

Human Instincts on the Inner Journey

with A.H. Almaas (Hameed Ali) and Karen Johnson

Module 1 • Drive for Enlightenment

Hameed:

Hello everybody. Welcome to the course on instincts. We will first start with a meditation practice. Every morning usually we start with a meditation practice and I am recording this especially for the course. It is a concentration practice and the particular concentration practice that works best with this topic of working with the instincts. The instincts have to do with the lower centers, subtle centers of the body, the belly and the pelvis. That is why we call this the kath meditation. Kath is the word that we use for the belly center, which Gurdjieff called the movement, the sexual center. In the East it is called the hara or tantien. It is a subtle center in the lower belly, and it will be our concentration point. When you concentrate there, it does not mean you will find the kath right away. Obviously, there is no physical organ corresponding to it. So, it is really subtle. You just focus in the area in the duration of the meditation.

The first thing about the kath is that its location is about three fingers below the navel and about two fingers inside the belly. So, three fingers below, two fingers in. Just sense. Some people have difficulty sensing that area. It is okay. You just try, do your best. Not everybody succeeds right away. It might take a while, but it is a good meditation practice to do for this course and in general. We do this of course every morning meeting usually and I would recommend that you do it every day, every morning while doing the course or even after the course. It is a very good meditation practice. One of the best concentration meditations not one of the meditations where we are aware of everything. This is concentration to develop your one-pointed focus. It is not just about developing your one-pointed focus which is what this concentration can do but it is also by focusing in that area of the kath, the area of the kath can be opened. The kath center will begin to open or can develop, can grow.

At some point you might have some sensation experience there like heat or bubbling or pressure or different kinds of sense of presence or something. This sensing in that area, because it has to do with the belly, the belly center, it also has to do with grounding in the body, grounding in the world, grounding in your particular situation in life. Grounding means you are here present in your body, present where you are. It is not about transcendence. It is not about general things. It is about being very specifically grounded. If you do it, you are really feeling grounded, you are here in the body, but you are here in the room where you are. As I said, it is a grounding center. It helps us to be grounded. Also, this center has to do with sensation and our sensing capacity which can develop and become refined, and you can start to sense spiritual presence. You can begin to sense spiritual manifestations and qualities of presence that can arise in the belly. It can be a sense of fullness or density or immensity or groundedness or solidity. That does not have to happen. The point is just to focus on the belly.

The belly center is called the movement center by Gurdjieff because when it is active, it helps our movements to be spontaneous, natural and where the instincts flow freely to move our body in the best way that is needed for the situation. It is the movement center but it is also the instinctual center because it is the center of the instincts. The instincts we deal with have to do with the first three chakras, however all these three chakras are in the kath center which unifies all the three chakras. By activating the kath or developing it, we get to access the inner deeper life force aligning and expressing itself as the three instincts, as the instinctual drives or forces.

So, this kath meditation is important for the instincts because it is the instinctual center and by opening it and developing it, we get more in touch with our instincts and also, we get the opportunity to explore them, to liberate

them and develop them as will happen in the teaching and exercises that we will do each week. So, the kath meditation is good for the centering and openness to the instinctual forces and life force and also for grounding. All of these together are a very important help and support for taking part in this teaching about the instincts, the instinctual drives or forces which are expressions of the life force.

Now the actual part that you do is you sit in a chair comfortably with your back erect, not straight, not stiff like a stick, just straight. You do not want to be slouching. You sit for the duration of the meditation without movement, trying not to move unnecessarily. If something unusual happens you have to move a little bit but otherwise you stay still. Your consciousness which means not only your thoughts but your sensation and feeling and everything is focused on that area of the belly. Three inches below the navel, two inches inside. I know it is difficult to focus there because you do not find anything there. The point is not to find something there. The point is just to focus the attention in that area. It might be difficult in the beginning because there is nothing there to hook the attention to. It requires a great deal of dedication and commitment to really focus the attention in that area and not be distracted by thoughts, by emotions, states, all external events. You keep focusing on the kath.

