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MIND ACTIVITY AND MIND RECEPTIVITY

Greetings, my beloved friends. The love of the universe embraces every manifestation and individualization of the Divine Being, especially when the outer, separated self strives so ardently to find the truth of being, the truth of self -- thus the truth of life.

All the pain and frustration the average human being goes through in the course of a lifetime is solely the result of not knowing your true identity. And the constant struggle of living comes from a vague feeling in your unconscious that there is something to recapture, some secret key that could open life. You know deep within that life cannot be merely what you experience from day to day or what it is at the moment. So you strive away from the moment, and when you do so you lose the moment and with it the meaning of life -- for every single moment contains all of life.

The struggle to discover the true self and to accept the now are not mutually exclusive -- they are interdependent. Tonight's lecture specifically examines what mental attitude is needed to unite the two apparently opposite ways of experiencing and to thereby find the meaning of life and your true identity.

The mind's activity or lack of activity is the key here: it is a subtle process, almost impossible to put into words, and yet so definite and important. However, we must do our best: I must do my best in finding the right expressions to communicate to you what I mean. You can do your best by opening yourself inwardly, your heart as much as your mind, so that you will understand not only with your intellect but intuitively as well. The latter is, as you know, the much more important understanding.

There are two powerful forces or attitudes in the universe and therefore in each human personality. One is the force that is striving, moving, acting, initiating, activating, doing. This aspect includes self-responsibility, independence, autonomy, free choice, and the power of the self. The other is being receptive to and waiting for whatever is to happen. This aspect includes patience, humility, the awareness of interdependence and of being a part of a whole. It has trust in the processes of the greater life. The former involves direct action, the latter means waiting for growth and indirect manifestation, which takes place in its own way and according to its own laws.

When a person consciously or unconsciously believes one of these two attitudes or ways of functioning to be right and the other wrong, and thus cultivates only one or the other, distortions and imbalances are inevitable. Because it is impossible to use only one, the opposite of a person's adopted way of functioning still exists, though in a less overt way. But when they are not balanced, each way produces inappropriate, ineffective, and even destructive results. It is important for every growing individual to discover the finely balanced interplay of these two universal forces. Since there exists no rule for exactly when and how to switch from one attitude to the other, the way to do

so must be found within each person's own rhythm and inner reality. One must become attuned to one's inner life and soul movements, so as to recognize when and how each attitude is expressed, when one or the other is predominant, and which is required at any given moment. The recognition becomes more and more spontaneous and automatic as the self unfolds and integrates with the ego.

These two universal attitudes might also be called the active and the passive forces. I spoke about this topic many years ago, but on a more superficial and general level. Now this topic can be treated much more deeply and specifically. You know that the truth of life cannot be found by understanding it merely with your brain. The way to experience the truth is to apply it first to your own self, to your individual problems, and in the application transcend the problems. Then you experience every force of the universe within yourself.

Still another way of putting it would be to talk about the creative masculine and feminine principles. The masculine and feminine principles exist in the psychic life of all manifestations. They are at work wherever life exists. The power of their harmonious interplay creates forever new manifestations and individualizations of the Divine Being. I do not refer solely to the fleshly creations; the principle applies to everything. Growth within the personality is also a creation determined by the same harmonious interaction of the male and female principles. Growth cannot come unless the right interaction takes place between initiative and will on the one hand, and receptivity, surrender, waiting, and unfolding on the other. The joining of these two forces creates renewal, new forms, expansion; it bubbles forth more and greater life; it creates supreme pleasure. Disharmonious interaction, with over-or under-emphasis on one force, thwarts life and produces displeasure, frustration, and restriction. When men and women have not established both masculine and feminine principles within their own soul and mind, they cannot fully be men or women.

The two principles or forces have certain common denominators. One of them is the alternation of tension and relaxation, of firmness and softness. The fertile soil of life, growth, peace, pleasure is the resilience that springs from the pulsation and rhythmic movement of tension and relaxation. This kind of tension is not the painful tension a person feels when the two forces are in disharmony. This pleasant tension is a springboard from which action flows forth naturally and organically. The same applies to relaxation; it must not be confused with the inertia of lifelessness and with lack of energy. Its healthy version is full of life and inner movement, poised in the confidence that natural action comes in its own time.

