

Aspects of Survival: Triumph over Death and Onliness

Alan Jacobs

Introduction

The major question related to the Holocaust committed by the German Nazis and some of their allies from 1939 to 1945 is why did they do it? Why the planned destruction of all the Jewish people? Why the genocide committed against the Polish and Russian peoples? The well-known Holocaust writer and philosopher Fackenheim properly asks the "big question" (1988, p. 197). He wonders what made the German people commit such crimes against humanity and answers *Weltanschauung* or cosmic scope, internal coherence and sincere commitment, thereby adding additional perspective to the knot of mystery and difficulty surrounding any primary explanation of the Holocaust. One could prefer exploration of the more general question of why the Holocaust? It can be attributed to a centuries old and deep-seated European anti-semitism and the conditions imposed upon Germany after WW I, the economic depression, etc. One could speculate a special something about the German people, their history and culture, something which makes them different from all the rest of us, something which drove them to mass murder on a scale never before experienced: Hitler's psychosis, Germany's patriarchal-authoritarian family structure, its militaristic nature, its Teutonic past, class resentments etc. Most of these theories have a certain accuracy, especially if each is seen as part of a multi-dimensional explanation, even if many do not ask the "big question."

They refuse to even pose the question "why they did it" in any terms at all, claiming an unanswerable dilemma, a riddle beyond human comprehension. But whether an explanation is attempted or not, one overriding principle guides most explorers: the Holocaust is a special instance of genocide, having never occurred in this form before and it must be approached as such. Yet there are very real dangers in this view. If we extend this speciality to the perpetrators, we limit our ability to understand why they did it. The need to experience the Nazis as a special instance of brutality, somehow beyond or beneath and outside ordinary humanness and humanity, separates them from us. It absolves us of any similar motivation. In order to answer the "big question" we must relinquish this view of Germany and Germans as unique in the annals of mass murder. Viewing them as different from the rest of us perpetuates the illusion that they are outside the human fold, the ultimate expression of evil. In this way we deny the possibility of our own capacity for such action. To explain in human terms, we must admit the Germans as human and thus the terrible possibility that we, too, are capable of similar acts.

Making them the ultimate expression of evil on earth implies that we are somehow better, thus polarizing good and evil as separate and ultimate entities incapable of coexistence in the same people. The search for ultimate good and evil as absolutes is part of the reason why they did it in the first place: the Nazis and many of the German people envisioned themselves as ultimate good and the Jews as primordial evil. As long as good and evil are conceived as separate and distinct entities, incapable of existing in the same person or people, humanity will continue to experience similar nightmares. For it is then always possible to identify the other as evil. What is avoided is the fact that good and evil alike exist in all, that each of us is capable of both. Creation and murder exist together, like the need to reproduce and the hunting of prey, within each human being.

The Holocaust, though historically unique, is not a unique instance of man's inhumanity to man, only a uniquely exaggerated one. It is exponentially greater, quantitatively, not qualitatively unique.

A reformulated "big question" might be, are there universal reasons for why they did it, beyond nation, philosophy of life and leader? Some will say that asking this question trivializes the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. Does this infer that Holocaust, once out of its dark recesses, can now only happen to the Jewish people? Or can it happen to others as well?

Kraus and Kulka write:

"The post-war trials of war criminals have provided irrefutable proof that the horrors that took place at Auschwitz were only a beginning, a testing period. Still more intense biological destruction, starting with the Slav nations, was to be initiated after victory had been achieved in the war" (1966, p.4)

This paper rests on the premise that all human emotions and capacity for any action exist in each of us, that we all possess within our nature a dictator and a follower, an object of hatred and a slave, a bystander and a rebel and ultimately a creator and a killer. The strength of our denial is related to the depth of our fears. What is true for the German people of the Hitler era is also, frighteningly, true for all of us. Our fear is much more easily thrust upon others than examined. The question is not what makes them different but what made them exaggerate and put into practice what we all possess. If we are to work to prevent such occurrences, the question then is not what makes them different or special but what about us, in whatever small degree, is the same?

For purposes of clarification I want to say here that this paper is not intended as a comprehensive social-psychological treatise. Rather, it is a result of wide reading in the fields of history, social commentary, and that portion of the holocaust literature sometimes referred to as the literature of the extreme. It is, additionally, an outgrowth of many hundreds of hours of interviews with Holocaust survivors. What this paper

attempts is an application of Transactional Analysis to areas others than those to which we are accustomed.

