

Eros Unfettered (Part 3)

Eros Unfettered Retreat

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Okay, so let's look a little more at various aspects of what's involved in the movement of soulmaking, what's necessary. Let's look at what's necessary, some of what's necessary for the eros-psyche-logos dynamic to unfold and have its range and its process, and correspondingly, how that movement and that expansion and deepening and widening can be stifled or blocked or diverted, how the movement of eros can be diverted. And again, why so much? Why are we circling around this, weaving in and out of this so much, this whole business about the soulmaking dynamic and the idea of eros-psyche-logos being stimulated by eros? We're circling because the ideas are unfamiliar, I think, because they're new ideas. They are not in circulation in the culture, I don't think – certainly not in Dharma culture; I don't think in the wider culture either. And ideas that are new, that are unfamiliar, that are not in circulation need repeating for us. We need to chew on them, to digest them, to incorporate them, to assimilate them, to be able to use them, to actually have them be powerful.

So they need that circling. They need the circulation of our reflection in our lives. So not just abstract, intellectual reflection. There's a level of that. But actually reflection in our lives, so we use them, implement them, bring them to bear on our experience in life, in relationship, on the meditation cushion, in relationship with everything, with nature, with whatever we love, et cetera. And I believe and I hope, at least, that trying to forge a conceptual framework that is supportive is actually really in the service of opening up what the path can be, opening up new territories, beautiful territories, important territories. All that is served by having a powerful conceptual framework. That's part of the process.

So when we gave the sort of small, loose definition, beginning, provisional definition of eros, we said it was a desire to connect, to touch, to contact more. We can very easily assume that there's a limit implicit in touching – once you've touched, you've touched. You can touch for *longer*, but once you've touched, you've touched. Once you've touched a whole body or a whole object, you've touched it. Once you've connected, you've connected. Once you contact, you've contacted. So we can easily assume that there's a limit implicit in that. But actually what we're saying now is that it's open-ended. So the words touch, connect, contact, certainly words like penetrate, it's open-ended – there's no limit to that penetration, necessarily at all. Or open, or receive the beloved other, open to and receive the beloved other – there's no limit to the opening and to the receiving. Or know them, I want to know them more, know this more, this beloved object, this beloved other. There's no limit to these, the penetration, the depth of penetration, the scope of and depth of opening and receiving and knowing.

So using those words, but not implying a limit, because we're saying that in the process of eros stimulating and igniting the eros-psyche-logos dynamic, their mutual expansion, mutual fertilization, et cetera, the sense of self, the imaginal self and the imaginal other, grow. They expand, they get deeper, they get richer, more complicated, potentially at least. So because both the subject who opens and receives and the object or the other, the beloved other, the erotic object that is penetrated or opened to, both the subject and object, the self and the other, grow potentially, there's potentially no limit to how much penetration or this process of penetration, of opening, receiving, knowing, touching, connecting, contacting, et cetera.

And if we approach it from the other angle, we could say – so eros, from what we've said so far, eros stimulates psyche and logos, the imaginal and the idea or the concepts involved in the sense of the other, of the beloved other, and also self and all that. Looking at it from the other angle, and just as important and valid, we could say that psyche and logos, image and idea, need to allow eros' further penetration and opening. They need to allow that *more* aspect of eros. So whatever image we have of

this erotic object or the other, whatever idea, that image and idea need to allow more penetration, more opening. They need to allow that movement of eros. Wherever it's at, that process, it needs to have something that allows more. If it doesn't need it right now, sooner or later it will need it. So what this implies, again, to state it again, is that the way of looking at images and the way of looking at perceptions is significant. Because either it supports psyche and logos to allow that further penetration, further opening that eros wants, or it doesn't.

