

THE INSTINCTS OF SELF-PRESERVATION AND PROCREATION IN CONFLICT

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless each one of you. Blessed is this hour.

In the last lecture we discussed the instincts of self-preservation and procreation as they appear in harmony and also in distortion. I should now like to continue with this topic and show you specifically how the two instincts combat one another, and also the particular distortion that each instinct causes when the soul is disturbed.

A distortion results from adopting a particular attitude and rigidly adhering to it. This happens when the personality unconsciously regards such an attitude as a solution to life's difficulties. The various aspects of the idealized self-image we have discussed are unconscious attempts to cope with life. Because they are erroneous solutions, they are necessarily rigid. The more you sense that such solutions do not really work, the stronger your drive becomes to make them work. This defensive reaction causes the rigidity.

Growth, development, maturity and the healing of distorted soul forces lie in eliminating the pseudo-solution and replacing it with truth, which is always flexible and knows no rules. It alone can provide true security, although the personality going through the process feels acute insecurity and anxiety when called upon to give up the pseudo-solutions.

The function of the instinct of self-preservation is to maintain and safeguard life. It is concerned with avoiding danger and securing safety. In a state of health and maturity, real dangers - not only physical ones, but any threat to the healthy growth of the individual -- are warded off. But in distortion the dangers are imagined and unrealistic. When a human being feels threatened by not being loved, admired, approved of or agreed with, the danger is unreal.

In a recent lecture I mentioned three main pseudo-solutions: (1) the quest for love, (2) the quest for power, and (3) the quest for serenity.* The misconception behind each one is that living according to the dictates of these "solutions" will help you master life.

In general, the distortion of the instinct of self-preservation leads the soul to adopt the quest for power. The distorted instinct of procreation leads the soul to the quest for love. Yet either instinct may serve both ends, since safety as well as pleasure are necessary in life. If the instincts are distorted, they conflict with, rather than complement, one another. Therefore, a compromise has to be found even in the case of pseudo-solutions. I should now like to be a little more specific.

If the self-preservation instinct is distorted, the following process occurs: The young child experiences insecurity, either from lack of love, from lack of understanding of its own individuality, from a general uncertainty in the atmosphere or in the personality of the parents. This creates

anxiety. The child sense an atmosphere of danger. In that instant the instinct of self-preservation starts to work. In order to ward off danger, the personality assumes certain inner and outer behavior patterns, above and beyond the character distortions that the distorted instinct of self-preservation ordinarily brings in its wake. I discussed this in the last lecture. These tendencies include aggressiveness, hostility, power drive, a need to triumph over others, competitiveness, and excessive demands. The idealized self-image will be set up according to these tendencies.

I emphasize again that this does not necessarily mean that contradictory tendencies, such as the quest for love, are not also present. Also, I want to repeat that what I say here presents only a general outline. The pseudo-solution has to be found in its particular form within each individual who works on this path, for there are many variations possible. For example, the quest for power may predominate without any apparent aggressiveness or hostility. The possibilities are manifold. Integration and self-finding can occur only when these tendencies are individually verified and experienced, possibly in entirely different terms than those mentioned here.

The distorted instinct of self-preservation will lead to the pseudo-solution of a quest for power, with all its demands, aggressiveness, and power drive. The psyche thinks: "If I assert myself and my power, my omnipotence, my invulnerability, nothing can happen to me. As a result, I will not be threatened by the dangers of a hostile world, which does not understand me."

In contrast, the distorted instinct of procreation contains the pleasure drive, the yearning for pleasure supreme on all levels of being. When, due to life circumstances on the one hand, and to personal limitations and personality disturbances on the other, this pleasure is not forthcoming, the distortion of the procreation instinct becomes conducive to the pseudo-solution of submissiveness, compliance, appeasement. The quest for love is supposed to solve all problems. Being nonassertive, giving in, can be damaging by leaving one open to abuse and it is equally doomed to failure. People choose this solution in the unconscious belief that they will be loved and thus receive pleasure.

