Pathwork Lecture 158: The Ego’s Cooperation with or Obstruction of the Real Self

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/](https://www.garyvollbracht.com/pathwork-lectures/pathwork-lectures-devotional-format/)

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Greetings,
my dearest friends.

May

- blessings and
- strength,
- understanding of truth, and
- vital flow of
  - universal energy
    - fill and
    - sustain
      you
      as you
      **hear these words and**
      as you
      **take them with you** –
      perhaps more as an
      - inner effect
        on your psychic forces
      than as an
      - intellectual memory of the words.
Many of my friends on this intensive path of self-realization have come to a crossroads where they see the old inner landscape, which is fear:

- fear of life,
- fear of death,
- fear of pleasure,
- fear of giving up control,
- fear of feelings –
- fear of being, as such.

It takes considerable self-confrontation, as you all know, to be aware of these fears.

They [i.e., All these fears – fears of life, death, pleasure, giving up control, feelings, and fear of being, as such] are usually covered up, but they exist nevertheless.

Many of my friends have come to the point where, to their surprise and dismay, they suddenly begin to see how they fear all these aspects of life I just mentioned.
As awareness of these fears increases, one
• gradually and
• automatically also becomes aware of the • effects these heretofore unconscious • fears have on one’s life:

• what they [i.e., what these fears] make one do and
• how they [i.e., and how these fears] make one withdraw from living.

One then begins to understand those vague feelings of missing out on life that one usually has without quite knowing why, and one begins to realize how much one misses.

My friends, you do miss out on life itself.

You miss the creative process of living by fearing this process [i.e., by fearing this creative process of living].
I now wish to discuss

- some aspects of these fears [i.e., some aspects of these fears of life, death, pleasure, giving up control, feelings, and fear of being, as such],
- their common denominator,

  which will indicate to you

  how to correct

  an unnecessary condition of

  - fear,
  - frustration, and
  - pain.

For even those of you

who have not as yet discovered

that these fears exist

will sooner or later

discover their existence,

especially when

you find yourself

  - dynamically growing

  and

  - moving on a path of

    - development and
    - self-realization.

When you thus become aware of

how you were hiding from life

because of these fears,

my words –

  - retrospectively and
  - retroactively –

will become very helpful.

They [i.e., My words of this lecture tonight] may create

  a seed in your psyche now,

  which will come to fruition

  when

  the whole of you

  is ready to

    - see the problem [i.e., the problem of fear]

    and

    - resolve it.

To cope with these fears

is truly the main problem of life.
The nature of all these fears [i.e., the nature of all these FEARS: fear of LIFE, fear of DEATH, fear of PLEASURE, fear of GIVING UP CONTROL, fear of FEELINGS, and fear of BEING, as such]
is a misunderstanding of
• the function of the ego
and
• its relation to
the real self.

This relation [i.e., This relation between the EGO and the REAL SELF, the DIVINE SELF]
is
• extremely subtle and
• difficult to put into words,
for, as all truths of life,
it [i.e., this RELATION between the EGO and the REAL SELF] is full of
apparent contradictions;
at least as long as you find yourself
• thinking
and
• living
in a dualistic way.

The moment you transcend dualism,
two
• opposite
and
• apparently mutually exclusive aspects become equally true.

This [i.e., This fact, that the moment you transcend dualism TWO OPPOSITES and apparently mutually exclusive aspects become EQUALLY TRUE] applies to
• the ego
in relation to
• the real self.
It is true when one says the ego's predominance, its exaggerated strength, is the greatest hindrance to productive living.

And it is equally true when one says a weak ego is incapable of establishing healthy living.

These [i.e., These two statements about the ego] are not
• opposites or
• mutually exclusive facts,
  my friends.

Before we go into greater detail, let me, first of all, stress that humanity's unhappy condition is due primarily to ignorance about the real self.

At best, the more enlightened human beings accept its existence [i.e., accept that the real self, the divine self, EXISTS] as a philosophical precept, but this [i.e., but this belief or acceptance of the real self’s existence, but believing or accepting this merely as a philosophical precept] is completely different from the experience – the
• living,
• dynamic experience – of its existence [i.e., EXPERIENCE of the real self’s existence].
If people were educated with
  • the idea and
  • the goal
    that they contain
    something deep within themselves
    that is
    infinitely superior to
    the ego self;
  • they would be given
    the opportunity,
    by
    • experimentation and
    • exploration,
      to seek communication with
      this nucleus [i.e., this nucleus that is superior to the ego].

