

REPRESSED NEEDS -- RELINQUISHING BLIND NEEDS -- PRIMARY AND SECONDARY REACTIONS

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

We began to discuss needs, but we touched only the very surface of this all-important subject. So let us go into it a little more thoroughly. Understanding and awareness of the significance of needs will be more than mere enlightenment and insight. It will show you that in connection with repressed needs, and along with your unawareness of them, you will find all the twists and unresolved conflicts within your soul, and therefore in your life. So this phase of your work carries us a great deal further and deeper than the images with their wrong conclusions.

Basically, there are two kinds of needs: the instinctual needs, and those of the idealized self-image. Instinctual needs derive from the two basic instincts of self-preservation and procreation. These needs can be healthy and normal. However, if repressed, they will turn into potent forces of destruction. It is not necessarily only the false and imaginary needs that are destructive. A need which in itself is healthy and normal can be destructive when awareness of it is repressed or non-existent.

Among the needs of the idealized self are, for instance, the need for glory, the need to triumph, the need to satisfy vanity or pride. In order to understand this particular process, you have to review how the idealized self-image came into existence.

The two kinds of needs often intermingle and fuse, so that you are no longer aware -- even unconsciously, if I may use this seeming paradox -- of what is a healthy and legitimate need and what is not. They intertwine and overlap. Not only do the superimposed, unhealthy, and artificially created needs of the idealized self create guilt feelings, but just as often the healthy, normal, and legitimate needs of every healthy human being cause equally strong guilt feelings. This is due to the influence of the environment, to mass images, and to mass misconceptions. Your ignorance and the ignorance of educators and parents have created a distorted view that induces you to repress and to subdue what should be encouraged in a constructive way. This overall ignorance fails to recognize that which is intrinsically human, and even necessary.

Once you free yourself of resistance and repression, it will be a great relief to recognize that often what you felt most guilty about is not only normal and healthy, but is in fact most creative. Because of these misconceptions, you have deliberately starved such needs. That cannot make them disappear; instead, by a process of displacement, they reappear in a destructive form. You then, unconsciously, try to gratify their insistent claims in a manner that cannot do justice to their real demands. The driving force to still the hunger is misdirected. Real, legitimate needs can be satisfied only with full awareness so that understanding can be combined with the instinctual forces.

Your misconception about the meeting of real needs produces repression and, subsequently, a defense mechanism which is very destructive. Some of you, my friends, have begun to get a glimpse of it. You may ask, "What does the defense mechanism have to do with this?" The answer is that repressed needs cause you to act contrary to your own best interests as you try to gratify them. Therefore your attempts produce experiences that starve these needs even more. Since this hurts, you will produce a defense against such hurts which will prevent the fulfillment you crave even more.

Since you continue to repress your needs, the entire process has to be unrolled and brought into awareness. Then you will be able to develop a more adequate behavior-pattern that promises to bring about the result you wish; that is, happiness and fulfillment. You may then discover that your defense mechanism has come into being not only because you fear the risks of life, love, and involvement, but also because you believe, mistakenly, that certain needs are forbidden and wrong, and thus defend against these needs in yourself.

I am not talking only about what is already commonly known in this respect: sexual needs. It goes a lot further. Humanity has by now learned that sexual needs do not have to be repressed. They are not, in themselves, harmful and sinful. But humanity has not as yet realized that many other needs also exist that have been treated in the same repressive manner as sexual needs. These other needs, reaching into a deeper layer of human consciousness must also be brought out, acknowledged, and properly re-directed, as has already been done to a degree with the sexual needs.

As already stated, if your needs are repressed, the urge for gratification becomes much stronger. This is logical, because awareness of a need and clear knowledge of it will enable you to cope with it in the manner most appropriate under the particular circumstances. It will enable you to make a choice: to relinquish one thing in order to eventually obtain what is more rewarding for you. The ability to relinquish indicates maturity. Repression, on the other hand, creating blind needs and their blind pursuit, makes it impossible to see what the issues are. Therefore you cannot act in your own best interest. Where it may be necessary to relinquish in order to receive greater fulfillment, you cannot do so because you do not see the condition clearly. The pressing need causes you to hold tight to that which you can get, even though it may be often utterly inadequate.