Masters and Followers: Aspects of Childhood and Script

Masters may be defined as being either Despotic or Ideological, and in addition, Converting or Enslaving (Jacobs, 1987). Despotic Masters have no particular following or gathering, no great crowd of admirers. They are mainly interested in promoting their own narrow self-interests and those of a select few, in simply living off the masses. What we are interested in here is the Ideological Master, who gathers a great crowd of followers because he or she has a social, psychological and political philosophy. This type needs many people to follow and believe in him or her because it gives them greater power. This type is primarily interested in two things, converting people to their cause, thus increasing the size of the crowd of followers, and identifying an enemy. Conversion adds psychologically to the size of the Ideological Master's own body, thereby adding to his or her individual strength. Identifying an enemy serves, among other things, to give the crowd of followers a specific identity, a nationalism (Jacobs, 1989). Some Ideological Masters are more interested in enslaving others, using conversion only as a means to gain enough followers. Followers are attracted to either Converting or Enslaving Masters and may be identified as either Converting Followers or Enslaving Followers. These are not exclusive categories, especially in the case of the Enslaving Master and Follower, where both conversion to a cause and identification of an enemy to be enslaved and/or killed can exist side by side. As will be seen later, there is still another category which develops out of the Ideological Enslaving/Killing position, which is the real subject of this paper: the Destroying Master, an apt label for Hitler and his crowd of followers.

Masters and Followers are both examples of autocratic personality types. Their childhoods are replete with conditional affection and generally rigid, controlling parent discipline (Jacobs, 1987). Submission to a domineering parent figure and humiliation is the usual outcome in the development of the Master/Follower child. The child is forced to adapt to a set of rigid prescriptions and is given little encouragement, protection and affection. Thus forced, the child's anger and feelings of aggression do not find adequate expression as repression/externalization occur. Later relationships are based on early unresolved struggles for dominance and the conflict is projected onto those groups or individuals which appear too weak to retaliate. The anti-weakness attitudes of Master/Followers derive from the compulsion to fearfully submit to parental authority (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1950/1982, pp. 276, 277).

Master types choose to dominate and Followers choose to be dominated. Sado-masochistic desires, in Fromm's terms (1973, p. 221) to control or be controlled, which, in some degree exist side by side in all of us, are exaggerated in the autocratic personality, either Master or Follower. When gathered in families, groups, organizations or nations, a pecking order develops as both aspects of the sado-masochistic drive exist within each person: I'm more than you (+,-) sadistic, and I'm less than you (-,+) masochistic [Fig. 1].

An overlapping hierarchy of sadomasochism exists in which each person relates to those above from the (-,+) position and to those below from (+,-). So each is, in a sense, a Follower to those above and a Master to those below. As a result, many power struggles occur throughout the hierarchy as tests of dominance and submission are exaggerated in a system founded in fear. Only the person at the top of the hierarchy has no one to relate to from the (-,+) position, other than remembered authoritarian persons from childhood and adolescence. A story told by one of Stalin's body guards about a visit to his mother in Tbilisi illustrates the point:

"We crossed the yard and headed for Stalin's mothers" door. He was the first to enter the dark hallway, I followed. Suddenly I heard a loud voice: 'You good-for-nothing lout! A tall woman entered waving a stick in her hand. What have you done to Georgia, what happened to our friends?'... To my surprise Stalin seemed unable to utter a word, just stood there shaking like a leaf. I then decided to leave the hall... In less than fifteen minutes he ran out and called me to his side:

'Where were you', he said suspiciously.

'I stayed in the yard', I said meekly.

'You didn't enter the apartment with me'?

...I'm sure that if he had a shadow of suspicion that I had witnessed his mother's greeting, my fate would have been sealed. One who saw Stalin trembling in fear in front of his own mother had no right to live." (Konieczny, 1989)

Conversely, persons at the bottom of the hierarchy have no one to relate to from the (+,-) position and they are therefore always looking for some group they can identify as inferior. One of the Master's major functions is to find such a group for them.

Forms and Degrees of Necrophilia

Aberrant forms are a matter of degree and are classified here as incipient, primary, flagrant, and atrocious necrophilia.