The proper interaction of tension and relaxation is the pulsation, the breathing, of the universe and of every aspect or particle thereof. For everything alive in the universe is an aspect of it and must therefore be subject to the same principles and laws. The pulsation of tension and relaxation expresses the integration of these two forces: the male and the female, the initiating and the receptive forces. Every life manifestation is an expression of this beat. The more harmonious the life manifestation, the more integrated are the constantly fluctuating initiating and receptive forces -- opening and closing, opening and closing.

The more the individual consciousness of an organism is removed from its source -- the less it is aware of its true divine identity -- the more painful must be the alternating rhythm and pulsation of its life. For wherever life is, the rhythmic movement of the two forces must exist. Conversely, the higher the development of consciousness -- the more the individual being is aware of, and therefore connected with, its true identity -- the more pleasurable and blissful both tension and

relaxation inevitably are. At a certain stage between these two extreme poles is the phase in which the opening, relaxed state is felt as desirable and pleasurable, whereas the closing, tense state is felt as painful and undesirable. The dichotomy causes the entity to strive away from one and toward the other state. Yet the more one strives, the more one hinders the natural rhythm. For striving creates more tension -- even when one strives for the open, relaxed state. Hence, there is really no other way but to endure the momentary painful state, so as to allow the natural rhythm to prevail until the entire personality is freed from the painful, cramped state. Freedom does not mean the cessation of the tense, closing movement -- for that would mean the cessation of life. It merely means that gradually, as the pain is transcended, it ceases to be pain. Many human beings find themselves in the middle state, where one universal pulse is felt as painful, the other as pleasurable.

The right interaction of the two principles or universal forces, from the point of view of your mind activity and specifically your pathwork, may best be described as follows: the outer, deliberate, conscious ego and its willpower must be poised in a firm but relaxed way. The resistant and destructive unconscious must be neither yielded to nor anxiously pressured or impatiently coerced. The ego must be alert to recognize what the unconscious expresses indirectly and why it holds back to prevent happiness and unfoldment. To recognize the true unconscious state, the mind has to be calm, observant, and accepting of what happens in the now, thus encouraging the unconscious to express itself. Once the unconscious surfaces with all its unreasonableness, it can be quite naturally given a new direction and the obstruction will vanish.

The process requires a fine balance between the masculine and feminine principles. The firmness of purpose not to follow the line of least resistance when confronted with the unconscious obstructions has to be balanced with the waiting, receiving spirit in which the expressions of the destructive unconscious are accepted. The unfoldment of the universal intelligence in the mind is identical to this process. However, the more obstructions fester "underground," the less will unfoldment be possible -- as you all know so well. The ideal approach is to use both alternately: instruct firmly, calmly, and determinedly the destructive part of the hidden self to express itself. Observe what comes forth with interest, attention, and noninterference. To make this possible, request the divine being that you are deep inside to guide and help you in this process. Again, the determination and instruction is the work of the active mind, while the waiting for the manifestation belongs to the passive, receiving function.

The human mind is constantly groping to find the right balance of these all-important attitudes. Finding this balance is one of the great difficulties each person encounters on the path to harmonious interaction. The way cannot be learned by rules; only finely attuned listening to your own soul movements will enable you to discover when to use one and when to stop and use the other of these two complementing forces. You must see yourself using the wrong way before you can gradually adopt the right one. How often are humans lazy and inattentive to their innermost expressions when governed by a misconception of the passive principle. They claim rightly that things must ripen by themselves and that healthy growth is a spontaneous process that cannot be forced. But they use the principle wrongly and neglect to go into themselves to face what needs to be faced and change what needs to be changed. At the same time, how often are humans overactive, coercive, and tense toward themselves as well as others, misunderstanding and misusing the active principle.

Whenever one principle is given such distorted predominance, it is precisely because the other also exists -- perhaps less noticeably. The outer impatience with oneself connotes an inner resistance. The outer laziness and distorted acceptance of things connotes a fierce inner struggle against the self and its effects. This fierce struggle must be brought out, for it is always present where there are unresolved problems, imbalance, distortion, unfulfillment. The struggle between the self and the self is, for the longest time, projected outwardly, so that the struggle seems to be between the self and life or between the self and others. But since there is no difference between you and life or others, the struggle is basically between you and yourself. Once you are quite conscious of your true struggle, the imbalance will become comprehensible, and a reorientation can begin.