It does not mean you should not have thoughts. These will happen but it is not our concern in the meditation. Let them come, let them go but you do not follow them. You do not focus on them. You keep focusing there. If you find yourself distracted by a thought or whatever, whenever you see that you just come back to the meditation, to focusing in the area of the kath. You continue that way until the end of the meditation. We always begin the meditation with what we call the OM salutation. The OM salutation is an OM and a bowing. We are bowing saluting to our true nature, our spiritual nature. We are dedicating in that bowing the fruit of our efforts to all beings. So, from the beginning the meditation is not really just for us but for all that can benefit from it. So, from the beginning we are not self-centered. We have a selfless motive to be a refuge to all beings. The OM salutation is basically reminding ourselves what this is about is for the liberation for freedom. Liberation includes the realization of our true nature. Freedom which means we are the goodness of Being, the goodness of humanity that wants the best for all.

MEDITATION

We are going to start as usual with an OM salutation and also, you want to hold your hands like this. You keep your hands on your lower belly like this and then put them down there by the area of the lower belly. This is called a concentration mudra. The hands are not on their own, they are clasped together as you see in a yin/yang symbol. Your right hand holds your left hand like this. You have the hands down there, your back is somewhat straight, your eyes closed, your mouth is slightly open with your tongue touching the upper palate slightly. That has to do with the flow of energy downwards.

First, we will do the OM salutation, we will start the meditation and it will go on for ten to fifteen minutes and then we will ring the bell. We will do it all together. OM.

TALK

What makes it possible for human beings to want enlightenment? What gives us the impulse and motivation to engage such a difficult task, knowing the odds against us? I wonder how does a human being get interested at all that? What makes it possible for them to even succeed sometimes? When I say difficult odds, there are many kinds and we have explored many. There is the ego and its defenses, the subtlety of True Nature, the childhood programming and its effects on us, the deprivation that happens. But this time I want to focus on a particular set of opposing forces, forces that we have to contend with. They are not always opposing, but generally they are. Those forces are what are termed instincts, animal instincts and their drives to attain the aims of those instincts.

Those instincts and their drives are so powerful that they actually run human life more than anything else. We want to be able to explore the instincts, how they appear, how they function, how they pattern our experience, how they run our lives? How can we become more conscious of their operation, their influence on our psyche, how they function in our life and in our choices? To see how they pattern our experience and what we can do, how we can work with them. How can we work with the instinctual drives when they are actually so powerful and at the same time underlie our conscious awareness? They are underneath our conscious awareness. They function independent of our recognition of them. That is why we call them animal instincts. Animals do not know they have instincts; they just do it. And so do we, we just do it and much of the time in ways that are not congruent with the movement towards realization and liberation.

In our orientation of learning not just to value, appreciate and recognize the inner experience of realization, but to express it, to live it, to make it part of our personal life. We have done many things in the last couple of years, and we will continue to do more, and this will be part of that. How can we live our realization if we do not contend with the instincts because instincts run life? We have dealt with the impacts of childhood experience and there are levels of it connected to the instinctual functioning, how the drives of these instincts manifest and pattern our experience. We have not focused on it and focusing on it becomes important for us now because we are not only working on experience but on living it. The orientation for liberation that is possible in relation to instincts is a freedom, a liberation from the instincts in the sense of an inclusive transcendence. How to transcend the instincts and their aims while including them in a way that integrates them or harmonizes them with the realization? Usually, spiritual teachings want to distance themselves from the instincts, the attempt is mostly toward renunciation, towards saying no to the instinctual pressures within us. There are good reasons for that because it is very difficult to deal with them. It is like you found out there is a raccoon trapped in your house. It is not easy to contend with it.

So, we want to deal with the animal level of the soul by focusing on its instinctual energies. We have no chance in the world to deal with them if it was not for the fact that True Nature has in its aliveness an optimizing force. If it was not for the optimizing force of True Nature that manifests in the aliveness and the way life manifests intelligently, we have no chance with the instincts. It is a completely losing battle. Instincts are there to dominate, to run things, mostly to serve life, but to serve it on the animal level. Instincts are animal forces, so they are to preserve life on the animal level. Realization means to transcend the animal level, to go beyond it. If we really ask ourselves where does the aspiration for higher values, the interest in living a more complete life that is not simply biological, to go beyond the biological, is what realization means; not just to be content with biological life, but also to go beyond it.

