] is but an externalization of your anger at yourself for not living up to the standards of your false self [i.e. standards of YOUR idealized self].
**Do not let it** [i.e., Do not let your anxiety, depression, or anger] get away with using the excuse of outer problems to account for • acute depression or • fear.

**Look into the question** [i.e., the question of your anxiety, depression, or anger] from this new angle [i.e., from the angle of your not living up to the standards of your idealized self-image].

Your • private and • personal work will help you in this direction, but it is almost impossible to do it alone.

**Only after** you have made some substantial progress will you recognize that so many of these outer problems are • directly or • indirectly the result of • the discrepancy between • your capacities and • the standards of your idealized self and • how you deal with this conflict [i.e., this inner conflict that occurs when your limited capacities prevent you from meeting the standards of your idealized self-image].
So, as you proceed in this particular phase of the work [i.e., this phase where you work with your idealized self-image], you will come to understand the exact nature of your idealized self:

- its [i.e., YOUR idealized self’s] demands,
- its [i.e., YOUR idealized self’s] requirements of self and others in order to maintain the illusion [i.e. maintain the illusion that you ARE your idealized self].

Once you fully see that what you regarded as commendable is really pride and pretense, you will have gained a most substantial insight that enables you to weaken the impact of the idealized self.

Then, and then only [i.e., When, and only when, you FULLY realize that what you regarded as commendable is NOT commendable but is in fact pride and pretense and have, by this realization of the truth, weakened the impact of the idealized self], will you realize the tremendous self-punishment you inflict upon yourself.
For whenever you fall short [i.e., fall short of the standards and demands of your idealized self-image], as you are bound to,
you feel so
• impatient,
so
• irritated,
that your feelings can snowball into fury and wrath at yourself.

This fury and wrath is often projected on others because it is too unbearable to be aware of self-hate, unless one
• unrolls this whole process and
• sees it [i.e., and sees this whole process] in the entire light.

Nevertheless, even if this hate [i.e., this self-hate] is unloaded upon others,
• the effect on [i.e., the effect of this self-hate on] the self is still there and
• it [i.e., and this self-hate] can cause
• disease,
• accident,
• loss, and
• outer failure in many ways.
When you make the very first steps toward giving up the idealized self, you will feel a sense of liberation as never before.

Then [i.e., Then, in feeling this sense of liberation as you give up the idealized self,] you will be truly born again;

your real self will emerge.

Then [i.e., Then, in feeling this sense of liberation as you give up the idealized self,] you will rest within your real self, centered within.

Then [i.e., Then, in feeling this sense of liberation as you give up the idealized self,] you will truly grow, not only on the outer fringes that may have been free of the idealized self’s dictatorship, but

• wholly and
• fully free in every part of your being.
This [i.e., This sense of liberation as you give up the idealized self] will change many things.

First will come
changes in your reactions
to
• life,
to
• incidents,
to
• yourself and
• others.

This changed reaction [i.e., This changed reaction to life, incidents, yourself and others that comes with sense of liberation as you give up the idealized self] will be astounding enough,

but
little by little,
outer things are also bound to change.

Your different attitude [i.e., Your different attitude that comes with this sense of liberation as you give up the idealized self] will have new effects.

Overcoming your idealized self means
overcoming an important aspect of the duality between
• life and
• death.
At present
you are not even
aware
of the
• pressure of your idealized self,
of the
  • shame,
  • humiliation,
  • exposure
  you
    • fear
      and sometimes
    • feel,
of the
  • tension,
  • strain, and
  • compulsion.

If you have
an occasional glimpse
of such emotions,
you do
not as yet
connect them [i.e., do NOT AS YET connect such emotions]
with the
fantastic demands
of your idealized self.

Only after
fully seeing
• these fantastic expectations and
• their
  often contradictory
  imperatives
  will you relinquish them [i.e., relinquish the fantastic
  expectations and demands of your idealized self-image].

The initial
inner freedom
gained in this way [i.e., gained by relinquishing the demands of your
idealized self-image]
will allow you
to
• deal with life and
to
• stand in life.
You will no longer have to hold on frantically to the idealized self.

The mere inner activity of holding on so frantically [i.e. holding on so frantically to the idealized self-image] generates a pervasive climate of holding on in general.

This [i.e., This pervasive climate of HOLDING ON in general] is sometimes lived out in
• external
  • attitudes,
but most often it is an • inner
  • quality or • attitude.

As you proceed in this new phase of your work, you will
• sense and • feel this inner tightness
and gradually you will
• recognize the basic damage it causes [i.e., recognize the basic damage this inner tightness causes].

It [i.e., This inner tightness from the demands of your idealized self-image] makes the letting go of many an attitude impossible.
It [i.e., This inner tightness from the demands of your idealized self-image] makes it unduly difficult to go through any change that would allow life to bring forth • joy and • a spirit of vigor.

You keep yourself contained within yourself and thereby you go against life in one of its most fundamental aspects.

The words [i.e., The WORDS “keeping yourself contained” and “going against life” when you experience inner tightness because of the demands of your idealized self-image] are insufficient; you have to sense rather [i.e., rather you have to SENSE] what I mean [i.e., sense what I mean by these words].

You will know exactly [i.e., exactly what I mean] when you have weakened your idealized self by fully understanding its [i.e., by fully understanding your idealized self-image’s] • function, its [i.e., by fully understanding your idealized self-image’s] • causes and • effects.
Then [i.e., Then, when you fully understand your idealized self-image’s function and its causes and effects.]

you will gain
the great freedom of
giving
yourself
to life
because
you no longer have to hide something
from
• yourself
and
• others.

You will be able to
squander yourself
into life,
not in an
• unhealthy,
• unreasonable
way,
but
• healthily
as nature
squanders herself.

Then,
and then only [i.e., When you are FREE enough from your idealized self-image to be able to SQUANDER YOURSELF into LIFE, healthily, as nature squanders herself into life, THEN, and then only]

will you
know
the beauty of
living.
You cannot approach this most important part of your inner work with a general concept.

As usual, your most insignificant daily reactions, considered from this viewpoint [i.e., from the point of view of your idealized self-image], will yield the necessary results.

So continue your self-search out of these new considerations and do not be impatient if it takes • time and • relaxed effort

One more word:

The difference between the • real and the • idealized self is often not a question of • quantity, but rather of • quality.

That is, the original motivation is different in these two selves.
This [i.e., This difference between the original motivation in the REAL-self 
and the original motivation in the IDEAL-self] will
not be easy to see,
but as you recognize the
• demands,
the
• contradictions,
the
• cause-and-effect sequences,

the difference in motivation [i.e., the difference in motivation between 
the motivations of the REAL-self and those of the IDEAL-self] will
gradually become clear to you.

Another important consideration is the time element.

The idealized self wants to be perfect,
according to its specific demands, right now.

The real self knows this cannot be [i.e., KNOWS that it can NOT be perfect right NOW],
it [i.e., the real self]
• knows that it is imperfect
and
• does not suffer from this fact [i.e., does not suffer from this fact that it is imperfect].
The real self
is a complex
of everything you are at the moment.

Of course you have your basic egocentricity, but if you own up to it [i.e., if you own up to your basic egocentricity], you can cope with it.

You can learn to understand it [i.e., to understand your egocentricity] and therefore diminish it [i.e., diminish your egocentricity] with each new insight.

Then you will truly experience the truth that the more • egocentric you are, the less • self-confident you can be.

The idealized self believes just the opposite [i.e., the idealized self believes that the more egocentric you are, then the MORE self-confident you can be].

Its [i.e., The idealized self’s] claims for perfection are motivated by purely egocentric reasons, and this very egocentricity makes self-confidence impossible.
The great freedom
  of coming home, my friends,
   is finding your way back to
    the real you.

The expression
"coming home"
  has often been used in
    spiritual
      • literature and
      • teachings,
but it [i.e., but the expression, “coming home”]
  has been
    much misunderstood.

It [i.e., The expression, “Coming home”]
  is often interpreted to mean
    the return into
      the spirit world
        after
          physical death.

Much more
  is meant by
    coming home.

You may die many deaths,
  one earth life
    after another,
but if you have
  not found
    your real self,
you cannot
  come home.

You may
  • be lost
    and
  • remain lost
    until
      you do find the way
        into
          the center of your being.
On the other hand, you can find your way home right • here and right • now while you are still in the body.

When you muster the courage of becoming your real self, even though it would seem much less than the idealized self, you will find out that it is much more [i.e., you will find out the truth that your REAL self is much MORE THAN your IDEALIZED self].

Then [i.e., Then, when you realize the truth that your REAL self is much MORE THAN your IDEALIZED self.] you will have • the peace of being at home within yourself.

Then [i.e., Then, when you realize the truth that your REAL self is much MORE THAN your IDEALIZED self.] you will find • security.

Then [i.e., Then, when you realize the truth that your REAL self is much MORE THAN your IDEALIZED self.] you will • function as a whole human being.
Then [i.e., Then, when you realize the truth that
your REAL self is much MORE THAN your IDEALIZED self.]
you will have
• broken the iron whip of a taskmaster
  whom it is impossible to obey.

