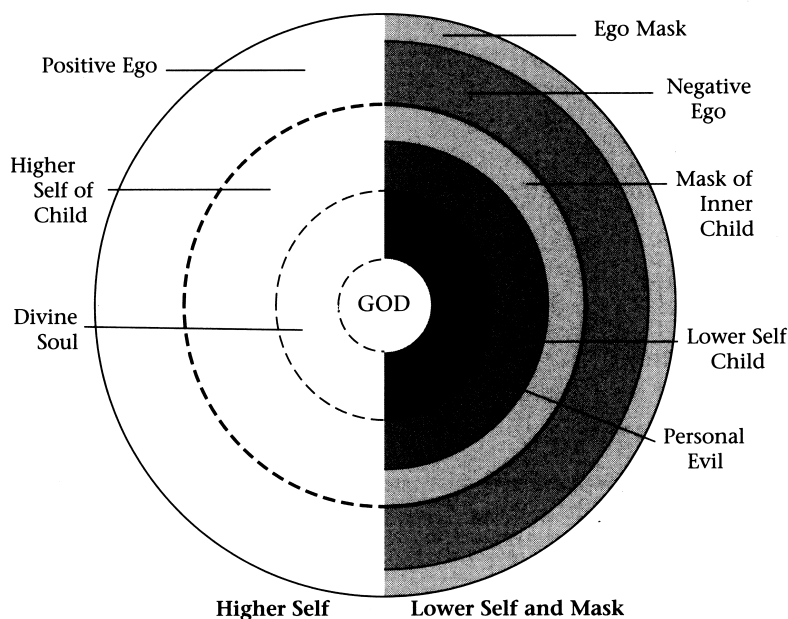


sive reaction of the personality, not inherent in the soul. However, the soul does contain both higher and lower self elements. Indeed, it is at the soul level that we can most starkly see the battle between our higher self intent to grow and unify and our lower self intent to separate and dominate. Spiritual work always intensifies when we are working at the soul level, where we must face—directly and without the excuses the mask creates—that which is evil within us. Yet we must always remember that we bring this evil with us into each incarnation precisely for the purpose of manifesting and then purifying it. The soul's task in coming into incarnation is both to purify the lower self and to ground the higher self into our human body/mind experience here on earth.

Beneath the soul, at the level of God, or unitive consciousness, even this fundamental duality—of lower self versus higher self, evil intent versus good intent—disappears, and there is only One. This is the level of unity where even evil can be seen as a temporary expression of God, as serving a function in God's divine plan. This is the level where "all is well and there is nothing to fear."

The following chart is an attempt to show some of this inner complexity.

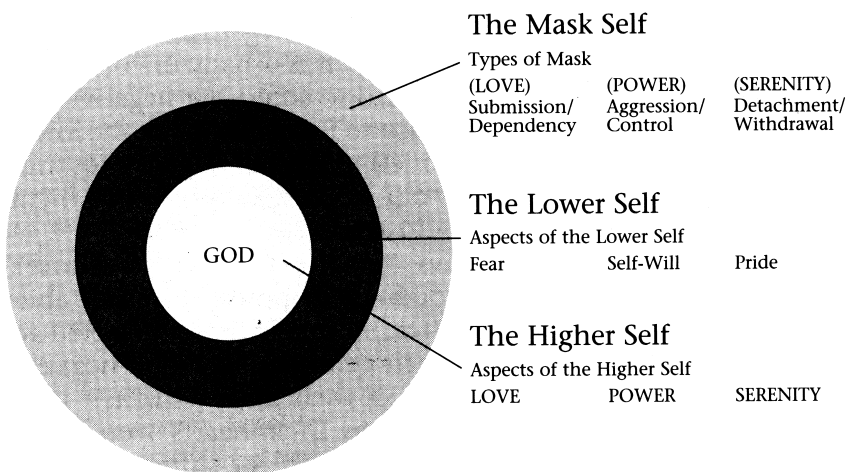


to embrace the inner "sinner" after shedding the hypocritical Pharisee mask.

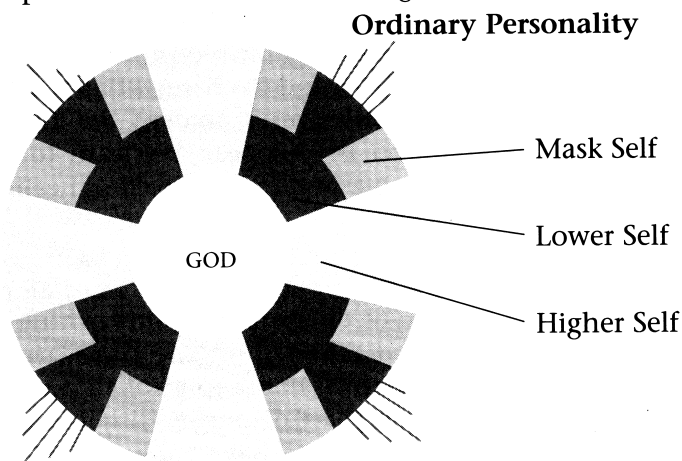
The higher self is the place in us where the stream of universal life energy flows freely. The higher self is our true nature as individualized expressions of God. Yet, in the human realm, the layers which hide the higher self—the layers of the mask and lower self—are also real and must first be penetrated.

When people are emotionally sick, it is always in one way or another that a mask self has been created. They do not realize that they are living a lie. They have built a layer of unreality that has nothing to do with their real being; thus, they are not true to their real personality. Being true to oneself does not mean that you should give in to your lower self, but that you should be aware of it. . . . Underneath the layers of your lower self lives your higher self, your ultimate and absolute reality which you must eventually reach. And, to reach it, you must first face your lower self, your temporary reality, instead of covering it up, because that puts an even greater distance between you and Absolute Reality, or your own higher self. In order to face the lower self, you must at all costs tear down the pretenses of the mask self. (*PL 14*)

Here is a visualization of the three selves with principal aspects of each self listed. The three major aspects of each of the three selves will be elucidated in this and future chapters.



In reality the three layers—of mask, lower self, and higher self—are not so neatly contained as pictured in the above illustration. If we view the outer circumference of the circle as the outer boundary of the personality, where it meets the world, an actual picture of the three selves might look more like this:



This picture portrays the reality that in every personality there are places where the higher self shines through, and other places where the lower self has not been covered over, and undiluted negativity may be seen on the surface of the personality. In yet other places, both lower self and higher self are masked. The mask and lower self may be present to a greater or lesser degree than pictured, depending on the degree of purification of this soul.

We might ask what an evolved personality would look like. My guess is that it would look something like the following:

