



PETER FRITZ WALTER

THE AUTONOMY QUEST

Why Your Strength is in Your Difference

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DESCRIPTION

The Beauty of Difference	1
Fusion and Individuation	5
Leaving Paradise	10
The Affective Confusion	12
Fusion and Autonomy	15
Fusion and Love	19
Identity and Wholeness	23
About Inner Peace	26
What is Autonomy?	29
Individual and Collective Freedom	30

THE BEAUTY OF DIFFERENCE

To accept life means to accept yourself. It does not mean that you have to blindly adopt the collectively approved forms of living. As a matter of fact, the more we identify with



THE AUTONOMY QUEST / 2

collective personality patterns, the more we alienate from our original being.

Thus, to accept life means to affirm our difference. It is this difference which singularizes us; in fact, it makes us unique among our fellowmen. When we are unique, recognizing our natural difference, we are naturally beautiful and our life will be fulfilled. Then we are authentic.

However, as a consequence of our alienated childhood, many of us are striving for some sort of lifelong fusion. Of course, as a newborn, we lived in fusion with our mothers. Yet many are still in need of a prolongation of this fusion through identifying with parents, friends, a group, an ideology, which then becomes a sort of pseudo-fusion that is commonly called codependence.

Fusion is a search for the nest, the matrix, the pedigree, and thereby, for the past. The search for fusion is deeply rooted in our need for emotional security. Being scared to make the difference, we remain mediocre, trying to imitate others.

The hypothesis I will lay out in this paper is that we long for perpetual fusion because we have been largely deprived of the essential fusion we needed as infants. This deprivation we suffered has many reasons. It has individual and collective reasons.



Researchers such as Ashley Montagu or James W. Prescott have shown with abundant evidence that violence in our culture comes primarily from the fact that our infants are deprived of tactile pleasure, our youth deprived of autonomy and, as a result, of natural emosexual growth processes. The result is a society of giant water-headed babies with all the inherent psychosexual problems that this situation brings along.

—See Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971. See also, Michel Odent, *Birth Reborn*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1986 and Frederick Leboyer, *Loving Hands: The Traditional Art of Baby Massage*, New York: Newmarket Press, 1977. Further, see James W. Prescott, *Body Pleasure and the Origins of Violence*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 10-20 (1975), partly reprinted in: *The Futurist*, April, 1975 and James W. Prescott: *Deprivation of Physical Affection as a Primary Process in the Development of Physical Violence, A Comparative and Cross-Cultural Perspective*, in: David G. Gil, ed., *Child Abuse and Violence*, New York: Ams Press, 1979, 77, 78.

In this essay I do not talk about individual pathological cases but about a problem that, at an underlying level, we are all dealing with in our culture, because it is a sociopathological complex inherent in Western society. Besides the terms *cofusion* and *codependence*, I use, almost synonymously, the term *symbiotoholics*, and perhaps more often, as an adjective, talking, for example, of *symbiotoholic* parents.



THE AUTONOMY QUEST / 4

In my two decades of research about this complicated matter, I found that healing confusion is strongly enhanced through acquiring self-knowledge, awareness of our individual needs and a firm sense of personal identity. Self-knowledge comes from listening to self, recognizing our needs and communicating them to the outside world. If we disrespect our needs, we will disrespect also the needs of others.

Respect begins with self-respect. 'Love your neighbor!' should be changed in 'Love yourself!' We will have our autonomous place in the community once we have become *in-dividus*, individuals, i.e. undivided beings. We become individuals through gaining autonomy.

However, doing this, we have to face our symbiotic needs and render them conscious. This, in turn, means to face our most basic fear: the fear of abandonment, of solitude, of loneliness. If we wish to attain our original unity, we cannot avoid facing this fear; a period of more or less extended solitude seems often necessary in this development.

Three phases characterize our growing into autonomy and true interdependence which represent the higher evolutionary level of confusion. These phases are:

—Fusion

—Individuation



Let us now have a look at this process and what we can learn from it.

