

THE DESIRE FOR HAPPINESS AND THE DESIRE FOR UNHAPPINESS

Greetings! God bless all of you, blessed be this evening. With great happiness I resume my contact with you. I will continue the teachings that had to be interrupted for a time. It is possible to use an interruption like this in a fruitful way, if you so desire.

The wish for happiness exists in every living being. However, the concept of happiness varies according to the development of each individual. Due to a distorted concept of happiness, another desire comes into existence in the human soul which is often overlooked. And that, strange as it may seem, is a desire for unhappiness. I shall now discuss the chain reactions set in motion by a wrong concept of happiness.

The desire for happiness is already in existence when the human entity is born. It exists in the small infant. The infant's idea of happiness is fulfillment of all its desires instantly and in exactly the way it wants it. Regardless of how adult a person may be, a remnant of this infant remains with him for the rest of his life.

All wrong concepts are distortions and misunderstandings of the right concept. Happiness in the wrong concept is expressed in the following way: "Only if I can have what I want, the way I want it, and when I want it, can I have happiness. I will be unhappy with any way other than this." Included in this statement is the demand for absolute approval, admiration, and love by everybody. The moment anyone seems to fail to meet this requirement, the person's world crumbles. Happiness becomes an impossibility, not just for the time being, but forever after. This, of course, is never the intellectual conviction of an adult human being, but emotionally it holds true; for when everything seems hopeless, the mood becomes desperate.

The undeveloped being feels in terms of black and white. It knows no in-between. Either there is happiness or there is unhappiness. If things happen in accordance with its wishes, the world is bright. But if the tiniest little thing goes against its will, the world looks black.

When the infant is hungry but for a few minutes, these minutes are eternity, not only because it lacks a time concept, but also because the infant does not know that the period of hunger will be over in a very short time. So the baby is in absolute despair, which you can observe in a crying child. The issue over which the baby cries seems in no way related to its anger, fury, and unhappiness. This part of the personality, freely expressed in infancy, remains hidden in the psyche of the adult and continues to produce similar reactions. Only the reasons change, and the outer display becomes modified or even completely covered by rational and reasonable behavior. But this in no way proves that the inner reaction has truly been eliminated or that the person has come to terms with it in a process of inner maturing and growth.

The infant realizes very early that the kind of happiness it wants is unattainable. The child feels dependent on a cruel world which denies it what it thinks it needs and could have if the world were less cruel.

If you think it through logically, you will find that the primitive and distorted concept of happiness actually amounts to a desire for omnipotent rulership, for unquestioned obedience from the surrounding world, for a special, elevated position above all other beings -- since others are expected to fulfill what the person desires. When this wish cannot be gratified -- and it never can -- the frustration becomes absolute.

It is impossible, of course, for any human being to remember these early emotions, for you have no memory of your first few years. That these primitive reactions continue to exist without exception in all human beings is a fact, and you can find these emotions by various ways in the work you are doing on this path. You can find them by observing past and present reactions, by analyzing them from the point of view of the inner infant. First, discover where the infant still exists in you with its desires, feelings, and reactions, and focus your attention on this particular aspect of your personality. You will then have reached a point from where you can start to outgrow the unrealistic and unrealizable concept of happiness and build the proper, mature, realistic, and realizable concept. This will be infinitely more gratifying. Until you have experienced the infant in you, you cannot understand certain inner conflicts as being the effect of the chain reaction this fundamental distorted concept sets off.

The more the child grows and learns to live in this world, the more it realizes that the omnipotent rulership it wishes is not only denied but is also frowned upon. So it learns to hide this desire until the hiding has progressed so far that the growing person himself is no longer aware of it. Two basic reactions follow. One is: "Perhaps if I become perfect, as the world around me asks me to be, I will get so much approval that through it I can attain my goal." You then start to strive for such perfection. Needless to say, my friends, although we are all in agreement that all beings should strive for perfection, this kind of striving is wrong. It is wrong because of the motive. Here you do not strive for perfection in order to love better and give more. You do not strive for the sake of perfection itself, but seek a selfish end. And it is wrong further because you want to reach the goal of perfection right away, since happiness through omnipotent rulership is desired at once. To reach immediate perfection is, of course, utterly impossible. It forfeits the healthy acceptance of one's own inadequacies, which enables the personality to learn healthy humility and accept being no better than the rest of humankind.