But we want to do it here, as I said, by including it, because our perspective is to live this embodied realization, live it in our personal situations. To do that we cannot just deal with the instincts by putting them at bay, having a distance from them, not engaging them. We want to learn how to work with them in such a way that they become clarified, liberated from their limitations and their distortions and integrated into our realization in a way that harmonizes with True Nature. And the possibility of that comes from the fact that True Nature has an optimizing force that appears at some point as the expression of the fact that it is also alive, it is life and the source of life. The life of True Nature is intelligent and because it is intelligent it is optimizing. It thrives by developing. It expresses itself by unfolding the universe and manifesting its possibilities all the way to the development of planets, the arising of biological life and the development of that biological life, the evolution to greater complexity so that at some point it becomes possible for it to have conscious experience, conscious experience of itself, reflection on self, which is necessary for the full expression of the mysteries of True Nature, the full awareness of it.

So, we can see the optimizing force operating as this primordial intelligence with its will and force and power evolving all the existence to make it possible for existence to become conscious of itself in such a way that it becomes conscious of its totality, not only from where it has arrived in terms of physical evolution but to the source where that has come from; to become aware of the optimizing force itself and the source of that optimizing force.

This optimizing force underlies really the manifestation of everything, not only its manifestation but also the manifestation implies the dynamism of True Nature. The optimizing force shows the life of True Nature, which appears as an evolution of the universe. The universe does not just develop haphazardly. It is evolving and we see it evolving toward greater complexity and greater organization. Although it is more complex, the complexity becomes a support for consciousness. Life begins with biological life. Life begins to show itself at the beginning of life. And the beginning of life does not have the consciousness, the awareness that we have as human beings. It takes a great deal of evolution for that life first to be conscious of itself as life and then for that life to reflect on itself in a way to get interested in what is its nature.

Now the way we can contend with the biological forces, the instincts is not simply by the fact that the optimizing force is evolving the universe, but in a particular manifestation of it in the soul. This appears as a fourth drive at some point, not only for humans, but only for humans when they develop to a certain degree. Instincts are three. There is another drive which is a drive for enlightenment, the drive toward enlightenment. There are the biological instinctual drives and there is a drive for enlightenment which is the expression of this optimizing force in the soul. We experience it as the aspiration to transcendence, the desire for freedom, the love of truth, the love of freedom, the desire for union with God or with reality. That is really the motivation that makes it possible for us to want to be liberated. We do not want to get liberated simply because we have a difficult time, and we want to feel better. If you feel that way, go to a doctor or you go to a therapist. You do not go to a spiritual teacher. The spiritual drive, the drive for enlightenment is you want your life to be more than simply normal biological life. You want it to be more inclusive, to have more transcendence, to have more wholeness, more harmony. True, more harmony and less suffering, but you are interested in the mysteries of the universe, mysteries of reality, mysteries of the consciousness that you have become aware of. And that is an inherent drive in the soul, but it does not appear until later in evolution.

So, we can say there are four drives that appear for human beings. We share the first three with all animals. The fourth one, the drive for enlightenment, as far as we know, only humans have it and not all humans, but it is possible for all humans. The optimizing force appears as an evolutionary force but also appears as the drive to enlightenment but also, on top of that it actually appears in biological life as the instinctual forces. The instinctual forces, if we explore them, if we learn to understand them, harmonize them, we recognize they are really a manifestation of life itself, the optimizing force of life. It is not news that the instincts are forces of life. All biologists know that. That is not a spiritual teaching. But to recognize them as a manifestation of the optimizing force itself is a whole other thing and that is where many spiritual teachings differ. Many spiritual teachings say they have nothing to do with the spiritual life. They are a problem, and we need to sort of suppress them, not listen to them, ignore them, and even frustrate them.

In this work we do not do that partly because we think it is not a gracious way to treat life, it is unkind and an arrogant way to treat life. Second, it does not really work. You cannot get rid of them. You cannot truly suppress them. They are the mainstreams of life; they are the fountains of life. The instincts are what patterns and channels the energies of life in various ways that manifest through our organism in a way that supports life and makes it thrive. To suppress them is like saying no to life. Then how can we talk about living our realization? We can only think of true freedom after life, which many spiritual traditions say, the full realization only happens when you get

rid of your body, when you are not alive anymore. That again is a lack of understanding of what life is. Life is not just biological. The biological is an outer, later expression of life. And after the biology is gone, life will continue. As far as we know, in our biological existence, the life force is channeled through the instincts and each instinct deals with a particular area or dimension necessary for the preservation of life, its continuance, its thriving and its development.

