



Between Unique Self and Ego

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from forthcoming book,
The New Enlightenment: Awakening Your Unique Self

Work in Progress-Unedited Version

Unique Self and Ego

1) The core transition from your ego to your Unique Self takes place as a result of intense and sustained transformative contact with the transcendent.

Everything below either deepens or gives examples of this core distinction between Ego and Unique Self.

Ego is not the villain. All you ego busters take a load and sit down. Evolution beyond ego always transcends and includes the ego. Transcends – Trance- Ends. Ends the Trance of Ego.

The first stage of enlightenment-what we terms classical awakening- does not mean that you lose the experience and function of ego and separate self in the world. Of course you do not. Rather, classical enlightenment means that you no longer identify exclusively with your experience of separate self and ego.

You realize that your skin encapsulated ego is not your exclusive or core identity. You are more than that. Your ego, which is part of you, identifies with larger whole, the great field of divine consciousness of which you are an indivisible and yet distinct part.

Remember that your ego has wisdom to offer you. It always pre-figures your Unique Self. Your ego holds the core truths of Unique Self, but in way that is distorted by your ego's fear, constriction, and shadow.

So here is the three-step process you must do in order to purify your ego.

1. First you deconstruct your false core or false self-matrix.
2. Second must widen your perspective and locate yourself in the larger field of being through contact with the transcendent.
3. Third you wait – until you witness your Unique Self arising, holding the clarified truths that first appeared as glimmerings in your ego.

For a classic example of how this dynamic plays in the world, see the Work Example below in section five of this document.

2) Deeper into Unique Self and Ego

The separate self emerges in a certain stage of history. Man emerges from his semi – immersion in the Great Mother. As the human beings sense of separate self solidifies in the early farming period, so does his terror of death. Man feels correctly that death is wrong. She feels like she is immortal. Like she is eternal and should exist forever.

She is right. Her core intuition of immortality could not be more correct. But locked as she is in her separate, self-egoic awareness, she mis-applies her core intuition in two ways.

1. First, because she is utterly identified with the ego, she applies her intuition of immortality to the egoic separate self. She thinks the ego will live forever.
2. Second, because she is identified with the now eternalized ego, she seeks all types of Viagra like identify enhancers for the ego.

She makes the finite goods of the world into infinite goods , meaning money, surplus goods, power, and accumulated pleasures all become identity enhancers for ego. Their purpose is to give the ego a felt sense of its immortality. Naturally then these death denying immortality projects are all are doomed to failure¹.

The ego makes these two mistakes but the ego's intuitions are not wrong.

The mistakes are corrected at the level of Unique Self. After you dis- identify with your separate self, your Unique Self appears as a distinct and indivisible part of the eternal one. It is in your Unique Self that you realize your immortality. The Unique Self correctly expresses the mistaken application but correct intuition of the ego.

The same is true of money, power and pleasures. As expressions of the divine field they invite your Unique Self to touch the divine, which is the eternity that resides in every moment. Separate from the divine field they appear as foolish and even grotesque identity enhancers for the ego.

¹ Philosopher Ken Wilber has given us a gorgeous evangelical gift in tracing this unfolding in his early books, *Up From Eden* and *Atman Project*. Ken, from a number of key thinkers, including Norman Brown and Ernest Becker, cites this core point. Ken clarifies, contextualizes, corrects and evolves their thought in *Up From Eden*.

The ego is confused. It fails to discern between Separateness and Uniqueness. The ego thinks it's separate self is god. The truth is that the Unique Self is one with God².

Correct Intuitions that are hijacked and mis-applied by the ego are contextualized and re-claimed at the level of Unique Self. These include eternity and the finite goods of the world. Like the goodness of pleasure, the divine aspect of power and more....

3) Unique Self-Ego, Action and Reaction and Imitation

Your ego is constantly in reaction to outside stimuli. It never thinks a spontaneous thought. It rarely acts because it is moved to do so by a freely arising thought or desire.

Your ego is trapped in imitation. The ego is by its very definition in limitation.

Limitation leads to imitation.

Your ego is in constant competition, which leads to compulsive comparison. Your ego is in constant repetition. The ego is alienated from its original face.