True change is a spontaneous process that happens quite by itself -- or so it seems. Actually, it is the result of the unstrained, natural, poised outer efforts. But when people expect direct and visible manifestations of their efforts to come immediately, they misunderstand the process. Such people become disappointed and discouraged; they start to use less effort and thus fall back into destructive patterns of mind, emotion, and action. At the same time, they become more and more tense and pushy toward their own processes. If people wait for results without going to the trouble of investing their very best into life and the growth process -- in the misapplied knowledge that growth manifests effortlessly as if by itself -- they too are disappointed, and the inner struggle against both themselves and life becomes more arduous.

The more unconscious your pains and frustrations are, the more you will strain and grasp for a solution. As you are not conscious of this either, you may explain away the feeling of discomfort with all sorts of reasons. You may even be driven to destructive actions, to seeking troublesome life situations that seem to explain your discomfort, because not knowing the reason for a pain is worse than any conscious pain. In some personality types the result is inertia.

Misapplied will and action produce excessive tension. Where the mind should be receptive, not only to what comes in from outside but even more to what comes out from inside, it often closes into a tight knot formed of pressure against the self. Deliberate receptivity toward the inner processes, receiving into consciousness what wants to work its way out, is an essential part of the path. You cannot ever get to know what is within you unless this inner attitude is cultivated. When people are too impatient, their pathwork is stopped. Excessive tension is always an expression of misunderstanding the processes caused by the false idea that inner blocks can be removed by the direct application of ego-will. The ego-will has its necessary function, but it is only indirectly responsible for the undercurrents and the will of the unconscious. Therefore the outer or ego-consciousness must treat the unconscious -- even the destructive, childish, distorted part of it -- with respect. It is the respect you grant a being who must not be coerced, but must find its own way. Your own unconscious, too, must find its own way. If it is coerced, it cannot unfold itself. It cannot respond, it cannot reveal itself. If the outer mind is tense and anxious and forces the unconscious, it is impossible to establish the kind of relationship between the conscious and unconscious that is necessary to first reveal the latter and then to unify the two.

The relationship between the conscious mind and the destructive part of the unconscious can be established by accepting, for the time being, that perceptions, attitudes, and feelings exist that are often diametrically opposed to each other. Once the destructive and obstructive unconscious aspects are allowed to reveal themselves, the more truthful and constructive convictions of the

conscious mind can influence and gradually eliminate the unconscious stumbling blocks. By the same token, a relationship between the ego faculties and the wisdom, truth, and love of the divine self can be established when the ego is prepared to receive the latter. This means a waiting in a receptive, quiet attitude, and once the divine self unfolds through new ideas, feelings, and depths of experience, the ego will be instructed and suffused by the manifestation of the Divine. Thus, the two aspects of growth and integration -- transforming destructive elements and manifesting the divine self -- presuppose the identical dynamics of doing and waiting, initiating and receiving. In one instance the conscious ego is wiser and more constructive than the buried unconscious. In the other instance, the buried unconscious is by far wiser and more constructive than the conscious mind.

Treating both aspects of the unconscious with respect is crucial. Respect is given not to the destructiveness itself, but rather to the processes of growth and unfoldment, to the wondrous laws of the inner reality. The laws of inner reality will eventually become accessible to the respectful mind, and the identical universal laws of creation will also be understood. This is what I mean when I say that you can understand life, creation, and the universe only to the degree that you understand the lawfulness and dynamics of your own unconscious processes.

Even the most destructive attitudes result not from evil but from sheer misunderstanding. When one fully understands this fact, even the most destructive processes are awesomely impressive, for their principle and mechanics are based on a lawfulness that is identical to the working of creation at its best. Since evil results from misunderstanding, and since the processes are equally wonderful in and by themselves, evil can truly be eliminated only when you learn to be respectful of your own unconscious. Let it unfold in its own way and in its own rhythm. Be receptive and open to what it reveals to you. The receptive attitude is violated by a punitive, anxious, and pressing mind force -- a forcing current directed to your own unconscious. The forcing results--sometimes alternately but often simultaneously -- in excessive tension and anxiety on the one hand, and in inertia, laziness, and neglect of active growth on the other.

Since you treat the outer world in exactly the same way you treat your own unconscious, you emanate the same climate toward those with whom you are involved. Other people retract from this onslaught of forcing that says, as it were, "You must," just as your own unconscious does. When you do not wish to pay close attention to your own unconscious and thus pull back from it or pay only superficial attention to it, you cannot help meeting their unconscious in a similar way. Needless to say that they resent this lack of attention -- often unconsciously.