FUSION AND INDIVIDUATION

A metaphor for the process of individuation in nature is the cell division. Out of one complete pattern a new complete pattern branches off. This new complete pattern is not a part of the former pattern, but a new whole organism. This is so because, as we know today, nature is programmed in holograms. In each cell the information of the whole organism is coded. Every particle of a greater unit contains the genetic code of the entire unit.

The holistic coding of life-sustaining patterns made it possible that very complex structures could arise, primarily because even multiple cell divisions do not cause loss of genetic information.

This picture from genetics should help us to grasp the process of individuation that is part of our growing mature. All springs from fusion, through succedent separation. In the genesis we hear that God separated the waters and the popular ancient Chinese myths tell us that heaven and earth, yang and yin, grew apart so that Life could come to existence.

Biologically, cutting the umbilical cord puts an end to the baby's fusion with the mother. However, the human baby, as distinct from the other mammals, cannot yet survive. Fu-



sion has to be prolonged by means of a symbiotic relationship with the mother (or a mother surrogate) if the baby is to develop his full potential of psychomotor skills. If this primary fusion cannot be lived, be it because the mother was physically not present be it because she was not adequate as a caretaker, or very little nurturant, we face a problem of fusional (codependent) attachment later in life.

What then happens is that we unconsciously try to 'heal' the lacking primary fusion by repeated fusional relations with others, throughout our life. However, since those others that we unconsciously invest with a role of ersatz 'mothers' and 'fathers' can never give us the lacking primary fusion, disappointment and depression will invariably ensue in those relations. In fact, most of the modern psychiatric literature speaks here of a narcissistic fixation or narcissism.

—See, for example, Alice Miller, *The Drama of the Gifted Child: In Search for the True Self*, New York: Basic Books, 1996, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*, New York: Noonday, 1998, Alexander Lowen, *Narcissism: Denial of the True Self*, New York: Touchstone Books, 1997.

However, most people and even many psychologists have a wrong idea about what narcissism is and what its etiology is like. They tend to think it was too much of self-love while the very contrary is true. Narcissism is an abhorrent lack of self-love, something like an impossibility for the subject to



love herself, a giant inner wound that parents or caretakers have inflicted on the child by non-attentiveness, lacking interest in the child as a person or outright child-neglect. And one of the reasons for parents to be so inattentive and preoccupied with self-serving interests is the ongoing confusion with their own parents and their resulting incapacity to truly take care of a new life that wants to grow into its own autonomy and power.

All creation is destined to be autonomous and carries in itself the will to achieve autonomy as a primary life goal. This desire for autonomy can already be made out in the behavior of the infant. In case the parents respect that will, the child grows into true individuation because autonomy opens naturally the way to self-knowledge. If however the parents and the environment of the child disrespect his striving for autonomy, the child has only two possibilities to survive: killing off their emotions or distorting/perverting them. The first kind of reaction later develops into the cancer etiology, the second into perception problems like schizophrenia, or else uncommon forms of sexuality.

Authoritarian upbringing frequently demands from children affective prostitution, a submissive attitude targeting at the parents' goodwill. This is in most cases not sexual prostitution, but one that plays on more subtle levels, affective, emotional and where power is involved. In families where ugly



power games between parents and children are daily reality, affective prostitution is always present with the children.

Children who can manage to live within a sphere of autonomy will later easily choose their profession or partnership, for they know what they want. This sounds simplistic, but it is really as simple as that. Those who know what they want have much greater chances to get it.

But the trick is that we only know what we want if we know who we are! Children who are raised by fearful and overprotective parents have generally a profound lack of self-knowledge. This is so because they had little opportunity to incarnate their wishes and to find out about their limits. Fearful parents tend to project their own wishes and desires on their children: only if the children follow their ancestors' path of life, those parents feel secure. Instead of giving their children the chance to find out about themselves, anxious parents care more about the child's knowing their, the parents' ways of life, the parents' wishes and desires, the parent's hardships and the parent's character. Sensitive children who are born to such narcissistic parents are not able to develop their uniqueness. As a result, symbiotic relationships are the primary trap for our growing into autonomy.

Because of the dynamic interaction of the psychic energies in play, fusion cannot be ended by mere physical separation, for example the son's or the daughter's moving out of



the parents' house. As long as our self is not individuated, symbiosis persists on the psychic level. This means that ending a symbiotic relation only engages the search for a new symbiosis, which replaces the former one—and so on.

The common reason for the high divorce rate in our society is that we perpetuate our babyhood symbiosis into marriage and project the parent of the opposite sex onto our marriage partner—which kills every marriage sooner or later.

It is obvious that our desire for eternal symbiosis with our children is still more devastating than desiring eternal symbiosis with a partner. Children, with their natural striving for autonomy in their process of growing up, perceive symbiotoholic parents as persecutory and demanding. They tend to develop anxiety and behavior disorders as a consequence of their feeling inadequate in front of their parents or the symbiotoholic parent.

Symbiotoholics is the true reason of parent-child incest. Even if no sexual interaction between parent and child is involved, children of symbiotoholic parents have difficulties to project their libido outside the magic circle of their family. On the other hand, if a child enjoys enough autonomy, occasional sex between parents and children will not necessarily lead to what we call an incestuous trap. It will rather be a form of natural corps-à-corps, a highly tactile bond between generations which rarely will have any negative effects. On the other



hand, even if sex is not part of the game, emotional incest in the form of an ongoing quest for symbiosis from the side of the parents will be received by their children as a real bother in the long run, and most probably handicap their being able to once stand on their own feet and be recognized as what they are.

LEAVING PARADISE

Metaphorically, we can compare symbiosis with paradise. Adam and Eve had to leave paradise—why? They had to leave paradise in order to develop their own individuality, their autonomy.

Paradises are not different from other things in that they also have two sides, a positive and a negative one. Positively, they give us the almost complete illusion of security and satisfy all possible desires. But negatively, they are true prisons.

The tree of knowledge, as we can remember, was forbidden in paradise to Adam and Eve—and we must add: *even* in paradise! More elucidatively put: it was forbidden to them *because* they lived in paradise!

In order to live with their full potential, Adam and Eve had to follow the wisdom of the serpent. Eating the apple, they knew each other as man and woman: this knowledge was the knowledge of their sexual identity. It was also their discovery of sexuality since the Bible uses the old expression to



know each other for sexual intercourse. The wisdom of language is amazing and gives us here the insight that the sexual interaction is actually the primordial way of human beings to get to know one another.

But it has a second component. Through the fact of knowing the other, recognizing the sexual identity of the partner, we get information about our own sexual identity. This also is an important truth: love leads to self-knowledge and is a part of our growth process. Without loving others, and I dare to specify—making love with others—we will hardly get to know ourselves. Through love we grow, we mature. Leaving paradise is exactly this: leaving the childhood of dependency on a self-sufficient, narcissistic way of being, and opening up to relationship. Love means relating and taking responsibility for one's own love choices.

All beings have to leave the nest of paradise. The fetus, decided he to stay in the womb in order to avoid the trauma of birth, had to die right there! Adam and Eve, leaving paradise, survived! Their leaving paradise was a birth, a birth to life on earth, life in a body of flesh, created by desire, an *incarnated* life.

The family tree and the phylogenetic tree both symbolize the nest, the matrix. They are the symbols for the hereditary roots of the person. But they are also prisons and graves for the individual. Jesus pointed this out saying that everyone



who did the will of the Father was his father and mother, his brother and sister. Jesus meant that one who follows his life's mission, his inner voice, rather than family ties, is blessed and will have ultimate success. We only need to have a look at the lives of most of our geniuses and great leaders, to know that this is true!

Ramana Maharshi expresses it in the formula that we have to go beyond the confusion that we are the body, that we should set aside our unconscious or conscious identification with the body.