Your ego is never in joy and therefore can rarely experience joy. Happiness is the natural byproduct of living your Unique Story. The happiness that the ego does experience is of a heavier and less textured quality than the Joy of the Unique Self. The Joy of the Unique Self is lighter and freer, often verging on the ecstatic.

The ego is always living the life of limitation based on imitation.

Your ego never thinks an original thought.

Originality emerges from your Unique Face, which is evoked by contact with your Original face.

Original face is the Buddhist way of saying that you make contact with the eternal, transcendent ground of being. Originality gives birth to action beyond reaction. Your Unique Becoming emerges from your immersion in Being.

² See Mordechai Lainer "Hisharut La-ad", on the ontology of Uniqueness, Marc Gafni, Unique Self and Non Dual Humanism, forthcoming, Suny Press Integral Series, doctorate

4) Unique Self, Ego and Eros

Unique Self lives in Eros. The ego is non-erotic. Eros is not sex. Eros means living on the inside with a fullness of presence, participating in the yearning force of being and wholeness, the experience of interconnectivity and being part of the whole. None of these qualities or capacities is genuinely available on an egoic level. All of them require and are an expression of Unique Self.

5) Ego Unique Self and Freedom

Your ego wants to be free. This is the quality, which we call autonomy. Your ego understands and experiences freedom/autonomy as being free from external influence. You are then free to do what you want. Unique self understands and experiences freedom as the liberation to live your Uniqueness and give your deepest gifts in the world.

When you feel yourself demanding your egoic freedom, stop for a moment and feel into it. Do not cover over the emptiness that lies at the root of your desire for freedom and autonomy. Feel into the emptiness. Feel into the Hole.

For example: Perhaps you are part of a group that you want to leave. You are chafing at the bit to get out of the group. Stay in the discomfort that you can palpably feel - which lies at the root of this desire. Do not cover it over by calling it a 'desire for freedom'.

Feel the quality of the vacuity and emptiness that arouses the desire.

If you stay in it long enough, the emptiness will begin to fill up with being and presence, with your Unique Being and Presence.

What happened?

You have discovered that the root of your desire to be free from others was your own disconnection from your personal essence, your Unique Self. When your Unique Self fills the hole, the desperate desire you felt to leave the group, marriage or the job etc. fades away.

You think you are searching for your autonomy but really you are covering up the hole.

Your ego can follow the rules and seek to create an identity as a good separate self, but when you disassociate with your own core quality of essence, your light is constantly sucked towards the black hole of your emptiness. The question –but “what about the “holes can only be address by the fullness of your Unique Self, which emerges only after you, have dis-identified from your ego.

6) Unique Self-Ego Greed and Satisfaction

Your separate self is driven by greed. Greed is not the want of anything specific, rather it is insatiable want. Insatiable want is a structure of the egoic mind, which seeks more and more, as identity enhancers to confirm its existence. Satisfaction and ego are opposites. Give the ego everything and it will not be satisfied. Give the Unique Self anything and it will be grateful and satisfied.

Satisfaction comes from contact with being and doing your best at becoming without attachment to outcome. Being is all one, so any moment of being gives infinite satisfaction. Becoming is an expression of the evolutionary impulse but not of the egoic drive to achieve. For Unique Self your very best is always good enough. Your very best is never good enough for your ego. This is why the ego is the source of all your suffering. The ego always wants more than you have to give to fill its greed.

{see biblical construct; you shall eat –be satisfied and give blessings, Talmud Berakot, give blessings even if you ate an olive's worth for Israel knows how to be satisfied from an olive's worth- world of partial fulfillment...See Chanukah story...etc.”

Your ego never thinks it is enough. Your ego thinks there is never enough to go around. It always needs more to feel like it exists at all. Your Unique Self knows that it is enough. Your Unique Self knows there is enough to go around. Your unique self strives for more, not to fill the emptiness, but as an expression of the fullness of it's being - bursting forth as the evolutionary impulse of the cosmos.

Greed, however, is not a root evil. At its core greed is your ego's distortion of a quality of essence. Infinite desire. Infinite desire is the natural expression of the endlessness of essence. It is this quality which creates constant yearning. This yearning however lives in paradoxical harmony with satisfaction.

Laughter is one of the wondrous ways for you to live this paradox.

