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## REACHING THE SPIRITUAL CENTER -- STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE LOWER SELF AND THE SUPERIMPOSED CONSCIENCE

Greetings, my dearest friends. Blessings for all of you. Blessed be this hour.

In the past working year, all my friends who have really and truly worked on this path have overcome the inherent resistance to face themselves and subsequently change. You have made considerable progress. I daresay most of you will feel an extension of awareness, a raising of your consciousness in many respects. Often, where life previously seemed hopeless because outside solutions seemed evermore beyond your control and unattainable, you now begin to glimpse an occasional shaft of light that suggests a more profound comprehension of your inner disturbances. You now understand why a certain unhappiness or unfulfillment is a result of inner error and confusion. This, in itself, is bound to bring hope and security. It eliminates feeling an innocent victim of circumstances beyond your control. By understanding a little more of cause and effect in your own life, and seeing it in practice, a sense of security is instilled in you, a sense that this is not such a bad world to live in, after all. Such thoughts may not be conscious, but affect the psyche when sufficient insight has been reached.

Some of you may find yourselves in one of those phases before an important recognition when all seems doubly confused. At such times your struggle is often very painful until you have truly come face to face within yourself with something you had wished rather to avoid. Then, as all of you have discovered, the feeling of liberation and strength, of hope and light, is such a profound experience that its effect can never leave you. But while you are engaged in this struggle, your overall view of your path may be befogged. It is difficult to evaluate, at such times, what you have accomplished, what remains to be done, where you stand, and to what degree you have fully comprehended your inner disturbances and deviations. Nevertheless, by now you have sufficiently penetrated into the depths of yourself to be aware to some degree of your progress and of what still remains to be accomplished. To know specifically in what respect you still feel unfree and obstructed, defensive and anxious, is of utmost importance. At certain periods, you may do well to gauge your progress, as well as what remains to be done, by asking yourself in what respect you now understand your problems; in what respect you still feel resistant to change in spite of the understanding gained; in what respect you are still in the dark and therefore need further insight; and in what respect you have truly resolved certain problems. Such an occasional inventory, if I may call it that, is very helpful.

In this final session of the year, I would like to restate certain facets and goals of this path of self-realization. When you live unto the day without understanding the relationship between you and your life, you must be in despair. Whether or not you know it, you go through life searching for the answer. Only too often you seek the answer outside of yourself; and there, as you know, it can never be found. Outside search can take on various forms. You may through a conscious or

unconscious insistence expect that others bend to your will so that you may be happy. When this fails you become angry, resentful, and often full of self-pity. However, none of these emotions may be conscious. Another form of outside search may be looking for theories and answers in philosophy, religion, science. You may, indeed, find many valuable and valid answers from such sources. However, they will not truly help, unless you use such answers as a guiding light to start an inner search, deep within yourself. As long as knowledge remains only second-hand information, it will not do any good. It will fail to give substance and meaning to your life.

Let me restate what I have said so many times and what some of my friends have begun to experience -- be it ever so seldom in the early stages of this work -- that all of you contain within yourselves all the knowledge, all the wisdom, and all the powers you can possibly need in order to live a satisfactory life. I have said this so many times that you may be bored to hear the same words over and over again. But, unfortunately, too few among you truly realize their significance. They remain a theory that has no real impact on you, in spite of your actually moving in the right direction on this path which leads you into the inner world of your being. It is one thing to go about the work of self-finding with the vague outlook of becoming a happier and more fulfilled person; it is another when the goal is clear, and you are aware of the powerful fact that deep within your soul you harbor a wealth of wisdom, knowledge, power, love -- the solution to all that puzzles and confuses you. To know this and to move consciously into the right direction will help you to muster the strength to overcome the resistance that always stands in the way of your facing yourself in utter candor, painful as it may appear at times.