It is an interesting thing how evolution happens both in the physical universe and in biological life is about the most primitive appearing first. That is the definition of evolution. The most primitive, the least structured, the most basic appears first and then there is more structure, more development, more complexity, more intelligence appearing, more specificity, more particularity. It is like we see in the physical universe the Big Bang and then matter and elementary particles and energy and they constellate and after a while they form into gases. Then at some point they constellate into heavenly bodies like stars and galaxies and later on there are planets and the development of ecosystems which have more self-organization, more particularity. And we see it in biological life, evolving like that. We see it also in the development of the instincts.

Instincts do not all arise at the same time. The most primitive one arises first. With the beginning of life is the survival instinct, which is the most primitive, the most basic. The survival instinct is the life force appearing in ways that will preserve life, will continue it, protect it. The first drive that appears is the drive for survival. That is inherent to life and when you think about it, it makes sense. If life is going to evolve it needs to preserve itself. Otherwise, if it does not care about preserving itself, if it dies after a minute or two, how is it going to evolve? It is inherent to the intelligence of evolution that there will be a preservation of survival. Anyway, that is the way it appears whether we can understand it logically or not. And this survival force dominates all life, all throughout its development, all the way to the human level. Humans are run by the survival instinct almost as much as ants and snakes and birds. We just do not know that it is that powerful. It is true, I said almost as much.

When they compare the DNA of human beings with rats, for instance, they say the difference is less than 1%. That might be a measure that says how much we are run by the survival instinct, 99% maybe as much as a rat. That 1% is what human beings want to think about; that we are really free, we can make our own choices, we are independent, we have self-choice, and we are creative and all of that. All of it is true, but that is really 1% and the 99% is that we are run by a powerful force toward survival. That is why fear is such a powerful thing for human beings. If it was not for the survival instinct fear would not be so powerful.

Anyway, this survival instinct is the first manifestation of the intelligence of the optimizing force appearing in life. The next one that appears is the sexual instinct, the instinct that at the beginning is the instinct for procreation, which is sort of concomitant with the survival instinct. For some species it might appear a little later. There are some primitive organisms that just divide up and there is not really the sexual instinct the way we know it. The sexual instinct is a little more evolved than the survival instinct because with the sexual instinct there needs to be an interaction between the organisms which requires more complexity and intelligence. For a human being the sexual instinct develops further than it does with the rest of the animals because evolution has happened in such a way to make the sexual instinct begin to approach the third instinct that I was talking about.

One way of looking at the development of the instincts is thinking of the development of the brain, which has been a hot topic in the last few decades in our sciences; brain science, neuroscience and all of that. One of the paradigms that has been used for a long time is thinking of the brain as having developed through evolution and history in different segments. The main way of seeing it is that there are three levels of the brain: the brain stem, the midbrain and the neocortex. The brain stem is the first one that arose, then the midbrain that is called the limbic brain developed second and expanded in size in animals. Then the neocortex developed as a much later arrival.

So, the limbic brain is the most primitive and is where the functioning of the survival instinct is rooted. That is why it is so powerful because it is beyond our conscious control. The sexual instinct, as it developed, uses also the limbic brain, both what is called the brain stem, which some call the reptilian brain, and the limbic brain. The third instinct, the social instinct does not develop until the limbic brain has developed because it is mostly functioning through the limbic brain, what is called limbic brain or the mid brain, which means it is a later development. Many animals do not have social life. Snakes do not have social life; they lay their eggs and disappear. They do have a sexual life, but a sexual life for a snake and other reptiles is a very different kind of sexual life than for human beings, for instance, and even for mammals in general.

So, as the organism develops and evolves, the drives themselves begin to manifest and evolve and that goes along with the development of the whole organism and the brain and nervous system. The three animal instincts are rooted in the lower brain, in the limbic and the brain stem. Their operation, their functioning happens through those primarily. It seems from all the indications that the drive toward enlightenment does not begin to manifest, begin to exert its force, until the neocortex is developed and evolved to some degree. The neocortex is not just the place where we have thinking, it also has to do with knowing and recognition and conscious awareness of oneself. Neocortex has to do with all these things and really with the possibility of having spiritual experience. The drive for enlightenment functions primarily through the neocortex. Life itself, the life of the soul has to function through the body. It uses the body as the structuring, the patterning conduit and vehicle and the brain and nervous system is the central part of that functioning.