Every good, beautiful, and creative experience in which you feel at one with life and with yourself arises from the proper relationship between the active and passive principles. When you think back to those experiences you will see that there existed a combination of poised alertness -- of active involvement and participation and, at the same time, of receptive waiting, and relaxed yet pulsating passivity. When you let these forces flow out of you, life can flow into you. Remember that nothing can come to you from life that you have not made possible, even when it appears to come from outside of you.

Let me briefly recapitulate the distortion of the twofold principle of the active and the passive. The initiating, active, masculine principle distorts into the tight tension of impatience, anxiety, and ego pride which thinks it can do it all alone, by sheer outer will. This attitude negates not only the

universal powers but also the person's own unconscious powers to grow and function according to higher laws. It implies distrust of all universal and personal movements within -- as though they had no existence, lawfulness, or rhythm of their own. Consequently it also mistrusts the reasoning of these inner forces, further strengthening thereby the conviction that there exists nothing but the isolated ego without deeper connections. In this extremely painful illusion, the real connections remain unused, so that the ego is truly unable to function according to its best potentiality. The less those inner forces and movements are made available to participate in the business of living, the less adequately can the ego fend for itself, and therefore the more harassed it becomes. Isolated ego-existence arises from ignorance and pride in the ego as the highest, best and only reality that can affect life; and it leads to more separation, frustration, and unhappiness -- to the painful tension produced by trying too hard in an ineffectual way. It is a lonely existence beset by fears.

Conversely, those who, in distortion of the passive, feminine principle, trust in God in a way that virtually abandons self-responsibility, who leave everything to God to justify their own inactivity, also fail to fulfill themselves. They seem to humbly and trustingly let God "do it," forever waiting, but their active, initiating powers and the spontaneous, indirect manifestations of growth are just as disconnected. If and when the latter appear, perhaps as a result of some initiative taken in the past, such persons ascribe the manifestations to a power outside themselves -- or at least miss the connection between the manifestations and their own actions and attitudes.

You can see how the extremes and distortions are quite similar and ultimately bring you to the same impasse. When you are passive and let things go instead of accepting self-responsibility for finding the way and perhaps doing what is at the moment most painful, you trust in a false God -- a God outside yourself. For you, your whole being, is God, and only by using your faculties can you realize this transcendental fact. When you are active with the separated ego alone instead of living the rhythmic interplay of doing and waiting, of acting and listening, you believe the separated little self is all there is to you -- and again you must be disappointed. Commit yourself to finding the key to your life -- to the truth of yourself, no matter how painful or unflattering it may be. At the same time, respect and honor your inner processes and allow them to take their course.

Find the balance. It is a constantly changing rhythm or cycle on each individual's path. Each step involves both movements or attitudes. Their proper interaction is the creative power that brings something new into life. Both the initiating and the receptive principles require the integrity of selfhood, on the one hand, and knowing that one is part of a whole, on the other. The latter means respect for the movements that cannot always immediately obey the commands of the mind. It is necessary to constantly initiate your own creative forces and find when and how they are ready to make themselves known.

Even the simple act of meditation must combine these two approaches. On the one hand, you actively formulate your attitude, goal, and intents -- your attitude being that you want to invest the best of yourself, your goal being to remove obstructions and to grow and unfold the best that is in you, your intent being to face whatever the truth may be. On the other hand, you become still and waiting, calm and receptive. If answers do not come forth at once, you let go and wait until they do come, possibly when you least expect them. For that is when your mind is relaxed and thus able to receive. When you are ready to receive both the best and the worst in you and are relaxed about both -- not overeager and not frightened -- then manifestations can appear. If you are equally

receptive to both the best and the worst in you and are willing to understand both, then the harmonious, rhythmic, organic growth processes will establish themselves more and more.

The alternating rhythm of initiating and receiving -- of becoming and being -- is the pulse beat of your path, my friends. The balanced pulsation of your soul forces can follow only after you have observed and temporarily accepted their imbalance, so as to understand it. As I said before, such understanding brings you into the state in which tension is no longer pain, so that you no longer alternate between pain and pleasure. Then these opposites will be reconciled, and the pulsating movements of tension and relaxation will be nothing but two different aspects of bliss.