The aim of finding, understanding, and resolving your hidden conflicts and distortions is to bring you ultimately into contact with the innermost core -- with the treasure of divine love, wisdom, and strength that lies embedded in all of you. If this aim is clearly defined, there will no longer be a conflict between spiritual and worldly interests.

There are two fundamental attitudes among human beings. One type of personality searches for God and searches for spiritual development, wanting to become a better person. It is unhappiness and confusion that lead this type on to a spiritual search. The true direction may often be lost by collecting outside knowledge of spiritual theories and doctrines, without taking the decisive step within one's own soul. But if the mind assimilates such knowledge as a preliminary step toward transcending the mind, if the person recognizes that the obstructions within have to be understood and dissolved so that the spiritual center can be reached, then a life in God will no longer be found contradictory to a life of personal fulfillment. The misconception that personal fulfillment is selfish and opposed to spiritual life often prevails among people who search spiritually but have not taken the final step of facing their hidden conflicts, their inner confusions. If they recognize these, it is only in theory, and they hope such defects to be dissolved by a comfortable intervention of an outside God and spiritual grace.

The other outlook is that life is to be lived as happily and satisfyingly as possible. I do not mean the ruthless attitude of certain spiritually undeveloped people who simply do not care for others. I refer to those who have standards of decency, who do not wish to harm others, but are not interested in spiritual pursuits. Through their intelligence, they have recognized that the problems must lie within themselves and they take steps -- possibly through the means of mundane psychology -- to find and correct distortions. If the search is profound enough and thereby an inner growth is set in motion, if it does not stop halfway but is followed through, the inner center will be

reached, even if one never knew it existed. In finding it, the reality of God is found. It cannot be otherwise. This inner experience will show that what is taught by conventional religion contains a great deal of truth; and yet it will be so different. It will show that finding God within does not mean to forfeit personal happiness -- a misconception that is often held even by the irreligious person. The splits and divisions, the contradictions and either/or's are a product of separation, error and confusion. In truth, all is one, but let this not be mere theory. Experience it by uncovering the center of your own being, where you truly realize yourself and discover that incompatibles become one.

For a long time we have been concerned, and shall continue to be concerned, with finding that in you which obstructs contact with the innermost center of your being. It cannot be reached otherwise. There is no way around it. And, my friends, you must not imagine the final reaching of this treasure to be a sudden and dramatic occurrence. It is, as always, a gradual process. Often you may not even be aware that, in some respects, you have already reached it, while in other respects you are still prevented from doing so because of barriers that still exist. The contact may come and go, it may fluctuate until you are sufficiently free and aware so as to function primarily from the inner center. Do not take this to mean that you are perfect, that you have overcome all your problems and lower instincts, but a deep understanding and complete awareness of them will indicate that the inner core of your spiritual self is no longer hidden and out of reach.

The more you are unhappy and lost, the more you feel empty and hungry -- maybe hungry for affection and understanding -- and the less you are in contact with the inner, real self which has the power to nourish you constantly, to sustain and to guide you so that you can truly fulfill your life. When you are in contact with your inner self you will understand the true reason for your loneliness and its emptiness will be filled.

Each life has something different to fulfill -- and all lives have the same to fulfill. Again, this may appear as a contradiction, but it is not, my friends. Keep in mind that the goal of this path is finding the center of your being which is reality, which is God, and through which you find fulfillment -- not in isolation but in unity. If you look outside in order to alleviate your isolation, you must become more isolated. If you look inside in order to alleviate it, you may appear to isolate yourself from others through this process of apparent self-concern, but you will in fact lessen the isolation and separateness that cause so much suffering and loneliness. Since your inner spiritual self is the same as everyone else's spiritual self, the separateness is lifted the moment you are no longer separate from your spiritual center. The real you is the other person's real self. There is no barrier between them. The barrier lies only in the covering layers.

It has been said by some who follow this path that certain facets of the work of self-confrontation resemble mundane psychology. This may be true to some extent. However, one of the major differences is the well-defined ultimate goal. In mundane psychology, the goal is the resolving of inner conflicts so as to function better. As I have said before, this must inadvertently, as it were, bring a person into contact with his or her spiritual center. But that is not its goal. Our aim is just that -- and it must solve all problems along the way.