First degree, incipient syndromes define people who derive pleasure or satisfaction and are fascinated with such things as attending funerals or post-funeral get-togethers, reading about the dead or watching newsreels or films depicting scenes of war, death and destruction or even murder. Additional symptoms might include enjoyment in killing insects or small pests and graduate to killing larger creatures on hunting expeditions.

Second degree manifestations, called here primary necrophilia, occur when the need is more extreme and the person is drawn continuously to these moments with the dead. For example, having sexual contact with corpses, although the love of the dead need not

be necessarily sexual. Or a person can just like being physically near corpses, e.g. working on a cancer ward, driving a crash ambulance, or working in a mortuary.

Third degree, flagrant forms involve killing humans for the sense of strength and power it produces; the pleasure of the moment of satisfaction and triumph over death. This is where most Masters of the Ideological/Enslaving type are placed. In these instances people have to cause the death of human beings in order to gloat over being alive. Also, it could be a multiple-murderer or a mercenary soldier, even an ordinary soldier of any rank who is drawn to combat because of the killing and the subsequent feeling of power in survival.

Fourth degree, atrocious aspects manifest the need to destroy more than a few humans and the products of human energy, buildings, cities etc. The Destroying Master is placed here. The main goal is to produce bodies, masses of dead. Buildings, bridges, cities etc, are substitutes for the real goal, the destruction of people. The greater the paranoia and resultant fears of death, the greater the need for more deaths one has caused. In most historical occurrences of the phenomenon, a single Atrocious Master emerges and leads the rest of the fourth degree types to these ends. He or she alone needs no one to follow and therefore is the only one who does not follow. All his or her Followers and agents are in this category as well and need to be distinguished from the Master. They exhibit two faces. One is that of the Follower, needing to be absorbed by the Master, to be protected by him or her. The second is the face of the Master, needing to destroy many people. They may be called Atrocious Master/Followers.

Scripts

Some Masters and Followers seek extreme solutions to society's problems. These social solutions are invariably hewed out of personal psychological ones. Extreme or third degree aspects of life script enable tragic final outcomes: masochistic Follower parts of people want to be symbolically incorporated by a greater force in an orgy of cellular sameness within the crowd. Followers find a sense of well-being when incorporated into the crowd body. Sometimes this even means being part of the crowd of the dead (Canetti, 1962, p. 42)

Verification of a person's tragic life view, or life-script payoffs, can be a single crystalline moment, or a series of moments. There are such moments, almost suspended in time, when people achieve some long sought script goal. People strive all their lives for these moments, of which there may be many, or only a few. For example, the moment of safety the criminal experiences when the door to the isolation cell closes behind, or the feeling of accomplishment one feels standing free, finally, just outside the last gate after years of imprisonment or the moment of relief with arrival of the final divorce papers. Even though these payoffs may find people alone and isolated, without friends or family, they are moments sought rather than avoided and they carry the secret, unconscious seeds of loneliness, despair and destruction. They are moments experienced and acted out as fantasy play in childhood as psychodramatic rehearsal and then carried by the Child ego

state into adult life, contaminating thinking and waiting for the time of expression. It can be a moment of extreme pleasure, satisfaction, or relief which requires action, conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious, in order to realize. Two of them will be discussed here in relation to Masters: the moment of triumph over death; and the moment of onliness.

Triumph over Death

Survival and power are distinct, though inseparable, entities. The greatest power is the power to live. Sometimes this is experienced as the power over someone else's life. This may mean killing or it may mean simply witnessing another's death. All people experience a degree of satisfaction at having survived in the face of death. When someone is dying, many stay away, while after death these same friends and relatives will congregate en masse at the grave site, and later, at the home of the dead person's family, where food and drink are consumed and where people may even be rather light hearted. They may listen to and tell jokes and humorous stories about the deceased, partly in an effort to quell the grief, but also to celebrate still being alive. Most of us are unaware of these primitive, and very natural, survival feelings, obeying norms which exist to prevent even more overt forms of everyday power seeking from surfacing.