Then [i.e., Then, when you realize the truth that
your REAL self is much MORE THAN your IDEALIZED self.]
you will
know
what
• peace and
• security
  really mean.

You will cease once and for all
to seek them [i.e., cease once and for all to seek PEACE and SECURITY]
by false means.
Are there any questions?

**QUESTION:**

So

• the real self
do not have two souls,
• no duality?

**ANSWER:**

Of course not.

The duality

crases to exist
once you
accept
yourself
as
part
• good and
part
• bad,
as consisting
partly of the
• higher and
partly of the
• lower
self.

These two sides [i.e., The higher self and the lower self, the good part and the bad part]

will

• be integrated and
• live in peace with each other
once you
accept
yourself
as having
both.
And only then [i.e., only when you ACCEPT yourself as having BOTH
the higher self and the lower self, the good part and the bad part]
can the
lower side
gradually
• develop and
• grow out of its blindness.

But
as long as you
• do not reconcile yourself
to being
both
• good
and
• bad,
as long as you
• battle against this "badness"
and
• believe you cannot tolerate it [i.e., cannot tolerate this “badness”],
duality exists.

By
accepting
your lower self
you can
gradually
overcome
• it [i.e., gradually overcome your lower self]
as well as
• the duality
between the
• higher
and the
• lower
self.

By nonacceptance [i.e., By nonacceptance of your lower self]
you
increase
the duality.
This is also the case with
• life
    and
• death.

By
accepting
death,
the duality
between
• life
    and
• death
is gradually decreased
    until it [i.e., until the duality between life and death]
    disappears altogether.

By
struggling
against
death,
as you struggle against your lower self,
the duality
increases.

QUESTION:
Could you tell us what Goethe meant by saying,
"Two souls dwell in my breast"?

ANSWER:
It [i.e., The expression “Two souls dwell in my breast”]
can be interpreted to mean
• the higher
    and
• the lower
    self.
And it [i.e., and, “Two souls dwell in my breast”]
can also be interpreted to mean
the duality
between the
  • idealized
and the
  • real
  self.

The lack of peace
between the
  • higher
and the
  • lower
  self
brings the
  idealized self [i.e., the idealized self, or the mask self, as the
  idealized self is also called]
  into existence.

These two dualities [i.e., 1) the duality between the HIGHER self and the LOWER
  self and 2) the duality between the IDEALIZED self and the REAL self]
are interdependent.

You see,
the more
  • the idealized self [i.e., the more the idealized self, or the mask self,
  as the idealized self is also called]
  is put
  between
  • the real self
  and
  • life,
the less
  • can life
  • grow,
the more
  • it [i.e., the more life]
  • shrinks and
  • is prohibited from functioning.
QUESTION:
In modern psychology
we frequently hear the word
schizophrenia
applied to people who are
psychotic.

According to your talk,
tonight and previously,
we are
all
• fragmented and
• split.

Is this duality [i.e., Is this duality, this fragmentation that all people experience.]
only
a matter of degree?

ANSWER:
Yes, it [i.e., Yes, this duality, this fragmentation that all people experience.]
is a matter
of
• degree,
of
• intensity,
and
of
• how many areas of the personality it includes.

For
• the clinical psychotic,
  the areas
  where the self
  is not accepted
  are overwhelming.

For
• a more normal person
  who can function in life,
  the idealized self
  may pervade the whole personality,
  but there is still
  a certain sense of reality.
QUESTION:
In the last lecture [See Lecture 82: The Conquest of Duality Symbolized in the Life and Death of Jesus given on March 31, 1961 – Good Friday]

we learned that
it is important for us
to face death
in order
to live fully.

There is, at present, great publicity given to the trial of Adolf Eichmann.

My questions are,
one,
• can we, and
• should we,
try to face
the death of these millions of unfortunates
in order to
learn something for ourselves individually?

Two,
• is it healthy
to revive an era of
• death and
• destruction?

Three,
• can any positive lesson be learned by mankind through reviving this [i.e., through reviving and recalling this era of death and destruction]?
ANSWER:
Answering first the question:

Can any lesson be learned about
  • life and
  • death,
  or
  • any other topic,
    for that matter?

That depends entirely on
you, the individual,
whether or not
you
  • can or
  • want to
    learn a lesson.

But as to
  the lesson of

death,

I venture to say
that
every individual
has to
go through that [i.e., go through death]

personally,

whether it be
  • actual physical death,
  or
  • the many little everyday dyings
    I discussed recently.
I think it would be very dangerous to assume that one person can learn through the tragedy of another in this particular sense.