On this path, we are no more concerned with creeds, dogmas, and doctrines than a worldly psychologist when working with his patients. Any superimposed opinion, whether true or false, is a hindrance to self-unfoldment. But on this path, and with this particular guidance, we are concerned

with the reality of the inner spiritual center. When it is liberated, there can be no question of adhering to theories or creeds. God becomes a personal experience that stands beyond proof and does not need to be proven. This reality can be experienced only if all that stands in its way is removed. As you so well know, your personal misconceptions and confusions, your erroneous conclusions blot out this reality. In the last analysis, all unhappiness and strife is the result of ignorance and misunderstanding. Every inner problem you uncover is always a distortion of higher reality. When you are governed by such distortions of your immediate, accessible reality, you cannot possibly grasp the extension of your limited reality on a wide scope. But the spiritual reality, always and only found as a personal experience within, does not contradict the accessible reality if the latter is profoundly penetrated. For such a profound penetration, your personal attitudes, outlooks and concepts must be questioned, stated and restated. Your automatic, unconscious reactions must be investigated as to the meaning and significance of their underlying concepts so that they can be lifted to the surface and evaluated. By this process you will understand how much you are still caught in unreality. This understanding will lead you closer and closer to reality in its widest possible sense.

Now I would like to discuss one of the major causes of inner confusion and of the battles going on in the psyche. We have discussed this all-important topic before, but I would like to tackle it again in a more direct way.

One of the most tragically futile inner battles is the fight between what we have called the lower self and the superimposed conscience. So often an expression or a term used without truly understanding its deepest meaning finally loses its impact and one uses it like a parrot repeating a word. This mechanical usage is harmful. It has the very opposite effect to what we seek to attain -- independent understanding, creative thinking. Therefore occasionally we need to redefine a term, to bring freshness to it, not only to avoid confusion, but also to give more of an impact to our approach and understanding. So let us briefly determine again what I mean by the lower self.

The lower self is not only that part of human nature where faults and character-defects lie. It also includes something more subtle and less definable. The best way to describe it is as an emotional climate of egocentricity. Regardless of good intentions, unselfish acts, considerate attitudes, this inner world of egocentricity continues to exist. The stronger the good intentions, the more difficult it is to find, acknowledge and accept the existence of the persisting negativity. The more the childish, one-sided egocentricity is hidden in guilt and shame, the less can it grow out of this one-sidedness. You must become acutely aware of its often preposterous self-concern to the exclusion of all else. In this area of your being you wish to rule supreme. You do not want to know another's interests which you violate at any cost so that a small wish or a small gratification of your vanity overrules more important issues for other people. True, you do not often act by it, but in your half-conscious wishes and aims you do react from this lower self.

The problem is much less the existence of the lower self than the nature of your attitude toward it. Your shame and guilt are a result of one of those misunderstandings I mentioned which prohibit growth and unfoldment. The misunderstanding comes from the idea that you, of all people, really should have already completely overcome the lower self and no such childish, preposterous selfishness and self-concern should have a place in you. Thus you start an elaborate system of self-deception and pretense which brings you into vicious circles and inner conflicts destroying your happiness and self-respect. Very few people are reconciled to the existence of their own lower self. They may do so in theory, but are not reconciled to actually owning up to certain

facets of it in themselves. Yet only by doing so can it gradually be outgrown. In denying its existence, you overlook its manifestations; how it is indirectly expressed in vague emotions, which are instantly covered up and pushed out of sight. How can you overcome something if you are not fully aware of its specific manifestation? Certainly not by a general theoretical knowledge of its existence!