The frustration becomes a double one; the first desire -- omnipotent rulership in order to be happy -- is not realized, neither is the second one, that of attaining perfection in order to obtain the first desire. This, in turn, causes acute feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, of regret and guilt. For the child does not yet know that no one is capable of attaining such perfection. It thinks itself unique in having failed and has to hide this shameful fact. Even when the person has grown up and consciously knows better, this reaction, not having been aired, continues to live locked in the soul. In the unconscious of the personality, the argument goes on: "If I were perfect, I would have what I want. Since I am not perfect, I am worth nothing." The second conscience, as I once termed it, continues whipping and whipping you, holding up the unrealizable goal, so that each failure causes additional despair and guilt, increasing the feelings of inferiority and inadequacy.

There is also another reaction. The personality cannot and does not want to assume the entire blame for the failure and so blames his or her surroundings. So a particular vicious circle comes into existence, which goes like this: "If they allowed me to be happy my way, by loving and approving of me completely and doing what I wish, then I could be perfect. With that, the obstacle that now stands in the way of the world giving me what I want would be removed. Therefore, it is 'their' fault. My failures are due only to the denying of my wishes, which they constantly inflict upon me." The vicious circle works like this in one direction: "I need to be perfect in order to be loved and to be happy," and in the other direction: "If I could have the position of rulership I need in order to be happy, then it would not be difficult for me to be perfect." Both wish-fulfillments are completely thwarted by the world. For this, you blame the world on the one hand and the self on the other. In addition, you resent that you are not loved just as you are. It seems to you that you ought to be loved unconditionally. This aspect reveals again that you demand an unconditional surrender from the people around you that would put you into the position of rulership you believe you need in order to be happy.

The wrong concept of happiness inevitably causes a wrong concept of love as well. Let me recapitulate briefly the wrong concept of happiness: "I can only be happy if things go my way." The mature concept of happiness in its highest unfoldment is: "I am independent of outer circumstances, regardless of what they are. I can be happy under any circumstances, because even the disadvantageous or unpleasant events will have a purpose, bringing me that much nearer to complete freedom and infinite happiness." Thus, even difficult times will have the power to make you happy. I grant you that as long as you are incarnated on Earth, this can only be experienced to a limited degree; nevertheless, with very mature and developed beings it happens at least to some extent. Unhappiness does not faze them because they recognize that it holds a seed of growth. For them such times are not useless, they do not feel hopeless, but fight with courage until the sun shines brightly again. With the mature concept of happiness, and therefore of life itself, the fact that one cannot always be happy is not cause for utter despair. One truly accepts that life holds both happiness and unhappiness. So when unhappiness comes along, the mature person's world does not come to an end, as it seems to happen for the emotionally immature. Pain is not something to be shunned at such high cost that the pain resulting from the avoidance becomes worse than the original pain would have been. Nor does the mature person seek and invite pain and unhappiness just to avoid the helpless feeling of being exposed to it against his will. But the immature person often does, and this leads us to the desire for unhappiness. We will come to it in a moment.

First let us consider the concept of love. The wrong concept of love, inherent in the wrong concept of happiness, is as follows: "If I am loved, I am paid homage, I possess a subject," as a ruler possesses his subjects. If you honestly observe your reactions right now, you will find similar feelings in you, although you may never have had the courage to acknowledge them. The right concept of love, on the highest level, is always and necessarily, "I love, regardless of whether or not you love me." Indeed, very few human beings have come that far. If you are not that far, there is no sense in trying to force yourself into something your feelings cannot yet follow. Forcing it may have a very bad effect in various ways. The compulsion and the inability to follow it through in reality would increase your feelings of failure and guilt. This, in turn, would lead to a tendency toward self-destruction. Moreover, the desire for this ideal, unselfish love can easily be distorted by the unhealthy desire to suffer which we will discuss in a moment. So if you are not loved and find it impossible to love in return, simply recognize it without guilt. If you have departed from your infant-desire for rulership, you will be able to take it with equanimity and without resentment toward

the person who does not seem to love you. On the plane on which most of you are, love is a give-and-take, a two-way-street. But contrary to the childish concept, love in its right concept does not demand a subject who blindly gratifies one's will, but needs and desires an object.