See discussion of laughter in Gafni, the path of laughter, unpublished manuscript.
See twelve sense conversation in Sefer Yestzirah and see also david as jester of the king in Zohar 107a cited elliptically in Lainer, Genesis in references to the free will determinism issue, see also tb Sanhedrin 107a source text for the later zoharic re-reading of the zoharic story

7) Ego and Unique Self and “You are God”

Ego holds truths that in their clarified form belong to Unique Self

Ego is the servant pretending to be a King. You are avoiding stepping into your Unique Self for fear to be a King. Your ego thinks it is God. But really does not believe it so: So your Ego insanely tries to make itself the god it knows it is not. Your Unique Self knows it is God so it acts in the world with majesty, audacity and grace.

8) Ego Unique Self and Wounds

In your ego you cling to the ever-petty details of your story. You never let go of any of your wounds. Your mantra is “I hurt therefore I am.”

Your ego can never truly forgive in your heart. If it does forgive it is a tactic and not a sacrament. Your Unique Self forgives freely without giving up your own truth.

From the evolutionary context of your Unique Self you realize that you have a Unique gift to give to all that is. You are animated, driven and pulled by that larger vision and obligation. This allows you to place your wounds in a larger perspective.

This larger perspective allows you to begin to let go of the ‘story of your wound.’ It is replaced as the greater story of your Unique Self, delight and obligation begins to emerge.

From the place of your Unique Self you are able to intuitively balance your outrage at injustice with a knowing about when you need to give up being right and move on.

9) Ego Unique Self and Betrayal

When you are in your ego you easily betray your friends if they threaten your pseudo story. Your friends, whose center of gravity is their separate self-ego, are much more likely to throw you under a bus. Your ego is easily identifiable by the shallowness of its integrity. Your Unique self is recognizable by the depth of its integrity.

Your ego crumbles when things go bad, and in your fear you are willing to betray virtually anyone. Justice and injustice are expendable on the altar of your fear. If you live in Unique Self and things go bad, you find your way through thick or thin, to a deeper center of spirit. From that deeper center you ultimately act in integrity.

10) Ego Unique Self and Friendship

When you are in your ego you help friends who are successful and even friends who are down, as long as it does not threaten your position. But from your ego alone, you are not capable of truly delighting in your deepest heart in a friend's large success.

When you are in Unique Self your deepest heart delights in your friend's success even if there is nothing in it for you.

In your Unique Self, people feel bigger when you walk into the room. They feel seen by you. They feel your desire to love and give to them. When you are in ego, people feel smaller when you walk into the room, they feel invisible before you. They feel, even if they cannot articulate it, that you are sucking off their energy. The result is that they feel depleted and in danger. {This rule will be true for most of the people you come into contact with..There will be a minority of people who shrink when you walk in because of their own sense of envy, greed or untransformed wound.}

11) Ego, Unique Self, Yes and No

Your Unique Self is always expanding and saying yes. Even when you say No, it is only to make room for a more authentic Yes. Your ego always contracts and saying No, even when your ego says Yes it is only because it is afraid to say No.

12) Ego, Unique Self, Victimhood and Injustice

The Ego is a victim. The victim's anger is not the same as the authentic outrage at Injustice of the Unique Self.

Discernment is relatively simple:

The Ego is angry at what is done to it. It very rarely feels the same outrage at what is done to someone else.

Usually the ego advises the other person to "take responsibility" while the ego herself wallows in the real and imagined offenses that she has suffered.

The Ego very rarely takes substantive responsibility. When the ego attempts to take responsibility, it creates a painful, virtually unbearable contraction in the self.

The ego is always splitting. The ego cannot hold paradox or complexity. For the ego others are either enemies or friends. The separate self-ego has a very hard time stably holding perspectives other than its own for extended periods of time.

The Ego very rarely admits that it is wrong. It very rarely changes course as a result of an authentic admission of mis- judgment.

The Unique aligns with and incarnates the divine principle of justice. For this precise reason the Unique Self is outraged against injustice.

The Unique Self holds with equal measure of gravitas and ease, it's own responsibility and its prophetic anger at injustice.

Prophetic outrage and equanimity live in paradoxical harmony within the Unique Self.

The Unique Self has the ability to take responsibility spontaneously, lightly and with full gravitas.

The Unique Self is not merely outraged against injustice done to it's own person. The Unique Self is hurt and outraged by any and all injustice.