Due to your shame and guilt about your lower self and the consequent hiding of it, you do everything to nourish its continuance with dire effects on your personality; you prohibit the very thing you most want: to grow out of it. What is more, due to the self-deception, more confusion sets in. Since all this is an unconscious process into which discrimination and reason cannot enter, along with the actual self-important and destructive impulses you also hide some of your most creative and inherently constructive impulses -- out of mere misunderstanding. Impulses and instincts which are potentially productive and life-giving, if they are not allowed to grow in the sunlight of awareness remain thwarted and, in their current form, are actually destructive. They could grow into something beautiful, but are not allowed to unfold because you are unconscious of the fact that their present form is not the ultimate one. You then conclude that they must therefore be ousted by denial.

Now let us recapitulate so as to make this process quite clear. The repression of the lower self falls in three categories: (1) repression of the actual lower-self in its distinct and extreme manifestations and character trends, as well as of the subtle overall climate of egocentricity and self-concern to the exclusion of all other interests; (2) repression of creative and productive aspects and trends; (3) repression of instincts which are as yet unproductive and self-centered in their immature state, but are destined by nature to become creative and constructive if given a chance to grow.

It is important to make the distinction and realize that all three categories of inner negative trends need acceptance and awareness, each for its own reason. Then it will often be found that the most valuable prize a human being has to offer to life is held in check, denied, and hidden. Hence a vast confusion exists in you. You suppose the confusion regarding the actual lower-self trends will disappear when you deny their existence and pretend opposite intentions and wishes. In your confusion you deny the potentially vibrant life-force the opportunity to function in its own beautiful, healthy way. The healthy and unhealthy trends are intertwined and the personality is thrown into despair. All this happens in a vague vacuum, in a no man's land between awareness and unawareness.

It may be a valuable task for my friends to ponder over all this during the summer months in which there are no group activities. It may give you an excellent preparation for our work together next year when we all hope to make further progress on this path. Question yourself, first, not as to the actual nature of your lower self, or what you consider as such. Rather, begin by looking at your attitude toward its existence. Are you shocked about certain of its manifestations? Are you impatient with yourself because of it? Do you feel it should already be gone, thus rejecting your state of being human? Do you also deny something in yourself that could be very constructive if you were to view it afresh and not be influenced by standards you have assumed without ever questioning their validity? Begin to observe the subtle manifestations of the lower self in certain of your reactions and impulses. Observe how you tend to immediately push them away. Now look at the wishes and attitudes in such fleeting reactions. Pull them out into the open and calmly look at them. Determine your harsh, intolerant treatment of yourself in this respect, your rigid,

uncompromising, self-destructive severity which is way out of proportion. All this is healthy preliminary work for the phases to come. This is one side of the battle.

Now what is the other? The concept of conscience is vastly misunderstood by humanity. Quite a few years ago, I explained that people have two kinds of conscience: one emanating from the real self, the other being superimposed. It will be useful to review briefly some characteristics of the superimposed conscience.

When religious people speak about conscience, they think of the inner conscience, coming from the divine center of the human spirit. But they usually ignore the vast difference between the inner and the superimposed conscience. In their eagerness to make the human being a better creature, the forces of society coerce the individual to follow and obey moral standards. Because of this pressure from the outside the superimposed conscience is strengthened and the inner, real conscience becomes more covered up.

Yet the superimposed conscience is not necessary to prevent a person from acting out primitive destructive instincts. For those whose inner conscience is not sufficiently developed to restrain them from committing destructive acts, the mere existence of social laws would serve as well, or better, than the superimposed conscience. The latter only does harm. As explained before, in the first phase of this inner struggle the superimposed conscience hides the lower self, instead of bringing it out into the open. Thereby it eliminates the possibility of the lower self's growing out of the infantile state. But the superimposed conscience hides also the most constructive and creative life-force and the impulses that would free the life-force. It is an unnecessary artificial creation instilling an unrealistically distorted view of oneself as well as of the way one believes one would have to be. It creates self-punishment and imposes shackles which prohibit the manifestation of every divine quality inherent in the soul. It certainly never prevents crime or destructive actions. In fact, it causes the opposite to happen. By repressing and hiding them, the forces that could easily be dealt with on the surface of consciousness germinate and accumulate and create great inner tension and pressure. You are then often driven into acts you cannot help committing if only because you have too long used the superimposed conscience, instead of giving yourself the chance to finally contact the inner conscience which is part of the spiritual center. Last, but not least, whenever a person rebels against laws and all standards of ethics and morals, he or she does so because of the harsh superimposed conscience which knows no mercy; which is inflexible in its demands and is blind in its evaluation. Yet one never rebels against the real, inner conscience.

