

**SOME REFLECTIONS  
AT ARRIVING AT THE NOON OF LIFE  
(3/4)**

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We should not interpret this spiritual movement with the concept of conquest that we have practiced in the first part of our lives in order to achieve professional success. We can no longer use the word "I" but it is God who should lead us. And in this putting ourselves in God's hands we should take care not to be arbitrators since we can obstruct God's action by means of and through difficulties. We should not abandon by our own impulse practices that have been received; we should leave them only when God suggests that we do so:

"The forms and materials that move mankind both exteriorly and interiorly towards doing good works and towards the love of God should not be abandoned before they fall away by themselves".

We should slowly abandon ourselves to God's action. We have to "put up with" HIS action, surrendering ourselves step by step to his will and providence, which demands that we deliver our heart to him. If before it was good to decide and make plans for life, today we should hope that he will show us what to do...and in this way we will return to the depths of our soul and while naked we will recognize our impotence and weakness and abandon ourselves to LOVE, our God, who will be newly born in each of us. But, a word of caution, this being born again in God requires our entire being. This is not an external thing, nor anything that gives "security", it is nothing that appears to be very good in itself, this birth should upset us a little bit...let us not search for security, "we suffer" for God's sake and we let him act in us:

"Come what may, from within or from without, let it fester and do not look for any type of consolation. Thus God will surely free you. In order for this to happen, you must be still and place your entire self in his hands".

In order that God be born in you, the soul must:

"establish peace and silence inside and interior recollection, hiding oneself and seeking refuge in the spirit facing one's own feelings and fleeing from what is sensible and making a place of silence and interior repose available inside oneself".

Then the heart will be filled with God, peace will spring up and serenity will be within reach; a heart mature and wise, good and filled with love. Then the goal of this midlife crisis will be achieved: the genuine being of mankind will appear and find its aim in God.

It could be, friend, that this might seem something very mystical and devoted to religious. But it is interesting to note that Carl G. Jung (11), a psychologist from the Freudian school, reaches similar conclusions but without the mystical sense of Tauler. Just as Freud tries to explain all of man's psychological experiences in terms of his infancy, Jung discovers that man is helped by means of the here and now in which he lives. In his clinic he discovers that in the majority of men who are over the age of thirty-five, they seek his advice for existential problems generally referring to a question of religious issues.

Let us look at this thought for a moment. He suggests that all persons need to individuate. With this he points out the psychological process by means of which an "individual psychologist is produced, that is to say, an independent and indivisible unity, a whole being". This process has two principal phases: first, one of expansion during the first half of life and then of introversion during the second half.

During the first part of life man must strengthen his "I", he needs to find his place in the world and be able to affirm himself within it, building a strong person. In this attempt, naturally, he lets other dimensions of his being fall by the wayside.

During the second part of his life the shadowy part comes out or, to put it another way, the image reflected by the "I", that part of him which is undeveloped and is formed "by characteristics of man that from the beginning were by and large excluded because of moral, educational or other reasons, and because of this they have been repressed, that is to say, separated".

He suggests that man is a "bipolar" being; it should be noted that each pole has its opposite pole. When man overcomes one pole of the conscious, the other one remains in the unconscious. The more one is cultivated, the more its counterpart does just the opposite in the unconscious (whether in thought, feeling, intuition or sensation...the four basic functions of the conscious according to Jung).

For Jung, along with the personal shadow we find what is called a collective shadow: the collective unconscious. Here the two elements that are part of each being meet: the masculine element (animus) and the feminine element (anima). During the first part of life, man relegates the anima to the shadows...he is proving himself in the conscious "I". During the second half of life, he needs to integrate both of these elements. The "I" needs to return to its origin, to its "self" and from there take on new vital forces. One has to integrate the conscious and the unconscious.

A problem occurs, according to Jung, when man believes that he can direct this second half of life using the methods and elements of the first part. For him it is clear that "that which young man found outside", and should find, "older man should find inside".

This interior searching should demand that man comes to terms with his relativity, that he accept his shadowy parts, that he integrate his anima and animus, and that he develop the "self" in the acceptance of death and the encounter with God. This is a substantial plan that we will try to explain briefly.

This revitalizing a person is difficult work since it has cost us so dearly as young people to acquire that particular role and to be recognized by others throughout life. Since it is a difficult process, it often happens that man reacts against the insecurity that the new situation produces, grappling tensely with his own person, at his identity without humor, at his profession, his concerns, his "title" (which for Jung means the dignity that society has given him, and it would be useless to look for a personality beneath that shell...; it is a cheap reward for a defective personality). Revitalization of the person demands that we be attentive to our inner voice and develop our inner personality.

Accepting the shadows means that man has not yet arrived at his full potential, that is to say he will not succeed at developing his "self" if he cannot integrate his contradictions instead of eliminating them. Half of life demands looking at both poles, opposing though they may be, accepting what I have not yet experienced and facing up to that. We can deny ourselves the opportunity of seeing the opposing side in a conscious manner, grasping for our old values; chivalrously defending principles which makes us obstinate, tough and limited. And the other extreme, as negative as the first one, is to throw away all values that up until the present time have been meaningful in my life. One believes that finally one can experience that which had been repressed and this is when one sees "changes in profession, separations, religious changes and apostasies of all types. These are the symptoms

of this movement that deals with the opposite poles". Accepting the shadows means that we should maintain "old values at the same time as recognizing their opposing poles".