13) Unique Self, Paradox, Tears and Laughter

The Unique Self holds paradox. Contact with the transcendent with the large field of divine reality allow for the holding of the opposites.

{Fn. This is one of the core teachings of Unique Self Lineage master, Lanier of Izbica. }

The Unique Self laughs and cries a lot. Laughter for the Unique Self is a way of holding Paradox or cutting through materialisms to a deeper level of insight.

14) Ego Unique Self and Perspective Taking

Unique Self naturally sees many sides of the issue but does not get frozen into the fear of relativism.

The Unique Self is able to hold a hierarchy of perspectives and is not afraid to assert that one side is more right than another. This capacity derives from the Unique Self's identity with the principle of justice.

15) Unique Self, Past, Present and Presence

The ego lives in the past while thinking it is the present. The ego does not recognize the Unique Self of every moment in time, therefore the ego confuses the past with the present. As a result, the ego is unable to create intimacy. Intimacy means meeting each other in the fullness of the present moment. Intimacy means making contact with another. Only the Unique Self can make contact. To make contact you must be personal and present. The lack of either dis-allows contact.

The present moment consciously includes the past and anticipates the future. The present is not cut off from the past or the future.

{This kind of description of the present –as disconnected from past and future -which comes up in a number of popular contemporary texts regarding the “power of the now” is mis-leading and partial at best}

When the past comes up in the present the Unique Self recognizes it for what is: the past coming up in the present. The Unique Self does not confuse the past for the present. The Unique self recognizes the patterns of the past for what they are, just Patterns from the past, which have no true foothold or power in the present.

The Unique Self uses this capacity for pattern recognition to heal old issues.

The Unique Self knows that the more past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be.

Since the same dynamic keeps playing in our lives time and again, you have many opportunities to heal and evolve the past. In fact the past has a way of continuing to come up until it is healed. This is one of the great spiritual principles of Unique Self mysticism as it appears in virtually all the traditions.

The ego confuses the past and the present. When you are confused, thinking you are present in the present while you are truly lost in a past trance, you are unable to heal the past.

In the same sense, the Ego often lives in a future trance thinking it is the present.

This creates an endless cycle of anxiety, which is not creative or productive. You cannot solve a problem that has not occurred, nor heal a situation that which you do not ‘realize’ is not longer happening.

Part of being in the present makes the Unique Self a master of discernment and interpretation. He knows how to sense into the specific quality of the moment.

The ego lacks this quality,

For example very often a person seems sad. There seems to be nothing to do to heal the sadness. But if you look deeper you realize she is not sad she is mad. {Cite Ken from No Boundary} The anger has been pushed into shadow. It is unconscious. Since the law of energy state that the anger must go somewhere, she project it onto her world. She feels her world and the people in it as hostile to her and she does not know why, so she is sad. But she cannot heal the sadness because at its core it is not sadness. it is anger. The ego is incapable of making this interpretation.

However, contact with the transcendent and the transcending of separate self significantly heighten your capacity to make elegant moves of this nature. You will be much less likely to rely on an ego psychologist to make the move for you.

16) Unique Self, Ego and “You are Special”

Your Ego thinks you are special because you are better than other people.
Your Unique Self knows you are special because you are yourself.

For the ego, special means better than.

For your Unique Self, Special or Different is free from any comparison or point of reference. It is your spontaneous experience of your essence.

17) Ego Unique Self and the Special Relationship

Your ego always seeks the “special relationship,” in the egoic sense, to cover the pain of your emptiness.

Your ego thinks the “special relationship” is better than all the rest of your relationships.

The Unique Self does not limit love to one person even though s/he may well limit romance and marriage to one partner {at a time or one total}

The Unique Self lives open as love in the world.

18) Unique Self and Ego Encounter:

Your Ego and the separate self open up the possibility of the I-Thou encounter. Where there is other, there is love. Where there is other there is responsibility, accountability, compassion and ethical action.

The great problem is that where there is other there is also fear. When you experience yourself as the separate self ego- you suffer needlessly because of your mistaken identity.

Your identity with your ego creates the terror of death. The isolated ego is the root cause of murder, war and virtually all-human suffering.

When you deconstruct your mistaken identity with the separate self-ego and identify with your distinct path in the seamless quilt of the universe, the fear dissipates and the love returns.

You reclaim through your Unique Self all of the good that you previously thought was only accessible through your assertion of a separate self.