Understand, my friends, that what stands between you and your inner, real, self is not only your errors and misconceptions, your false images and distortions, your lower self, but also the superimposed conscience. It is the latter that creates so much confusion and often prevents you from reaching freedom and truth. It is the superimposed conscience that induces you to reject yourself as a human being. Between its demands and the demands of the primitive, self-centered child you still harbor within, you are torn apart in the storm raging inside of you. As long as this conflict is not out in the open, you cannot master it. You cannot possibly extricate yourself from both these unrealities. You cling to the superimposed conscience in the false belief that it alone can prevent you from acting upon your lower-self instincts. Therefore you can never come to a healthy, secure trust in yourself, because you do not give yourself the chance. Healthy self-respect can come only from your real self, from which you alienate yourself further by clinging to the superimposed conscience. You find yourself in one of those vicious circles we have so often mentioned. As long

as one has not found the real self, one must cling to the superimposed conscience, obeying, conforming, appeasing, and blindly following it. Never developing the independent faculties of thinking and discriminating, one becomes weaker and more dependent, less able to stand on one's own two feet.

The outer action in question may or may not be the same. But there is a tremendous difference between acting out of bondage and fear -- in other words by following the superimposed conscience -- and following the voice of your real conscience in a spirit of freedom, derived out of your own inner struggle, your intuition, your reason, even if the result be the same. If you rebel against the superimposed conscience, you are no more free than if you obey it. If you obey the superimposed conscience, and the result of such a decision is not to your liking, the corroding effects will be rebellion, self-pity, and putting the blame on life and the world. If you obey your real conscience, you will take all the responsibility upon yourself and even a negative outcome will not throw you into despair. You will soon see that the pleasant or unpleasant result is not as vital as you may believe it to be, because in either alternative you have equal possibility for growth if your actions and decisions are derived from yourself and your own standards.

The fight between the superimposed conscience and the primitive, self-centered, destructive child is a tragic one -- tragic only because of your lack of awareness of it. For it is so superfluous.

Of course, education has a great deal to do with it. When humanity becomes aware of these things and guides young people into the right direction, much harm will be eliminated. It is important to know, however, that not only ignorance and poor guidance are responsible for the struggle within yourself, for you are not enmeshed in this struggle in every aspect of your being. In some areas of your psyche you are quite free and function without clinging to superimposed demands, standards, or rules as they may actually exist or are believed to exist. It is noteworthy that you adhere to the superimposed conscience and do not accept your shortcomings or your lower-self aspects -- whether real or imaginary -- only in the realms where your personal, specific inner problems hold sway. When you consider these problems in the light of this specific struggle, you will understand how your inner problems and this particular struggle are connected.

Personality problems and deviations come, as you know, from childhood hurts and frustrations -- real or imaginary. When you do not feel secure in the affection of and acceptance by one or both of your parents, you elaborately build a defense against this hurt, trying later to correct it. You have found it to be true that this actual childhood hurt need not burden you for life, but your defense against it, which you continue to use, destroys for you the possibility of fulfillment. All of that you know very well by now, not as mere theory, but from personal discovery. The parent one feels uncertain of, in awe or fear of, usually stands for the superimposed conscience, because one so desperately tries to win his or her affection. Not only social rules are incorporated in one's superimposed conscience, but also particular rules of the superimposed conscience of the parent in question. It may often be the case that you merely believed these standards were expected of you by this parent. In this investigation, the emotional atmosphere and climate is important, not the actuality.