"The living man never considers himself greater than when confronted with the dead man, who is felled forever: at this moment the living man feels as though he had grown. Yet it is a growth that one ordinarily does not flaunt. It may recede behind a genuine grief, which covers it entirely... even if the deceased meant little... it nevertheless would flout good taste to reveal any of the satisfaction at being confronted with the dead. It is a triumph that remains concealed, that one admits to nobody else and perhaps not even to oneself. Convention has its value here: it tries to keep an emotion secret and small, since its heedless manifestation could have the most dangerous consequences" (Canetti, 1979, p. 16).

Extreme situations such as war increase the magnification, so to speak, on emotions we don't ordinarily notice in, say, an automobile or industrial accident where bodies are lying on the ground. Many race car drivers refer to the spectators as coming mostly to watch them crash and die. And this is, perhaps, so. At root, it is no different from a driver's motivation, the desire to triumph over death. After a race, a driver experiences a tremendous sense of being alive, especially if he has won. To challenge death directly, and survive, is an exhilarating experience, let alone to challenge it equally with others and to best them. The curiosity of the spectator is generally considered ghoulish, but it is no such thing. Not being able to confront death directly, and survive, as the driver does, the spectator can only experience the sense of power and survival vicariously. However, when witnessing a fatal crash he or she can experience directly the contrast between the dead and the living and this momentarily increases the sense of being alive. It isn't macabre or ghoulish as is generally thought, but rather, an emotion we all possess to one degree or another.

The extreme view magnifies everyday occurrences, thus enabling a deeper understanding of the primary human emotions of death, survival and power. In the moments after battle soldiers feel triumph standing over the dead and satisfaction at having survived, in still being alive.

"The terror at the dead man lying before one gives way to satisfaction: one is not dead oneself. One might have been. But it is the other who lies there. One stands upright oneself, unhurt, untouched. And whether he is an enemy who one has killed, a friend who has died, it suddenly looks as though death, which once threatened by, has been diverted by oneself to that person.... what was only just terror is now permeated with satisfaction" (Canetti, 1979, p. 15).

There is nothing abnormal about these kinds of reactions, unless they become a preoccupation. Certain types of Masters and their Followers create or seek them, deliberately strive for these moments of satisfaction especially involving some type of physical combat, even war. These situations allow for clear win/lose results which create momentary actualities of dominance and submission. Involved in these struggles is the competition for the Controlling Parent position usually as a counter-phobic reaction to feelings of dread associated with losing and death. These reactions even come into play in everyday and less threatening situations. Take for example some of the terms used by victorious sports teams and their followers: "We killed 'em"; "We knocked 'em dead"; "We rolled over them"; "We slaughtered them."

Ideological Masters and their Followers, in varying degrees, have a continuous and extreme need for these moments. Ideological Enslaving Masters need to physically subjugate masses of human beings while Ideological Converting Masters attempt to win people to their side through various kinds of persuasion and argument and are not as inclined toward these moments as their Enslaving counterparts. Although it is possible for a single Master to possess both capacities, Enslaving and Converting, usually one will emerge as primary. We are more interested here in Ideological Enslaving Masters and in what they become.

While all, as stated earlier, experience some degree of satisfaction, mostly hidden or repressed, at confrontation with the dead, the Masters and Followers we are concerned with here seek it in overt ways involving more than single murder, serial killing or even making war. Their attention is directed to masses of people. It is one thing to happen upon the dead, seek them as a spectator, murder or even make war, and quite another to create the circumstance that produces mass death.

Mental disorder arises partly out of a reactive need to cope with stress in the environment, while taking into account genetic factors. It is as natural to any specific organism as "normal" behavior. We all have, in varying degrees the capacity for insanity; insane situations produce insane reactions, the potential for these reactions lying

dormant within each of us. Perhaps then, necrophilial love of the dead is an exaggerated need to experience the triumph of self over death which all humans feel.

A survivor's sense of power and aliveness is multiplied by the number of dead with which he or she is confronted. There is a sense of a special entitlement to life somehow. The survivor wants to exist as long as possible and wants immortality. If this means, ultimately, that others must die first, even all others, and that the survivor stands alone, than this becomes the crowning survival achievement. "He does not only want to exist for always, but to exist when others are no longer there. He wants to live longer than everyone else and to know it." (Canetti, 1962, p. 227)

Power is also enhanced if the Master can order others, thousands and even millions of others to murder in his or her place. These Followers can come from any branch of society. One of the surprising things about members of Hitler's concentration and extermination camp SS is that they came from all walks of life: laborers, academics, physicians, architects, shopkeepers, accountants etc. These types, often third degree, are psychologically grafted to the Master as working parts of his body and are ordered to kill with the same obedience one asks of one's own hand, immediately and without question.