These include personal love, responsibility, compassion, ethical action, activism and all the rest. The choice between personal love and being is false choice.

There is no contradiction between them whatsoever:

{This is the root of the Western confusion between Separateness and Uniqueness: see discussion in Marc Gafni, The New Enlightenment, Awakening the Unique Self. The west – motivated by love and the desire to end suffering affirmed the separate self because it thought this was the only way to gain the goods of the “encounter- love responsibility, contact, intimacy, accountability, compassion care etc. This was a mistake; all of those goods may be realized through the encounter between two Unique Selves. It does not require two separate selves.

19) What will be helpful for you at this point is to an example, from a personal story, which will allow you to get a feel for the Unique Self/ Ego distinction. It is not an easy or light story. But it is dramatic. I share it however but I do because it will make it much easier for you to discern between Unique Self and Ego as they arise in your life. At the conclusion of the story I will outline several more Unique Self Ego distinctions, which arise from the tale.

When I {Marc} was sixteen, my teacher at seminary school, Pinky Bak, died. I was very close to him. Pinky was for me somewhat of a cross between a big brother and surrogate father. My first thirteen years of life were more than painful and Pinky was able to feel

through the trauma. He said to me, “You rock, you have a good head and big heart. It will be okay, more than okay”. He was the first one who invited me to realize greatness. He taught me to believe in the possibility of possibility. He taught me how to play swing a bat and not strike out. He was 32 when he died. He fell down right next to me in the middle of a huge wild party celebrating the Mardi gras like Jewish holiday of Purim. He half looked up for a moment and said, “Go on without me. I will get up in a second”. He then died instantly of a brain aneurysm. The Dean of the school asked me to give the eulogy on behalf of the student body because everybody knew that I was very close to Pinky. I did. In my talk the words flowed out from a place beyond me, every word fell into place as if they were written and rehearsed thousands of times. The place was silent when I finished. It was the first time I experienced the Silence of Presence, although at the time I could not name the quality. It was my first genuine experience of Eros, not only beseeching but also being part of the larger divine field. As I spoke the words that came out said, “I commit my life to carrying on the spiritual teaching that Pinky Bak started.” And that was it.

The course of my life was set. A well-known rabbinic figure came to me after the eulogy and said – god is with you. You are our future.

The second major talk came a couple of years later. It was the same experience. A well-known philosopher and professor at Brandeis University, Marvin Fox said to me as soon as I had finished my teaching, “I can retire now. I am passing the baton to you”.

I had clearly not evolved beyond ego. I had not dis-identified with my ego. I had no clue what words like that might even mean. Yet in a moment of Eros, when I was in the Zone, in a flow state, my Unique Self had shown its face. Unique Self peeks out at peak moments.

My ego then partially hijacked the Unique Self revelation. I was on the one hand sincerely committed to teaching, sharing and evolving the wisdom of my lineage. But mixed with that sincere desire and good intention was the ego using my speaking and teaching skill to cover up the aching emptiness. My childhood pain was not healed or addressed. I had contained it in some supposedly tucked away safe place. That is what I thought I was supposed to do. I barely remembered where I had stored the container.

So public speaking and teaching, for which I had a gift, welled up from mixed places in my consciousness. On the one hand it welled up from all that was holy, pure and good. Yet some in part of my isolated vulnerable ego, I thrived overmuch on the wave of embrace and affirmation that came from the public’s response to my teaching. It filled needs that should have been filled in other ways. The need for a home and for the pleasure of public recognition unconsciously affected every decision I made at that point in my life. But in very disguised and subtle ways, the good and sincere intention was so strong that I did not detect the ego’s bad advice insinuating itself. My false core sentence at the time was proba-

bly “I am not safe”. The false self I developed to compensate, heal and deny the false core was something like:

“I am a Rabbi, committed to outreach to unaffiliated Jews. I am filled with love, passionately committed, creative and brilliant. I give my life to God. Everyone is beautiful. I am committed to seeing only the beauty on people. If I just love people enough I can do anything and take care of anything that comes my way. If I love people they will feel loved by God. No one could possibly betray my love. I can handle it.”

Of course, none of this was conscious. It was all true, at least partially. It was not purified or evolved. It lacked discernment.

I was asleep.