My friends, before I go on with this lecture, let me add the following: I am sure that none of you who hear or read these words will have any quarrel with them. You will be able to think of the many instances you sincerely felt according to the right concept -- or thought you felt that way. Yet I ask you, try to find the instances when you are incapable of feeling according to the right concept of love and happiness. All of you, without exception, will be able to remember such instances if you really try. Try to recognize when you wanted a subject and not an object. Find out by what emotions, desires, and reactions you can discover this to be true. All you need is the proper interpretation of your reactions and feelings in certain incidents, on certain occasions.

Now we come to the desire for unhappiness -- how it arises in the human soul out of the complex and universal basic phenomenon of misunderstood happiness. As I said, the human personality finds it more and more impossible to find happiness according to the wrong concept, the only one he knows. Instead of finding the right way by changing the wrong concept into the right one, the personality only too often struggles against the tide, trying to force life into the wrong concept. When this proves impossible, another way out is sought which seems a solution but proves even more damaging in the long run. Unconsciously, the person argues: "Since happiness is denied me and unhappiness inevitable and inflicted on me against my will, I may just as well make the best of it and turn a liability into an asset by trying to enjoy unhappiness." Superficially, this may appear to be a smart solution, but of course it never is. Although some aspects of unhappiness can be enjoyed in an unhealthy way, there are bound to be others that are extremely painful and cannot be enjoyed at all. But you are ignorant of this; you did not bargain for it and when the pain arises, you fail to see its connection with the process described here. Since the entire process is unconscious anyway, the unenjoyable aspects of unhappiness are never connected with the fact that they were self-provoked. Certain aspects of suffering are enjoyed by humanity, although this will never be consciously acknowledged, unless one is on a path of self-finding. It takes time, effort, and extremely good intent to bring what is in the unconscious to the surface.

Strangely enough, in a very distorted way, the desire for unhappiness seems to approach a state of being beyond the experience of most human beings, belonging to a much higher state of development. Some of you have heard that pleasure and pain are one above a certain level. A vague knowledge of this still exists in the superconscious memory, but is distorted by wrong motivations, by misunderstood basic principles, and by unrealistic approaches to life. Thus it is lived out in an extremely unhealthy and damaging way.

The psyche argues: "Since I cannot avoid unhappiness, I may just as well enjoy it. Furthermore, I want to alleviate the humiliation that the unhappiness is inflicted upon me against my will, making me a helpless prey. I will call forth the unhappiness myself! Then I am not quite so helpless."

This "way out" also takes the form of the following inner argument: "Since there is only black and white, and white is denied me, let me enjoy the all-black." This inner process propels the entire chain reaction into renewed momentum. Because the desire for unhappiness is unconscious, the

injuries collected in the process of provoking the unhappiness make you feel even more inadequate, the world even more cruel and unfair.

Needless to say, my friends, none of these thoughts are ever conscious. They are entirely unconscious arguments. You can only trace the emotions and reactions by applying certain methods in your work, by learning how to analyze your findings from a new angle. You will then find patterns of how you go on and on in subtle, hidden ways, provoking people and setting up negative situations, so that you can collect unhappy incidents, injustices, injuries, wrongs, and hurts. Once you recognize how you have provoked all this in ever so subtle ways, you will also be able to find what you enjoy about it -- no matter how much you loathe some aspects of it in your conscious mind. All this seldom happens in a very obvious way, although sometimes it is quite noticeable to others, but not to you. Most of the time, it happens so subtly that it completely escapes your attention, unless you truly wish to notice it.

