

FURTHER ASPECTS OF POLARITY -- SELFISHNESS

Greetings, my dearest friends. As always, blessings stream forth. A blessing is a current which is a power, to be received by you to the extent you open yourself up to it, knowingly and willingly.

A person's unhappiness is almost always considered an indication of sickness. Unhappiness is usually interpreted in a wrong, distorted way. The result is that you fight the manifestation of your inner being, as though the manifestation itself were the sickness. It is, of course, quite true that if people were entirely in harmony with the universal forces, they would not be sick, neurotic, unhappy. But it is equally true that sickness, discontent and disharmony are an indication of health. For it is precisely your real self, your spirit being, which speaks through the unhappiness, sending the conscious ego a message that something should be different. The real self says to the outer personality that it is conducting something in a wrong manner. This message comes from health and wants to reestablish health, well-being and happiness. Truth in life equates with feeling good in the deepest possible way -- without reservations, in joyful security and self-liking. When you act and move in life in a way that is conducive to such a state, the spirit being of your innermost core is completely content. Thus a neurosis, an unhappiness, is in a deeper sense a sign of health.

The freer a person's divine being, the less encrusted and hidden it is, the more clearly the outer personality registers its messages. Sometimes this is experienced as "having a conscience." Less-developed individuals, whose real self is deeply buried, register such signs much less acutely. They may go along for extended periods -- even incarnations -- without feeling their inner discontent, without registering qualms, anxiety, doubt or pain about their outer deviations from the lawfulness of universal life. They do not register unhappiness when they violate their integrity and may even feel a temporary, precarious sort of satisfaction when they feed the needs of their destructive demands.

Usually people overlook, or even ignore, that neurosis is, in itself, a sign of a healthy spirit which rebels against the mismanagement of the outer personality. Thus the weight is subtly shifted relating to what is healthy and what is sick, so that the individual combats the very language of the healthy spirit. You then try to adjust to an unhealthy condition, in the assumption that to rebel against it is immature, unrealistic and neurotic.

Persons with immature, unrealistic tendencies also frequently strive away from self-responsibility, deny any sort of frustration, want to get by with giving nothing and receiving all. You certainly know that these attitudes are decisive factors of the human personality and have to be faced and changed. But the strange thing is that the more people ignore their birthright to be happy, and overlook the messages of their spirit that want to set them in the direction of living according to these basic rights, the more they want to cheat and get by with giving nothing. In fact, it is a logical

connection. The more human beings believe they must sacrifice their fundamental happiness because to do this is "right," "good," or "mature," the more they become deprived. The inevitable further result is secret destructiveness and ruthless selfishness somewhere underground as far as emotional inclinations are concerned. These underground tendencies may erupt at any moment. The greater the suppression becomes, the greater the contrast with the false superimpositions is, the greater will be the likelihood of a breakdown, of a violent eruption which the personality cannot control. We shall come back to this topic later in the lecture.

Let us now take the example of a human being who neglects his or her personal growth. Inevitably, discontent must follow. But the conscious mind may be unable to read the message of discontent correctly. The diagnosis is made according to the person's understanding of these matters. Only too often professional help consists of trying to make patients accept their condition, in the belief that their frantic struggle is exclusively a rebellion against authority, or a self-destructive maneuver against a secure, safe life. The personality's resistance to recognizing the real cause cooperates in leading the helper astray. Fear of the consequences of total commitment to growth makes it appear more desirable to be a recalcitrant child. All this is even more misleading because, as mentioned before, such immature rebellion and self-destructiveness actually exist as well. But they are hardly ever the cause of the evil, merely one of the effects.

You can see how easy it is to be confused about the subtleties of health or neurosis. Neurosis is simultaneously a sign of health and of sickness; a message leading people toward feeling good again in themselves after having lost their proper course. This is, once again, a demonstration of transcendence of duality. In the dualistic system it is either sickness or health. Neurosis is thus always seen exclusively as sickness. True as this is, it is equally true that it is coming from, and striving toward, health. It is extremely important, my friends, to approach yourself and your state of mind and emotions in this manner and with this view.