Now actually, to state again, the way we are using the word image already includes a way of looking at it that sees it as imaginal, so that is supportive to a certain extent, or to a certain level. But still, that might need to grow. But if we step back a little and just look at this whole notion of ways of looking in relation to soulmaking, we can see that certain ways of looking not just limit soulmaking but actually dampen it; they put out the fire of soulmaking, they cause that stream to dry up (in a more watery image), they dissipate the imaginal or dismiss it or reduce it, they put out the fire of eros. Certain ways of looking will do that. And among those ways of looking that kind of, if you like, kill soulmaking, some of them reduce clinging and some of them actually increase clinging. Okay?

But we can differentiate, if you like, three sort of broad directions or kinds of ways of looking, if you like, or views. There is what we might call a group of views that are realist or flatly humanistic, that their view of something that arises might be, for example, that this is a result of or this is representing something that happened in my childhood, or it's representing a faculty of my mind, a component, and reducing it in those ways. Or even more, this is just a result of random neuronal firings, et cetera. So there's a way that the human being is reduced to a sort of flat, kind of modernist humanist version of what a human being is there. And that will not support soulmaking. That kind of view, the realist, flatly humanist view, will not support soulmaking.

Second group of ways of looking is ways of looking that actually fabricate less, that lead to less fabrication than the usual state of consciousness. So this could be just a little less fabrication. What we usually call mindfulness in the traditional sense of the word is, relatively speaking, a degree, a modicum of less fabrication than usual, or bare attention or whatever. Then there are other ways of looking which actually fabricate much less, much less than the usual state of consciousness, much less than bare attention or mindfulness, and we've touched on those before. They can take you into *jhanas* or deep states of oneness, and eventually even transcending of all perception and all conventional experience in the knowing, in the opening to the Unfabricated, to nonfabrication. There's a group of ways of looking that actually decrease fabrication, the second group.

And a third group we could call ways of looking that are soulmaking, the soulmaking perspectives, where there isn't this reduction going on. We are not reducing the image or the imaginal perception of something. And neither are we dissolving it by fabricating perception less. So we're not blurring out into a kind of oneness of white light or deep unfabrication or something like that. Nor are we just reducing this thing in some kind of psychological explanation or biological explanation or whatever it is. So three groups of ways of looking. Actually – and we'll return to this because it's not that simple – the relation to this process of unfabrication, our relationship to it and our conceptual framework of what's happening as we engage ways of looking that fabricate less, the relation to that whole process of fabricating less and the conceptual framework of it can actually become soulmaking, through the relationship with that and through the idea we have of it. We will return to that. But just to say, it's not so simple, the divisions between these three ways of looking. But broadly speaking, we can delineate three.

When there is, when there has come about, in one way or another, in the perception of an other a sense of there is more there, there is more depth here, there is a sense of unfathomability to this object, to this image, to this person that I'm seeing soulfully, there is a sense of more to move into, of mystery, a mystery of the other, depth of mystery of the other, in the perception of the other, into which the eros might expand, might penetrate, might open, or to which it might open to, then that sense of more, that sense of other dimensions, even if we don't see them clearly, that sense actually stimulates

eros. So it's working the other way around – the psyche, the logos, the sense, the perception stimulates the eros and inflames the eros. And what happens there – and again, if you really enter into imaginal practice, whether it's with, so to speak, purely intrapsychic images or again with someone or something of nature or some person in your life that actually is alive to you as image in this soulmaking, soulful, beautiful way, ways – then we get the sense that that other, that object, if you like, contains a multiplicity of images. Some of them will be clearly perceived, maybe right now, or maybe we know them from before, with our history with working with this object, this person, this image. And some are kind of intuited. You can feel them there, you can sense the presence of other images within this figure, within this person, within your perception of them, but they're not yet known. They remain sort of presences intuited, vaguely intuited, but not known.