The third pseudo-solution, namely, withdrawal, the quest for serenity, is secondary. It is the result of the previous two solutions fighting one another and tearing the personality in half. When the pressure of the inner conflict becomes too great to bear, this secondary, superimposed solution is adopted. The first two solutions are adopted in order to cope with life. The last is adopted in order to cope with the conflict resulting from the other two false solutions. On the conscious, more superficial level of personality, this third attempt at solving life takes the form of withdrawal from emotional involvement, a feeling of wanting to be left alone with the rationalization that this will bring serenity. In actuality, you cannot satisfy both instincts any better. Satisfaction becomes even less possible as the distortion increases.

The two primary pseudo-solutions, present to some extent in every individual, have to be acutely felt and experienced by each one of you as you proceed in this work, my friends. You will then know and experience the conflict, not as a theory, but as an observable battle within yourself. You will consequently gain an entirely new understanding of yourself and your problems.

If your predominant concern is with inner safety, you are bound to overemphasize and therefore distort the instinct of self-preservation. Therefore the instinct of procreation must, to some extent at least, be squelched and held in abeyance. The whole personality is geared toward

obtaining safety, so it undermines another legitimate need. The soul rebels against this. It continues to crave pleasure. The less this craving is heeded because of the greater imaginary need, the greater the unconscious craving becomes.

Unconsciously, you confront the alternatives of safety or pleasure. For, in order to obtain happiness, fulfillment, bliss, pleasure, a certain courage is presupposed, a spirit of adventure, so to speak. Pleasure presupposes the willingness to risk. But such risk is the very danger that you feel you must avoid at all costs. So the immature soul struggles to get both safety and pleasure without daring to risk, without coming out of its shell, without taking the necessary steps. When these goals are not obtained, rebellion and self-pity set in, with no conscious awareness of the cause. This entire process is unconscious, from beginning to end -- there is no awareness of these two basic needs, no understanding that these needs are unfulfilled and why. All this has to become conscious in this work.

Whenever an unsuccessful, half-hearted attempt is made to obtain fulfillment, fearful souls will regard any minor rejection, criticism, or disapproval as such drastic danger that they will again quickly withdraw either into a false serenity or into a domineering aggressive, forbidding attitude. This makes the attainment of love impossible. The venture does not seem worthwhile. So, the yearning for pleasurable fulfillment is squelched and an essential part of the soul remains thirsty and barren. It misses not only happiness and beauty, but an integral part of the life experience. Needless to say, such a soul suffers a damage that the real self will rebel against. This rebellion, when reaching the outer levels of being, may take on various forms.

If the pleasure-supreme principle predominates, the personality will take a risk, but at such a price that further disturbances are bound to set in. The thwarted instinct of self-preservation tries to compromise; you will risk by submitting. You will try to obtain happiness by self-effacement and masochism, thinking to combine the needs for pleasure and safety. In giving in, you believe you will receive what you crave, while protecting yourself by acting helpless.

If the distorted instinct of self-preservation and its pseudo-solution, the quest for power, predominate, a vital part of the soul will starve and stagnate. If the distorted instinct of procreation and its pseudo-solution, the quest for love, predominate, vulnerability and helplessness increase until the soul is actually endangered. The danger comes not in the sense that the psyche believes, but in a very different sense: from continued self-denial and estrangement from the real self. This brings inhibition and the stunting of creative forces, which in turn cause anxiety and frustration, among other feelings.

Since both instincts exist in equal strength in the human soul, and since the distortion of one invariably causes distortion of the other, both pseudo-solutions will be found in every individual. For some, one predominates and the other will be found only after further search. It will be discovered as the underlying core of the predominant tendency. For others, both tendencies exist side by side, tearing the person apart in constant conflict. But even if one tendency predominates strongly, it does not mean that conflict is absent. Just because something is not on the surface does not mean that severe effects are not possible. They are often more severe because it is harder to determine the cause when one tendency is hidden.