This brings me again to the topic of duality. I repeat: your tensions and confusions, as well as your suffering and fears, are a result of the dualistic state of consciousness in which everything is split in half; in which one half is adjudged as good and desirable, the other as bad and undesirable. This is always an erroneous, illusory way of perceiving and experiencing life. Opposites are not to be divided in this fashion, as I have shown you many times before. Only when, through your personal evolution, you transcend the opposites and conciliate them, can you reach the unitive state. In order to approach this state the opposites must be faced and accepted as long as they appear as opposites, so that the inner tension diminishes.

Some opposites are no longer experienced as one versus the other, even in your dualistic sphere of consciousness. Humanity has sufficiently evolved to have transcended some of the polarities. In such cases, the average human being no longer experiences one opposite as good, the other as bad. When I say "no longer," I mean that previous states of consciousness existed when this was the case -- with all individuals and in all respects.

Let us take, for example, the masculine and feminine principles I discussed in the last lecture. Only the person who is very distorted, very subjectively influenced and disturbed -- and even then it is hardly ever an overt manifestation -- will experience one as positive and the other as negative. The deep psyche, in which not all old obstructions are overcome, still harbors the division of good versus bad. But generally, and to a much larger degree, the average person experiences these

opposites in a truthful fashion. Both are seen as intrinsically good and beautiful. They complement one another in a wonderful way, making one unity, one whole. Both contain aspects of the creative universe.

Let us take a further example where, for a halfway healthy mind, opposites are transcended -- are no longer seen as good versus bad, but as complementary facets, both fulfilling their own function, equal in beauty. These opposites are the forces of activity and passivity -- the expanding and restricting principles, initiating and being receptive -- to refer to our most recent discussions. There are many more dualities which are seen as complementary and mutually fulfilling rather than mutually exclusive -- even in this predominantly still dualistic state. Everyone will consider night and day as mutually complementary manifestations of nature, both having their value, beauty, and function. Only the most distorted personality will consider one as good and battle against the other as evil.

These examples should make you sense that in reality it is this way with all opposites, even those that seem most difficult to comprehend in this way. I have attempted to show you that even a pair of opposites like health and sickness does not, in reality, indicate good versus bad. Both can contain both. If health prevails while a person violates his or her spiritual needs for growth -- for total feelings of love, for the deepest experiences of happiness, pleasure, union with others -- if health continues while an ego remains isolated, separated and unfeeling for its own innermost self and other people, it is not good. Conversely, ill health is good if seen as a symptom leading to total health, fulfillment and happiness.

Thus, what is good and what is bad is not ever divisible, so that one polarity is one, the other the other. Each polarity is all good when in its natural, undistorted state. Each polarity is bad when distortion and error set in.

This is most difficult to experience with the greatest polarity of all: life and death. Perhaps the foregoing can help you begin to sense vaguely in a new way that it can hardly be different with this particular duality. I must tell you, my friends, that the more you succeed in conciliating polarities about all sorts of aspects within your own soul system and with your soul current, the more you will sense that it is no different with life and death. Both are good; neither needs be feared or fought against. The more other polarities or dualities begin to unify and are experienced as vital functions of living -- all meaningful and beautiful in their own way -- the more this is bound to happen regarding life and death.

There are many other opposites that you cannot help but experience at this state of your development as good versus bad. To the degree you have evolved, have come into your own, have realized your divine nature, to that degree you cease to experience life in this divided way. Only then can the soul be peaceful. Only then can soul movements be relaxed and consequently in a state of delight. For tension breeds unpleasure, making bliss impossible. Tension is inevitable as long as one is under the illusion that there are always new things to fight against. Soul currents close up toward all the good of life when an entity believes itself in danger. Since all opposites are constantly "around," always "there," deep within your self as well as around you, you live in a perpetual state of tension when you assume one opposite to be good.

Since all of life consists of polarities, the fact that most of them appear as mutually exclusive opposites -- one being grasped at, the other being tensely denied -- puts people in a constant state of painful tension, anxious grasping, needless denial. The consequences are pain and frustration. This is all the more confusing when you believe you have done right to fight against the bad and grasp for the good. Why, then, are you so discontent, so empty, so lacking in the vital joys of life? Such confusions are rarely conscious and concise. If they were, it would be much easier to question and challenge the premises that led to the distortions in the first place. The difficulties are truly illusory, as illusory as the split of good versus bad, but they seem nevertheless real in all the discomfort they give.