  • They would become able to
    reach
    their true inner being [i.e., become able to reach the real self].

Since this is not the case [i.e., Since people are NOT so educated with this idea], people become
more
and more limited
in their
• concepts and
• goals.

They ignore
that there is anything else alive in them
besides
the ego.
Even those of you who have, for years, formed a concept of the • real self, of the • creative substance that enlivens every human being, forget in ninety-five percent of your daily lives that this creative being [i.e., the real self] • lives and • moves in you and you • live and • move in it [i.e., you live and move in this creative being, in the real self].

You forget its existence [i.e., You forget the existence of the real self, this creative being].

You do not reach for its wisdom.

You stake all your reliance on your • limited • outer ego self.

You neglect to open yourself for the deeper self’s [i.e., for the real self’s] • truth and • feelings.
You go blithely ahead
as though there really were
nothing else
but
• your conscious mind,
• your ego self
  with its
    immediately accessible
    • thinking processes
    and
    • will force.

With that attitude [i.e., With the attitude that there is nothing but the conscious ego]
you shortchange yourself greatly.

Such forgetfulness [i.e., Such forgetfulness of the real self’s truth and feelings]
inevitably
has various consequences.

The first one is [i.e., The first consequence of
forgetting the real self’s truth and feelings is]

the question of
• identification.

When you
identify yourself
exclusively
with
• the ego or
• outer conscious self,
when your
sense of self is
predominantly
associated with
• the ego functions,
• you become
  completely imbalanced
and
• your life
  becomes emptied of
  • substance and
  • meaning.
Since the ego cannot
  • replace,
  or in any way
  • come near,
    the resourcefulness of
    the real self,
it is inevitable that
such people [i.e., such people who are identified exclusively with the ego] – and they comprise the majority of human beings –
become
tremendously
  • frightened and
  • insecure.

• They must feel inadequate,
and
• their sense
  of
    • life,
    of
    • living,
    of
    • self

  must become
  very
  • flat and
  • unenjoyable.

 Substitute pleasures
 are then [i.e., When the ego is cut off from the resources of the real self
 and your sense of life, living, and self is very flat and
 unenjoyable, then substitute pleasures are] –
  often frantically –
looked for,
which
  • are hollow
  and
  • leave you
    • exhausted and
    • dissatisfied.
The ego cannot add
  • deep feelings
  and a
  • deep flavor
to living.

Nor can it [i.e., Nor can the ego, disconnected from the real self,]
produce
  • profound and
  • creative
  wisdom.

The ego can only
  • memorize,
  • learn,
  • collect
    other people's
    creative knowledge,
  • repeat, and
  • copy.

It [i.e., The ego] is equipped
to
  • remember,
to
  • sort out,
to
  • select,
to
  • make up the mind,
to
  • move in a certain direction –
    • outward
    or
    • inward.

These are its [i.e., These are the ego’s]
functions.
But it is not the ego's function to • feel, to • experience deeply and to • know deeply, which is to be creative.

When I say creative, I do not merely mean artistically creative.

Every simple act of living can be creative, provided you are activated by the real self.

Every act is uncreative when you are cut off from the real self, no matter how much effort you put into it.

In fact, the real self is effortless.

Wherever it manifests [i.e., Wherever the real self manifests], effort exists, but it is always effortless effort.

This, too, may appear a contradiction.
Let us come back to those fundamental human fears I listed before [i.e., FEAR of LIFE, fear of DEATH, fear of PLEASURE, fear of GIVING UP CONTROL, fear of FEELINGS, and fear of BEING as such]

and consider them in the light of this information.

As I said, these fears come into being as a result of
• cutting off from the real self
and
• remaining in ignorance,
• living with false ideas.

Let us begin with the fear of death, since it is this particular fear that casts such a shadow into everyone's life.

If you predominantly identify with your ego, your fear of death is really quite justified, for the ego dies indeed.