The third aspect, that of integrating the anima and the animus, also brings with it its own problems. Jung says:

"How many times does it happen, for example, that men between the ages of 45 and 50 loses his organizational skills and his wife begins to wear the pants and open a small store in which the husband does some small tasks. There are many women who wake up after age 40 to a general type of social consciousness".

During the first part of life, men and women habitually affirm the portion of their collective being: men accentuate their masculinity, relegating the anima to the shadow side. Nevertheless they may unconsciously manifest the shadow side in sudden urges and strong feelings or attachments: "The suppressed anima reinforces, exaggerates, falsifies and mythologizes all emotional relationships in terms of professions with persons of both sexes".

Women follow the process inversely, and the repressed animus can show itself in strong opinions, unapproachability, and unquestioning personalities that will not allow themselves to be moved. A point that is really not that important and secondary suddenly an issue of capital importance that must be defended at all costs.

When man does not acknowledge his feminine characteristics (such as feelings, creativity and delicateness) from his anima, he projects those characteristics towards women and they are fascinated by him, sometimes falling in love with strong emotions. During the second half of life man is asked to abandon this projection: it is difficult to recognize that everything that has attracted me to women I actually am in possession of myself...It is a slap in the face in terms of my manhood, my masculinity. Jung believes that a great and painful effort is needed to be sincere with oneself "in order to recognize the shadows - and I refer here to the twin pieces - and so that man accepts the anima, the other part of the masterful piece. Not many succeed in doing this".

Nevertheless one has to take the first step. For Jung this consisted in not suppressing my humor, feelings and emotions; nor withdrawing into one's occupation, nor valuing things less nor excusing them as if they were weaknesses. It consisted in allowing these things to flourish in my unconscious; accepting them and dialoging with one's own feelings.

For Jung this step of dialoging with one's anima could be a source of confusion and embroilment for men. A safeguard that he sees as a possible salvation for men can manifest itself in religious symbols. Religion gathers together the intuitive and creative part of the anima. What is religious provides a maternal cover for man, but it is freed from the childishness that a maternal relationship can create. Distress at facing the unknown of midlife make man search his unconsciousness for the protection of a woman...; all this gives a sense of legitimacy to the process and may charm him into satisfying his sense of possession. Religion allows him to experience the fecundity and the creativity of the anima, which are necessary for his vivacity as, at the same time, it serves to protect him from the fascination that he might have as his projection of his own anima might be directed as specific women.

What man needs to do with his anima, woman needs to do with her animus. She should learn to use her animus as a way to gain entry into her own unconsciousness. This is a means to describe how her opinions are supported, learning to criticize those supports which seem to be based on reason. Religion is also important for women at this moment of crisis although for Jung it fulfills a different role. The ascetic

and moral demands that religion may suggest are important in order to achieve a freedom from her maternal being as a type of protector and cover, and thus achieving a greater security and practical application in terms of areas of responsibility. Religion can lend form and figure to the anima and guide the animus which will help woman develop fully and grow.

An important aspect of this process, and one which helps the integration of both principles, is that of community and it has certain characteristics: it offers, demands and shapes lodging. He who closes himself in a community separates himself from life's torrent. Opening oneself to community is also a question of humility; he who is too proud to open himself to others remains aloof.

Finally let us look at the last aspect that Jung proposes: the development of "oneself" in the acceptance of death and the encounter with God. Arriving at midlife, or the "noon of life" also means accepting the fact that this point marks the beginning of our decline. Recognizing the fact that the summit has been reached also means accepting that the road begins its descent. In the last analysis, during this stage of life is when man comes to grips with his attitude towards death, the end of his earthly life, death as a reasonable objective. For this man the second half of life has meaning in itself and also it poses a challenge, a task to accomplish. For Jung this matter is not a question of faith but rather of psychic reality. The soul remains healthy in the measure that it is disposed towards death, accepting its biological life decline and this can increase its psychological outlook towards individuation.

"Beginning at midlife he who accepts death will continue to be alive".

Nevertheless some look backwards, towards the past. For Jung it is a misfortune that society today admires and even encourages older people to have a youthful outlook and behave like young people. For him this is a type of stress as the future is made evident to an older person and he attempts to cling to his youth.

Without considering the religious tendency of a person, only considering the psychology, he affirms that man can only develop his "self" when he experiences the divine within it, abandoning the "I" and surrendering himself to God.

Jung sees this encounter with God possible for the man who is capable of sacrifice in his surrender; for the one who is capable of offering up his "I" in order to acquiring his own self.

To achieve this surrender a type of introversion is necessary and this is accomplished by means of meditation and asceticism, by aloneness and voluntary fasting. The mystics agree on this point since according to him they are "the known methods from antiquity that protect that meditation and which should give way to the unconscious".

So a total man is in accord with those who "find themselves, learn how to accept themselves, are capable of being reconciled with themselves and with the circumstances and contradictory events of their lives". "This is almost the same as the old saying: You have made peace with God and have offered your own will as a sacrifice as you submitted to God's will".

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(11) Jung, Carl Gustav (1875-1961), disciple of Freud, psychiatrist, psycho-analyst, focuses on this same problem of people at the same level from the strictly psychological point of view.