I should like to emphasize again that the enjoyment you derive from the unhappiness you provoke is never felt to be truly and wholly enjoyable. If it were, the solution would be a true and realistic one. But since it is neither, you suffer, while at the same time you enjoy certain aspects of the unhappiness you produce. You might enjoy, for instance, the provocation itself in such a subtle way that this, too, escapes your attention. Or you might enjoy the self-pity that ensues.

Let us suppose that you are to meet a new friend. How often do you approach such a meeting with defiance, a negative attitude, doubt, and any number of other destructive feelings? Superficially one may say that this simply displays pessimism. But by going to the core of your feelings, you will find a hidden corner where you do not want to have a happy experience and so you sabotage it by all these negative attitudes. If you truly wanted a happy outcome, you would display an inner readiness which would be bound to bring success. Often, to the measure the inner readiness is lacking, you overcompensate with a superficial outer readiness, which however can never make up for the lack of truth within yourself. In some instances even the superficial outer mask is lacking. And yet, when the unhappy outcome is accomplished, you delude yourself into thinking that it was really not you who had brought it about. If you analyze your emotions in such, or similar incidents, you will discover without a doubt that the lack of inner readiness, the tiny little inner voice saying "no" does exist in you regardless of how much you desire the happy outcome consciously. Since the happy outcome would still be a compromise as compared with the complete rulership you unconsciously wish to exert, you prefer to destroy that which is within the realm of the possible, and ask for pain and suffering instead. Once you find out all that, and experience it to be a truth in yourself, as you have experienced other truths in the course of your work on the path, you will be well on the way to outgrowing the prison of self-inflicted suffering due to errors and false concepts.

This is very important for all of you, my friends, for this predicament is universal and all-encompassing. The time has come now for all of you who work on this path to investigate it as closely and as honestly as you know how.

It is often said that self-destruction -- that is, the desire for unhappiness -- is the result of deep-rooted guilt feelings. This is only partly true. It is much rather the other way around. There is no greater guilt feeling and shame in the human soul than the guilt due to provoking and collecting unhappiness. You may ask why this should cause more guilt than anything else. I might safely say

that the guilt and shame due to provoking unhappiness and collecting miseries is the mother of all guilt and shame and is at the root of all other guilt feelings. All the feelings of guilt and shame you have found so far are superficial levels and coverups for the real guilt. The proof of this is that the guilt feelings you have unearthed and acknowledged still linger on. They have not disappeared. Had you found the real reason, the guilt would have had to disappear, for then a change of attitude would have inevitably occurred. As long as a true finding leaves you still unable to change your attitude, so that the healthy emotions could begin to grow, that finding is not yet sufficient -- a basic truth has yet to be discovered.

Most of you are ready now to approach this part of your soul. Of course, it cannot be done alone. When you have found and are ready to face all this within yourself, when you truly experience these emotions and live them, your life will gradually begin to change in many ways. Because by recognizing again and again the ways in which you call for unhappiness, you will cease to call for it, since you know that there is no longer any need for it. You will cease to desire to be a ruler when you have achieved a more mature outlook on life. To the measure you discover the desire for rulership within yourself and learn to give it up voluntarily, you will give up provoking unhappiness and misery. It is not easy to come to the point where you really experience all these emotions, where their presence ceases to be a mere intellectual theory. As long as it is a theory only, their discovery will not help you one bit. As long as you observe this tendency in others only, but not in yourself, it will not help you either. But with the proper method, and most of all, with your will to find this in you, after some painful recognitions, overcoming the resistance to making them, you will find the confirmation of every single word I have said. It is necessary that you find these feelings now. If you find them, experience them, lift them out of their hiding places and come to terms with them, you will hold a major key in your hands.

I repeat: there is no exception. No human being is completely free of what I have just described. It may manifest in many different ways and degrees in different human beings. One person may provoke unhappiness and collect misery to a high degree, while another may express the demand for rulership more openly. Many variations exist, governed by temperament, personality, and character trends -- and also by certain environmental factors in the formative years. But this basic human deviation exists, at least to some degree, in everybody. The extent of it is determined by the ability of the growing human being to come to terms with the world of reality, accepting it in exchange for the world of utopia that the infant desires. Intellectual conviction and outer behavior are in no way an indication of the inner attitude.