This may sound like a frightening statement for those who have not experienced yet the
• truth and
• reality of their inner being.
It [i.e., This statement, “the ego DIES,.”] is frightening precisely for the reason I just mentioned, namely that a sense of • being, of • existing, a sense of • self, exists for so many by identifying only with the ego.

This [i.e., Because ONLY the EGO dies.] is why no human being who • has activated his real self and • experiences it [i.e., EXPERIENCES his real self] as a daily reality is ever afraid of death.

[When one experiences one’s real self as a daily reality] One • feels and • knows one's immortal nature, one is filled with its eternal quality; it [i.e., the real self; one’s eternal quality.] can only be a continuum, for this is its [i.e., for being an eternal continuum is the real self’s] inherent nature.
This [i.e., This fact that the real self, one’s immortal nature, can only be a continuum and cannot ever die] cannot be explained by the logic the ego is used to; such logic is much too limited to comprehend this.

A vicious circle comes into existence when the ego is given undue importance in one’s sense of being alive.

If one cannot conceive of any other reality of
• thinking,
• feeling, and
• being in oneself but
the reality of the ego,
one cannot, of course, experience
• the higher faculties and
• the greater reality of
the real self.

Therefore, hearing that the ego-faculties, which one considers the only real ones, cease to exist must seem frightening.
But for those of you who have experienced the stark reality of the real self, this statement [i.e., this statement that the ego does indeed die] can never be frightening.

You then know perfectly well how:
- inferior,
- fleeting, and
- insufficient
the ego is as compared to the reality of the inner eternal being, which you will experience as eternal whenever you encounter it.

Therefore, fear of death must exist only when one's sense of self is exclusively attached to the ego self.

I want to add here that an intellectual acceptance of the real self as a philosophical precept will not alleviate fear of death because it [i.e., because mere INTELLECTUAL ACCEPTANCE of the existence of the real self] cannot give:
- a sense of reality and
- true experience of the real self.
| This [i.e., This sense of reality and true EXPERIENCE of the real self] requires more. |
| It [i.e., This sense of reality and true EXPERIENCE of the real self] requires an |
| • actualization of |
| the faculties of |
| the real self. |
| This [i.e., This ACTUALIZATION of the faculties of the real self], as you know, |
| necessitates |
| certain |
| very definite |
| stages of development. |
| I will say more about this later. |

| The next fear on the list would be |
| fear of |
| life. |
| You have heard me say innumerable times that |
| whoever fears |
| • life |
| must fear |
| • death, |
| and |
| whoever fears |
| • death |
| must fear |
| • life, |
| because they [i.e., because life and death] are really |
| both the same. |
This statement [i.e., This statement that life and death are really the same thing] can also be truly understood only when one experiences the real self, which reconciles [i.e., an EXPERIENCE of the real self RECONCILES] all apparent opposites.

Then [i.e., Then, when one EXPERIENCES the real self,] one sees that • life and • death are the • sunny and the • shadow sides – if I may put it this way – of a certain manifestation of consciousness, nothing more nor less.

Now, the fear of life is justified when one's sense of identification is exclusively attached to the ego.

For the ego's capacities • to cope with life and • to live life productively are extremely limited.
In fact, they [i.e., In fact, the ego’s capacities 
it to cope with life and to live life productively]

• are downright insufficient
  and
• must leave the individual
  • uncertain,
  • insecure,
  • inadequate.

The real self,
on the other hand,
always has
• answers,
always has
• solutions,
  no matter what the problem is;
it [i.e., the real self]
always makes
  any experience,
  regardless of how
  • unnecessary and
  • futile
  it may seem at first,
a deeply meaningful
  steppingstone toward
  further expansion.

It [i.e., The real self]
increases
• the experience of life
  and
• the realization of one's inherent potentials.

It [i.e., The real self]
therefore
has the capacity
  to render you
  more
  • alive,
  more
  • fulfilled,
  and
  • steadily stronger.
Certainly,
none of this
can be said about
the ego.

The ego
is constantly ensnared
in apparently insoluble
• situations,
• problems, and
• conflicts.