Once we have found that we are spiritual beings, sparkles of light in a universe of light ('planets' or 'stars' as the Aborigines say) which are incarnated in a body, we understand that the family is only the nest and as such a kind of springboard which should catapult us into life, into our own life.

THE AFFECTIVE CONFUSION

To confuse co-fusion with love is parallel to the confusion between need and desire. Co(n)fusion, as the word indicates, has to do with fusion. Fusion means to melt something with something else, to put two things together in one pot.

Modern civilization with its inherent loss of initiation and initiation rites, has created confusion and, with it, co-fusion. We are confused about our being fused. Children



are held immature for still longer periods in a kind of extended childhood, as irresponsible and slavishly dependent beings without autonomy and self-reliance.

All therapies are today centered on the basic problem that most people have never grown out of their original symbiosis or that rather, in the contrary, they were deprived of it during babyhood and try to search for compensation during their adulthood, clinging desperately to some partner or friend, which destroys every partnership in the long run.

In our high-tech cultures we can observe how easily people confuse symbiosis and love. Often attempts of sensitive and intelligent children for personal autonomy are punished and sanctioned with love-withdrawal or even threat. Some parents react entirely hysteric to their children's natural demand of freedom because they themselves never discovered their own essential life

space and live entangled in a network of dependencies, insecure and immature. Their children's natural demand for respecting their natural need for freedom and autonomy is misunderstood as a lack of love for their parents or family, is being perceived as a threat. Their children's leaving the nest can be deeply traumatic for parents who have those symbiotic tendencies. And this is a real trauma and can produce all forms of psychic and physical illness. However, it is not per-



ceived as such and rather belittled in the psychological literature and specialized media.

And the problem exists also outside the family, in the partnership. A long-lasting marriage or partnership may suddenly break off because one partner expresses a need for autonomy that the other depreciates and misunderstands as a magic destruction of intimacy and love. A fear to be abandoned, relict of some or the other traumatic separation from the mother or a parent during childhood, may become reactivated in the partner who feels left alone and betrayed whereas the other partner simply wanted to establish a basis for creative space within the partnership.

This process, if it is lived consciously and understood as mourning, proves very positive for the evolution of the concerned person, also with regard to their future love capacity and creativity. After such mourning, life will be lived fuller, with more energy, more empathy, more completeness and more enthusiasm, on a higher level of happiness and integration.

However, if such consciousness is repressed (perhaps because the fears involved are too heavy or any therapeutic or other help is not available), the person will end one symbiosis in order to search for another, as a compensation of the former, which in turn was but another sprocket in the chain of compensations for the first primary symbiosis.



Any such relationship cannot last because it is based on an illusion.

FUSION AND AUTONOMY

The end of fusion is the beginning of autonomy. In fusion the self is hindered in its expression. It is not autonomous since it defines itself with relation to (the symbiotic partner). This is like a stone thrown in a pond which creates waves only in the pond (the fusion partner) but not in the one who throws the stone. To consider this mechanism energetically, we have an outflow of bio-energy here from one to the other of the fused selves. And, on the other side, we have a gain of energy within the self of the fusion partner. We can see it as a closed energy circle in which both fusion partners are involved. The realized, de-fused self, however, vibrates in itself and feeds itself; it is self-sufficient and therefore available for all beings, like the sun, like a flower whose beauty is real not only for the eye of the lover, but for everybody who passes by; or like a fountain that produces fresh water endlessly, without someone coming to drink it. That is why that, here, we can say that the bio-energy is fully at the disposition of the self.

Connection to our self means connectedness to all beings, to the whole universe. The paradox is that the ego being detached from symbiotic interference is open to receive the



full potential of direction or guidance by the self and can then link to a far greater range of beings. Therefore, we can conclude that autonomy is the condition for true interdependence with others. More we are detached from partial attachment, more we are attached to what is not partial.

Since times immemorial this truth was known by religions. Especially in India religious sects have developed and practiced a doctrine of detachment as an essential part of a religious lifestyle. However, as Krishnamurti has shown with unique clarity, detachment if sought after and cultivated will not be achieved, but rather turn into its contrary: attachment. Only in developing consciousness and passive awareness of our manifold attachments we can gradually achieve detachment.