And with that, there's a sense of this inexhaustible mystery that can arise, the depth of soul in this person that I'm beholding, the depth of soul I'm beholding in this person or in this thing or in nature – it's like, nature ensouled; nature has this inexhaustible unfathomability, the levels of mystery to it. And always then, sometimes the intuition, the intimation, is that always the unknown is greater than the known. There's always more to discover, because we've learned about this infinity, the potential limitlessness of this process, so one can actually palpably feel or palpably perceive a sense of the dimensions and the faces that are not yet known to me, not yet clearly perceived to me, will always, so to speak, outnumber the ones that are known, that have been beautiful and soulmaking to me so far.

That sense of inexhaustible mystery stimulates the eros, is itself soulmaking. So we can say that eros requires an image, but it also maybe requires, if you like, a region of what is as yet unknown. So this sense of territory it can move into, of a landscape of soul, a world of soul into which eros or our souls can move, so to speak, as we penetrate the other, or to which we can open. It needs the image but also the sense of the mystery, the as yet unknown, in the image, with the image. We could even say that the eros generates this very perception, stimulates the image and stimulates the sense of some *more*, some territory beyond, this pothos generating a beyond, if you like, that it can then enter, the soul territory, penetrate, open to.

Now, this infinity, this inexhaustible mystery, it might be of a kind of universal nature, as we've touched on before. A very common one is a universal love, and the infinity of that, or the universality of awareness, or even the Unfabricated – sometimes you can actually get the sense of that shining through, or everything, if you like, embodying that in a mysterious way. But the inexhaustibility that we're talking about here predominantly – or rather, in addition to those kinds of inexhaustibility that are universal, so this universal awareness shining through is the same in everything, or the universal love, it's pervasive, the same in everything. So this person that I'm beholding is not any different in the way that they express that, they are that; that's the essence of everything. We're talking about in addition to that kind of perception of mystery, of unfathomability, and that kind of infinity, there's a different kind of infinity that comes about through this, what we've been calling the vertical spectrum of the imaginal, the sense of these dimensions, if you like, inhering or contained in the beloved other. There's an infinite fecundity, an infinite, if you like, number of theophanies in the particulars of that soul that we're perceiving, of that object that we're perceiving. The infinite fecundity of soul, of theophany, through the particulars.

Another way of saying all this, because it's all connected, is like eros generates this very sense, and then falls in love with it, moves into it and fills it. So eros has, we've been saying, this tendency, this inclination, this impetus within it that fertilizes, if you like, that stimulates the fecundity of the soul and of the mind. Eros is a cosmogonos, we said. It gives rise to more, more perception of the other, dimensions of perception, richnesses, complications, depths and breadths. So in the expansion of the eros-psyche-logos, there is this birthing of cosmoses, if you like. Eros, in this process, this soulmaking dynamic, creates or fabricates or discovers, if you like, both, more psyche, more image. There's an increase in the range of images within this object and more generally, and the perceived facets and

dimensions of things, especially the beloved. More mystery and a sense of depth and dimensionality, et cetera.

So let's talk a little bit about the logos aspect and the necessity of that stretching and growing, or how it can get limited, or in other words, when it supports the eros-psyche-logos dynamic and when it actually inhibits it through it itself being limited or constrained or too rigid. So remember, when we're talking about logos or concept, we're not always talking about something conscious or something even involving actual thought in the mind. It's often operating at a level that's what we might call unconscious. We're not aware of the view, the conception, conceptions that are operating. They are subliminal. Usually they're based on assumptions that unwittingly we've absorbed, usually from the culture or some culture, subculture that we're moving in. So logos has a broad range. It can involve thinking, an elaborate conceptual framework thought out, but a lot of the time it doesn't involve that at all. We're really talking about something very subtle woven into perception of which we're rarely conscious and rarely have we actually figured out for ourselves and arrived at by ourselves; more we've just been indoctrinated or absorbed it.