Because of this raging inner battle between such mutually exclusive aims and solutions, the psyche seeks compromise solutions. Such compromise may assume various forms. For instance, the pleasure drive will be released only on certain levels of being. You may feel that spiritual, intellectual, or mental pleasure is not a dangerous pursuit. It does not involve you emotionally and does not expose you to the risk of rejection and hurt. Emotional or sensual pleasure, on the other hand, seems extremely dangerous and is therefore more or less eliminated. Needless to say, seemingly valid explanations are always found. This process may not always be so crass that a person actively withdraws. It may be more subtle; you may unconsciously sabotage yourself and then project your failure on others. Such failure actually results from withholding outgoing forces and being unwilling to risk giving of yourself. Such an attitude robs a vital part of the inner organism. This damages the psyche and the whole structure of the individual.

A further and very common compromise solution is to try and make either self-preservation or procreation serve both ends. This, of course, cannot work. For instance, the quest for power aims at love and pleasure in the unconscious belief that being omnipotent, strong, invulnerable will bring love and devotion. This attitude implies that you will not only ensure your safety and invulnerability, but this very facade will simultaneously bring you so much admiration that your quest for love will be fulfilled. You never see that invulnerability makes love impossible. The more you try to convince others of your invulnerable strength, the more frightened they will be of you, and fright has never yet induced love. Nor does the superiority over others induce love, for other people resent being made to feel inferior and will certainly not respond by loving those who have belittled them, regardless of how subtly the belittling is done.

Those whose predominant pseudo-solution is a quest for love to obtain pleasure will compromise by trying to combine this pleasure drive with the need for safety. Often they are even consciously convinced that there is no conflict. If they obey and do everything expected of them, they will receive not only love and pleasure, but protection from danger as well. They do not recognize that such tactics generate inner reactions that are bound to destroy their very aim. The more they submit, the more the existing power drive of others will indeed take advantage of them. The more they are taken advantage of, the more they are bound to rebel and resent. Such resentments may not rise to surface awareness, but their undermining strength is bound to reject others, who will respond with resentment in turn.

These are only a few general examples of the compromise that seeks to combine the mutually exclusive pseudo-solutions. Many more variations are possible and have to be uncovered by the individual. Beware of rigid evaluation that each pseudo-solution contains only one distorted instinct. It is not as simple as that. Find how you too are trying to serve both needs with attempts that do not even work for one basic need.

All this is very general, my friends, but you can gain a glimpse of the many possibilities in the soul's unconscious and often unsuccessful striving for solutions. In this work you have to uncover layer by layer how these pseudo-solutions cannot possibly bring the desired results, why they cannot do so, how they affect the self and others, and what their original purpose was. In order to determine this, the emotions you once felt as a child and, in a different way, still feel have to become conscious. Then you will see the contradictions, the arbitrariness of your emotions and how your unconscious concepts and ideas govern their origin and their aim. Such pseudo-solutions superimpose still other ones, along with contradictory underlying emotions.

Let me give you an example. Submissive people, always ready to appease, to be overly modest and never to take credit or advantages for themselves, are bound to become resentful of others. They do not see that such resentment is unjustified because they themselves chose this behavior pattern. They have no right to blame others for taking at face value what they offer -- their self-effacement. They feel: "Even though I offer the sacrifice and am so modest about it, people should give me special respect and should love me instead of taking me for granted." In other words, their self-effacement is offered in return for being loved. Because their self-effacement takes the place of loving others, the barter does not work. This is what they resent. Not until they recognize the just inner process at work between themselves and others, will they change.

Submissive people also feel guilty about these resentments because they do not correspond to the dictates of their idealized self-image. When you find such a submissive attitude in yourself, look into what exists beneath it. You will not only find the resentments and guilt, but deeply hidden, you will also find excessive demands, no less than those in the aggressive, power-driven person. You will find that just because these demands exist -- for love, protection, and nurturing -- the submissive solution has been chosen in the belief that this will make others comply with your demands. Yet the conscious acknowledgement of such demands crassly contradicts the general character of such people. Therefore the demands have to be kept under cover, causing additional guilt. The greater the demands, the more you feel you must hide them because you would be criticized and therefore not loved. So you develop a double guilt: one over the existence of your demands, the other over the insincerity of your modesty and undemandingness.