The ego
is adapted
exclusively
to the level of duality:
• this
  versus
• that,
• right
  versus
• wrong,
• black
  versus
• white,
• good
  versus
• bad.

As you know,
this [i.e., this either/or duality]
is inadequate
for approaching
most of life's problems.

Apart from the fact that
no truth
can be found
if one looks at
• one side as
  • black
and
• the other as
  • white,
the dimensions of these problems
include many other considerations.
The ego
is incapable
of
• transcending the dualistic level,
of
• bringing into harmony
  the truth of
  both sides,
as it were.

Therefore it [i.e., Therefore the ego]
• cannot find solutions
  and
• is perpetually
  • trapped and
  • anxious.

Thus,
an ego identification
brings
fear of life
  automatically
  in its wake.

The next on the list [i.e., The next fear on the list of fears]
might be
• fear of
  • pleasure.

For those of you
whose self-exploration
is still not extremely deep,
such a statement [i.e., such a statement as “one fears pleasure”]
may sound absolutely incredible –
  just as
• fear of
  • happiness
  would.
You would then [i.e., then, in thinking fear of pleasure to be absolutely incredible.] say to yourself,

"This [i.e., This “having fear of pleasure”] has no application to me."

But let me tell you that everyone,

to the degree they feel
• unhappy,
• unfulfilled, and
• empty,
fears
• happiness,
• fulfillment, and
• pleasure,
no matter how much they
• strain and
• yearn
for it
on the conscious level.

It [i.e., The statement that to the degree one feels unhappy, unfulfilled, and empty to that degree one must FEAR happiness, fulfillment, and pleasure] must
be so;

it is the equation [i.e., it is the equation relating one’s level of EXPERIENCE of UNhappiness to one’s level of FEAR of HAPPINESS] that must come out even.

Your life
demonstrates the fact,
for your life
is never a product
of
• circumstances beyond your control,
or
of
• causes beyond those you inwardly set in motion.
It [i.e., Your life] is always a product of your own inner consciousness.

You know this [i.e., You know that your life is ALWAYS a product of your own inner consciousness] in

- theory

as well as

in

- practice.

At least those of you who have made some self-discoveries come more and more to see that, in one way or another, you have created and are creating whatever is amiss.

Don't you ever forget this.

Now then, fear of

- pleasure,

of

- happiness,

of

- fulfillment,

is a reality applicable to all human beings.
At first, it [i.e., At first, FEAR of pleasure, happiness, fulfillment being a REALITY] is only a question of connecting consciously with this fear.

The moment you do so [i.e., the moment you connect consciously with this FEAR of pleasure, happiness, fulfillment as being a REALITY in you], you will then, at last, understand why your life does not yield what another part of you so ardently wishes.

The more the ego cramps up to get what you want consciously, forgetting that it is not the ego alone that can attain it, the less can fulfillment be possible.

Yet it is not the conscious ego that necessarily obstructs it, but some other part of your being, which is neither the • ego nor the • real self.
However,
The conscious ego
is often
blindly driven
to act the way the
• unconscious,
• fearful,
• life-refusing
part
dictates.

This [i.e., This fact that the conscious ego is often driven to act the way the unconscious, fearful, life-refusing part of your being dictates]
is then
• rationalized and
• explained away.

Even when one pays allegiance
only
to the active ego self
with its consciousness,
even then
the ego self
is no more than
an obedient agent,
whether you know it or not.

The question is only
whether
the ego follows
• erroneous destructive drives
or whether
it is activated by
• the real self.

Hence, it is absolutely essential
that you be open to
your own inner reactions
which
shrink from
• happiness and
• pleasure.
To understand this in context,
I should like to say to you now:

If you derive your sense of self
only
from
the ego faculties,
giving up the ego
must seem
terribly frightening.

And right here
is where you are
c caught in an
insoluble conflict
as long as
you remain stuck in it:

• unfoldment and
• pleasure,
• delight and
• creative living,
• fulfillment and
• happiness,
can exist
only
when
• the real self
is activated,
when
• you do not identify
exclusively with
the ego,
but [i.e., but instead]
when
• you are
• connected and
• identified
with the
• real self,
with the
• eternal,
• creative
substance of your being.
And here is what is important:

this [i.e., this attainment of unfoldment, pleasure, delight, creative living, fulfillment, and happiness, that comes from connecting and identifying with the real self, with the eternal, creative substance of your being,]
necessitates
letting go of
the
direct
ego controls.