Affective confusion means that I am melting with you. If we are melted, how can we exchange affection? How can there be exchange at all where there is not a minimum of distance, a minimum of autonomy? It is difficult to imagine a person giving something to another if both persons are glued to each other. We stretch out our arm to greet, to give, to receive. This gesture requires a certain distance between the other, and us -the distance of an arm length.

For many of us a spiritual outlook on life and personal growth is well compatible with a normal family life. Others need to be entirely by themselves and perceive the connec-



tion to their fate by passing through periods of utter loneliness. We are quite different, in this respect not less than in other dimensions of life. This is why there is no absolute path to truth, but many ways leading to the same end.

Fusion is to be found not only in intimate or family relations but also in religious, professional and collective forms of attachment. Some are trapped in attachments to various gurus, religious, scientific or others for example to a sect leader, religious guru, and scientific authority. Others are blindly fused with a company or a political party, an ideology or a church.

The role of some people we meet in life is to help us detaching from fusional ways of thought and relationship. These people who catalyze in us our true desire or mission are healers, therapists or simple non-professionals who help us through their love and true devotion, their unselfish understanding and friendship. Often those people went themselves through the problems involved in fusion and have therefore sharpened their consciousness in this respect. They have found that truly giving love is something different than symbiotic attachment to others and that this love always sees the best in the other, his or her highest form of existence. And that true love gives freedom, not attachment. Some of these people have little awareness of their role as



healers and appear to us in humble appearance or situation, which however does by no means, affect the light they bring us.

Jealousy is a problem of fusion. If we believe we can possess another person or that love contained such kind of possession instinct, we confuse love with fusion. Love can be seen as the highest form of respect of the difference of the other. It is therefore hardly compatible with jealousy. Yet, life is seldom pure and often love is to be found in impure forms, melted with jealousy (or even hate), fusional desires, sexual desires of various kinds, sexual desires melted with fusional desires, and so on. This is how we generally perceive love around us. There rarely is the extreme form of pure love or pure fusion. However, if we define one model as the fusional model, and the other as the autonomous model, we can perceive two developmental schemes:

—One model would start from the premise that every relation, however fusional, will lead to growth of personal autonomy in both the fusional partners and develop their mutual attraction into a more giving form of love. I call this a one-directional model;

—Another model would postulate cyclic fluctuations in relationships where the degree of fusion, on one hand, and the degree of autonomy of the partners, on the other, varied continuously during the relationship. This model could be



called a cyclic model. The scientific discussion of fusion could well follow each of those models and thus would spread into rather different directions. But that is what the potential of this research is. The future will decide what kind of model is going to prevail. My work being a mere pioneering approach only shows the options.

Every possible relationship, seen in its continuity, could be evaluated using on one of these two developmental models. The two models concern the relation between fusion and love. The first model assumes fusion as developmental towards love; the second model sees fusion and love in dialectic exchange with each other.

I will not develop these models further in this essay and rather come to a more general question: which is the influence of love on fusion? Is love enhancing fusion or is it fusion-solving?

Please note that, after what I just wrote about the 'impurity' of life, this is more or less a theoretical question. But I will nonetheless devote the next chapter to it.

FUSION AND LOVE

In every love relation the partners, consciously or not, move towards more self-knowledge, more autonomy, and less fusion. Fusion is a lack of autonomy because of lacking self-knowledge.



A child that was not mirrored by his parents does not develop a sense of the I Am force in him. Depending on the love of his parents, the child will, in order to please them, substitute his own self-image by the image of one of the parents.