Your blindness encourages the childish greed to reach for immediate fulfillment all along the line. If this proves impossible, the frustration becomes unbearable, and you find yourself trapped, caught in your own vicious circle of continuing to do what is against your best interest. Only awareness of your needs will enable you to tolerate temporary frustration. You will be capable of relinquishing the urgent pressure for immediate gratification if you keep in mind the farsighted knowledge that postponing the gratification serves the interests of your healthy needs, if not right now, then at a future time. You make this choice freely, because you have the necessary awareness.

If awareness of your needs is lacking because an unconscious guilt prevails due to the belief that they are wrong, they freeze into a hard knot. In such a case the pressure for gratification reaches such a pitch that it becomes impossible to stand frustration. Inability to tolerate frustration is one of the marks of immaturity. This lack of gratification combined with frustration then confirms that you are wrong in having the need. Awareness is driven even more into hiding and that causes you to pursue gratification compulsively. Under the accompanying self-castigation, the urge becomes even more potent and therefore more difficult to handle.

However, paradoxically, awareness of one's real needs and of their legitimacy makes it possible to pursue their gratification. In order to do so, frustration sometimes becomes necessary and can be endured. Unawareness and repression, on the other hand, create such an urgency that the immature, unconscious condition in which you cannot stand frustration prevails. You cannot relinquish even the slightest immediate gratification, and thereby you sabotage the possibility of fulfilling your real needs.

Offhand, all this may be very difficult to understand, for no general rules and regulations can be made. The process can only be understood if and when you find it within yourself, and see how it manifests specifically in your case. As you allow yourself awareness of the raw needs, of their significance, their validity, their desired goal, you can proceed to observe what you have done in the past to sabotage them; how you have done so; what defense mechanisms caused such sabotaging.

Eventually you will find one focal point deep within yourself, where you discover that you are locked and enslaved in what is called, in your present-day human terminology, a neurotic situation. All neurosis is built around a nucleus of repressed needs and contains the inability to give up certain gratifications. This then causes the neurotic symptoms of helplessness, dependency, inability to make a choice, and of seeing only two equally dissatisfying alternatives. You are torn in half by this very condition. If one part of you did not disapprove of these needs, you would not find it necessary to repress them. As it is, one part of you says "no" to them, and the more you say "no," the more urgent they become. The other part in you battles against the "no," and battles against the world that does not offer gratification gratuitously. Only your own wholehearted determination can induce you to undertake the necessary actions that will finally bring a sufficient measure of fulfillment, even if not to the ideal extent of your childish fantasies. However, the actual fulfillment will produce much greater happiness, in spite of its lack of perfection, than the childish fantasies. Such realism is a consequence of the strength and self-reliance you have acquired on the way, and of the knowledge that your fulfillment is up to you and not up to others. That knowledge will more than compensate you for the difference between reality and illusion.

To find that condition in you which so far you have not been able to relinquish takes time. The time varies with each individual. Again, no generalization can or should be made. That would only mislead you and tempt you to seek the solution by an intellectual process, rather than allowing your emotions to reach surface awareness, thereby finding the answers within yourself. Only by becoming aware of all this will you also find it possible to distinguish between the natural, healthy needs, and the artificially created needs of the superimposed idealized self-image.

Only as you learn to maturely go about fulfilling the healthy, natural needs, will you become capable of giving up the false needs. Do not even attempt to forcefully stamp out these false needs. It would do no good. All you can and should do is to become aware of them, while gradually learning to do what is realistic and adequate to fulfill the real needs. This in itself will automatically cause the false needs to disappear. Slowly, their intensity will diminish, and gradually they will disappear altogether as real fulfillment comes to you out of your own healthy inner, and therefore also outer, activities. False needs, even if gratified occasionally, leave you empty and dissatisfied.

In this nucleus of division, repression, and therefore self-destructive activities and undesired results, you are caught as in a trap, unable to make a constructive choice. A festering, twisted

condition prevails in the psyche leading to a host of further conflicts which finally manifest in an outer situation you cannot cope with. You cannot determine what you are really facing and make a choice. You are driven. As within, so without you see only two equally dissatisfying alternatives, and you are torn between them. On the one hand, you give in to the needs, and by submitting, appeasing, and complying you become most angry with and contemptuous of yourself. On the other hand, you rebel against this very necessity to satisfy your needs. Neither of these two alternatives will bring a constructive result. You have not found the point of relinquishing in either that would allow for the constructive end of eventually fulfilling your needs.