Biologists and neo-scientists believe that the instincts and life and consciousness originate in the brain. That is not how we see it from the spiritual perspective. The way we see it is that life predates the body, that biological life is a later manifestation of life and consciousness even predates life. It is more fundamental and develops later because of that. Consciousness uses the brain, and the complexity of the brain is necessary for that functioning of the consciousness. This biological paradigm about the brain is helpful in terms of language for some of the ways we want to conceptualize the work with instincts.

The primary difficulty with the work with the instincts is not that we cannot see them or see their pattern and understand them. We can do that and we do it that all the time, however that does not do much to them. It does not affect them that much. It does not change their patterns. It does not impact them in a way that transforms them to go along and harmonize with the more human and spiritual life that we are interested in. So one way of understanding that is that for most people, the understanding and the experience, looking at your dynamics and how your need for survival makes you do this or that, or your sexual needs or your social needs make you have this pattern, that pattern, and seeing these patterns and all of that, does not change those patterns very much because those patterns are operating through the lower brains, the brain stem and the midbrain. The new experiences are happening mostly in the neocortex. And the neocortex is a later development so it cannot influence the lower brains, the more basic influences. It comes later. So, the brain stem is the most fundamental. It is what runs your heartbeat and your circulation and stuff like that. You cannot really control it that much. Yoga practices affect it some, it is true. But it is good that it happens without your conscious awareness otherwise you would be in trouble. But because it is beyond consciousness, the conscious experience does not affect it as much.

We will discuss this weekend where the patterning comes for the drives or the instincts. But that patterning is operating through the structures of the lower brains which cannot be impacted much by what happens in the neocortex. Meaning, our usual conscious experience and understanding and recognition and education and intentions and our best wishes and our dreams, do not have that much impact on the levels of the instincts because our instincts are creatures of the lower brains. In our language we say the instinctual operations happen through very early and primitive impressions and structures in the soul that are preverbal, pre-conceptual and usually

beyond conscious awareness. Now, I am bringing it up, we are going to work on it because it is possible to work on it, and possible to become conscious of that level and possible to have an impact on it.

In some sense, this level of work has to do with rewiring of our brain. We are seeing here that the operation of the instincts is hardwired. When we say it happens through the brain, it is pretty much hardwired. The neuro-pathways, partly you are born with them and partly they are laid down very early on and they are actually physiological, they are biological components, and these pathways are the pathways of how the instincts operate. As you can see because of the evolution of the instinctual drive, it is easier to affect the social instinct than the sexual instinct. The social instinct is easier than the survival instinct because the survival instinct is the most primitive and the brain stem is the least accessible to the neocortex. There are a lot of details in science and biology and neuro-science that we do not need to know for this work, for what we are doing. But I am using some paradigms that will help us have some kind of understanding that will create a context of how to work with these forces, how to work with them in clarifying them, liberating them, and integrating them, harmonizing them with the enlightenment drive. Since we recognize that they are really manifestations, expressions of the optimizing force it is possible for them to be harmonized and unified.

So how to have the most evolved drive, the enlightenment drive, begin to contain and influence the more primitive drives, how can it subsume them in time and integrate them without pushing them away? How to have the transcendence include life and its forces? Of course, the way to do this is they have to be clarified and liberated from whatever distortion so that they are in their original natural condition, which makes it possible for them then to be a support for life, supportive energies that can support our realization. That will not happen through the usual education, not through the usual experience and understanding. We are going to explore what are the factors necessary for working with the instincts. Of course, what seems to happen, as I said, human beings have in them the enlightenment drive, that we become conscious of at some point, and it begins to exert its force. But it does not happen in all humans. Human beings first have to have some kind of integration of the first three drives, some kind of development or some level of harmony of them, some level of satisfying them, some level of dealing with them, of coming to terms with them before the enlightenment drive begins to exert its influence and exert its force. Becoming aware of that force, inviting it and having it developed becomes one of our greatest allies in dealing with the primitive drives, the animal drives.