Primary symbiosis is a psychic process. It is ongoing even beyond the first eighteen months of life (during which time it has to take place if the child is to develop healthily), if the mother does not allow the child to gradually detach from the fusional bond with her, by gradually developing autonomy. A mother who has not resolved the fusion with her own parents will unconsciously project this fusion in the relationship with her children. This is how fusion is perpetuated over generations. Such mothers evaluate every sign of autonomy in their children as some form of love denial and react with fear and aggression to the child's desire to make his or her way into the world. Thus unconsciously those mothers attempt to move the child again back into the womb. There is abundant proof for these facts found in the psychotherapeutic practice of Winnicott, Melanie Klein, as well as later of Françoise Dolto and Alice Miller.

It is in this respect significant how the mother generally reacts to the movements of the child which are directed away from her. The baby carefully observes and registers the mother's feedback. The mother also gives signals which the



baby can interpret as 'Yes, I find it good that you are yourself and that you show it to me,' or 'No, I do not appreciate your being different than I would be at your place' or even 'No, I would like you to be a part of myself.' The latter implies something of an unspoken order given to the child to behave the way the mother likes. It is obvious that in the two latter alternatives these often nonverbal or only partially verbal messages of the mother do not favor the child in his search for autonomy, for growth, but rather inhibit the child's healthy growing up.

Perception problems that in extreme forms can lead to psychosis and schizophrenia are often related to fusional attachments that have become destructive. The delusions are signals of the mindbody that demonstrate the inner conflict. In psychosis the whole ego is overwhelmed by energies that have become disintegrated. In a less pathological sense many people in our culture find it difficult to identify their own energy as distinct from the energy of others. Yet we can learn to feel our energy by being more and more attentive to our inner life and processes.

Love begins with oneself! Once we begin to respect our more-than-physical needs, we learn to dive into our own energy reservoir. It is only a question of passive observation to become again sensitive and conscious with regard to perceiving our own energetic pattern.



From our dreams we know how this energy 'feels like.' In dreams we meet no physical beings, but their energy bodies. Sensing their energy patterns, we identify others. This can be tested easily when we have forgotten a dream and want to remember it after awakening. If we have only a slight remembrance of the dream figure's energy pattern and we relax and focus on it, we once of a sudden remember the dream, like a flush. It seems that dream memories are associated with energy patterns involved in our dreams.

The fact that we perceive others as patterns of light or energy shows us that originally creation gave us a sense for such perception, and that we have only lost it in our busy lifestyle. With little exercise however we can relearn this special sensorial perception of our mindbody and it can help us a lot in identifying where we are with others.

In observing attentively our feelings and thought processes and their impact on energy patterns, we apply the principles of

universal love in our lives and achieve gradually more autonomy and identity. This passive observation must however encompass the whole process of life. Spirituality is in fact nothing else but this attentive observation. Observation and attention without judgment are the highest forms of spirituality! This observation also encompasses our subconscious thought processes because thought is a process that happens



on several levels or layers of consciousness. We can observe our subconscious thought processes in observing our dreams, but also through the projection of our thought patterns by special devices such as the Tarot, the I Ching oracle book, geomancy or other divinatory practices. Then consciousness of ominous, parallel, synchronistic life events raises and we begin to grasp the concept of synchronicity as C.G. Jung has developed it. Once we can interpret the little omens we receive in our daily life, the little signs of destiny (we use to call them coincidences), we achieve more insight in the holistic pattern that is woven into life as a whole. Such intensity of consciousness requires a high energy level. It is this conscious use of the bio-energy (*élan vital*) that leads to the resolution of symbiotic relationships and which restores our original uniqueness, our singularity and our wholeness. We can call this energy love or give it other names. Yet the names are not the thing and therefore rather unimportant.