It would be dangerous [i.e., It would be dangerous to assume that one person can learn through the tragedy of another] because it would make for a smugness in that individual [i.e., in that individual who assumed that he or she could learn through the tragedy of another], which could possibly wind up in • passive, or eventually even in • active, cruelty.

Such a person might condone cruelty in an • insidious and • subtle way.

Certain things one can learn only by going through them oneself.

There are other ways in which one could, at least theoretically, learn through other people's experiences, if one is open.
However, experience shows that most individuals have to learn their own lessons through their own mistakes, not by the mistakes that others make, and not by the experiences others have.

If in isolated cases this [i.e., learning from the mistakes and experiences of others] does occur, all the better.

But there is no general law that can proclaim one particular happening as more conducive to learn from than another.

Theoretically, one could learn from any occurrence in life.

Mostly it is easier to learn a lesson from
• one's own
• tiny insignificant disappointments

than from
• another person's
• tragedy.
As to the second question [i.e., “Is it healthy to revive an era of death and destruction?”], my dear friends,

I cannot answer that with
• a yes
or
• a no.

Again, it depends on the individual.

A positive lesson could be learned by
• individuals,
as well as by
• humanity in general,
if they recall this era of destruction and cruelty.

And a negative lesson could also be learned through it [i.e., through recalling this past era of destruction and cruelty].

By the same token,
• a positive as well as
• a negative lesson could be learned by
  not
  reviving it.

There is no yes or no.

There is no pat answer to either of these two alternatives [i.e., the alternatives of either 1) reviving this era of destruction and cruelty, or 2) NOT reviving and recalling this era].
As long as
• people are governed mostly by
  • vindictiveness, by
  • hatred, and by
  • revenge,
and
• these emotions remain predominant,

there will be no lesson [i.e., no lesson learned by recalling and reviving this past era of destruction and cruelty].

If, on the other hand,
the main motivations [i.e., the main motivations for recalling and reviving this past era of destruction and cruelty]
are
• truly and genuinely more
  • constructive than
  • destructive – not only
    • proclaimed,
    but
    • truly felt –

the lesson [i.e., the lesson learned by recalling and reviving this past era of destruction and cruelty]
will be a positive one.
On the other hand, not reviving it [i.e., NOT recalling and reviving this past era of destruction and cruelty] could also happen out of negative motives, such as • cowardice, • fear, • indifference, • opportunism, • resignation.

This would then be a negative lesson.

Not reviving it [i.e., NOT recalling and reviving this past era of destruction and cruelty] could as well come out of a true wisdom that knows that the laws of the divine world take care of everything.

But this [i.e., But this fact that the laws of the divine world take care of everything] certainly does not mean that criminals should not suffer the consequences.

The approach of • taking it upon oneself to punish another human being is a very different one from the approach of • making further cruelty impossible, while healing criminals of their disease – if they are at all willing to accept the necessary help.
QUESTION:
To what extent should humans take it upon themselves to punish a criminal?

ANSWER:
It is not up to human beings to punish.

Your course of action
• should be,
and one day
• will be,
to also take upon yourself the responsibility that any crime can happen through wrong
• values,
wrong
• systems,
wrong
• education,
wrong
• attitudes.

With that recognition the weight will be shifted from
• punishment to
• healing.
But

the possibility of perpetrating further crimes by such people should be strictly avoided by curtailing their

• outer freedom,

while helping them to gain their

• inner freedom

through treatment.

This [i.e., Curtailing criminals’ OUTER freedom while helping them to gain their INNER freedom through treatment and eventual healing] would feel like punishment anyway for the criminal, for

• the infringement of personal freedom,

as well as

• the painful process of healing the soul, may be every bit as difficult as

• death or

• life in prison,

only it would be much more constructive.

All this will come about one day.

May you all find

• truth and

• help and

• further enlightenment through the words I gave you tonight.
However,
you should
• understand and
• expect
  that a
  theoretical understanding,
  especially now,
  will avail you nothing.

As long as these words
remain
theory
you will
not be helped by them.

When you
• begin or
• continue
to
• work in this direction and
• allow yourself to
  • feel and
  • observe
    your
    emotional reactions
    connected to
    your idealized self,
then
you will make
substantial progress
in your own
• liberation and
• self-finding
  in the truest sense of the word.
Now
my dearest ones,
each one of you,
receive
our
• love,
our
• strength, and
our
• blessings.

Be in
• peace,
be in
• God!

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