The opposites people struggle with create a tremendous tension. Humanity has been geared for centuries and centuries of its psychic existence to feel one opposite as good and right, the other as bad and evil. Thus you inevitably get lost in confusion. You try to resolve all your personal problems on this basis and, of course, can never succeed, can never find a real solution that gives you peace. You approach all your personal alternatives of action in this fashion. Thus the very premise you start from is already the ground work for further and deeper entanglement and error.

At times this tension leads to eruptions, as stated before. At other times, the two polarities which arbitrarily seem to be mutually exclusive, annul one another. In the groping for a solution with such erroneous premises, one polarity is always set off against the other. Thus they cancel each other out. In truthful perception, both opposites are accepted and function organically, mutually aiding each other. In the illusory perception of mutual exclusiveness, they create a short-circuit. In the darkness of the confusion, the individual is called upon to make a choice, but cannot do so successfully. When the distribution is uneven, in a nonorganic, distorted way, eruption may occur. When the distribution is even, balanced -- again in a non-organic, distorted way -- all power currents become inactivated, short-circuited. What the mind holds true actually happens: the two opposites annul each other. The further result of this state is the numbness, lifelessness and deadness of feelings that we repeatedly discuss in our work together. We often discuss this numbness and deadness in connection with other more limited aspects -- for example, fear of feelings. But isn't such a fear based on precisely such a dualistic struggle -- the struggle against choice between polar forces in a person's inner life?

A simple example will also describe the basic Yes and No currents, which we discussed before in different connections. The Yes current represents the affirmative principle, the principle that expands, embraces, is open and receptive to life. The No current represents the negating principle. It pulls back, retracts, denies, shrinks into itself. There is a general conviction and assumption that the affirmative principle is good and desirable, while the negating principle is sick, bad, undesirable. Religion itself has made this division, explicitly representing God as the affirmative, the Devil as the negating power. This is, at best, a half truth. To blindly accept this division in the depths of one's unconscious reflexes means untold confusion and pain. The moment a person is governed by such an attitude, they become involved in errors leading to further errors and misinterpretation of life, until it becomes increasingly more difficult to extricate themselves from the maze.

I will demonstrate this in the simplest possible way. Isn't it true that to affirm an undesirable condition, a destructive attitude, is as undesirable as negating a positive, constructive condition or attitude? To an individual geared only to affirm, any negation would be experienced with pangs of hesitation, doubt, uncertainty and guilt -- even if negation is healthy and constructive in a particular

situation. I am referring to very subtle levels of reactions, lodged in the unconscious or semi-conscious mind. The next link in this chain reaction is difficulty in asserting oneself, difficulty in taking one's inherent rights as a part of creation, difficulty in being healthily aggressive. Such an individual feels compelled to always submit, to never say No to any demands, no matter how exploitative. The spinelessness and weakness of many people result from a deep-seated fear of denying anything. This is not real goodness -- based on free giving of love, on the generous spirit of wanting to give of oneself. It is a subtle fear of making any self-assertion, of claiming anything for the self. Such lack of freedom and selfhood decreases the capacity to love and increases underlying separateness and selfishness in the destructive sense. So you can see, my friends, even with the seemingly good versus bad of the Yes and No currents, it is never one versus the other. You would be totally mistaken to adopt the affirmative principle as an overall attitude for all contingencies and to negate the negating principle.

I am showing once again that the dualistic world view leads to error and suffering, to confusion and tension -- and away from all true solutions. The conciliation of all polarities lies in seeing the good in both opposites. This alone will lead to truth, reality, health, the unfoldment of universal bliss, and expansion of consciousness. This has been underlying all my lectures. As we proceed further and further, and as you go deeper within yourself, it becomes increasingly important that you gradually reorient all your faculties to living according to the unified principle. This applies first to your thinking processes, later to the most subtle emotional reactions and perceptions. More and more you will come to the point when you can embrace both opposites in their truthful, real, healthy manifestations. More and more you will become attuned to recognizing their healthy and distorted versions. You will feel, rather than judge, which are which.