Very often the predominant tendency hides its opposite underneath. If the predominant tendency is the quest for power in order to be safe, with all the accompanying hostility, ruthlessness, pride, superiority, pretense at invulnerability, the underlying core may be the helpless child, looking for love and protection; craving pleasure and happiness; feeling vulnerable, submissive, insecure, and dependent. If the predominant tendency is a quest for love in order to receive pleasure, with all the accompanying self-effacement, appeasement, self-denial, and masochistic sacrificing, the underlying core may be a ruthless selfishness, self-centered pride and superiority, excessive demands and often even cruel impulses toward others.

The underlying core always produces shame, which has to be hidden, and is then covered with its opposite. These two tendencies are mutually exclusive and therefore create conflict, and additional conflict arises from the very shame of the underlying tendency that has to be covered up. Even if you are ashamed of something positive and constructive, the very fact that you are ashamed and therefore hide it produces strain, anxiety, pretense, and fear of exposure.

What makes this work temporarily so painful is the uncovering of something shameful. Only after mustering the courage to bring your shame out in the open will its exaggerated character vanish. And with that you will gain an indescribable sense of liberation, of shedding a burden so heavy that you have never quite realized its weight.

The more you progress in this work, the more important it becomes for you to feel and experience all your emotions, to appraise their significance and translate them into meaning. Without this activity, it will be impossible to free yourself of conflicts and problems. The whole weight has to be shifted from thinking, intellectually evaluating, and deducing to feeling and

experiencing all your positive and negative emotions. I cannot emphasize this enough. As you gradually learn this by decreasing your resistance through increased understanding, you will truly unfold layer after layer of these pseudo-solutions with all their various emotional reactions. You will unlearn the repression of forbidden feelings and will acknowledge them without censorship. Only then can you understand their origin and meaning.

Becoming aware of your emotions is a gradual process and happens only when you truly want and cultivate it. Before such awareness is cultivated, the average person experiences life in a very different way and with a very different understanding. The acute anxiety and fear that you occasionally experience will be ascribed entirely to outer provocations, and you remain content to believe that you are otherwise all right. Of course, I am not speaking here of crassly disturbed people. Most people fail to connect cause and effect between the outer event that disturbs them and their own inner conflicts and pseudo-solutions. They do not realize that any pseudo-solution produces an unhealthy dependence on others, regardless of how bent they are on becoming independent. Nor do they see that when all is calm in their outer life, they live with only a small percentage of their capacity to experience, to enjoy life, and to be creative. They are oblivious to their inhibitions and their inability to express themselves adequately. They do not realize that strain, tiredness, and vague anxiety result from repressed emotions. Mostly, they are unaware of their negative emotions, which they keep in hiding and which come to the fore only when they have reason to externalize it.

So the first major step in becoming aware of the emotions is an inner permission to find out what you really feel. This is to be cultivated by prayer, meditation, and a daily resolution of intent. In this way resentment, guilt, anxiety, animosity, and other negative emotions will rise to consciousness. These negative emotions account for the inhibition of spontaneity and for a certain feeling of flatness that you have about life, a certain lifelessness. Before appreciable progress is made in this work, this general outer climate is usually regarded as acceptable. You take it for granted and it never occurs to you that life could be very different. When you penetrate this outer pseudo-calm, which is so easily disturbed by circumstances outside your control, you will find a vast accumulation of smoldering emotions that you often believe to be entirely alien to your character and that are therefore doubly upsetting. With this penetration, although unpleasant at first, you begin to eliminate the causes that have made you only half alive, using only a small measure of your potential faculties on all levels of your being.

The first emotional level of awareness usually will be a welling up of resentments that you were never conscious of and that are connected with guilt and anxiety. But you will find that not all resentments are unjustified. Some are, because you have caused the conditions; but others are not. Yet you are under the vague impression that you must not ever resent anything and that everything must automatically be your fault.