Perhaps you may have guessed that the universal human attitude or inner process just described is not an "image"; it is neither a personal, nor a mass-image. It underlies all images. It is a basic condition. The personal or mass-images affecting the individual are always determined by the particular way the basic human condition described here is expressed, and by the extent it can or cannot be assimilated or come to terms with as the personality grows. If you consider all your personal images with this in mind you will easily see how this basic condition influences and underlies all of them.

I have occasionally mentioned, particularly in one lecture about the basic vicious circle, that self-punishment and self-destructiveness are very strong factors in the human makeup. If you add what I have told you tonight, the basic vicious circle will become clearer and more understandable to

you. In this lecture I wanted to explain self-destructiveness in more fundamental terms, since we are approaching a deeper level in your work.

I have also referred in some private sessions to the "idealized self." You will now understand the meaning of that term. Learn to analyze your idealized self, what your unconscious wants it to be, what is it supposed to accomplish and to what purpose. By analyzing your daydreams and desires, you will always find the same common denominator: the desire for perfection in order to attain happiness, in order to be the ruler of the world that surrounds you. Offhand, you will undoubtedly say: "No, I do not have the slightest wish to rule over others; that is not true." But what do your many emotions amount to? Do you not wish to be perfect in order to have people do exactly as you please? Do you not wish to be loved and approved by everyone, without exception? Do you not wish to be perfect in order to be better, outstanding, more admirable than other people? If you are honest with yourself about your emotions considered from this new slant, you will have to admit that your answer must be "yes," although you certainly never expressed a desire for rulership in those terms. The rulership-principle is inherent in every soul, and it needs to be faced, my friends, before you can really outgrow your chains. Without recognizing this, you cannot recognize your desire for unhappiness, your provocations in that direction -- and it is of great importance that you face and see these in a true light.

If you can really accept yourself -- in your most deeply-seated emotions, not merely in theory and with your intellect -- as one in the long line of humanity, as imperfect as the next one, being liked by some, disliked by others, you have truly reached maturity. You will no longer find it necessary to damage yourself by inviting misery. But how few people are capable of doing this! You always suffer acutely when you are disapproved of. It may even rob you of sleep at times, or of your peace of mind. You find it so unbearable that you cannot even admit to the slightest wrong. You fight and fight against any such admissions. Why? It would destroy the picture of your idealized self. Your life seems at stake, for all happiness seems to slip out of reach if you cannot maintain the picture of your idealized self. This behavior is the infant reacting in you; your brain tries to assimilate the clamor of the infant in a rationally acceptable way, but this does not bring you peace. Peace will be yours only if you learn to see, face, and give up the infantile concept of happiness, rulership, and perfection. The idealized self is always an expression of this basic attitude, regardless of what shape or manner it takes in the individual personality.

You ferociously hold on to this basic attitude, not realizing how high a price you pay for it. You would not need to suffer if only you were willing to acknowledge the falsity of it all and give up the concept and the desire. By bringing the infant in you out into the open, you can teach it to be willing to let go of something useless. Hidden, the infant would go on destroying your life, no matter how hard you tried to prevent it on outer levels or how much you absorbed with your brain.

Some of you may wonder how all this ties in with the God-image. Since both the God-image and this condition are basic, how do they combine? In your work on the God-image or Life-image - for some people the latter expression may be more adequate -- you have found mostly one particular aspect: your unreasonable fear of God, the monster created by your misconceptions, residing in your unconscious. As you know, in your God-image this god seems unjust, inadequate, weak, and therefore arbitrary and cruel. As such, he is to be feared. You know that these emotions exist, regardless of your conscious concept. This aspect of the God-image ties in quite easily with the subject just discussed. Since you want happiness according to your idea, and life, or God, denies

it, God is to be feared all the more. It seems senseless to you to be denied what you wish. It seems unfair and unreasonable. So you can easily see the connection.