Perhaps you can best find your own inner rhythm when you think of the active pulse beat as doing your best to overcome the fear of facing something unpleasant; giving the best in you to find your true identity; contributing to the processes of evolution by your serious and total involvement with your growth. The passive phase of the pulsation is following all such inner acts with periods of waiting -- waiting for the moment when the results are ready to come.

The more you find your own balanced rhythm, the more a new vision will grow. This vision or realization will be that you live ninety-five percent of your conscious life responding not spontaneously and directly and independently to what is, but according to conditioned reflexes. This will be quite shocking at first, and it will be liberating at the same time. In the instant of recognition, life and the world will begin to open up. I do not refer merely to opinions and views you unknowingly echo because you are afraid of the responsibility of being true to your own opinions and views -- because you believe you need the approval of others more than you believe you need your own approval.

I now go beyond this rather superficial level, which we have discussed sufficiently in the past, to something deeper and more subtle. What I mean is that you do not approach every life experience freshly. You are conditioned to respond to it in a certain way. For example, when you see the color red, you generally do not see it according to your own perception and experience. You see it according to your indoctrination about how you should see red -- you have a preconceived idea of "red." Or when you see a tulip, the word, the concept tulip, is already a reflex, so that you do not experience the tulip as though you were confronted with it for the first time. You can multiply the effect of conditioning and compound the multiplication infinitely. Without exaggeration, ninety-five percent of your experiences -- sensuous as well as conceptual experiences -- are not your own true, free, and spontaneous reactions, but preconceived reflexes. They result not only from what you picked up in this life, but also from many, many previous existences. Your psyche is filled with a collection of predigested experiences.

Most significant of all, and relevant to our topic here, is the experience of pain and frustration. You have been indoctrinated for millennia with the conviction that any frustration is pain. That is why it is so difficult to make the transition from the pleasure/pain pulse beat of tension and relaxation to the liberated state in which tension and relaxation are different aspects of pleasure. Unless frustration ceases to be a threat so that the personality does not cramp up and shrink into itself, you cannot detect the free-flowing beat of the universe behind your curtain of fear.

Your conviction that frustration is pain and perhaps even danger makes you react in a way that actually produces a painful and dangerous state. I suggest that, as you begin to observe yourself

and to be receptive to what comes out of you, you should experiment with any frustration that comes along the next time. Ask yourself, "Now, here is pain. I let myself feel this pain. Is it really as painful as I pretend?" I mean here "pretend" in a deeper sense. As you convince yourself of the pain, you produce waves of pain by your very reaction, as if the situation were truly so painful. The tension becomes more painful than the pain itself. Once you watch your reactions from this point of view, strange experiences will come to you. You will learn to let the pain, the frustration, be. You will let its movement be by itself. Little by little you will experience how the pain turns into a pleasurable movement of pulsation. Only when you let yourself be calm and observant and receptive to what is within you, and accept it, will you be capable of experiencing this shift in consciousness. Usually the mind makes such frantic, struggling movements against the pain and frustration that it is impossible to come to the pleasurable experience of pulsation. You are usually too busy following your habit-bound, conditioned reflexes, in which you respond to what you believe is good in one way and to what you believe is bad in another way. Thus you go on never really experiencing life independently, never experiencing the real you, this particular individualization of the Divine. You never experience things as they really are, without preconceptions or preconditioned sensory reflexes. Your preconceptions are illusions, and they can be penetrated only when you become both initiating and receptive to your own innermost being. Then you will alternate between knowing new material about yourself and the world, and feeling yourself and the world in new ways. You will come to know more and more your true divine identity. It will reveal itself first as an apparently other self, manifesting from somewhere within you; then, as it enlivens you more and more, you will know that it is you and you are it.

May this lecture be the next guidepost on your way into your own unconscious and learn to accept it as it manifests, so that you establish the proper relationship of tension and relaxation in your approach to yourself. Such balance can change your attitude toward yourself and teach you to accept yourself as you are; and because of this basic acceptance, you will gather momentum and strength for further surging forward. Your inner soul movements must live these principles; it is never sufficient to know them, although knowing them is often necessary and helpful to lead you into the climate in which living them becomes possible. Calmly let yourself be and let yourself unfold.

Be blessed, my dear friends, in all your further undertakings for spiritual growth. Each step forward brings you nearer to the realization of who you really are and what life really is -- a continuum that need not ever know the fear of death, a continuum of living and rejoicing. Be in peace, be God!

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