

THE NATURE OF LIFE AND HUMAN NATURE

Greetings, my dearest friends. May this lecture be a help and an inspiration for every one of you. In this discussion I should particularly like to stress the relationship between the nature of life and human nature, for there is a very direct link between the two. I have often mentioned this; it is not new to you. Very few people truly understand the full significance of the connection, however. Their concept of life as an entity in itself is so confused and so alien to their innermost personality that they feel they are dealing with unrelated phenomena when looking at their personality, their concepts, their feelings or the lack of them, and at the way life unfolds for them.

Let us first discuss the nature of life from an absolute, as well as from a relative point of view. Speaking of life, what do we really mean? The stretch of years one spends on this planet? Or the wonder of living as one among other existing organisms? Are we thinking of life as having a particular meaning or purpose, as postulated by the various philosophies or religions? Or do we regard life as merely a chore one has to get through as best one can? Is life essentially favorable? Or is it a hostile force, working against you, from which you need to defend yourself? Or, finally, is life neutral and indifferent? Which is true?

Now, life is all of these, my friends, on a relative plane. That is, life will manifest exactly as you believe and conceive of it -- not one iota differently. If your life experience and your conscious concepts are at variance, this is proof that your unconscious concepts must accord with your actual life experience. I cannot stress this emphatically enough, for it is constantly glossed over. Nothing could be a better yardstick of your real concepts, attitudes, and feelings than how your outer life manifests in any given area. The moment the correspondence between the hitherto unconscious concepts and feelings and the manifest life experience is established, you are much closer to the nucleus of life within yourself. You no longer flounder in ignorance and alienation, believing life and you are two separate factors, not seeing how your life is a direct effect of your feelings and attitudes which, in turn, are the sum of your secret convictions about life.

To discover the discrepancy between your conscious and unconscious beliefs must always be the first step in the direction toward full selfhood. Life's relative nature is therefore neutral: life itself consists of a highly potent, creative, and impressionable substance that is exactly as malleable and moldable as the soul substance, for, in fact, they are one and the same. Hence, when an individual is convinced that life itself is a certain fixed, unchangeable thing, life must turn out to be exactly that for this individual. This is not the absolute reality of life; it is the relative reality of the particular individual. Needless to say, this does not apply only to the general definition of life, but also to every particular belief within one's practical everyday life. The limits one sees must seem real. Therefore the rules one establishes, or blindly follows, find their confirmation. Yet the moment a person discovers that these limits or rules are not unalterable law and can be questioned, the limits recede and new laws are proven, according to the new beliefs.

What is the absolute nature of life, as opposed to this relative, moldable one? The answer will become apparent when it is thought, or rather sensed, through to its very essence. Since the life stuff is so moldable, the absolute nature of life must be as limitless as the reach of consciousness. Hence life is limitless in its possibilities for good, for unfoldment, for yet richer and greater experience. It is not limitless in its possibilities for evil, for the limit is set when life ceases -- or seems to cease. The dreaded ultimate is always non-life. There is nothing beyond non-life. This limit of non-life could exist only on the relative plane, never on the absolute plane. On the absolute plane life is life, therefore it cannot be non-life.

So, what humanity fears most is always non-life in one form or another. We shall come back to this a little later. Let us for the moment dwell on the nature of life on the absolute plane. Human consciousness is incapable of conceiving of the possibilities that exist for good, for expansion, for unfoldment, for pleasure. The human scope is just too limited for this. Only those forms of consciousness which have evolved beyond the human scope and whose experience of life is infinitely greater, wider, deeper and fuller, limitless in creative experience and joy, can embrace the limitless vistas, and the more expansive concepts.

Yet most human concepts are expandable way beyond their present state, so that human experience could be infinitely richer than it is. When human beings suffer from discontent and inner tension they, fundamentally, always do so because they deeply sense that more expansion is possible than they avail themselves of. And all too often their searching goes in the wrong direction.

Let us now turn to where it is possible to widen one's horizons, according to the potentials of each of you who follow this path, so that your life can become richer and fuller. In order to make this possible, your feelings must come alive. In this work, and in these lectures, we have often discussed the issue of feelings from various angles. But how exceedingly difficult it is for humans even to find the subtle, hidden area where they discourage the full natural flow of feelings, where they deliberately numb them. It is usually easier to become aware of an apparent inability to feel more, although, at first, this, too, may be covered up by counterfeit feelings.