But there is one further aspect of the God-image that has not yet been found, or at least fully recognized, by many of my friends, and that is the following: "Since I can attain happiness only by being an omnipotent ruler, I have to be a god myself. Therefore, I want to be God. Why should I submit to this cruel, vindictive, vengeful, inadequate god who inflicts so much suffering on us? I could do it so much better. I would be more benign than he is if my will were done, if I were loved and approved of. I have no intention of being cruel if people do what I want. Therefore, I know better than God, and so I want to assume rulership of my little universe." Now whether that universe is the nursery, the house, the circle of friends and acquaintances or the town or the country, makes no difference. One's universe is always as large as the scope of the inner eye and the reach of inner perception -- not that of the outer knowledge. Again I say, you never think these thoughts consciously and in such crass terms. But by checking and analyzing your emotions as to their real content, you will find that they amount to just that. I would like to recommend that you try to find this aspect of the God-image in you, my friends, if you have not clearly found it yet.

I will be glad to help all of you individually to trace the basic condition brought to your attention tonight. With each one of you the way may be different. We have to find the approach best suited to each individual. This will be a new and very important phase in your work now. Are there any questions on this subject?"

QUESTION: Would you say that enjoying unhappiness is the same as "Weltschmerz"?

ANSWER: That is just one aspect, as self-pity is, for instance. But the crasser form of enjoying unhappiness is enjoying the process of provoking the situation that will bring on unhappiness.

QUESTION: Would you elaborate on the statement that pain and pleasure are the same in the healthy and developed form?

ANSWER: I will try to find the right words, for it is difficult to convey in the limited human language something that can hardly ever be experienced by a human being and is therefore outside the realm of human understanding.

Let me try to put it this way: The personality who has reached this state remains unaffected by negative events and is therefore truly independent. Pain, or what would cause pain to someone who has not reached this state, will have a creative, uplifting effect, causing inner growth and additional strength and freedom. While pain is known to be inevitable, it is not sought: it is taken in stride and allowed to serve a constructive purpose. When this purpose is fulfilled, it ceases to be pain. With a human being who is truly advancing on this path one can observe this to some degree. A painful event comes your way. You will first suffer. But instead of extending the period of suffering unduly by wallowing in a feeling that the suffering is senseless, not realizing what can be learned from it, you will fairly soon come to the point where the painful occurrence gives you an important new recognition about your soul, freeing you forevermore of some chains of ignorance and darkness. The moment this recognition is reached the pain ceases, even though the outer condition that caused the pain still prevails. Thus the very incident that has caused you acute pain

before the recognition now becomes a source of joy. And here I mean healthy and constructive joy, leaving no bitter aftertaste.

The higher the development of the entity, the shorter the period of suffering and the faster the arrival of the moment when the negative incident ceases to be painful -- until finally the moment of recognition and joy occurs at the same time as the "painful" experience takes place. When this state is reached, pain and pleasure become truly one. Then one has outgrown the world of opposites.

You must not expect in this life to reach the point where pain instantly turns into pleasure. In fact, this would be a dangerous expectation, since it approaches so very much the unhealthy attitude of looking for pain that is in you anyway. Moreover, it would lead to the nonacceptance of life as it is in your reality, namely a mixture of both pain and pleasure. Only by fully accepting both can you come out of inviting pain in an unhealthy way, and thus steadily, though slowly, you will approach the point where pain will no longer be. So do not even search for that. Simply try to make the painful experience a constructive one. That is the best, the only way for now.

QUESTION: Would you say then that some of the martyrs of the Catholic Church, for instance, confused the two attitudes?

ANSWER: Very often, indeed.

QUESTION: In other words, what the human being can do, if I understand it right, is to take it as a philosophical concept?

ANSWER: Yes. Beware of trying to strive for it now, for it may be exactly the opposite of what you really want and need for your soul.

Be blessed, all of you, this entire group. May divine light and strength, truth and love flow through you and lighten your burdens. Be in peace, be in God!

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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