It requires
• trust and
• courage
to surrender to
an inner movement
that is
not responsive to
the outer
• thinking and
• willing
faculties.

It is easy to ascertain
the truth of this statement [i.e., the truth of this statement that attainment of unfoldment, pleasure, delight, creative living, fulfillment, and happiness requires the trust and courage to surrender to the real self, to the eternal, creative substance of your being]
when you ponder a minute
the heightened moments in your life.
Whatever was truly
• pleasurable,
• inspired,
• effortless,
• fearless,
• creative, and
• deeply joyful
was precisely due to this
• letting go and
• being animated by
  something other than
  the usual faculties
  under the direct determination of
  the outer self.

Then [i.e., Then, when you let go of direct ego control and are animated
by the real self, by the eternal, creative substance of your being]

happiness is not only
• possible
but is
• a natural byproduct.

• You cannot be the real self without
  being happy,

and
• you cannot be happy
  unless you are
    • integrated with, and
    • enlivened by,
      the real self.

This [i.e., This happiness that happens when you are integrated with and
  enlivened by the real self]

is the kind of happiness that knows no
• fear of ending or
• loss or
• unwelcome byproducts.
It [i.e., This happiness that happens when you are integrated with and enlivened by the real self]

*is the kind of happiness,*

*as I said elsewhere,*

*that is,*

*at one and the same time,*

• dynamic,
• stimulating,
• exciting,
• vibrantly alive,
and yet
• peaceful.

**There is no longer**

**any split from**

• separating these concepts [i.e., There is no longer any split from SEPARATING (happy feelings of excitement and vibrancy) on the one hand from (happy feelings of peacefulness) on the other]

and

• making them [i.e., and making feelings of excitement and feelings of peace] mutually exclusive,
  which is what
  the dualistic ego
does.

**In the split way of experiencing life,**

• peacefulness excludes
  • excitement
  and brings
  • boredom.

Excitement
excludes
  • peace
and
brings
  • anxiety and
  • tension.

You are confronted, as in so many other instances,
with a choice that is no longer necessary
when you enter the realm of
the unified real self.
How can you embrace fearlessly a state that must dispense with the ego faculties when your sense of being alive seems to come exclusively from these ego faculties?

This is just where you are trapped.

Unless you see your fear of happiness in this light [i.e., in this light of being exclusively identified with the ego], you will not find your way out of this trap.

You will be constantly vacillating.

On the one hand, you will be terrified of letting go of the ego.

On the other, you will be constantly in a state of greater or lesser hopelessness that may be more or less conscious.

A feeling of
• missing out on your life,
• lacking something essential, will haunt you, because what is necessary to alleviate this condition cannot come about until you let go of the ego’s predominance.
This brings me to the next very much related fear on the list, and that is
the fear of letting go.

If, again,
one's sense of self
derives exclusively from the ego,
the personality
is unable to let go.

Letting go
would then mean
annihilation.

But for those
who have begun,
• first here or there,
• little by little,
to see the
• truth and
• reality
of the real self,
letting go
will not only be
• without danger,
it [i.e., letting go]
will be
• life itself.

Only gradually
do you become acclimated to
the new
• condition,
the new
• vibrations,
the new ways of
• the real self’s functioning.

But this is certainly [i.e., But the real self’s new way of functioning is certainly]
not incompatible with
living in a body
on this earth sphere.
Not at all.
It [i.e., This living in this new way of the real self's functioning] merely means harmonious interaction between
• the ego
and
• the real self.

It [i.e., This living with harmonious interaction between the ego and the real self] means knowing the ego's
• functions,
it [i.e., the ego's]
• limitations,
as well as its [i.e., the ego's]
• power.

I shall return to this issue.

First, I should like to say that whenever one fears
• the real self,

one must fear
• life
and
• death,

• pleasure
and
• fulfillment,

• happiness
and
• unfoldment,

• one's feelings
and
• the creative process itself.
Second, it is self-evident that

* feelings cannot be controlled by
  * the ego.