You will learn to discriminate. You will discover that some resentments are understandable and healthy, provided you would do something about them rather than fall into a state of desuetude. You will learn to assert yourself where you previously let yourself be taken advantage of. You will, gingerly at first, stop this process. You will realize that other resentments are altogether unfounded. No rule can be made. You yourself will know the truth without a doubt once you have the courage to let out your repressions. This will give you the ability to assert yourself and, if need be, to adopt a healthy aggressiveness, which is altogether different from the distorted one. Thus a proper inner

balance will begin to take place. You will cease being -- inwardly or outwardly -- aggressive where it is unjustified; and you will be aggressive where it is healthy and constructive. One imbalance always causes another. Thus, establishing balance comes from facing truth and changing whenever possible. This new balance comes automatically and is unattainable by deliberately initiated outer actions.

As you experience this layer of resentment and find what you really feel, rather than trying to feel as you think you should, in order to stick to your private solution, and if you have the courage to acknowledge what you feel, right or wrong, you will prepare the way to become aware of the next layer and its predominant pseudo-solution. You will also find other defense mechanisms. You will find the main components of your idealized self-image, comprising, perhaps, all three tendencies. Only after this is explored will the underlying neglected and shamefully covered core of your problem evolve into emotional awareness. You will then experience these emotions.

This is a painful process, my friends. I want to say to all of you who do this work, do not shy away from the pain for it is healthy, and indispensable to eliminating your pain once and for all. Without your going through this path, it will persist in your soul and damage you, whether you know it or not. The freedom and happiness, the security and safety, the marvel of life experience can be fully yours only if you have the courage to go through this. Then, and only then, will you realize how worthwhile this process is. You will then know that shying away was an ostrich policy that never got rid of the pain deep within. By drawing out the pain you will lose it. By keeping it locked up and covering it, you continue to suffer. The courage to go through this pain, which you may encounter on various levels, as well as at the core, has to be experienced. Life and this path will help you if you so decide. Help will come also through outer events that will focus your attention on the causal inner factors.

Your inner will to go through your pain must always be cultivated anew. The inner will to face the truth in you, regardless of whether it is pleasant or flattering, must always be resolved afresh. This will give you the strength to be successful. It will help you to keep on going at the most crucial crossing, when the temptation to give up is always strongest. Pursue, persist, and persevere! This is my advice, my friends.

I also advise you to ask yourself what is your attitude to this work. When certain painful points are reached, what are your reactions to the work, to yourself, to the people who help you, to the whole idea as such? Many ways of reacting are possible.

Now, my friends, are there any questions?

QUESTION: I would like to ask about all three distortions being simultaneously present in one person. Do they alternate in time? How does that work in a personality?

ANSWER: I just explained that. What exactly is not clear?

QUESTION: I understand that people who are submissive inwardly, for example, may have an underlying power drive -- and vice versa. If this becomes too much to bear, they establish a false serenity by withdrawing from life. But what I would like to know is, how does it work when two or all three of these tendencies alternate? When a person is submissive on one occasion, domineering

on another, and withdrawn on still another occasion. Do they perhaps fluctuate even momentarily? Why does that happen?

ANSWER: It happens because these are pseudo-solutions and therefore they do not work. They may work occasionally to a certain degree, if life and others fall in with it. But if life presents certain obstacles, not permitting one of these attempted pseudo-solutions to work, then the others may in turn be resorted to and probed, so to speak.

Let us take an example. Say a man has a predominant power drive. He has associated with many submissive people who respond favorably to him. This solution, then, seems to work for him. Thus the power drive is predominant. Let us say a very important person on whom he depends is himself predominantly power-driven, maybe a relatively healthy person will not respond to him with submissiveness. A third possibility is that, even the most submissive person will reach a point where he or she will outwardly rebel. You can only go so far and no further, since the submissive person also has aggressive power aspects. So then the "solution" of superior power no longer works. In order to get what he wants and thinks he needs, he will call upon his submissiveness. The very same person who usually domineers over others will then become quite submissive. This is how people will try to gratify their needs for safety, love, and unconditional approval. I venture to say that you all have observed this often. You all know the person who cringes in front of superiors, in front of those who really are, or are imagined to be, stronger people, but who is ruthlessly domineering toward weaker ones. This is a typical manifestation of how these solutions alternate, according to the need and to the situation. Is that clear?