When this entire process has reached surface-awareness, one of the most important steps on your road to freedom has been taken. Once you understand how you enslave yourself, you will also become aware of your self-contempt. Unconsciously you had shifted this self-contempt to the existence of the needs. But you will find out, once all this reaches consciousness, that there is no reason to feel contempt for one's healthy needs. You will see that the real reason for self-contempt is your inner unwillingness to relinquish. And as you learn to do so, a new strength and self-respect will evolve that will be a great experience for you. At the beginning it will only appear occasionally. But with each new victory it will stay with you longer and the relapses will become weaker and less frequent.

Moreover, as you find the subtle point of relinquishing, you will no longer be a slave to your needs, because you are now conscious of them. Furthermore, you can go about finding the best way to bring fulfillment to yourself. The inability to relinquish is the most basic factor in your feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. The destructive defense mechanism, trying to do justice to two mutually exclusive drives -- for and against gratification of the needs -- is largely a product of your self-contempt due to the inability to relinquish. The ability to relinquish will give you strength, self-confidence, and a healthy self-respect that nothing else could give you. And just because this strength develops within, you can first give up the false, distorted, superimposed, artificial needs, and then you can go about doing what is necessary, step by step, to obtain gratification for your real needs. But self-respect must be established first. Without it you are locked and blocked.

Beware of finding a quick answer as to what the point of relinquishing is. Do not take a particular surface desire and sacrifice it in the mistaken idea that here you have found it. This may be very misleading and may encourage false self-sacrifice, defeatism, and self-destructiveness. You will find this point only after reaching a great deal of awareness about the process. When it comes, you will feel so right about it. There will be no doubt in your mind. Most of all, there will be no sense of loss, of giving up something precious. Neither will you feel especially virtuous. You will relinquish it in the full knowledge of what you are doing and why. You will want to do so because you will fully understand that this serves your own interest. Only when such feelings accompany the point of relinquishing have you truly found it. Until then, you have to plough along exploring your emotions, bringing repressed needs to the surface, and unrolling the inner process, while observing the subsequent outer actions and reactions.

When it comes to the subtleties of the human psyche, misunderstandings and misinterpretations are even more apt to occur than on the more superficial levels of human life. Beware of the false sacrifice which can often be used as a substitute for the real relinquishing. The latter is never a sacrifice. It is intelligent expediency, arrived at through fully facing a real situation. If you relinquish something that is not yours to begin with, you do not sacrifice. Hence you will not

be led into the dangerous illusion of relinquishing something that could be yours -- and then feeling false self-satisfaction, as opposed to real self-respect. The point of relinquishing simply means discovery of where your willpower has no jurisdiction, adjusting to that which is, while gathering your strength to do that which you can do. It means giving up an illusion to which you had clung out of your pressing unconscious needs.

Do not let it bother you if at the moment you are completely at sea when I talk about this point of relinquishing. The understanding will come, slowly but surely, as you proceed in this work. Those who are not doing this work with the help of another person may indeed feel at a loss to understand even remotely what I am talking about.

This condition of repressed and mischaned needs, with all the consequences that sap your energy, strength, and self-respect, influences your ability to relate and to react. This is obvious, if you think about it. For, the more urgent your needs while you are unaware of them, the blinder you must be, and the less capable of being alive and free in a real situation. Therefore, you cannot respond to the situation in an appropriate way. Such inadequate response cannot fail to set negative chain reactions in motion.

In this connection, we may speak of primary and secondary reactions. The healthier a psyche is, the more free it is of the neurotic condition just discussed. Because, the less enslavement exists, the more one will be capable of having primary reactions. That is, you will react originally and spontaneously to another person or situation if you are not caught in the trap of your own repressed needs with the consequent negative condition. If you are unable to stand frustration, unable to relinquish, because you dare not face an unwelcome reality and cope with it, you cannot be spontaneous. You dare not consult your intuitive impressions which are so valuable. You are trapped, dependent, waiting for clues, and your responses and reactions will be secondary ones, based on your guesses of what the reactions of others toward you are. Needless to say, this prohibits truth, spontaneity, and reality. In a secondary reaction, you focus your inner, often unconscious attention solely on responding to what you believe exists, not to what actually exists. In a primary reaction, free of the illusion of hoping to bring gratification for repressed needs, you are capable of seeing what actually is.