Part of what kept me asleep was paradoxically the depth of the teaching, sincerity of my intention and goodness of my heart. All of this was real but since it was running in a false self-track –it ultimately could not sustain itself. I was headed for a series of dramatic train wrecks and had no idea that they were inevitably coming.

And as we have already noted, stages never unfold in a formal linear line. So there are many genuine Unique Self state moments mixed up with the egoic stage.

All of this unfolded at an early stage of the spiritual path when I was still powerfully identified with my separate self as the core of my identity.

20) Evolution Beyond Ego

In order to genuinely move beyond ego -you need authentic and sustained contact with the transcendent - with the intention of evolving beyond ego. Prayer, chanting, study, meditation are some of the paths. In part, this was my path, particularly chanting and intense sacred study. That may not be enough for you. It was not enough for me.

But do not worry about where to find the transcendent. It will find you, it always does. Direct contact with the transcendent comes in many different and subtle disguises.

Tragedy of varying degrees was part of my path. As I moved from my twenties to late thirties my separate egoic self began to clarify through a mixture of chant, study and deep pain. By my early forties the clarification process was becoming more intense and dramatic, but I still was not there. Events then took place in my life of such pain and proportion that by all rights I should have died.

Betrayals, distortion, falsification and malice behind the scenes teamed up with exaggeration of genuine misjudgments on my part. Add to that together with whatever was impure in my persona that gave a hook to the projections and one life long adversary obsessed over decades with my life, a student who turned out to be Iago, sleeping with and loving to many people without a container, in the same circle no less, believing privacy was a genuine and legitimate option, never thinking that huge masculine shadow manipulating the feminine, a strong does of feminine shadow, my own idealization, misjudgments, might bring down my world.

My world came tumbling down. Held in the burning furnace by grace, I somehow remained alive. For a full year I could barely breathe. For an entire year, not more than a half hour would go by without heart my welling up with tears. I was not able to utter the words of Hebrew prayer. I was unable to sing. Only with the greatest of pain could I chant and very rarely. The visceral heaviness of my heart virtually stopped my life force several times a day. Enduring the pain of false accusation, sudden rupture from all I held dear, the insanity of National Enquirer like poisonous lies on the Internet for which there is little recourse, was more than the small egoic self of marc gafni could hold. It was something like the pain of losing your baby and being falsely accused of its murder.

All of this came together as a gift of terrible grace.

I was forced to step out my story. Out of my pseudo story. Out of my ego. Out of my small self.

All of the spiritual work of the past twenty-five years came to the fore. But it was grace, known by many names that shattered all vessels, cracking me open for a new level of light and love.

For the first time in my life I found a place inside of me in which it was totally okay if I never taught again. I was able to locate myself outside of my gifts. I did not even know if I would be able to keep my gifts. I was so cracked open that for a long period of time I prayed for the privilege of sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of some small house and meditating my way in silence towards old age and death. Death itself beckoned and invited me to dance more than once. Quiet and the disappearing into an action movie {dramas and comedies were both way to painful} seemed like pure bliss. Pain, moments of loving, involvement in details of the world, spaciousness, taking refuge in the Buddha and flashes of intense enlightened awareness all burst in at regular intervals - on my small self.

This went on for almost three years. Truth be told, it is still going on. Each time the vessels shattered, and expanded again. And again and again till today.

I spent many hours in the first year after the tragedy reading Psalms by myself or together with my friend Dalit. Perhaps reading is not quite the right word. It was a somewhat strange combination of intense wracked sobbing with reading the text as prayer.

I felt David and his God very close to me, holding me, understanding it all, and lifting me up. The gifts came back.

At some point in 2008 I began public teaching again, but from a different place.

It was from a more spacious place, a wider place. The meeting with non-existence had done its work.

The knot of the heart had been untied.

It is not over.

Knots can tangle up again very quickly. I untie the knots every day anew.

But something has shifted in me in a way that is virtually indescribable. On the one hand it is slight, modest, and small, almost unnoticeable. And yet everything, "all that is," is grand and glorious beyond imagination. It is in me and I am in it.

I was opened up in sweet surrender to the luminous love light of the one. Only then, after stepping beyond ego, or more accurately being thrown out of ego, was I able to take the next step. To feel my Unique Self, to rise up like a phoenix from the fire.

There was no choice. There is never really a choice.