COMMENT: Yes, I think so. Then it becomes a matter of grasping at straws.

COMMENT: Right. You see, any such pseudo-solution is always a grasping at straws because the child, seeking solutions to cope with a seemingly hostile and frightening world is not equipped to find the real solution. Beset by problems it has brought into this incarnation, it cannot see the trouble spot and is bound to react by resorting to pseudo-solutions. This should absolve you from destructive guilt feelings about the original pseudo-solution you have clung to. Then, you could not help it. But now you will take full responsibility upon yourself, without any destructive guilt, for maintaining the pretenses that are always linked to pseudo-solutions. And this, in turn, will help you to free yourself of them.

QUESTION: In a relatively well-integrated child, how does the idealized self-image manifest, as against the real self? Is there a continuing fusion without building a strong mask personality?

ANSWER: Of course, the healthier a human being is, the weaker the idealized self-image. It may then manifest only in the disturbed personality areas, and to a weaker extent. It will always be counteracted by the stronger manifestation of the real self. Since there is no human being who is entirely free of inner distortions and soul disturbances, everyone has an idealized self-image. The strength of obstructions determines the strength of the idealized self-image and to that extent the child -- or the adult, for that matter -- becomes alienated from the real self, and tries to become the idealized self. The stronger the inner conflicts, the stronger the difference between the real and the idealized self. In the relatively healthy person, the difference will not be as striking nor as incongruent. The demands and standards of the idealized self will be less stringent.

The desire-life of daydreams is always a good indication of the idealized self-image and its pseudo-solutions. Fantasy stems from the predominant aims and needs of the psyche. Since most adults live in daydreams in one form or another, these may serve as additional material for search. The idealized self-image shows up in more than just fantasy. It must show in the rigid commands, the shoulds and musts I have discussed. It shows in the anxiety and the guilts when these compulsions are not lived up to. It shows in certain expectations of the self and others. But all this can be found and verified only after extensive work. If the idealized self-image shows in the desire-life, it must also be incorporated in the personality, although you may not yet be aware of it. If the personality were entirely free of it, if there were no self-estrangement, there would be no need whatsoever to daydream about the idealized self-image. A very active fantasy life in which desires are fulfilled is an expression of an urgent need to become the idealized self-image.

QUESTION: Isn't every child when it is born as well adjusted as any other?

ANSWER: No, absolutely not. You bring with you the problems and conflicts of your former life that have not been resolved. Your life circumstances and environment have been chosen -- perhaps by yourself -- to best solve these still-unsolved problems. Not only does general spiritual development vary with each person, but there is also variation in the conflicts and their intensity.

QUESTION: There were two questions last time. One of them was left unanswered because of time, and the second seemed not to have been answered satisfactorily. They are related. One has to do with the possibility that resentments and indignation would be leveled to a state of apathy. The other inquired about the validity of righteous indignation or justified resentment. I think you have answered both tonight. Would you want to say a further word about this?

ANSWER: It is answered in tonight's lecture. I specifically said, for instance, that submissive people, as well as those seeking false serenity, may not even allow themselves to become aware of indignation that is quite justified and that should be acted upon. Injustices or provocations will be healthily declared once the personality reaches inner health in this respect. Before such a point is reached it is extremely difficult to distinguish between justified indignation due to actual provocation, and unjustified indignation due to unreal or self-caused provocation. Only extensive work on this path will eventually bring you to the point where you know beyond the shadow of a doubt, without any wavering or guilt, without any need to get allies to confirm how right you are, when to assert yourself and when not to. You will act freely because you so choose, and you do so without inner compulsion in either direction.

I bless each one of you, my dearest friends, and ask you to open your innermost self to receive strength to enable you to gain further insight into yourselves in every possible way. May all outer friction be a helping element to thus recognize inner friction. With these words I bless you and strengthen you with all our love.

Be in peace. Be in God!

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