But when the logos, the concept, the idea of something is too narrow or fixed, and that can be in many kinds of ways, as we'll explore, but for example one idea is just believing rigidly in a materialist view of things, a physicalist view of things, that things are essentially just matter. Personality, consciousness arises out of that, out of the genetic makeup and the neuronal makeup and the conditioning from the culture affecting the flow of neurons, et cetera. And matter is just matter – these things, trees, et cetera, or inanimate things, are just matter. So a fundamentally materialist view. Such a view, if it's too tight and too rigidly adhered to, too fixed, it will actually kind of prevent the imaginal level from kind of blossoming. It will prevent this fertility of dimensions being perceived and born there. Maybe something wants to arise, but it just gets dismissed because the view is, "Well, that's not reality. The thing is just x." This all might be barely conscious. "It's just material," so any view I have or any sense I might have of something else just gets kind of aborted immediately or even before it reaches any kind of birth.

And then if there's eros, and eros wants more always, we said, that more, because there's only really one dimension operating there, the logos only allows one dimension and that dimension is the material, that's the only reality, so the more that eros wants, as we said in its basic definition, a simple definition, the more is forced, it's forced to look for that more, find that more, only at that one dimension of the material. It's constrained to that one material dimension, and so it must go, for example, to something physical. Where else could it go? Some physical act. In the realm of sexuality, it must go to the physical act. Or maybe something else, I need to buy something and make it material or get more of this or that physical, material thing. Eros' *more*, the pothos in the eros, the *more* movement in the eros, can only move horizontally at one dimension.

And then what happens, for example, in relationship, in relationship to – could be anything, any other, whether it's a lover or a spouse or a physical thing that we wanted and were enamored with, when the eros can only go into the physical, and whatever we can do with this thing physically, seen in one dimension, when that's exhausted, the physical acts are exhausted, then what happens? What can the eros do? The eros needs fuel. Maybe the flame gets extinguished. Without the fuel, the flame of eros just dies out. This can happen as one of the possibilities, and sometimes it can happen almost pervasively in a person's life. You can see something was alive in the childhood and through the teenage years and adolescence, and the flame of eros there perhaps in all kinds of ways – questioning and aliveness and stretching things. And then maybe in the 20s, maybe in the 30s, maybe even the 40s or the 50s, something – it's just lost fuel. Sometimes it's in the logos, in the limitation of ideation, that does not give enough fuel for the eros, and the flame is extinguished. Or maybe, as I said, it's forced out – for instance, I'm in this relationship, or with a marriage or something, and I'm only seeing it one-dimensionally, or the dimensions are very limited, let's put it that way, in terms of who is this person, how rich, how deep are they potentially to me. Maybe they're not just material, maybe they have a

certain kind of interiority that we grant people and their sort of psychological complexity in a sort of typical modernist view. But the dimensions are limited. And then what happens? If there's eros, wants more, where does it go? It has to maybe go to other partners. Have to find someone else, because I can only go at one dimension. I can't go deeper into this beloved. There is no deeper. I disallow it. The logos disallows it. So I go looking elsewhere.

Or maybe there's some other area in my life where I go and I take up this or that something, and maybe that's an area where the logos actually allows a certain expansion, maybe. Maybe it's rich. Or maybe it just goes again into acquiring material things. So there was this thing, and I was enamored with it, but because that thing, whatever it is, I don't know, a possession, a house even, it's only one-dimensional, it can only really be one-dimensional, then I need to acquire something else. I need to acquire material things or status or something. The more can only move on one-dimensional, very limited dimensions. There's no vertical depth, other dimensions for it to expand into.

Now, I wonder about something – just thinking about – I wonder about something like pornography, or pornography addiction, stuff like that. I don't know; I've actually never been into pornography. But I wonder whether, again, part of what sometimes happens there is that there is, one is caught, the person engaging in that is caught in a limited dimensionality, just seeing matter in a very flat way. Or perhaps there's a split between where other dimensions are alive in their life and there's a sort of spirituality, but there's a split between spirituality and sexuality. So in relation to sexuality, it's not spiritual, it doesn't have the possibility of feeling, sensing, perceiving, knowing, conceiving other dimensions within sexuality. So there's a split. You know, I wouldn't want to speculate, but again, one wonders about abuse within the church and the clergy where people are – you know, sometimes spiritual teachings that do divorce the sexual from the spiritual in ways that don't allow a dimensionality in relation to sexuality. Or the person just has a materialistic view in the first place, a one-dimensional view.