I appreciate your listening to this story as to the one above it. It is a story about my Unique Self unfolding and your honor me to listen.

In return let me again share with you some principles I learned from the story.

- Unique Self reveals itself in flow states: In this case – gifts of teaching and leadership.
- Unique Self qualities and Gifts are then often hijacked by Ego
- Ego is purified through contact with the transcendent: grace, practice and life.
- Unique Self re-appears: The glimmerings of the gifts that appeared in the ego re-arise fully realized free and open as your unique self.
- This is not a linear process. It is a continual spiral of consciousness that keeps ascending throughout your life.

21) I want to share with you a final distinction between Unique Self and Ego. Again I will do it through a story – a particularly painful and beautiful story that happened to me several years ago.

I had just come to Salt Lake City after my life had fallen apart. A series of misjudgments, malice, communal corruption and my own blindness has brought my life to a careening crash. The only way I can describe the level of pain so that you can grasp it to feel into what it might mean if your children were brutally murdered and then you were set up and falsely accused of the killings. So you might say that I was not feeling very good. It was ten o'clocks on a sweltering Monday morning. I was staying at a friend's house, which was quite a distance from downtown Salt Lake City.

I had a meeting in down town Salt Lake with a law firm that was a hugely important to me. I had set up the meeting was set up to determine whether I would pursue an aggressive strategy and sue people who had lied or a more defensive strategy of creating the necessary protections should they be necessary and simply walk away from the conflict. The complexity of the variable and the possible domino effect that my actions might have on people I loved including those who had wrongly supported the false complaints was staggering. The pain in my breast was virtually unbearable. The night before I had been reading Psalms. King David describes his pain with the words, "my bones were terrified". I knew exactly what he meant. I knew that the phrase "broken heart" was no mere metaphor. I felt the brokenness jutting out of my chest, afraid that at any moment I would explode into death from the raw pain of it all. I am by nature a lover. The experience of betrayal was so intense that it literally took my breath away. This lasted for almost two years after the initial shock was over. So all of this is just to give some context for that Monday morning in Salt Lake City. I had only been in Salt Lake once before. I had no car and no real idea of where anything was or the relationship between different parts of the city. I thought I would take a bus down from my friend's house in the mountains to down town Salt Lake where my meeting was supposed to take place. I leave the house, after having cried most of the night at around nine am. My meeting is set for ten. I barely know where I am and somehow find my way to a bus station. I look at the bus schedule and realize that the next bus might not come for another two hours. I do not know what to do. I had no cash on me. I did not have an American credit card with me at the time having just come from Israel. I did not know anyone in Salt Lake at the time except for one couple that was out of town that day. The friends whose house I am staying at are in Maui. I have an address for this critical meeting but no phone number and no cell phone. So here I am in Salt Lake City Utah, exhausted beyond imagination, heart broken in a thousand pieces and feeling that the Unique calling of my life, my Unique Self was over. For my Unique Self was always to receive people in the fullness of their beauty and to reflect back them in radical love their goodness and even their greatness. How could I do that now? The false accusations had come between the world and me. At that time I still did not know that I would be able to recover my computer files, which would allow me to completely falsify the complaints. All I knew is that some terrible untruths had been told and that Iago like Malice had for the time