Those who attempt this [i.e., Those who attempt to control feelings with the ego] merely deceive themselves.

They [i.e., Those who attempt to control feelings with the ego] kill the

* spontaneity and
  * freedom
  of the real self.

This is why feelings can never respond to any

must, issued
either by
  * other people
  or by
  * the self.

They [i.e., Feelings]

* come about indirectly and
  * seem to have

their own,
  * independent life,

their own
  * laws,

their own
  * logic
  and
  * wisdom.
You would do better to
• explore and
• understand
  this
  • law and
  • wisdom
  [i.e., this law and wisdom of the world of FEELINGS]

rather than
• deny the feelings
  and
• superimpose over them
  your puny
ego
  • logic,
ego
  • law, and
  • pseudo-wisdom.

For
  feelings
  are an expression of
  the creative process itself.

Anyone knows that
  this process [i.e., this creative process]
  cannot be forced either.

It [i.e., The creative process]
  can only be
  • encouraged or
  • discouraged,
  just as feelings can [i.e., just as feelings can only be
couraged or discouraged].

• Feelings
  and
• the creative process
  are inner movements,
  which I also term
  soul movements.
They [i.e., SOUL MOVEMENTS, which is the term I use for the inner movements of FEELINGS and the CREATIVE PROCESS] have their
• messages
and
• signs
that cannot be heeded too much [i.e., the messages and signs of the SOUL MOVEMENTS, FEELINGS and the CREATIVE PROCESS MUST be heeded]

if the individual is
to
• effect self-realization and
to
• establish contact with the real self.

The real self
• exudes and
• transmits
a vital flow of energy,
consisting of
many distinct streams.

It [i.e., The vital FLOW OF ENERGY exuded and transmitted by the REAL SELF] is what I usually call the life force.

This life force is not only a
• tremendous power:
it [i.e., this LIFE FORCE] is
• consciousness.

It [i.e., This LIFE FORCE] contains
• deep wisdom and
• inexorablelawfulness,
• eternal and
• immutable.
It is necessary to
• explore and
• understand
these laws [i.e., to explore and understand
these eternal and immutable laws contained in the life force].

Such understanding
enriches life
• in a most wondrous manner,
• to a degree you cannot imagine.

Denying
the intense ecstasy
of this life force
which manifests
• in some areas more intensely than in others
• on all levels of existence,
means
courting various degrees of death.

[Conversely,]
Embracing this life force
means
living deathlessly.

The denial of
the pleasure supreme of
life
is
death.

The fact that
• the ego
came into existence
means that
• death
came into existence.

I cannot go into details about this now,
for this would lead us too far afield.
It suffices to say that
the ego
is a split-off particle of
the vaster consciousness,

which still remains
in all human beings.

Unless
this split-off part [i.e., Unless the EGO, this split-off part of the vaster
consciousness.]
is integrated with
its origin [i.e., integrated with the ego’s origin, the vaster consciousness],
it dies [i.e., the ego dies].

Therefore
• splitting off [i.e., splitting off from the vaster consciousness]
and
• dying
  are related,
as
• reunification [i.e., reunification with the vaster consciousness]
and
• living
  are
  • related and
  • interdependent.

• Ego existence,
• pleasurelessness,
and
• death
  are directly connected,
as
• the real self,
• pleasure supreme, and
• life
  are directly connected.
Therefore

whenever
• fears
  • letting go of the ego,
who
• fears and
• denies
  • pleasure
  because of this fear [i.e., who fears and denies pleasure because of this fear of letting go of the ego],
  must
court death.

This is the
true meaning of
death.

It [i.e., Death]
is a denial of the
• true,
• original
  life kernel [i.e., Death is a denial of the true, original life kernel, that is, a denial of the vaster consciousness of which the ego is a part].

All this, my friends,
may lead to
the misunderstanding
that
the ego
should be dispensed with.

Unfortunately,
many a spiritual teaching
• has made this error
and thus
• brought confusion to its adherents.