As I said, the drive for enlightenment, what the Buddhists call the Bodhichitta, sometimes translated as the impulse for enlightenment or the total enlightenment is almost like an instinctual force. It is dynamic the way instincts are and forceful the way instincts are, and it has the intelligence the way instincts have because it is an expression of the optimizing evolutionary force of life and True Nature appearing more clearly as that. The instinctual drives are manifestations of the optimizing force, but it is not clear at the beginning. In fact, for most people, the way their instincts operate, they are either opposed to the enlightenment drive or tangential to it, and hence distracting from it. That is why we need to learn about them, recognize their functioning, bring them into harmony with the enlightenment drive, which means with our realization, which makes it then possible for us to live, live fully, and express our realization, our true nature in our life, where the instincts become wellsprings of energy and vitality and intelligence, but harmonizing going in the same direction as the enlightenment drive.

You want to learn and see how each one of the instinctual drives actually expresses the optimizing force. It is not very clear when you see it only on the animal level. On the animal level it is simply for the survival of the biological organism. It is not for enlightenment. That is how biologists look at it. They think evolution is all for survival. That is how Darwin explained evolution. He explained it as the way to survive. You evolve to survive better. From the spiritual perspective we say, yes, this is true, but why? What is the point of surviving better? Just to come around eat, sleep and fuck and die? That is what Darwin basically says. When human beings begin to mature, they



say no, that is not enough for me. I want to do these things but not only these things. I want to do them better and I want to do them in a meaningful way. That is what the enlightenment drive means.

We do not want to denigrate the animal side. We do not want to push it away; we do not want to oppose it. We want to embrace it, so it can join the angelic part, the essential essence, the essential nature. We will see when I talk about liberating the drives, what does that mean? Harmonizing them, what does that mean? It is not obvious yet. It will take a while to work on the instincts. It is not a little thing, and it is not an easy thing. In some sense it is the most difficult level of work. This weekend is a beginning, and it is partly preparation for the summer retreat. The summer retreat will not be focused on instincts, but the work on instincts will be part of it, a necessary part of it. We will work with the instincts for a few years. Three days is not much time for things that have been around for billions of years.

EXERCISE

We will begin with repeating questions in dyads. The first question for fifteen minutes per person is: *Tell me something that limits the power of your enlightenment drive.*

The power of it that makes it forceful, makes it really influence your life and directs it toward realization and transcendence and interested in dealing with the obstacles including the instincts and other things. I am not going to do an exercise on whether you are aware of it or not. The fact that you are here, you have been influenced by it you see.

The second question is also fifteen minutes: *Tell me a way you experience the drive for enlightenment.*

You want to see the various ways you have experienced the drive. Do you experience it as love of truth, the desire for freedom, a wish for liberation, as compassion, or do you want to be free from suffering or do you want to help other people, help the environment? The drive for enlightenment is not just for you, it is really for life as a whole.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Q&C 1

STUDENT:

First for me, the understanding that anything that creates excitement and aliveness in my body is part of the enlightenment drive. It gave me the realization to stand up in group and to talk here. It is a support in myself and the enlightenment drive. Does that make sense?

Hameed: Makes perfect sense to me. You are feeling alive and more excited. It makes me more excited too.

STUDENT:

Six weeks ago, something happened and I have fantasized ever since talking to you about it. I wanted to talk with you about the experience. It is hard to know where to start. When I came to Diamond Heart it was after fifty years of feeling profoundly dead, emotionally and spiritually. And when I came to California, I got involved with really intense abreactive therapies as a way of coming alive. Paradoxically, most of the crying that I did came when I came here. That even when I was in other modalities designed to open me up so that I could feel more of my body and more sensations in me, it was in the field here, in this context, that I was able to really cry more than any other place. I came to a weekend about six weeks ago and I was feeling that I did not want to be there. It was just too

hard. Something was too heavy being there. I had been in primal therapy for quite a while and I realized that the feeling of it being difficult was what they would call the birth primal, that I was getting into birth and it was just too hard, too heavy, too difficult. And when I said that to the person who was working with me, she said not to make assumptions about my birth. Lots of people come here and they have the feeling of birth, but do not make any formulation about it.