The more repressed, and therefore the more urgent your natural needs are, the more blind you will be, and the more limited your outlook is bound to be. Therefore you will more likely misjudge people's reactions to you. For instance, you may take it for granted that someone meant to hurt or reject you, when in reality no such intent existed. Unawareness of needs distorts reality. Everything is exaggeratedly good or bad, favorable or unfavorable. You are incapable of properly dealing with the situation, of evaluating people. You are only capable of experiencing secondary, conditioned responses, which are unreliable and will never give you a feeling of security. Only the capacity to experience primary, original, direct responses brings out the intuitive reliable picture based on solid ground. It derives from yourself, from your own freedom, from the ability to face and cope with a situation, even if it is against your liking -- thus making you capable of relinquishing your illusion.

Secondary reactions derive from clinging to illusion and not daring to see what actually is. For example if your need to be liked is so strong that you cannot face the possibility of not being liked, then you are incapable of objectively and freely observing the situation, of finding out what it really is. You dare not allow yourself to like the other person until you are sure you are liked. If a liking

for you transpires, then you will like the other person. This is a secondary reaction. Your liking the other person may be in truth, but it may also be based on considerations that have nothing to do with reality. If you are free enough to cope with not being liked, you will react spontaneously to that person, uninfluenced by your need. Thus you have relinquished for the sake of truth the pressing need to be liked. Being in truth you will be in a position to do what is necessary to fulfill your need. Either your free and spontaneous reactions will produce favorable circumstances for you, so that you will be liked, or, in your spontaneous primary reaction, seeing the truth you will perceive that approval and liking by this particular person will yield you no gratification anyway, and you will be free to find a compatible person elsewhere. Whether this applies to a mate, to friends, or to general human contact, makes no difference. Perhaps with this example, simple as it is, you will get a better idea of the process I am describing here.

The ability to have primary reactions is of utmost importance. The inability to have them comes from the repression of needs, the clinging to illusion, and the subsequent inability to relinquish the illusion and to see the real situation. At the same time, the absence of primary reactions strengthens your enslavement. You become more and more dependent on others, and therefore you fear others. The tragic thing is that your dependency often hinges on completely illusory circumstances. So you battle against something that does not exist and forfeit the chance of fulfilling your good and healthy needs. For that, the freedom and strength of developing primary reactions are a necessary prerequisite. This has to be tackled from both ends.

By bringing your repressed emotions and needs more and more into awareness, you will uncover your persistent clinging to illusion and false hope, your reluctance to face reality, or to relinquish a desired illusory goal. This process will free you to develop primary reactions. By observing the fact that you respond only conditionally and not originally, you will finally become capable of daring to react unconditionally, originally, and thus produce primary reactions. This will help you to face reality and relinquish illusion, so as to be free to pursue the real fulfillment of your needs.

I realize, my friends, that this is not an easy lecture. For most of you it will take quite a while to truly assimilate it. The faster you advance in your personal work on this path, the sooner this will happen. And I am happy to observe that some of my friends are very close. But even an inkling of understanding some of my words will be of great help. Once you encounter the inner condition I have described, with all its various aspects, you will experience more than simply another victory -- it will be a great step forward. You will be close to resolving a sick, distorted aspect of your soul that has brought you much unnecessary misery and frustration.

Are there any questions now?

QUESTION: How do you determine which is an artificial need and which is a natural need?

ANSWER: Let us suppose you discover a need to gratify your vanity. You know perfectly well this is not a life necessity. Or let us suppose you discover a need to triumph over others. One can very well live without that. However, such discovery cannot and should not be used to moralize and force the need away. This would only lead to further repression. Find out why these needs exist. You are bound to discover that a real and healthy need has been starved and the artificial one has taken its place. The fact that certain needs are false should not be accepted merely because I say

so. The best way to determine the real from the false is to consider what the fulfillment of the need brings to you and others.