You cannot possibly recognize the superimposed conscience in its full significance unless you view it in relationship to the attitude that you have had toward your parents; the specific emotions, their attitude toward you, as well as the resultant images, behavior patterns, and defense-mechanisms

you developed. Only by seeing the whole picture will your struggle between your superimposed conscience and your actual and/or imagined lower self take on a new meaning for you and furnish you with the necessary insight to resolve the struggle. The general knowledge of the existence of this inner condition can never alleviate it, even if you have actually come to observe it. It is essential that you see it in relationship to your personal problems. The fight between your lower self and your superimposed conscience may be completely different from the fight of another person in this respect, even though many of its aspects and manifestations may indeed be the same.

As I have said before, in this struggle you treat yourself with merciless harshness. You inflict iron rules upon yourself as exercised by the cruelest ruler and far beyond the unreasonable standards which may be exerted by society. Your blind, excessive standards make it impossible to reach the inner center from which you could be nourished with constantly renewed vigor. Then there would be realistic hopefulness, as opposed to wishful thinking; foresight; the ability to make mature decisions; self-confidence; the ability to love and be loved; the ability to receive and to give; the ability to relate harmoniously and to create a life which is useful not only in one direction, but in all important areas of living.

Many of you have found a profound sense of fulfillment in certain areas of life. But you are unfulfilled and lonely in other areas. This is too often rationalized by saying, "Because I have this great fulfillment, I have to pay for it by forfeiting other areas of fulfillment." This is not true, my friends. Deep down, inside of you, you know it. It need not be that you fulfill yourself in one area of living at the expense of another. There is room for all kinds of fulfillment in the healthy soul of a person who truly reaches into the depth of his or her being -- not only partially, but opening all channels which have been clogged up before. No form of self-expression needs to suffer at the expense of those forms which have already been freed.

But you feel, deep inside, that you do not deserve all that. You do not even cultivate a concept of yourself in which you see yourself fulfilled in all directions. Observe how you shrink from such a visualization; how it seems that you are asking too much, despite the actual childish overdemanding that exists on another level. This proves that in this struggle you have not come to terms with yourself. Something in you says "no" when you visualize yourself as being fulfilled in all areas of living. This is due to your harsh, unforgiving and unaccepting treatment of yourself that comes from not being reconciled with the self-centered child. It continues to make unfair demands you cannot cope with and push out of sight.

Accept fully the primitive, selfish, destructive child in order to make it grow up. The only climate in which it can do so is in the full knowledge of all its manifestations. How you accept it without losing a sense of proportion about its "badness" determines the degree to which you are able to perceive, experience, and accept the highest faculties within yourself. You can only lose your sense of guilt about the former if and when you learn to look at the impulses coming from it and realize that although this undesirable side exists, you need not act accordingly. At least you do not deceive yourself about your own state of development and you evaluate all its dictates without acting them out. Then you will have a chance to win in this tragic battle. You will liberate yourself from the false conscience and therefore become capable of hearing the voice of your real conscience.

Are there any questions regarding this topic?

QUESTION: I have a question which I prepared, but it seems to fall right into this lecture. Is it true that we try not only to squeeze ourselves into our own idealized self-images but we actually try to live up to the idealized selves of our parents as well? Is this correct?

ANSWER: It is absolutely correct. The child's helplessness and insecurity makes him strive desperately for acceptance by his parents. In doing so, he believes he has to adopt the standards of the parents. As I said before, it does not matter whether these standards actually are those of the parents or the child merely believes that. So the child begins a process of false, pretended, superficial adherence to certain standards without inner conviction. Doing so alienates him from his real self, which thereby becomes weaker. He becomes doubly resentful and feels cheated when this mode of living and being does not bring the hoped-for results, as certainly it cannot. As you all know, there is in all of you, to a greater or lesser degree, a desire not to give up being a child, despite the equally strong wish to grow up. The insistence on remaining a cared-for child necessitates your holding on to the superimposed standards and thus to the superimposed conscience. With it, you hope to appease, coerce and force, as it were, your parents or the parent-substitutes to belatedly give you what you missed. Thus you perpetuate the process until and unless you fully recognize it in all its intensity and various side-effects.