So all this, you know, pornography feels soulless; why? Well, it is. In our language, it is. It's exactly that. It feels soulless because it is soulless. Meaning there's no possibility there for the imaginal. There's lots of possibility for the imaginary, but no possibility for the imaginal, for the sense of dimensionality, of depth, of mystery, in the body, in the beauty, in the sexuality, et cetera. There is really an objectification in the sense of narrowing down this or that object or other to just one dimension. There is an absence of soul, a poverty of psyche, a poverty of image. And when that's the case, then we get what we might call greed. It's got nowhere to move, no depth in which to move. It may – again, I don't know; part of this is just kind of wondering out loud – it may be that someone who's into pornography, you know, there isn't an absence of *metta* there. So I'm thinking of actually two people, students who shared with me their (what they would term) pornography addiction. Both of them had quite a degree of kindness and *metta*. So it's not an absence of *metta*. But something is blocked in the eros-psyche-logos dynamic. It's blocked from its natural inclination to expand, blocked by some kind of logos that either just sees one-dimensionally or doesn't allow spirituality or dimensionality in to meet and to infuse the sense of sexuality and physicality.

So we could say, in other words, with something like pornography, maybe there's no psyche or logos beyond a one-dimensionality with respect to the other, certainly with respect to self, the world, with respect also to the eros itself. So that fourfold self-other-world-eros, that fourfold sort of confluence or co-constellation. The psyche and logos with respect to each and all of them is limited to being one-dimensional and to being reified: "It is this. This is the truth. I am like this," et cetera. "Sexuality is like this," whatever. So that in our language, the small definition of eros, the initial impetus, if it's there, if that's moving in a person, if they have a lot of libido and life force and there is that eros, the logos and the psyche won't allow the eros-psyche-logos to expand and it goes perhaps, if it's there, it will go just into some kind of greed or pleasure seeking, et cetera. It has to stay at that one level. Limited.

Now, actually, we could say any prioritizing of one dimension or level of being, existence, perception, any shrinking of that vertical spectrum of the imaginal, whether it's to a so-called purely material level in the way that modernism kind of conceives of it or senses it, or whether it's even some other kind of elevated, ethereal, almost disembodied level or whatever, any prioritizing or shrinking down to one dimension or level of that vertical spectrum of the imaginal, and a belief with that, "This or that level is what's really real," any of that will limit soulmaking. It's the openness of the sense of multidimensionality that encourages, supports, stimulates soulmaking, and conversely soulmaking opens up that sense of multidimensionality. As always, there's a mutual dependence there.

As we're talking, and I think I might have said this before, we can get the sense that eros, psyche, logos, we can talk of them as if they're three almost separate things that come into interaction, mutual insemination, et cetera, or we can just as well say they're facets, three facets of one dynamic, of one process, three facets of soulmaking. And this soulmaking and these three facets, they can be open and creative, or any of those three – the eros, the psyche, the logos – could be constricted somehow and then when any of them is constricted, any how, it can hinder or block the whole movement of the soulmaking. So the whole process, the whole dynamism gets stuck, the whole dynamic gets stuck at some point, at some stage, rigidified, ossified, blocked, cramped.

So there's so many possibilities here. But for instance, what happens again in relationship with a beloved – any kind of beloved – if the logos, the idea, the conception of what a human being is generally – in this case, what this person is – is limited, either psychologically... In other words, limited in the way that a lot of modern psychotherapy might consider a person. Certainly they're complex, certainly they're a result of past conditioning and family influences and cultural influences and all that. So it's a view. And we acknowledge and we feel nowadays with modernism a certain interiority, as I mentioned before, to what a human being is, that a human being has, that perhaps in many cases they didn't have that sense at other times in history. But still, with all that, even with that kind of interiority, even with that kind of psychology, Freud's psychology or anything that came out of that, a lot of modern psychotherapy, there's still often – not always, but often – a kind of limit to the logos of what a human being is. And that can function as a block, as a limit. It limits the soulmaking movement, the soulmaking growth and expansion.