So, as I was lying on the mat, I was thinking, boy if I was in primal therapy, I could move to one side and begin to cry, be in fetal position and I could really experience the infant sound, the infant cry at birth. But instead of doing that I just laid there silently and suddenly there was the experience of gray emptiness. It started to lighten up and as it lightened up, I started to feel like oh my god, this is where I wanted to be my whole life. It just feels like I am at home. And there was no great sense of enlightenment or transformation. It just felt like I was where I needed to be and always wanted to be and after that experience, for about three or four days, I felt sane, in the sense of living life without veils, life without self-consciousness. The book was *The Primal Scream, the Cure for Neurosis*, and I felt like I am not neurotic at this moment, neurosis is gone.

I had two questions that I wanted to ask you. One was is it the optimizing force what you would call that which runs through the body, which at one level leads to deep, deep, deep infant primal crying and then at another level, kind of transforms into noticeable feelings of anger, fear, joy, whatever and then on another level becomes transformed into something else, whatever that other experience I was in, is that life force, is that the optimizing force? That is the first question. The second question I have is when people get done with the primal, they are relatively tension free, tension is out of their body and one of the therapists of primal therapy said there are only two things that people ever do. They are either trying to get or they are feeling the pain of not getting. I always thought, wait, after a primal there is a space where the body is tension free and there is no wanting and no pain. Why is that that they do not work with that? Why do they not acknowledge that? And the other question I have is how do you move, what is it that allowed you to recognize that in that space, the tension free space, there was something that was meaningful when as far as I can tell no other therapy ever acknowledged it or recognized it?

Hameed:

Therapy was not designed to find meaning in life. That was not the point of therapy. Some people try to make therapy do that now, but originally therapy was an extension of the medical profession, which is to make people feel better, get over difficulties, diseases, neurosis, things like that. That is really the point of therapy. So why the conceptualization therapy does not include, generally speaking, the spiritual dimension is because that was not the intention. Therapy is really an attempt to deal with life difficulties or difficulties that people have as they live their life. It is not about transcendence. That is not the point of it. Most therapists are not spiritually oriented at all, if you think of the whole country. In the Bay Area you will get a different perspective about therapy because many transpersonal therapists, Jungian, start thinking that therapy and spirituality are sort of close, but for the rest of the world, it is not so. In the universities, generally speaking, they are two different things.

The optimizing force in our Being, as I said, manifests as a life force, manifests as the instincts through the life force. That is why enlivening the body, feeling the body, helps to liberate the life force. As the life force is liberated, the optimizing force has the possibility of functioning. If we are dead and we are not feeling ourselves, there is not much chance because the optimizing force is not just life, it is the optimization of life. So, you have to have life to optimize it.

Q&C 2

STUDENT:

A question about the picture you have about the evolution of consciousness and the greater complexity to self-reflection and eventually to the drive for enlightenment. Many scientists looking at biological evolution would say that there are two major jumps in the capacity of the universe to generate complexity. The first would be the origin of the genetic system, in which case life transformed the planet in a very short geological time period and then the second would be the origin of language, which brings in cultural evolution, where ideas like the genes and how they go on evolving in our minds right now at a great rate to be propagated around the planet instantaneously these days. Human beings have taken over the planet also in a very short geological time period just like life did originally. One of the factors here is that it is human beings that have this complexity of language as opposed to other animals, who all of them have neocortex, for example. So, it seems to me like the origin of language has something to do with the origin of the capacity for some kind of self-reflection that makes self-inquiry and makes the drive for enlightenment possible. Yet, as I tried to ask you about this before, you do not seem to see language as a critical factor here. You seem to see just a continuum; gorillas could involve the drive to enlightenment as easily as human beings and so forth. So, I am wondering what is it about your picture that sort of marginalizes this notion of the quantum leap that comes from language and evolution?

Hameed:

Because that is a different subject matter for another time. I am neglecting it. It is just I am focusing on something. I cannot talk about everything relevant to development all at the same time. Definitely language is a big jump for evolution of life on earth. This is a well-known accepted notion and I understand it. We can do something about it at some point but this time here I want to work with the instinctual forces and to have some way to deal with them. I am not trying to survey all the issues of evolution and development. I only refer to the ones that are important for dealing with the instinctual drives.