QUESTION: Would it be possible to give us a specific example, as sometimes you have done in the past, of one of those instincts that is really constructive, but which we treat as though it were not?

ANSWER: People so often deliberately clog the channel of their intuition. They are afraid of it because its messages may diverge from the way prescribed. They wish to avoid confrontation and decision between the two sources of knowledge. They fear to risk disapproval if they follow their intuitions. This is a very, very frequent occurrence.

Another example is the sexual and erotic instinct which in its nature is entirely creative and unitive if it be allowed to grow. Only in its immature manifestation is it self-centered. Society's emphasis on its sinfulness so often causes this creative instinct to remain self-centered, in hiding and, if expressed at all, to come out in a self-centered way, while the person feels guilty and sinful -- often very much unaware of such emotions. If society's rules were, at least, directed to the real "evil," they would emphasize all forms of self-centeredness as being destructive and stress the need to grow out of separateness. By thwarting this creative instinct, not only is emotional fulfillment hindered and impaired, and the ability to relate hampered by it, but a paralysis of the general life-force with all its healing, regenerating effects is the result. This holds true not only in extreme cases such as are surely familiar to all of you. In a subtle way this may hold true with the most enlightened people as well who would never dream that they harbor similar unconscious attitudes. The destructive influence of this factor often manifests in a disturbance of the relationship between the sexes. Such a disturbance may be as subtle and hidden as the very misconception itself. It may create a pattern of continuous disruption of relationships; of never being able to maintain a relationship; or of never even fully establishing relationship in its true sense.

Human beings can only truly become human -- and therefore eventually divine -- if man accepts his manhood and woman her womanhood. But inner disturbances always make people fight against their manhood and their womanhood. All human beings are endowed with both masculine and feminine tendencies. In the healthy person, both these aspects work together in harmony and

make the man more masculine and the woman more feminine. The tendencies of the opposite sex are not fought against, nor artificially bolstered up out of fear of not being what one is. Therefore, the compatibility of masculine and feminine aspects makes the man more of a man and the woman more of a woman.

A great deal can be said on this subject, and will be said later on. We cannot possibly cover all of it now. Let me merely touch upon the most vital aspects of this question. In thwarting natural instincts, man so often thwarts his manhood. He is frightened of independence because he thereby seems to renounce the privilege of being loved, which he erroneously believes is given only to women or children. In fighting against independence, he fights against his manhood. But in denying his need for love due to the misconception that then he is not manly, he also fights against his masculinity. Moreover, he fights against it out of the mistaken fear that all his male and healthy aggression is the same as his unhealthy aggression and hostility -- the result of an accumulation of hurts which he cannot cope with. So he often finds himself in a double bind. The real, healthy male aggressiveness is confused with hostility for which he feels guilty. So he feels guilty also for healthy male aggression and energy. He cannot separate the two. Simultaneously, he represses his need for affection and love, for he believes them to be unmanly. And at the same time he is reluctant to give up his clinging to childish dependency which may never be manifested outwardly but does nonetheless exist. In all these confusions of unconscious ideas, he thwarts his masculinity in its natural and healthy form by trying to manipulate it according to circumstances. Thus it cannot flow naturally and spontaneously.