Nothing can be further from the truth
than a
• disregard or
• neglect
  of the ego.
Doing this [i.e., Disregarding or neglecting the ego]
would merely lead to
the opposite extreme [i.e., the extreme opposite to valuing ONLY the ego],
and
both extremes [i.e., both the extreme of valuing ONLY the ego and
the opposite extreme of disregarding the ego altogether]
are always
equally
• wrong,
• damaging, and
• dangerous.

People who have
throughout a lifetime –
nay, often during several lifetimes –
overemphasized
the ego,
in the mistaken idea
that it [i.e., that the ego]
is not only
• safety
but
• life itself,
become tired.

They become tired
because
every soul movement
based on
misconceptions
is exhausting
by its very nature.

It [i.e., Every soul movement based on misconceptions]
makes people
cram up
in order to
hang on desperately.
The various false ways of relief from a cramped ego always mean the weakening of the ego.

If, on the one hand, the ego is too strong, it [i.e., the ego] inevitably must be too weak on the other.

I put this in practical terms for you who are working on this path:

To the extent you are frightened of letting go of ego control because you believe the false idea that letting go makes you lose strength, to that extent you are unable to assert yourself because you are afraid.

The more capable you are of self-surrender, to

• your feelings,
• the creative process,
• the unknown qualities of life itself,
• a mate – the stronger you must be.
You will then [i.e., When you are capable of self-surrender to your feelings, to the creative process, to the unknown qualities of life itself, to a mate, you will then]

not fear
to make
• decisions,
to make
• mistakes,
to meet
• difficulties.

You
will rely on
• your own resources,
will have the
• integrity of your own views,
will pay the price for
• selfhood,
will
• assert your rights
as you fulfill your obligations
• freely and
• willingly,
not out of fear of
• authority
or of [i.e., or not out of fear of]
• the consequences of disapproval.

The ego strength
of such healthy self-assertion
makes
• self-surrender
  possible.

Conversely, the weakness
of an ego that fears self-responsibility
makes
• self-surrender,
  and thus
• pleasure,
  impossible.
The person who habitually
  • overcharges
  and
  • exhausts
    the ego faculties
    will then seek
    false relief.

Such false relief
can take many forms.

One of the more crass forms is
  • insanity,
    where the ego is
    completely disabled.

In less crass cases it [i.e., In less crass such false relief used by the person who habitually overcharges and exhausts the ego faculties] takes the form of
  • neurotic manifestations,
    where the ego
    is unable to use its faculties of
    • strength,
    • selfhood, and
    • self-responsibility.

Or it [i.e., Or such false relief used by the person who habitually overcharges and exhausts the ego faculties] can take the form of
  • alcoholism,
  • drug addiction,
  and
  • all the artificial ways of
    obtaining relief from an overtense ego
    that is deprived of pleasure
    because it is too frightened
    to surrender to the creative process.
It is therefore of primary importance to comprehend

- what the ego faculties are,
- how to use them, and
- where the ego’s limitations are.

We shall go into greater detail in the future; all I want to say at the moment is this:

the ego must know that it is only a servant to the greater being within [i.e., servant to the real self within].

Its main function [i.e., The ego’s main function] is to deliberately seek contact with the greater self within.

It [i.e., The ego] must know its position.

It [i.e., The ego] must know that its strength, potentiality, and function is

- to decide to seek contact [i.e., to seek contact with the greater self, the real self],
- to request help from the greater self,
- to establish contact permanently with it [i.e., establish PERMANENT contact with the greater self, the real self].
Moreover,
the ego's task
is to discover
the obstructions
that lie
between
• it
and
• the greater self [i.e., discover obstructions between the ego and the real self].

Here, too,
its task [i.e., Here too, the ego’s TASK of discovering the obstructions that lie between it and the greater self, the real self] is limited.

The realization [i.e., The realization of the obstructions that lie between the ego and the greater self, the real self] always comes
from
• within,
from
• the real self,

but it [i.e., but the realization of the obstructions that lie between the ego and the greater self, the real self] comes
as a response to [i.e., comes as the REAL SELF’s RESPONSE to]
the ego's
wish
to
• comprehend

and [i.e., and the ego’s WISH] to
• change
  • falseness,
  • destructiveness,
  • error.
In other words, the ego’s task is to formulate
the
• thought,
the
• intent,
the
• desire,
the
• decision.