STUDENT: I was just interested if you thought I was critical for the enlightenment drive.

Hameed:

Language is important and we will see at some point, we will discuss this before. It is important for the social instinct more than any other, which is why the social instinct is the latest to develop.

Q&C 3

STUDENT:

What I am wondering about is this word 'wiring' process that you mentioned briefly. It seems like my experience in the school has been such that I have been willing really to depend upon feelings and the palpability of various experiences to recognize and realize what is going on. In fact, it has probably been the most important aspect of learning and experiencing and evolving. One of the things I am wondering about, I know that there are certain emotions that get in the way of my ability to recognize and understand. I do not know exactly what my question is, but are we going to be like trying to disconnect some of the wires where we have been conditioned to respond in fearful ways to certain things and are we going to augment some other wiring that allows us to recognize the palpability of things like openness and compassion and spaciousness and even transcendence. Transcendence seems to have a feel to it, so I just wanted a little bit more clarification on this.

Hameed:

One way of saying it, one kind of language to say that - I will be discussing in some detail about what we really can do, what is possible and it amounts to a re-wiring. What does that mean, what does re-wiring mean when we talk about re-wiring, about biological and physiological forces? First of all, it is a new field, a growing field, just in its infancy. I am using that as a way to help us understand or focus on this area of exploration. However, we have our own language, which is very complete in its own way to look at that. How it connects with the brain and wires and stuff like that. I am not completely clear about it. I do not know if I could say it all, partly because I do not know the field completely and partly the field is a new and developing field. But I think some of the conceptualizations, some of the paradigms might be useful, especially working with what we are dealing with here which are the instinctual forces. The source is the life force which comes from the soul, but goes through the instrument of the body which differentiates it and channels it and supports it to express itself in various ways for life.

I discussed how the evolution and the way we see it, is toward greater complexity and variety and seeing the complexity as richness that is necessary to support more developed ways of living and expressing and being, which includes at some point, knowing and consciousness. One thing, I am using the word consciousness to understand that the word consciousness is used in many ways. Sometimes I use the word consciousness to mean opposite of unconscious. So, when I say that the instincts are beyond consciousness, I mean we are usually not aware of how they are functioning. We do not have conscious awareness. They are subconscious, preconscious. Sometimes when I use the word consciousness and I say that life evolves to the point of consciousness, I mean first animals are aware of their surroundings, there is consciousness, but when I use the word consciousness, I mean consciousness conscious of itself. Human beings are conscious, they are conscious. That requires seeing the development of the neocortex. Animals do not have that. There are some animals that have some development of the neocortex so they might have some capacity for self-reflection to recognize themselves.

Q&C 4

STUDENT:

I was wondering about Adam and Eve. That story seems to be the opposite story of evolution, starting out with consciousness, enlightenment and then go into some sort of dark place. I just wanted to hear what you have to say about that.

Hameed: Adam and Eve?

STUDENT: Yes.

Hameed: I like both of them and I like their story. I think it happens all the time. That is how I see it.

STUDENT: It happens all the time meaning what, going from consciousness?

Hameed:

No, the Adam and Eve story. They get together and listen to the snake and do something they were not supposed to do, and they get in trouble. In that sense, it happens all the time. Now the biblical story about Adam and Eve, the whole story of how life began or how human beings began as Adam and Eve, and there was no evolution, maybe there is some truth to it. Maybe there was Adam and Eve in heaven and then something happened, and they fell to earth, but they appeared first as primitive organism and had to spend billions of years before they became an image, a physical image of what they used to be when they were in heaven. How about that? Maybe, if you believe in the theory of archetypes, maybe it works that way.



Q&C 5

STUDENT:

I just wanted to say how much I appreciated the questions and especially placing the drive for enlightenment with the other drives and then to work with them a bit and see the force of it, to really feel the vortex of it and the pull of it and the drive itself. So, thank you.

Hameed:

Yes, many spiritual teachings conceptualize that drive in different ways, which is why we are working with it, why we are doing the exercises, to recognize that because we are all here because of that really. But the thing we want to work with is to see how it is related to the instinctual drives. It has very similar characteristics. The instinctual drives are forceful and powerful, and they have their own intelligence. That is how we can see that all of them are really, the four drives really in some sense are all expressions of the optimizing force of life.