Or it might be just the idea of *this* particular individual; I have a limited, fixed idea of who or how they are. Or my idea, my logos, my conceptual framework that's operating of relationship, or of eros, what eros is, or of sex and sexuality and that movement. I have a limited idea, whatever it is. Actually one of these students who considers himself to have a pornography addiction said to me, "Sex is just biological instinct. It's just biological instinct." It's a certain limited logos of what sex is. But even ones that sound like they're more generous and richer and more heartfelt – "Sex is the expression of love," or "The sexual impulse is a spiritual impulse towards union" – all of them may have some validity, but when it's limited in that way, that, too, that limited idea is a limited logos, and that will limit the soulmaking possible. Or in relation to sex, "This is how it should be," some idea of how sex should be, which would include then a clinging to an idea or an image, a self-image, the psyche there of my sexuality, how I am sexually, my sexual identity, and that maybe has got narrowed down or rigidified in all kinds of ways – character or performance or all kinds of stuff. But there the logos or the image, the psyche in regard to my sexuality has become rigid or limited or both. And then again, the eros actually is hindered. The eros in its wish to expand actually gets hindered, blocked.

So you can see how many, maybe perhaps infinite ways the eros-psyche-logos dynamic can get blocked and limited. Perhaps we could say that. It's infinite. Whether it's basically either because of the eros being hindered, or the psyche, or the logos, or some combination of those, the permutations individually are infinite, perhaps. So we could also, for instance, cling to the image of another, a certain image we have of another, and we neglect to see, we fail to see that this image that I have of this other is dependent on my way of looking. We believe and we act and we assume that the way we're seeing them, the image we have of them, is independent of the way of looking that one is employing at any

time. There's a reification of that image. Or again, of marriage. "Marriage is this." We have a certain image of what marriage is. Or a certain logos of what marriage is. And all this can prevent in different ways, stifle and limit the expansion, the deepening and widening, the fertilizing of the soulmaking.

Now, of course, in actual relationship with another, the soulmaking in relationship, for the relationship to be a fertile field for soulmaking, for the continuing fire of the eros in that relationship between the two there or in a community or whatever, it needs a basis in actuality. So of course it needs a basis in taking care of our communication, really making sure the communication is skillful and supportive and helpful and caring. It needs a basis in kindness, in love. We need to voice love, express love, express appreciation. And without that kind of basis, the soulmaking dynamic will founder; it won't have enough basis, generally speaking. Again, it will be limited without that basis at another level, if you like.

But sometimes other things happen in relationship or are blocked in relationship. Sometimes the eros of one partner has a depth to it and a fire to it that is not matched by the other. Has an aliveness to it and a range to it that is not matched by the other partner. The spark and the fullness of the eros either is just inherently not matched, they're just different personalities, or in one of the partners the eros is blocked. So it's actually there somehow, but for different reasons – can be very complex – the eros is actually blocked, so one partner, their eros is flowing and the flame is burning and very alive, and the other, it's just not, and there's a mismatch. And sometimes what happens is the logos and the psyche, the ideation, the concepts and the images that perhaps were shared, the ideas about life, about relationship, about being, the ideas and images that were shared, no longer overlap. Or perhaps there isn't enough overlap to start with, and so there's not enough fuel for the mutual eros to burn. It can't really go anywhere with that. So the eros again gets limited, gets stifled, doesn't have the opportunity to grow.