In this same vein I should like to discuss the very important topic of selfishness. In the course of our work together we have touched on this topic in various ways. Now I should like to be a little more explicit and go a little deeper. This extremely important topic has a great many ramifications in each human existence, in each human psyche and inevitably, therefore, in each outer life. At the same time, the topic is a difficult one because it may easily mislead childish, self-centered, falsely selfish, separating personalities, who may desire to proclaim their destructive selfishness and separateness as health and self-assertion. This is why I have waited a considerable time before discussing this topic in detail. Most of you, my friends, have sufficiently progressed in the capacity to distinguish between healthy and destructive selfishness, so you will not fall into the trap of pretending that one is the other. This trap must be avoided. Then the comprehension of these words will represent a great liberation for you.

The universally accepted principle is that selfishness is wrong, bad, undesirable, while all kinds of unselfishness are laudable, good, right. One rarely makes the distinction that some forms of selfishness are intrinsically healthy and right. They guard a person's inalienable right to be happy and protect their ability to grow, expand, evolve. Concomitantly, one rarely notices that unselfishness can be a sick manifestation of self-destructiveness and weakness -- exploiting others through self-enslavement, just as one allows others to exploit oneself. This has little to do with genuine concern for the rights of others. In fact, only the person who can be selfish in the right, healthy way is capable of genuine concern for the rights of others.

Selfishness has a healthy origin. It says: "I am a manifestation of God. As such I am, in my healthy, unobstructed state, a happy individual. For only a happy individual can spread and give

forth happiness. Only an individual who grows according to his or her potentials and life plan is happy. Thus happiness and the fulfillment of one's destiny are synonymous. The one is unthinkable without the other. I am also a totally free individual, autonomous and completely responsible for the life I shape for myself. No one else can determine my life, my growth, my happiness. I will not allow myself to subtly hitch this responsibility onto others by "buying them" with my false unselfishness, through enslavement, through making myself feel so unselfish because I abdicate my rights."

You cannot assimilate this realization deeply enough. Meditate on this in the most personal and deepest way and see in what way you inadvertently deviate from such an attitude. The more you come to express this honest, healthy and self-responsible way of life, the more you will feel secure in yourself, because security is found in being anchored within yourself. Thus truth brings out the divine kernel, which itself becomes your anchor. False unselfishness makes you lose this center. You are then anchored in the other person for whom you sacrifice. Whenever such attitudes are truly faced, it shows that never can such a sacrifice be made in genuine love, in a free spirit of spontaneous giving. When genuine love is present, the idea of sacrifice is no longer applicable. The act is so pleasurable that it is as selfish as it is unselfish. Unselfishness is selfishness, and vice versa. Sacrificial unselfishness always implies an inner bargaining, a secret desire to get away with something underneath an outer sentimentality that pretends the act is good. It is always loveless and defeats growth.

When you are anchored not in your own real self but in the approval of others, through which you hope to gain your selfhood, self-respect and happiness, you cannot comprehend the messages of your divine nature. You are disconnected from your vital life center. You flounder in contradictory alternatives -- confused about what is right or not -- for you as well as for those you are involved with.

As a result of the decentralization of your being, you pursue a path in which unhappiness is equated with unselfishness, which is equated with being a good person. This error is only the beginning of a cycle of further errors, creating many chain reactions of destructive emotions and attitudes. To name only a few: self-deception about what "being good" is; dependency, which is also interpreted to mean love for and concern with the person one is dependent on; weakness, helplessness, false humility -- therefore rage, anger, rebellion. The more these must be kept underground so as not to disrupt the false structure, the greater the discrepancy between the surface and the underlying emotions. The greater the outer, assumed, sacrificial unselfishness becomes, the more the ensuing rage and hostility will build up hidden destructive selfishness. In your emotions and hidden desires you pay no heed at all to others whom you would gladly elbow out of all their rights. The other cannot have reality for you if you give no reality to your own self.