IDENTITY AND WHOLENESS

There are different ways to achieve wholeness. Some choose therapy, some prefer art, and others do it with science, others through religious devotion and still others through modern techniques of self-development. It does not matter which way we take. The ancient cultures and today's still surviving aboriginal tribal cultures know about the deeper sense of life. The initiation rites most of those cultures prac-



tice are powerful means to cut off the fusional bonds with our parents or the family and to root us into a larger collective structure such as the tribe, the group of males, and so on. Since in our high-tech nations initiation rites have been abandoned (we have them in another form, such as diplomas, driver's licenses, yet their psychological effect is minimized), we have to find new ways to initiation. Psychoanalysis is one of them, for example, but it often disregards the spiritual dimension or life. Psychoanalysis typically describes the growth of the child's autonomy in terms of its psychosexual or emotional development. The psycho-sexual development of the child is characterized basically by four steps:

- 1) homosexual identification with the parent of the same sex (age 2 1/2 to 4)
- 2) heterosexual identification with the parent of the opposite sex during the so-called oedipal phase (age 4 to 7)
- 3) latency phase (age 7 to 12)
- 4) adolescence which repeats these earlier phases on a higher level in order to resolve fusional residues (age 12 to 18).

It is questionable if analysis alone can bring us integration. It seems that identity is the fruit of integration, and not of analysis. Integration results in a higher form of consciousness, and is not only intellectual. It cannot be pursued by using rational thought processes alone. It is achieved by integrating our emotions into our thought processes, without de-



fense reactions that hinder this integration. For example, machismo and obsessive machism is a form of such defense. It is the foolish reject of our anima, of all what is yin in yang, female in male, cold in hot. It is the refusal of our moon-energy, the archetype of motherhood. This fear of the matrix or the archetypal expression of it has produced the atrocities of witch-hunts in the past and the present and is found in mythology in the negative women-representations of Lilith or Kali. This fear is fear of life, a fear to live. It is a form of retrograded *élan vital* (Wilhelm Reich called it DOR, negative or deadly orgone).

Every therapy intends to catalyze a process of inner alchemy in order to retransform this retrograde Yin-energy into a positive bio-energetic charge. There are many different forms or techniques of therapy, but all have in common that they try to help guiding us back to oneness and unity . There is in fact no contradiction between the psychoanalytic theory and the spiritual truths as far as spiritual teaching recognizes the mundane nature of man and his instinctual urges as a fact of life on earth, a life which is incarnated in the earthbound dimension. All religions provide projection systems for our inner processes which work with symbolic representations supporting us in the alchemy of inner (and outer) transformation. This means that all religions are integrative systems designed to lead us to unity. Also the so-called esoteric practices like astrology, numerology the Tarot or the I Ching in-



tend to help us integrating our unconscious thought processes and feelings in order to guide us on the way to a higher level of consciousness which we may call holistic.

The integration of all what is hidden (occult) in our psyche, the consciousness about karmic or conditioning factors in our way of life leads to an integrated mindbody consciousness which goes far beyond mere intellectual or physical knowledge. We could call this state fusion with our own self.

ABOUT INNER PEACE

Inner peace is impossible without inner freedom. Inner freedom in its highest form is the realization of an autonomous self,

Inner bondage, by contrast, in its most damaging form, is the unconditional surrender to a spiritual, ideological or sectarian system which requires absolute obedience. Such a system may be represented by a state religion, sect or fanatical guru. It can also be a feature of the own unconscious self. As long as we have a problem with that on the outside level, there is a high probability that we have some problem with it inside, too.

Inner freedom begins with finding out what we really want, what, in the depth of our heart, we desire to realize, what is our life's mission - and to become conscious it. Self-knowledge is the door to inner freedom, the door which leads



out of the labyrinth of symbiosis. Without knowing who we are we let ourselves guide by others. Such entanglement in the energies outside of our self leads, especially in the spiritual realm, to more or less complete alienation from our own potential of light, riches and abundance. Self-knowledge opens the door to the treasures of our own light and our own truth which is available for all of us as spiritual beings. But this treasure is in our heart and, with many of us, unfortunately too well protected and therefore buried there.

Self-knowledge is a continuous process of exploring oneself, searching for the 'treasure hidden in the field' (Matthew 13, 44), getting into the grand canyon of our own inextricable heart, the secret of our being, and of our individuality which will remain eternally untouched by all kinds of collective religious undertakings. Self-knowledge leads to knowledge of the relativity of truth and the incapacity of man to grasp an absolute concept of truth. This limitation of the human existence is inherent in every truth. Therefore, on a human level all that is objective becomes subjective, because subjectively related.