After the first superficial layer is removed -- and many people do not even wish to do this -- you encounter a sadness about the "true" lack of feelings. You feel like a cripple who is different from others, born with less capacity for rich, warm feelings. But this is never so, and there is always a more hidden level where the numbness is very deliberately instituted. When this is finally uncovered, you have indeed proceeded very well on your path.

The deliberate numbing occurs because you believe life is your enemy, and your life-affirming feelings would deeply involve you with this feared enemy. In order to avoid this, the feelings must be clipped, stilted, hindered. With some individuals this is true in certain aspects only, while they are free in others, finding a harmony between their unhampered, spontaneous feelings and life. With others, this is true as an overall attitude to life. Whatever the case may be, the following preposterous, paradoxical situation arises in the human soul.

You fear life as an enemy. This takes your life from you. Since the feelings naturally affirm life, your feelings become your enemy also. Consequently, you proceed to deaden them and deliberately institute non-life, out of fear of non-life. As with every issue in the human psyche, this

misconception is bound to bring about the very aspect one fears and tries to avoid. The defense against a dreaded misconception must be as erroneous as the misconception itself: that life, as well as feelings, are hostile forces you need to guard yourself against. The natural feelings are always life-affirming, outreaching, joyous and so is life's essence, unhampered by false ideas. Anyone observing a child can see this natural quality of joyful outreaching and gusto. Only when pain, misconception and misinterpretation of pain arise, is the natural flow diverted or stopped altogether.

As life is essentially buoyant, so are the feelings. As life is essentially positive, so are the feelings. As life is essentially rich and involving, so are the natural feelings when they are not tampered with. There the immediate correlation is obvious. To the extent people allow themselves to feel in any given area of life, they are fearless, trustful, and positive, and to the extent they consequently involve themselves with their total being, bringing the most positive and constructive aspects of their personality to bear on the situation, their experience in this particular area will be correspondingly joyful and positive.

When you fear life because you suspect it to be against you, you proceed to numb your feelings. As I have said before, you fear life because you fear non-life. If you analyze the naked fear of life, it is really a fear of its opposite. I have often mentioned that people who fear life must fear death, and vice versa. But any apprehension, aside from death, when you truly analyze it, always boils down to a personal annihilation, a personal form of nonlife. Perhaps you fear a negation of your dignity, of your essential value; or perhaps a denial of wishes. Your original wishes are always for a greater aliveness. Even though the form these wishes take in an immature being may be damaging and unrealizable, their essence always remains intact and realizable, provided one takes the trouble to crystallize it. Any fear is actually the opposite of life, in one form or another.

The struggle between acceptance of and fear of life is going on in practically every human being on this planet. Only the degree varies. There are rare individuals for whom this preposterous and tragic situation is much less true than for the average person, but it still must exist to some minor extent; otherwise, this individual would not assume human form. The consciousness would not seek this particular expression.

When you go deep enough in your work of self-search, my friends, sooner or later you will discover where you hold back, where, instead of affirming life and your feelings, and instead of expanding with your feelings into life, you negate life and your feelings and retract from life, from your feelings, and consequently lose contact with them. You do not feel at home in your life. You feel anxious, persecuted, ill at ease. Negation of life, negation of feelings, and negation of self are all one and the same. And because negation implies non-life, fear arises. Out of fear one proceeds to do the very thing that aggravates the condition of non-life and non-self.

When you find these areas within yourself, you have taken a major step that leads you directly back into yourself. The many possibilities existing on this earth for human concern and philosophies can all be abused to avoid facing where you, and you alone, deny life. Often such avoidance is present in one's conscious beliefs. But often, where the human experience requires the most direct, spontaneous freedom of feelings, where the joy and the involvement is most immediate and least conceptualizable, you resist seeing your impoverishment, so that you are unable to find the self-induced stoppage. Blessed are those who are aware of what they miss in life and proceed to remedy the situation.

In what area of your life do you deny life? How do you do this? In what way does the denial take place? Strangely enough, it seems painful to admit such denials, until you have reached the total vision of yourself. The moment you can really see yourself in this negating process, you are already in a more affirming process, because you no longer delude yourself about yourself.