The fulfillment of a false need brings a shallow, temporary, and short-lived gratification, often at the expense of another person, or at the expense of a more urgent need of yours. On the other hand, the fulfillment of a real need produces something constructive for everyone concerned. Your gratification will also be constructive for others, and it will not hamper other important aspects of your own personality. It will be the outcome of growth and will produce further growth, in addition to happiness and fulfillment.

You will discover that if the awareness of an in itself healthy need has been repressed, some unhealthy factors must have become attached to it. This then causes the healthy need to get out of hand and become intense that it is impossible to face reality, to cope with frustration, to relinquish an illusion connected to it. As you examine all these factors within yourself, you cannot help but become very much aware of which needs are constructive and healthy, and which are not.

QUESTION: What about a strong need for harmony?

ANSWER: In itself harmony is a healthy need. But if it becomes so strong that for the sake of harmony you forfeit your equally healthy and legitimate need for self-assertion, independence, success, happiness, fulfillment -- all of which require a certain amount of healthy fighting spirit -- then there is something wrong that is most harmful for you. You cling to the need for harmony, thus violating another essential part of your being, resulting in repression, discontent, anxiety, a sense of failure, and self-contempt. This is often projected onto others. As long as the need for harmony does not interfere with other needs, and you are capable of occasionally relinquishing the need for harmony in order to gratify the other needs, everything is fine. Only you can be the judge as to whether or not this is so. In your further self-finding, you are bound to determine this -- and then go on from there.

QUESTION: When you touch upon these deep roots, when you are able to recognize what causes this complete twist in your psyche and how it manifests in many areas, and then this area becomes very rampant, you become ill and you fight to survive this. How do you combat the severe reactions when you really get to these twists?

ANSWER: When there is such a strong reaction, such a negative experience, something in you still fights against giving it up. This must mean that a part of you still believes that its existence provides you with some advantage, or protection. Instead of forcing it away, rather set out to find in what respect you believe an advantage exists for you in maintaining the twisted condition, and in what way do you believe, in some part of your being, that its absence will be a disadvantage of some sort. Your battle, your severe reaction, is partly due to trying to force it away without understanding the irrational belief of advantage versus disadvantage. As long as such understanding is lacking, you must experience extreme anxiety, because the twisted condition has a function in your erroneous, unconscious belief. Set about finding it, and your battle will cease.

Because you ignore this, you are temporarily unable to change. This makes you even more impatient with yourself. You want to speed yourself on in order to free yourself, yet you cannot do

so without experiencing extreme discomfort. This impatience at the delay engages you in a battle with yourself which heightens the fear of giving up a precious "defense."

The impatience is caused to a large degree by the unconscious misconception that you have to be perfect in order to experience happiness and fulfillment. But this is not true, as some of my friends are beginning to find out. Because of this misconception you become quite frantic when you have discovered a distortion and are not yet able to let go of it because some further understanding is still missing. In this frantic state it is even more difficult to discover the imagined disadvantage that makes you hold on to the condition in question.

QUESTION: When you begin to realize this deep frustration, this deep aggression you have, which is caused by the neurosis, you become ill before you are aware on a conscious level. You escape into not facing that thing in you which you feel destroys your whole structure. Once you do recognize it, it does go away to some degree, but then something else even deeper comes up, and you escape once more into this same illness. This is my problem. How do you break this pattern of escaping into illness?

ANSWER: You mentioned that something even deeper comes up. In this instance, it is the answer of why you battle against giving up the sick, the erroneous solution -- whether it is illness or anything else that offers escape. As I said before, the imagined advantage of the false solution pushes to the surface, but the personality is afraid of facing it. Thus, the same process of overcoming resistance has to be gone through again.

In this process, it often appears that one finds the same elements over and over again. This is the spiral movement of evolution and development. As you proceed, you will become aware of your escape mechanism and resistance at the moment it manifests, while previously you found it only in retrospect. Such synchronization is the only indication of true progress.

The negative manifestations do not just vanish after having been discovered once. They will reappear again and again, as you observe them at work, with shorter and shorter intervals between occurrence and discovery, until the two synchronize and finally vanish. This is the spiral that becomes narrower and narrower, until it finally ends at one point.