A similar struggle exists with woman. When the girl-child feels rejected, she feels passive and helpless. The passivity and helplessness, as an aspect of femininity, is then felt as such a humiliation that she fights against it by summoning all her masculine traits as weapons against the femininity that she fears and associates with a state of humiliating helplessness. She erroneously feels that being hurt and being helpless against it is femininity and thereby fights against it. At the same time, she also feels that all her creative, active trends are considered unfeminine by the world, and reflecting, perhaps, on her intelligence or resourcefulness, or courage. She then fights against these trends as well. This, of course, is interdependent with her fear of real femininity. To the extent that she fights it and cultivates masculine trends as a weapon against her femininity, to that degree may she often, artificially, create a false femininity by repressing her so-called masculine trends. These trends are no more masculine than the man's need for love is feminine. Her intelligence, courage and activity in many areas of life, the independence of her spirit, could truly enhance her womanhood if allowed to integrate with it. But just because she fights her passivity and ability to give of herself completely, she has to artificially suppress her activity in order to falsely create the caricature of a woman.

These are good examples which can be used in your self-search and extended in individual cases. Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: Yes, it helps very much. I think it must be difficult to answer my next question. It may be a foolish one, in a way, but in thinking of the sex angle, when people are unmarried and unattached and are seeking a happy relationship, how much promiscuity do you advocate?

ANSWER: I do not advocate promiscuity at all. What do you mean by promiscuity?

QUESTION: You speak of the sex instinct as natural and right. But just how far do you go?

ANSWER: The only answer, my dear friend, that I can possibly give you -- and it would apply to this question, as well as to any other, for that matter -- is that if people do what they feel within their deep inner self uninfluenced by the superimposed conscience, as being right for them, then it is right. And this does not necessarily have anything to do with the happy or unhappy outcome of the situation. If they can approach it wholeheartedly, without being divided, taking full responsibility for all consequences, fully committed to the relationship on whatever level it exists, if no false morality blurs the issues and thus hampers the real morality, then there is no wrong. There is perhaps no other subject in which so much self-responsibility is shifted to the "rules," merely because one is afraid of taking risks.

This world would be a very different place if more people were to do whatever they do wholeheartedly, be it a human relationship, be it reading a book or taking a walk, or going through a conversation. This planet is such an unhappy place because people are torn; they do not do one thing without being divided in attention and motivation. There is rarely a full commitment in anything people do. They serve two, three, or ten masters at the same time, but not their own real self. People want to have everything cut out to perfection, insisting on a guarantee against all mistakes, knowing perfectly well that this cannot be.

The outlook from the plane from which I am talking is so different from yours that the words often do not even mean the same thing. When you raise your consciousness, you will come to a different understanding of concepts, terms, and values. From our point of view, promiscuity may be one single act, with all the sanctions of human society, if this act does not stem from a complete commitment. If we use this word at all, it can certainly never apply to the quantity, but only to the quality invested.

As long as humanity approaches any question, whether it is of the type you have asked, or political, social, religious, or relating to any other human activity or attitude, from the viewpoint of ready-made rules in which one thing is right and another is wrong, you still live under the yoke of the superimposed conscience which is supposed to make everything so easy and simple. You still are torn and paralyzed by the fight between the primitive little child in you and the superimposed conscience. If you were not engaged in this fight, such questions could not even be asked. Such a question is the expression of this very condition I mentioned.

I do not want to be misunderstood. I certainly do not advocate license. Maybe in a different way, the real self might have stricter standards than those of the superimposed conscience. The real self's standards are often more difficult to obey because they might demand that you oppose public opinion. But the strictness may lie in a different direction. The real conscience is very discerning about any kind of self-deception. It is adamant against cheating when one tries to cheat life, often using the superimposed conscience and the ready-made rules as a shield against complete commitment.

May these summer months prove a fruitful time during which the gains of this past year can ripen and come to fruition. May this period be utilized so that you consolidate the past year and gain an outlook as to where you stand and what remains to be accomplished. The past year has

surely brought you nearer to the center of your being. If you continue in this way, the next year will bring you a further step toward the inner light which is the source of all life.

Be blessed, all of you. Receive the love and the strength flowing forth to you so as to help you from this side to open the channels. Be blessed again. Be in peace, be in God.

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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