In order to avoid seeing the negation of the self, of feelings and of life, you produce a false self, false feelings, and therefore a false life. This is why people who know about the correlation between self and life, one's concepts and one's experience, often wonder why their experience varies so much from their conscious notions.

The real is denied and the false substituted -- and this is the answer. This explains the conflicts arising from the false feelings. This is why conflicts seem to be created when one trusts the feelings. It is never the real feelings that produce conflicts. There must always be a denial of something in the self and in the relationship between the self, life, or others.

False feelings are created because nothing is as frightening as numbness. Even though you created the numbness to protect yourself from the supposed dangers of life, you do not know this and you are compelled to go on numbing your real feelings. You are just as much frightened of awakening your feelings as you are of their deadness. You then proceed to create false feelings. These false feelings parallel other illusions -- about your spiritual development, your character, your fulfillment, your sufferings, your state of happiness or unhappiness, the reactions of other people to you. Then you believe these reactions to be either better or worse than they really are.

Being aware of the deliberate intent to numb feelings, and of the poverty-range of the feelings, constitutes a major step in self-realization, because the most difficult thing for you is to penetrate these illusions. Most people would rather do anything than that. Some find certain facets of their idealized self-image, for example, and content themselves with that, not wanting to see the rest of their illusions, which they unconsciously believe they cannot live without. Those people who have reached the point where they no longer fear facing any illusion they may have are fortunate indeed. Their path lies before them unobstructed. From then the work becomes a question of building up, for the tearing down is over. What must be torn down are only illusions, falseness; never real positivity, affirmation, or constructiveness. Those who are most confused about the real and the false in themselves therefore often believe this pathwork to be destructive or negative. It must appear that way from the viewpoint of their illusions.

When you suffer an unfulfillment, you hesitate and often even battle against recognizing it. For recognizing it would be admitting to nonlife, admitting unhappiness or some form of deadness. This, in turn, brings you face to face with the fact that you fear life and run from it and yourself. Facing this would require you to stop doing so, but you are too fearful to risk. Hence you remain in the status quo and cling to an illusory life, not being sufficiently aware of its pain and waste. You do not permit your inner voice to convey to you the awareness of this pain. You do not dare risk it because you assume that the ultimate reality of life is negative, as you fear the ultimate reality of yourself also to be negative. This is so hard to face that you cover it with illusions to which you cling.

Therefore, when you penetrate the illusion and at last see the negativity lodged in yourself, you are much nearer to salvation than those who cling to the false theories about life -- false because in their hearts they do not really believe either the fake good feelings or the negative ones they produce to avoid death and nothingness.

It is impossible to eliminate the illusions unless one comes face to face with the discrepancy between what one consciously believes or what one thinks one believes and pays lip service to, and what one believes deep down in one's soul where the emotions, attitudes, and concepts form a specific expectation of life and create a specific emotional climate. Wherever such negativity exists - hidden or overt -- one does not trust in the ultimate good of one's own personality nor, consequently, anyone else's.

There is a great deal of difference between facing the negativity, understanding that here I am negating rather than affirming; here I express the negation in this specific way, and a justification of this negation, while denying its existence. The denial manifests in a continuous effort to talk oneself into the opposite state. The justification manifests as a destructive, negative world view to justify a personal fear. The fear is therefore denied in its real form. It must always lead back to a personal experience, never to a general one. In other words, when people try to expound a nihilistic world view, they hide their private fears, disappointments, and suffering, their distrust in their own innermost self, in their feelings, by making a general rule that life is, supposedly, bad. The personal experience must be unearthed.

Therefore this path must be concerned with penetrating illusions -- the illusion that says, "I am fulfilled" when one feels unfulfilled; the illusion that pretends the world is bad when one believes that one's feelings are unacceptable or dangerous; the illusion that ignores a particular unhappiness; the illusion that makes one unaware of how one holds back the spontaneous flow of natural feelings, and the illusion that does not want to see in what devious ways this can be accomplished.

Illusion does not refer only to glorifying or beautifying facts by falsely making them more positive. Nor does it refer only to ignoring vague factors that would need concise acknowledgement in order to bring the personality into balance and truth. It means more than denial and failure to ascertain an inner state. Even this failure to ascertain may be subtle, for a state may be half-admitted without your fully seeing it. Illusion also means producing unreal negative emotions. This, too, may be subtle.