As an Atrocious Master's power increases so does the threat to his or her life, thus increasing the desire for survival. The more one kills, the more enemies one creates and, therefore, the more one has to kill. Ultimately the atrocious types experience power as directly related to the masses of dead bodies killed in their name. They come to rely on it, to crave it.

The need to feel alive is so driven by fears of one's own death that more and more bodies are required to feed the sense of being alive and powerful. Those murdered are incorporated into the Master's body, which consists of his own person and the grafted Followers. They are digested as food, absorbed, their substance used to energize the Master/Follower body.

The Moment of Onliness

As Canetti (1962) tells us:

"There is nothing that man fears more than the touch of the unknown... All the distances which men create around themselves are dictated by this fear.... the whole knot of shifting and intensely sensitive reactions to an alien touch - proves that we are dealing here with a human propensity as deep seated as it is alert and insidious..." (p. 15)

Ideological/Enslaving Master types who possess much more than average amounts of this fear, and who act on it, can be called Destroying Masters. If their goal is to create heaps of bodies in order to feel alive and safe, then the degree to which they project these desires onto their enemies is profound. And so is the resultant fear. Holocaust and

genocide derives in part from these fears: Power-seekers strive for what Canetti called the "moment of onliness" (1979, pp. 22, 24). Destroying Masters want to be the only survivor. Triumph over death will be purchased at any cost, even the deaths of followers, supporters, even friends and family. One is reminded of Hitler's and Stalin's fears about their own circle of guards and followers. On some level, either unconsciously, or secretly conscious, they wanted to destroy everyone, even their protectors. Their lust for absolute survival, being the only survivor, wins over everything and everyone. Destroying Masters, in varying degrees and intensities embody this desire.

"Muhammad Tughlak, the Sultan of Delhi kept finding letters that were thrown over the walls of his audience hall. Their exact contents were not known but supposedly they were insulting and injurious. He decided to reduce Delhi, one of the biggest cities in the world back then, to ruins. Since, as a strict Mohammedan, he cared greatly for justice, he bought up all the houses and homes, paying the full price. Then he ordered the inhabitants to move to a new, very distant city, Daulatabad, which he wanted to make his capitol. They refused. Whereupon he had his herald announce that no one was to be found in the city after three days. The majority gave in to the order, but some people hid in their houses. The Sultan had the city combed for any remaining inhabitants. His slaves found two men in the streets, one crippled, one blind, and brought them before the Sultan. He ordered the cripple be shot from a catapult and the blind man be dragged from Delhi to Daulatabad, a voyage of forty days. En route, he fell to pieces, and all that arrived in Daulatabad was a leg. Now everyone else fled from Delhi, leaving furniture and property behind; the city was utterly deserted. The destruction was so total that not a cat, not a dog remained in the buildings of the city, in the palaces or suburbs. One night, the sultan climbed to the roof of his palace and gazed across Delhi, where no fire, no smoke, no light was to be seen, and he said, 'Now my heart is tranquil and my wrath appeased' (Canetti, 1979, pp. 23, 24).

The story includes elements of paranoid grandiosity, resettlement, the illusion of equanimity, utilization of terror through public acts, and the moment of the script payoff, withdrawal, or suicide.

"The exact contents were not known..." is typical of the lack of grounded reality inherent in grandiose paranoid put forth as justification of action by Masters. In order to justify them, objectification of fear must be achieved. This remains unclear in the Sultan's case, but distinctly so in the case of Hitler. Very often there are objective reasons to be afraid, but during the advanced stages of script fulfillment Master's fears are only lightly influenced by reality.

The Sultan's solution is to get all the people settled elsewhere, to remove them. It is reminiscent of Hitler's resettlement plan to make Germany Judenrein, or Jew free, by deporting all the Jews to Madagascar.