Ignorance of this process often causes distress because you may believe you have relapsed and this makes you more impatient, more frantic and hopeless. But understanding what you can expect will enable you to relax, to further observe, so that answers still hidden will come to the fore. The answers will make it not only easier to narrow the gap between the wrong reactions that derive from the negative condition and its subsequent manifestations, but will lead to finally giving up the twisted, damaging defense mechanism. Do you understand?

QUESTION: Yes, but it just seems so endless.

ANSWER: No, it is not endless. The spiral movement becomes smaller and narrower, as I just said. But finally there comes a point when a change occurs within, almost as though by itself. A new reaction-pattern becomes noticeable which you started almost unknowingly, as it were. This is the result of long struggle, but if you do not let up and go again and again through the seemingly

discouraging repetitions, each time finding the same anew, you will finally experience this automatic, spontaneous new reaction. It is never a forced and deliberate thing. If it is, it is not genuine.

QUESTION: What happens when you have a recognition that you can't be satisfied with second best, while knowing this to be immature and unrealistic. But I can't feel different. It is impossible.

ANSWER: In this case, too, there is an underlying "reason" missing. You have to accept that this distortion spoils things for you, rather than bringing you advantages. The more you observe and understand this, the easier it will be to find that you maintain it because the child in you believes it will provide you with more happiness. Only calm observation of what is true, what is really more advantageous and what is not, will finally enable you to relinquish, to change. This change, too, will come as if by itself. Observation of this process, understanding of why the psyche retains it, will produce results. Battling it forcefully will not.

QUESTION: Besides the psychological approach, is it not true that prayer and turning to God, asking for help, is of great assistance to us?

ANSWER: The psychological approach is actually prayer in action. If you really analyze what happens here, you will find that as you acknowledge and understand all distortions -- without self-moralizing -- you do the best to purify yourself. As discussed in a few recent lectures, the so-called psychological approach is not in contradiction to the spiritual one. Of course, prayer is of help and is recommended. But I have to give you more than advocate prayer. And you have to do more than merely pray for help. You have to observe your attitude in prayer. This is a very deep and subtle thing. If you pray and find the hidden attitude that you expect God to do it for you, then your approach is not only destructive, but it also indicates a more deeply rooted wrong attitude about life and your role in it. If you pray for help, but with the full intent and realization that you have to face and eventually change, that you want to see the truth, that it depends on your efforts and willingness, then prayer is very useful. There is a fine distinction between such healthy and right attitude and the idea that you should sit and wait for God to hand it to you. The latter kind of prayer will do no good whatsoever.

QUESTION: But the spiritual approach which you have taught and which has added so much to the psychoanalytical approach -- I was just wondering?

ANSWER: I fully discussed in a few recent lectures why it is healthy and good for you, in this particular phase of your development, to put less stress on the so-called spiritual, and more on the so-called psychological. For us, it is all one and the same: they are merely different facets, aspects, approaches and ways to the same end. Emphasis on the spiritual, if it is too long maintained and at the expense of self-finding, leads to escapism and the false religion I discussed recently. It leads to the wrong concept of God. If you reread that lecture, you will understand what I mean.

The idea that you neglect God by not discussing Him, and that focusing attention on the distortions so as to be able to change would lead you away from spirituality, is utterly untrue, of course. Common sense will tell you so. If such vague ideas exist in you, it could be that you are afraid of finding and changing what wants to remain hidden. It may be the expression of a childish hope that by speaking about God and the spirit world and its laws you will be able to change

yourself without pain and discomfort. This cannot be done, of course. Further intellectual understanding about spiritual factors would not induce an inner change. But what you are all doing now on the path is bound to bring about an inner change that brings you closer to true spirituality than all the words you hear in the world, no matter how true and beautiful. Outer belief is one thing; the inner capacity of living these beliefs is an altogether different proposition. It takes a great deal more time, effort and pain to achieve the latter. Unfortunately, this aspect is very much neglected by all religious denominations and societies. They still deal with the mere thinking process, which often contradicts and conflicts with the real inner life, the life of the emotions.

May you all, each one of you, find in tonight's lecture something that will bring a little more light and help in your work, a little further incentive, hope, strength, and inner push, without tension or anxiety, so as to free yourself from your own enslavement, to make yourself whole instead of divided. Go all in peace, my dearest ones, on this glorious road of self-realization and freedom. Be blessed, be in God!

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