Or, you know, again, for really all kinds of reasons, something in him, something in her, in the relationship – again, I don't have to make it as if it's objectively existing or not existing in them, but something in him or her, in this relational constellation, in this perception, in this dependent co-arising of the relationship, something in him or her doesn't allow the deepening of the psyche, the deepening of the imaginal dimension in relationship to him or her. There's a limit to how – my sense of their soul doesn't open into more mystery, more dimensionality, more depth. And it's complex. The psychology here is complex in relation to all this and in relation, you know, why that happens, so that there's a limitation on this eros-psyche-logos dynamic.

Let's make it clear. When we talk about logos, when we talk about ideas or concepts, by nature, their nature is to limit. They define and delineate. That's the nature of ideas. That in itself is not a problem. We touched on this a little bit, sort of obliquely, in an earlier talk. But that's the nature of logoi, of concepts, of ideas, is they limit, the delimit and the define and they delineate. No problem. That's just how they function. The problem, from a soulmaking perspective, is when the limit of a logos is reached with respect to the sense of the other, with respect to the idea of the other, of self, of world, of humans in general, of the soul, of psyche, of eros itself, of divinity. With respect to any of that, when a certain logos that's in place, when the limit of that is reached, and it doesn't allow the ongoing expansion or deepening of the soulmaking dynamic, and when the limit is inflexible – so it reaches, just like hitting a wall, and the wall will not shatter because it's just entrenched, whatever this idea is, and it won't stretch, so it won't stretch or shatter to allow more space or more territory for the play of this dynamic of eros-psyche-logos playing together, the soulmaking fecundity and fertilization; there's just something wants to expand but the limit is reached. So it's not the fact that ideas, logoi, concepts are limited and limiting by their nature. That's not the problem, because that's always the case. That's how they work, as I said.

Really what's at stake here, what the issue is, is where is the soul's process right now in relation to the limits of the concepts and ideas, the logoi that are in place? Where is my soulmaking process at, that intermingling of image and eros and ideation in relation to the limits that are in place of the logos?

What is the expanse that is created by my conceptual structure? Do I still have, does the soul, if you like, and the soulmaking process still have more room within the limits, the playground created by a certain conceptual structure or conceptual framework, a certain logos? Or have I already filled it? Has the soul already explored that whole territory, that whole playground, and needs to expand? It wants more, and the more cannot be provided by the limits of that playground. So that's really the question at any moment in time. Not so much even what the logos is or how it relates to someone else's logos or anything like that. It's really a question of relative pacing, if you like, of expansion, between the different elements, if you like, of the soulmaking process. If the image wants to expand and the eros wants to expand, the logos is limiting it, that's a problem, if it wants to expand beyond what the logos can allow.

So with all this, you know, I hope you're getting the sense – when we talk about logos or concept or idea, we're not talking about something abstract. In a way, that's kind of irrelevant. The word *abstract* actually means to remove, *ab, from, to take from, to remove*. So it's like, we're not talking about something removed from life, removed from perception and experience and embodiment and living. And again, we're talking about something that's always operating. So certainly a concept, an idea, a logos *can* be abstract, and in terms of practice, when we talk about ways of looking in meditation, whether it's to do with emptiness and dependent arising or whether it's to do with soulmaking, we need to actually – we're talking about practicing entertaining different concepts, different conceptual structures, different logoi, in ways that actually flow into, actually inform, actually shape a way of looking so that they can be soulmaking. We're not talking about just thinking something sort of intellectually in a way that doesn't come into the way of looking, in a way that actually affects one's life.

So sometimes – this is a really important point; sometimes people don't get the connection here. “Why is he talking so much about ideas?” And actually find it hard to bring an idea in to bear on the actual sensing and seeing and embodiment and life and perception. So we can't just assume that they do, because it might just be we're just entertaining this idea abstractly, we're just listening, “Ah, that's very interesting. Fascinating,” but it's not actually – we need a way to bring an idea into the world that we live, in the way that we live, to the perception. Ideas are there anyway, as I said. What we're interested in is this flexibility of concepts and ways of looking and plugging them in, moving between them, again in ways that make a difference. Really what I mean by all this is not so much the abstract logoi, but the logoi, the concepts that are actually lived, that are alive. If they're unconscious, can I make them conscious? And if they're stuck, can I bring in new ones and fresh ones and develop that flexibility? So we're talking about the concepts that are lived, that are alive, that are embodied, and that actually involve and affect the heart and the experience and the perception.