Equanimity is feigned as the Sultan's first move is to appear fair and just in the matter ... he bought up all the houses and homes, paying the full price" (see above). Hitler offered to pay the Jews for their property, though not the full price. But given that the Jews were defined as so insidious and malignant a threat, any price would have appeared fair to the majority of Followers and Bystanders in German society. When buying them off fails the Sultan resorts to murder and torture, acts designed to terrorize the populace into obedience. Similarly Hitler instigated Kristallnacht in 1938, "The Night of Broken Glass", at which time many Jewish stores were destroyed, Synagogues were burned, people were beaten, some to death, by mobs of roving Nazis, while others were thrown into concentration camps such as Dachau. After this night of public terror many Jews decided to leave Germany and did so, sadly not all. It was only later, when the ultimate terror could no longer be denied that all, like the inhabitants of Delhi, would have gladly fled. The ultimate moment of the script payoff comes for the Sultan as he mounts the walls and experiences the feeling of aloneness and safety.

Hitler, the archetypical Destroying Master, never reached this moment though there are many indications of his having worked steadfastly and resolutely toward it. It explains the numerous and blatant errors of military planning. He went against the advice of his generals on numerous occasions: hesitated before a vulnerable England after Dunkirk; created a second front by attacking Russia and failed, through hubris, to anticipate the possibility of a winter campaign, neglecting to provide winter equipment for his armies. He ordered Field Marshall Von Paulus to fight to the last man at Stalingrad rather than stage a strategic withdrawal. There were other symptoms. He eventually withdrew from ritual display so important to the Nazi ideas of pagan ritual. He withdrew from public support such as visiting any bombed cities. This is contrasted with images of Churchill waddling steadfastly through the bombed rubble in London and Coventry, cigar in mouth, signing the V for Victory. At first Hitler showed tendencies to withdraw by spending most of his time at his retreat, Berchtesgarden. Later he stayed mostly at his eastern military headquarters at Rastenburg in East Prussia and finally, near the end, he holed up in the bunker in Berlin, all symptoms of the will toward being ultimately and absolutely alone and progression towards script end. While in the bunker he ordered Germany murdered by decreeing that all German cities be destroyed by his own armies. Eventually realizing the impossibility of attaining absolute aloneness in life, he found it in death by committing suicide. And still there is one further try. In order to separate himself from the pile of fifty million dead the war produced, he ordered himself cremated, paradoxically to join them in the sky; all the soldiers and bombed civilians, the German and Austrian dissenters, the freedom fighters, and all the Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses and others he sent to the crematoria.

Perhaps the most eloquent description of this process can be found in the poem by J. L. Moreno, the creator of Psychodrama.

"Hitler speaks: This is my prayer, oh God:

Give me the power to kill. Let me destroy one half of mankind and let me build the other half for the future.
It will be a healthier world, a rejuvenated world.
The world will be vastly better if only the superior will survive.
They know how to worship you.
I shall first reduce in number or destroy the lower breeds of men; the Negroes, the yellow people, the gypsies, the Jews.
Give me the power to kill the lower breeds, the eternal bastards of your creation.

He speaks: I return to you in prayer, because I am in doubt.
Give me the power to kill more.
One half of mankind is not enough. May I destroy perhaps, two thirds of it?
I know now that I must reduce in number or destroy the Slavs,
the Poles, the Czechs, the Turks and many other breeds that stand in the way of your glory.
God! Give Me the Power!

He speaks again: I turn again to you, oh God.
Again I am in doubt.
There are still more races and breeds of men who should perish from the face of the earth if the world would be after Thy image.
Give me the power to kill all who are not worthy of You.
Now I know that there are Anglo-Saxon tribes, and even Germanic tribes which should perish.
And as I look closer, oh God, there are people even in my own house; men around me who are not worthy of living.
Give me the power to destroy all of them!

He speaks once more: This is my prayer, oh God.
I return in prayer to you.
For the last time this is my prayer.
This is my last prayer:
May all beings perish.
You and I are now alone.
We share the world,
and as I think it to the end,
I could not bear a God above me.
Give me then, oh God, the power to destroy you" (Moreno. 1969)

Conclusion

"Why they did it" rests on the conclusion that when the desire for absolute aloneness, onliness, and the extreme need to triumph over the dead are joined in a nation or people, usually through a supreme Master, the result is genocide, even the particular genocide

known as Holocaust. The early need is for power. But power isn't enough, not even absolute power. Heaps of bodies are needed; more and more, for their sake alone. No number, short of all, is enough. Ultimately all that is strived for is nothingness, only nothingness.

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