Both positive and negative false emotions can be so subtle that it is easy not to admit them. It is rather obvious that false feelings are produced when one talks oneself into a feeling that one does not have at all. It is less obvious that the feelings are false when the rudiments of the particular feeling actually exist and on one level of consciousness the person would very much want to feel this particular emotion, but cannot, due to blockage. Hence, the feeling is manipulated, artificially exaggerated or dramatized. Again, this may apply to positive or negative emotions.

Dramatizing negative emotions is just as frequent as pretending positive feelings. Usually they go hand in hand and can be found together in the same psyche. One hangs onto hurts, which may be just as illusory as pretended fulfillment or a denied unfulfillment. Anger, hurt, suffering may all be dramatized and clung to. Artificial feelings, both positive and negative, serve to alleviate the terror of non-feeling, which is a state of nonlife.

Now, how can you tell the difference between the real feelings and the false feelings, the genuine wellspring of spontaneous life and the drummed up, manufactured emotions, instituted as a means of averting a terror? The manufactured feelings are always troublesome and problematic. They do not bring enlightenment and clarification. They do not bring peace of mind. They are a means to avoid an opposite state, hence they must produce more opposites, more irreconcilable poles. For example, a false feeling of excitement is supposed to ward off numbness, dullness, boredom. The real feeling of aliveness and vibrancy does not avoid anything. It just is. Therefore it contains both stimulation and peace. The false feeling cannot combine apparent opposites, such as excitement and peace. They must seem incompatible opposites that cannot be reconciled, so that the person is faced with a choice. Often you alternate between the two choices and are driven from one extreme to the other. For a false feeling creates a lack of freedom, enslavement to the false processes set in motion. One no longer chooses either excitement or peace; one is driven to choose the distortions. Being alive becomes a chore, a peace-robbing and difficult endeavor; being peaceful becomes lifeless and finally ends in fright.

False feelings always create problems on the dualistic level. Let us take the example of love. The false feeling of love breeds and results in the conflict of submission and slavery, loss of dignity for the sake of giving in, giving up one's own rights and desires for the rights and desires of the loved one. So the way out seems to deny love in order to have one's selfhood intact and one's freedom unhampered. This is the typical conflict of false love, which, in turn, is produced because one fears the state of nonlife.

There are many, many other such conflicts, and all are the result of false feelings. Artificial production of positive and negative feelings are both equally damaging, but each breeds different manifestations on the practical level. False positive feelings breed irreconcilable conflicts. False negative feelings, after a time, appear as real negative feelings. They begin to envelop you and involve you so deeply that, although the whole construction is invented, you find yourself unable to escape from it. This happens despite your awareness that you, in a sense, played a game and deliberately constructed the false feelings, let us say fear or anger. These feelings seem to keep the psyche alive, as it were. The aliveness is not real life, but it seems better than deadness. Although it is initiated purposefully, playfully, deliberately, this is soon forgotten, pushed away, and what was a false anger or a false fear appears real and becomes much more frightening and peace-robbing than a real negative feeling.

You all know that on this temporary plane of existence real negative feelings do exist, real anger, real fear, real hurt. But they never rob the person of peace, at least not for any length of time, beyond the immediate purpose of the specific real feeling. They never weaken the individual. They never drive the individual into a trap from which there is no way out. Real anger can be expressed. It will clear the air. Real fear is a purposeful warning that serves to make the individual cope with a particular situation successfully; when that situation is over, the person has become stronger. This is not so with false emotions. A real hurt mellows and makes a wiser person; it makes you grow and expand your horizons. A false, dramatized hurt can never accomplish this.

Any superfluous emotion always causes the greatest pain and suffering. No emotion that is spontaneously and honestly experienced, unhampered by the fearful, distrustful or cunning ego, can ever be a waste. Only numbing the real feelings and creating false feelings, no matter how subtle

they are, is a waste. False feelings are the result of a chain reaction that must weaken the self, waste life, and alienate the self from the limitless inner life center.

It is essential, my friends, that all of you working on this path pay attention to the false emotions you initiate. Note how you do not question yourself, with a relaxed attitude, "Now, do I really feel what I think I feel? Do I not perhaps put it on?" Once it is put on, it controls you. You must come face to face with the mechanisms which deny natural life, so that you find yourself actually holding back the natural process, the feelings that want to stream out of you, beautifully alive, whole. Instead, you wastefully and ignorantly think you protect yourself by denying them. You think the life process is not safe, that it does not have its own inner wisdom.