Even more than that, I would add playing with different ideas and conceptual frameworks and actually entertaining them in this way that I'm talking about, in the perception, in the experience, and more than that, creating them, forging them as we're doing now, this process, both the flexibility of entertaining them but also building new ones, that is soulmaking. That process of engaging with the creativity of conceptuality, of idea, of mind, is itself part of soulmaking. It stimulates soulmaking. It supports the inflaming of the eros and the increase of the psyche.

You can see how much idea comes in, ideation comes in to our lives. So, for instance, faith, you know, is a certain ideation, we could say. Many different kinds here. But for example, in relation to some personal difficulty that's arisen in my life or that I might be going through, or some pattern I have in the personality that's difficult, or something that befalls my body or me, and the idea, the logos, that it is somehow necessary to soul. It's an idea. Or that it somehow has divine roots, that it mirrors something divine. These are ideas. But if I can plug them in, just play with that a little bit, they make the experience rich. They make the personal difficulty – they give it depth and dimensionality. They make it feel necessary. They make it imaginal, and eventually divine. So logos affects perception,

affects the image, the lived image we have of what we deal with, ourselves and the things that befall us and make ourselves up.

And then something interesting, because we talk a lot in the Dharma of relating to this pain or that pain, or this difficulty or that difficulty with *metta*, *metta* to myself who has to go through this, has to bear this, *metta* even to the phenomenon of the pain (talked about that on different retreats), but there's a possibility of not just *metta* but of eros then in relationship to a difficulty. There's the possibility that this sense of the difficulty is enriched, given dimensions, et cetera; doesn't just fade. I don't just hold it in kindness, and I don't just find ways of looking that it fades. All of which is really valid. But there's also a sense of eros in relationship to one's own personal difficulties and the difficult events of one's existence, of one's life.

So we talked about *amor fati* on the *Re-enchanting* retreat, *The Poetry of Perception*, the love of one's fate, and what allows that, what allows that to actually be a lived and heartfelt, soul-felt experience. We could say, in relation to anything, anything at all, in relation to any thing, a view that reduces it – say psychologically; a view of psychological reduction – won't lead to soulmaking, or will lead to a very limited kind of soulmaking and very limited, then, expansion of the sense of sacredness in life but in relation to that thing. It still may be very helpful. You know, psychological reductionism, other kinds of reductionsim can still be very helpful, very helpful in relation to this or that difficulty. Won't lead to soulmaking.

Won't lead, won't allow, because of the reductionism of the view there, of the logos, it won't support this expansion, this growth, this organic and potentially limitless growth – *unless* the very psychological difficulties we have, and the obstacles we have, and the personal difficulties, and the difficult events in our life, or things that befall us, unless they too are seen as images, unless they become imaginal. So the very psychology itself and the difficulty itself become images, or the logos that sees them allows them to become images. Then they become re-enchanted. I think Catherine's talk was called *Re-enchanting Dukkha*. It needs this, needs to become, the very *dukkha*, the logos that I have of it needs to somehow – either in the logos of the thing itself, that I'm not psychologically reducing it, or I am considering it psychologically but that whole psychology has its other levels of mirroring, necessity of soul and divine purpose, et cetera. In other words, what happens in my childhood, what happens in my life, the journey that I am, if you like, guided into, constrained into by the circumstance of my life, that also is given other imaginal dimensions. Then yes, this thing might be a result of my psychology or expressing that, but the whole thing has another imaginal dimension. The *dukkha* is re-enchanted.