The hidden, destructive selfishness comes from fear and makes guilt an obstruction that seems insurmountable, just because the picture underneath is so different from the one on top. A person who cannot be selfish in the right and healthy way does not experience his or her own self in reality -- it is all a game, how to get by most easily with a minimum of investment into life. How can people who do not take themselves, their growth and happiness sufficiently seriously, as real factors to be reckoned with, experience other people as sufficiently real to have concern for their true being?

When selfishness is deemed to be bad and unselfishness good, regardless of the how and why, duality and error are rampant. Therefore conflict between self-interest and the interest of others is inevitable. It seems, indeed, a real conflict. And on that level it is. But once the duality is transcended, such conflicts no longer exist. For what is good for one's own real self must absolutely and inevitably be good for the real self, the real ultimate happiness and growth, of the other person. In the realm of inner reality -- of universal truth, to be found in the depth -- there can never be a conflict between the real interests of individuals. Conflicting interests exist only on the superimposed levels of falseness, neurotic needs, and destructively selfish and exploitative demands that hinder the unfoldment of truth and the happiness of all concerned.

When the duality splits selfishness into false divisions and false values so that untruthful, pretended and distorted attitudes prevail, that which destroys true growth and happiness is believed to be the right way. It lends false humility, thus false pride, to the person who sacrifices. It makes an exploiter out of the person who accepts the sacrifice -- always under the guise of righteousness. Can this be furthering truth and beauty, bliss and unfoldment for either the one who sacrifices or the one who blindly accepts it? Even if it can be claimed, outwardly, that such an arrangement connotes righteous action, is this truly so? What takes place in the psyches of people involved in such an interaction? Those who accept the sacrifice must have a growing guilt. Yet, they cannot permit themselves to face it, for this would make the structure they mutually built collapse -- and they do not want to part with such a situation. I already mentioned the rebellion, anger, and false sense of goodness, the spirit of being victimized, that takes hold of the psyche of the self-sacrificing person.

When the polarity of selfishness/unselfishness is reconciled, the self is accepted as the center of existence -- not by evaluating yourself as more important than the other, but by knowing your ego is responsible for your life. It is the carrier in this life, the captain who determines which way to go. Only then is it possible to perceive and experience that you and the other are one, within. You will inevitably experience that self-interest in the right way can never interfere with the interests of the other -- where it really counts, on the deepest level. However, even right and healthy self-interest almost always interferes with the egotistical self-interests of the other person. This is why following one's true self-interests is often a great struggle and requires a lot of courage. The world around you fights it and deludes itself into claiming that true self-interest is nothing but egotism and destructive selfishness. This is why you need to be strong enough to withstand the disapproval of the world to follow your own spiritual path. Since one's own spiritual path cannot be anything but blissful -- and since the world is geared to believe that that which is blissful is wrong and selfish -- how strong and independent you must become not to be influenced and feel falsely guilty for that which truly deserves no guilt.

You must overcome a number of these deep obstructions and resistances before you can come to feel that the path of growth itself is the most blissful experience imaginable. All self-deceptions must be eliminated before this truth can unfold itself to you.

If you understand this principle, my friends, and proceed from here on, asking yourself a number of questions, what will happen to you will be a wonderful new awakening. Perhaps you will begin in this phase of your pathwork to ask, "What makes me most happy?" If you go very deeply, you must see that what makes you really happy must be constructive, growth-bringing, and must make you more connected with cosmic life, hence with God. You must see also -- if you go deeply

enough and do not stop in hesitation and fear of your probing -- that healthy self-interest cannot be against the true interests of others. Indeed, it supports the true growth and unfoldment of those whose egotistical, sick interests play into your own fearful, dependent self, the part that wants to abdicate self-responsibility. Healthy self-interest can, however, be against the interest of stagnation and non-growth of yourself and others. Once you view this frankly and un sentimentally, the courage to be yourself will arise in you from such truthful vision. All falsity and, with that, much suffering and tension will fall off. The kernel that is so simple will remain: what produces growth, unfoldment of the soul, must also produce vital happiness, vibrant stimulation and pleasure. For such is the goodness of God's world.

It is the distortion of God's world that makes commendable what does not further the evolution of the individual.

Be blessed, all of you, my friends, be deeply in the truth of your divine being. Let yourself become more and more what you truly are -- God.

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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