Here is where you must be concerned with your development, your growth, your search. When you come to this area in yourself, you can truly proceed to unlock the door, and learn how you make yourself sick needlessly, sometimes out of a misunderstanding and, very often, my friends, out of a subtle spitefulness. The spite comes from hurts you have misinterpreted; it was originally directed against your parents but now manifests toward life and toward anything and anyone you encounter.

Those who are face to face with their negativity, and see how they stop the life process by denying the life stream, are nearer to the solution than those who deny and ignore their unfulfillments and are oblivious to having created their own lack of fulfillment through false feelings. People who live a false life with false feelings often believe themselves further advanced than those who battle with the actuality of their negation.

Now, my friends, are there any questions in this respect?

QUESTION: Regarding unrequited love between a man and a woman, I sometimes feel that it is enough if I love this person. But sometimes I don't feel that way and I would like my love returned. I would like to know whether there is something in me that is wrong.

ANSWER: Whenever there is something amiss in an outer situation, it indicates a corresponding inner problem. Since there is no mystery about this, there can only be one answer: there must be something in you that does not want real fulfillment. You must be divided. There must be a part in you that very much wants the feelings, wants the experience of feeling yourself alive and vibrant with the beauty of such feelings, as only the most dynamic experience on this earth-plane can bring -- love between a man and a woman. But there is another part where you fear it, perhaps for any number of reasons. If you did not fear and deny it, you truly would not find yourself in such a situation. Your feelings would be directed toward a person who is willing and eager to reciprocate. In fact, it would be unthinkable that your feelings could be elicited, could be ignited in a situation that is one-sided. That in itself indicates an area where there is fear and a denial of life.

There may be many reasons for this. Often in such cases, people find that if and when their feelings are unexpectedly returned, their own feelings cool off. When they are not returned, when the other is unreachable, unattainable, the feelings increase and reach out. It is as though the psyche tried to find a compromise between wanting to be alive, wanting to feel the sweetness and fullness of life, but dared to do so only in fantasy. It lacks the courage to create it in reality.

You have to ascertain how and why you are frightened of the real love feelings that may come your way. You have to ascertain that you feel more at ease when the reality is less stimulating, less conducive to loving feelings than the fantasy. Recognize that you feel more reassured when you feel less alive, while this more intense state of feeling threatens you and makes you doubtful you can cope with it. This doubt results from your reluctance to trust your feelings.

QUESTION: How can a person who has a great problem with those manipulated feelings differentiate between the false and the genuine feelings?

ANSWER: The easiest way would be to express every day, deep into the psyche, the wish to become aware of them; to face where false feelings arise. The attention will then focus itself, with the help of the inner guidance that automatically manifests when it is truly wanted. When one truly wants to become aware of the false feelings, to deceive oneself no longer, and states the intent simply and firmly, something is set in motion that will bring the awareness. The clearer you state the desire and intent to want to live in reality and feel real feelings, the more this will become possible. The more the personality is willing to dispense with deceit and courageously look at what is, the more the guidance from the innermost life forces, the inner wisdom, will manifest without any doubt. The awareness will grow, the attention will focus more clearly, and with more understanding the difference will become more obvious. You will see how the false is laborious and the true is easy; how the false leaves one flat and the true brings a warmth and vibrancy, no matter how small the feeling may be to begin with. True feelings warm the whole system, the whole person: body, mind, soul, and spirit. When you decide, "This is what I want, this is what I am going to do: to live in reality, to see the false, to stop it, and to allow the real to come out, and I know that this decision must bear its fruits, I know it will," something already begins to change within. This is the way to go about it. Each day intend it, say it, mean it, and look at what is. Decide to call upon the subliminal forces lodged deep within the real self.

May this lecture give you a new incentive to see what is essential: to see your nonlife; for then, and then only, can you become alive; to see yourself in nonfeeling. For then, and then only, can your real feelings manifest. See this and live it; proceed in this direction, and your life will truly be lived purposefully. It will not be lived in vain. It must have its deep fulfillment, no matter what exists or does not exist outwardly. Those who live this way live in reality, and reality will adapt itself eventually and mold itself in an entirely new way.

Be in peace, my friends. Be in God!

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