Inner peace is the fruit not only of the insight in one's own understanding of truth but also trusting this insight. On the other hand, inner peace is only possible if we consciously refuse to convert others into our truth, but concede them the freedom to undertake their own exploration, do their own



treasure hunt and gain their own self-knowledge, their own truth.

The question that arises and that has been asked throughout the existence of man is of course if individual truth can in some cases act contrary to common social principles.

This is perhaps the key question that every collective or state government confronts its individuals with. It seems that, throughout human history, many cultures had strong mistrust in the realization of truth by self-knowledge and individual religious undertaking and preferred instead to engage in mass indoctrination, mass education, mass religion, mass manipulation and mass obsession. Here we see the primary reason why freedom and peace of the individual truth searcher has been considered a threat to totalitarian forms of government. And yet, it is exactly this freedom to search for truth that is man's birthright as a spiritual being.

Inner peace can reign in us only from the moment that we have replaced the outer fusion by the inner fusion which is the fusion with our own self and which makes that we are an individual (*individus*, lat.: the undivided). Therefore the problem of fusion is of immediate importance in every form of spirituality, but also in every responsible form of government. Most religions try in some form to convey guidelines how to achieve inner peace. The basic idea is similar in all religious dogmas. Islam and Christianity consider inner peace a direct



consequence of belief. It is doubtful, however, if inner peace can be installed by mere belief, without some form of deeper understanding in the psychological intricacies of life and living. It seems that religions, instead of helping man understanding his hidden nature, work with ideals, positive pictures or models. However, such ideals or models are always collective and disregard the individual, and the individual wisdom, of each and everyone.

WHAT IS AUTONOMY?

This brings us to the question what in fact is autonomy?

Etymologically the word autonomy stems from the Latin 'auto' (own) and 'nomen' (name). Autonomous is thus the one who has got his own name. It is equally true that in antiquity the proverb *nomen est omen* was expressing a general belief. It meant that the name is the destiny or in one's name is contained one's destiny. Those of you who practice numerology know that this is fundamentally true, and not a mere belief. Initiates and psychoanalysts such as Françoise Dolto tell us that we bring our names with us from the other dimension when we incarnate on the earth plane.

After our little etymological research we can thus say that autonomous is the person who owns his destiny. What does this mean? Well, one who owns his destiny does not need to share other people's destinies. He follows his star.



Follow but thy star and thou canst not miss a glorious heaven!, said Dante. This means with regard to our discussion that the autonomous person is free from symbiotic bonds with others. With autonomy we commonly associate freedom of decision and of will, freedom of speech, freedom of creative living, freedom for partner choice, freedom of religion, freedom to choose one's profession. Yet autonomy is also a psychic quality of freedom (therefore the expression inner freedom), which comes about through the integration of the unconscious, the disentanglement of the psychic fusion with the matrix and the acceptance of living in the present.

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE FREEDOM

A world with more freedom and tolerance is possible to the extent that we accept to be true individuals, undivided beings that are oriented towards the whole of life; beings who have gained inner freedom and know to preserve it. World peace depends on the fact that the group of people who have reached this higher form of consciousness steadily grows and helps not only to shape a new consciousness, but also helps building the outer world in a new and different way.

Liberation cannot be reached by political, social or otherwise sensational breakdown of outer forms and structures. All such revolutions at the outer level only lead to more chaos, more bloodshed and suffering, more dominance of ignorance



THE AUTONOMY QUEST / 31

and power abuse. The only possible change is a gradual, peaceful and inner transformation of our consciousness. Everyone is called upon to collaborate in this universal transformation, which is his or her own transformation.

Krishnamurti has shown us in unique clarity the way and the mechanisms of this psychological revolution. However, spiritual evolution is not possible without insight into our functional bonds, our psychological striving back into the matrix. It must be accompanied by the gradual dissolution of our psychological umbilical cord that holds us entangled in the matrix.