won the day. On that morning in Salt Lake City all hope seemed lost. The purpose of my life, the Unique Self destiny that I had given my life to realizing had been brutally shoved off the road and it seemed that there was no way back to the path. All of these thoughts are floating through my grief stricken mind even as the I have a sinking feeling that I will miss this essential, which at the time seemed crucial for my safety and that of my children. I have no idea how to get down town. I am done. Just done with everything. I am crushed – not figuratively but truly at the thought that I would never again be able to reflect back to someone their gorgeousness through the mirror of my face. The mirror had become falsely distorted and there seemed nothing that I could do to fix things without setting into motion potentially horrendous unintended consequences. I was lost. Just as I was about to give up a car slows down by the bus stop and the driver motions for me to get in. I am confused. What is this car stopping and why is this woman motioning for me to get in. I approach the car and an extremely plain looking fiftyish woman said to me. “ I woke up this morning knowing that I had to leave to work early. I knew there was something I must do but I did not know what it was. Now I know. I need to take you wherever you need to go. I have plenty of time. Do not worry. Hop in. I was more than amazed. My heart opened just a crack. This small act of kindness from a random stranger ignited a faint flicker of hope in my heart. I thank her and get in the car. We begin driving towards downtown, which was quite a distance from where she picked me up. So we had a lot of time together in the car. I asked her name which she hesitatingly gave me. I then proceeded to naturally ask her about herself. She began to slowly tell me her story. Before you knew, I was lost and she was too. Lost I was in the inside lining of her story. What a story it was. About a husband who left and raising three kids by her. About her small and epically tragic struggles with her boys. It was a story of love and betrayal, a story love won and love lost. I forgot where I was. I forgot about the pain which had just a few minutes before literally made the world feel unlivable. I had entered the inside of the inside. I was living and breathing inside her Unique Self story. It took us about forty-five minutes until we arrived at the law offices in downtown Salt Lake. She pulled over to curb as she was finishing her story. We were both on the inside of the inside. I was blown wide open by her goodness, depth and heroic beauty in the face of a so much truly intense suffering. I knew I had met an angel and it was my delight to reflect her beauty and depth back into felt sense of self. The car ground to a stop and I hardly noticed and neither did she. She was crying profusely. I had a tear rolling my cheek and I was not even sure why. She was a Mormon woman raised on the tradition of the tabernacle, high priest, and temple. She looked at me and she said, Who are you? Are you the high priest in the temple? No one has ever listen to me like that and made me feel so beautiful.” We were both crying – for different reasons- as I got out of the car. In that moment I realized that it was going to be okay. Even if did not turn out well. I knew that while my ego could be crushed, my dignity debased, my Unique Self could never be taken from me. I could –anyplace in the world- receive people’s story and remind them of their wonder and beauty. Nothing could ever stop that from happening. My Unique Self was inviolate. . Everything else would find its way.

I appreciate your listening to this second story about my Unique Self unfolding and your honor me to listen.

In return let me again share with you some principles I learned from the story.

When life strips everything else away the true gift remains.
Ego can be Taken Away from You.
Unique Self can never be taken away
Unique Self cannot.

Here I am
I am Yours
Do with me What You Will

I come empty
I surrender
My heart is in your hands

Even If all
is taken from me
In my heart
your voice is heard

From the pain
You will lift me
Filling me
With your love

Ego is always seeking power and control.
Unique Self is able to give up control and surrender into the mystery.

Kabbalistic Text on Unique Self

R. Kuk

And the I is in the midst of the exile...

The inner, essential I

- of the individual and of the community –

only reveals itself within one

to the extent of his holiness and purity

to the extent of the higher courage

which is drenched with the pure light of higher radiance

which burns within him.

We, along with our forefathers, have sinned.

The First Man sinned:

he became alienated from his own personhood,

for he turned to the opinion of the snake

and lost himself;

he did not know to give a clear answer

to God's question "Where are you?"

for he did not know his own soul,

because his I-ness had perished in the sin of bowing down to a foreign god.

Israel sinned,

she whored after alien gods;

she deserted her true character:

Isreal abandoned goodness.

The Earch sinned.

She contradicted her essential character,

she contracted her strength

And went after end-results and bottom lines.

She did not put forth all her hidden power

so that the taste of the tree would be the taste of its fruit.

She aimed her vision outside herself

To consider fortunes and careers.

The Moon made public accusations.

She lost the emcompassment of her inwardness,

her joy in her role;

she dreamed about the outer regalia of sovereigns.

And so does the world grow darker

with the loss of the I of each,

the individual and the community.

Along come learned educators

and fasten their gaze on externalities;

they, too, dismiss the I from importance

and add fule to the fire:

they give the thirsty vinegar to drink.

they cram minds and hearts with everything that is outside of them,
And the I is increasingly forgotten.

And when there is no I,
there is no He:
and certainly there is no thou.

“The breath of our nostrils, the Messiah of God.”

This is the Messiah’s power, the splendor of his greatness.

He is not outside us - he is the breath of our nostrils.

Let us search for God our Lord and for David our king;

Let us tremble towards God and his goodness.

Let us search for our own I,

Let us search for our self and we will find it.

Remove all alien gods;

strip away all that is inauthentic or bastardized

and you will know that I am the Lord your God

who has removed you from the land of Egypt

in order to be your God:

I am God.