But its [i.e., But the ego’s] limitation is in
the execution of
the
• thought,
the
• intent,
the
• desire.

After it [i.e., After the ego] has fulfilled its task of deciding for
• truthfulness,
• integrity,
• honesty,
• effort, and
• good will,
it [i.e., the ego] must
• step aside
and
• allow the real self [i.e., the real self or greater self] to come forth with its
• intuition and
• inspiration that
• set the pace and
• direct the individual path.
The ego must,
again
and again,
• select,
• decide,
• intend,
in order to
follow this development.

It must be willing
• to learn from within
and
• to comprehend
  the deeper language of
  the unconscious,
  which
  is first
  • quite obscure
  but
  later becomes
  • increasingly more obvious.

It [i.e., The ego]
must learn to
interpret
the messages
of
• the destructive unconscious,
as well as
of
• the still more deeply unconscious real self,
  with all its wonderful
  • creativity and
  • constructiveness.

The ego
must lend
its
• wholehearted support,
its
• one-pointed effort,
its
• most constructive attitude and
• undivided attention to
  the inner path.
It [i.e., The ego]
• must know its limitation as to the deep wisdom, the individual rhythm of the path, the timing, the strength to persevere in difficult times, and • call upon the unlimited resources of the real self.

It [i.e., The ego] must develop a finesse to sense the subtle interplay between • the increasingly alert ego and • the increasingly more manifest real self, so that it [i.e., so that the ego] may learn when to be • strong and • assertive in overcoming resistance, in disclosing • excuses and • rationalizations, and when to • step aside in a more • passive, • listening and • learning attitude.
The ego
can be likened to
hands and arms
that
• move toward
  the source of life
  and
• stop moving
  when their function
    is no longer anything else
    but to
    receive.

May you all
  truly benefit by this lecture.

May you
  • study it deeply,
  • meditate about it.

Study
  sentence
  by sentence
  as it applies to you.

Meditate with
  the wish to make use of it [i.e., with the WISH to make use of this lecture],
  not only by
  • understanding it
    theoretically,
  but by
  • truly seeking
    that part of yourself
    that is
    • eternal,
    that is
    • truly adequate, and
    that is
    • always in
      • wonderful,
      • ecstatic
        delight.
**For this** [i.e., For finding that part of yourself that is eternal, truly adequate, and always in wonderful, ecstatic delight] is your birthright.

The price is [i.e., The price for claiming your birthright is] some effort of overcoming

- laziness,
- resistance,

and

- false safety devices.

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**It** [i.e., The price for finding that part of yourself that is eternal, truly adequate, and always in wonderful, ecstatic delight] also includes exploring the conditions that make a connection with the real self possible.

The ego self must be compatible with the real self.

The real self transcends the flat laws of outer morality, therefore you must have the courage to be in your own truth, rather than paying allegiance to

- public opinion,
- an authority,
- society at large.
**Such submission** [i.e., Such submission to public opinion, to an authority, or to society at large]

only happens out of
• fear and
• greed,
• cowardice and
• opportunism.

Thus
• outer
  morality
is not necessarily a sign of
• real,
• inner
  morality.

However,
the real self
has extremely exacting standards
of
• real morality,
  of a far deeper nature
  than
  the former kind [i.e., of a far deeper nature than
  the nature of outer morality].

One must see
where
• selfishness,
• cruelty,
• self-centeredness,
• greed,
• dishonesty
  exist,
  if only in minute form,
  in the soul.
Every such particle [i.e., Every such particle of selfishness, cruelty, self-centeredness, greed, and dishonesty], no matter how diluted by genuine goodness, stands in the way – particularly when it is
• not recognized,
when [i.e., when each particle of selfishness, cruelty, self-centeredness, greed, and dishonesty is]
• denied or
• excused.

If you cheat
• yourself
by trying to cheat
• life,
you make yourself incompatible with the
• laws and
• power
of your own innermost creative being.

So discover the areas where you cheat.

They [i.e., Areas where you cheat life] may be hidden, indeed, but they always exist to the extent of
• unhappiness and
• discontent,
hence to the extent you are separated from your real self.

Be in peace,
be blessed,
be in God!
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