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AND EASTERN MEDITATION CONSISTING OF
WINTER SEMESTER 1938/1939 AND THE
FIRST HALF OF SUMMER SEMESTER 1939
AS WELL AS LECTURES 1 AND 2 OF THE WINTER
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Lecture 1⁹⁹

28 OCTOBER 1938

IN EARLIER SEMESTERS, I spoke a lot about dreams and attempted to outline how dreams are structured and how we can get at their meaning. Now, in this semester I will follow up by describing the phenomenon of “active imagination.”

You will recall the dream of the concert where, at the end, a glowing bauble emerged out of the Christmas tree.¹⁰⁰ In particular, I said this:

This bauble is not an ordinary object, but rather it is a symbol that reaches far back into the intellectual history of humanity. It is an example of how contents from the collective unconscious impose themselves upon consciousness until they become conscious. If we were to proceed anthropomorphically, it could be said that it is as if these contents of the collective unconscious have a certain volition of their own to become manifest. However, this is only a hypothesis, and I ask you not to take this literally. In any case, such contents appear first in dreams. These are phenomena that take place at the edge of consciousness, contents that emerge into consciousness. I was impressed by this fact very early on. You see this phenomenon extremely frequently in patients, as well as in the mentally ill. I asked myself if it might not be possible to make an impact upon that background where the unconscious originates so that it would give up its contents more clearly, or if it were possible to make these traces of the unconscious clearer so that one could discern them and understand them better?

I found that if one directs attention to these traces and concentrates upon them, a curious phenomenon of movement gets going, just as when one stares at a dark spot for a long time which then begins to become

⁹⁹ Text is compiled from notes by LSM and RS as well as the English translation by BH. ES was absent from this first lecture as he missed the train to Zurich.

¹⁰⁰ Jung is referring to the lecture of 8 July 1938. See Jung (1937/38).

animated. We are then suddenly able to discern the forms of one's own internal background. "Gazing into the glass or bowl of water" opens onto the background to one's own soul, to the extent that one ultimately perceives the images—though of course not in the water.¹⁰¹ This is a technique used by the ancient Egyptian priests, for example, who stared into a bowl of water. There is nothing present in the water, but the intense gazing arouses the soul into seeing something. It has a hypnotic and fascinating effect. For this purpose, the ancient magicians used a glass button or jewel, or Egyptian priests a beautiful blue crystal, in order to impart unconscious perceptions to their clientele. It was not understood in this way back then but was employed for the purposes of prophecy, divination, and healing. The ancients were well aware that to heal the soul, or even the body, a certain assistance from psychic experiences was necessary.

We find similar ideas in the ancient Asclepius cult.¹⁰² That is why medical clinics in antiquity had incubation chambers in which the ancients would have a dream that proffered the correct diagnosis, or often even indicated the right cure for healing.¹⁰³ Similar practices are still used today by Indians and medicine men of primitive tribes. If someone is troubled by an evil dream, the medicine man has them go through this process in order to bring them back into harmony with their psychic backdrop. For it is well known that someone who no longer has this connection has lost their soul. The loss of soul is typical for primitives. It is absolutely imperative that the soul be recaptured. This can be achieved by restoring the connection with the unconscious by capturing the psychic substratum. With children, for example, images sometimes even start to come alive: the locomotive begins to move or the people in the picture book begin to do something. It is thought these are only children's experiences, but some primitives have much more experience with the background than we who live orientated to the external world. We must get to know this. We live

¹⁰¹ Jung connects here with earlier psychological studies on this subject by Pierre Janet (1898), pp. 407–422, and Frederic W.H. Myers (1892).

¹⁰² Asklepios, Asclepius, Greek and (as Lat. Aesculapius) Roman god of medicine and healing, son of Apollo and Coronis, raised by the centaur Chiron, who taught him the art of healing. His cult was particularly strong in the third-century BCE. In the so-called Asklepieia the priests cured the sick of their ailments using a method called incubation. Asklepios was worshipped throughout Greece with the most famous sanctuary being in Epidaurus. His symbol, a staff entwined by a serpent, has long represented the profession of medicine.

¹⁰³ The first volume of the series of publications from the C.G. Jung Institute Zurich was C.A. Meier's monograph on *Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy* (Meier, 1949), reissued as *Healing Dream and Ritual: Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy* (Daimon, 1989).

through our eyes. However, that is not characteristic for all peoples, but simply a peculiarity of the West.

If one concentrates on such a fragment, it is necessary to clearly retain the initial perception of it in the soul. This is where the Westerner has a tendency to inhibit the arousal of fantasy. He can shut off something from the environment, i.e., he so holds to one and the same standpoint that nothing disturbs him. This differentiation is characteristic for Westerners, but not for people from the East. It is almost impossible to acquire precise information from them. They have no meditation on a specific area. If I bend down over a specific blade of grass and ask what it means, the Eastern person will give me the entire meadow. For them that's a demanding task that wears them out. This has also struck me about spiritually significant people from India or China. They cannot concentrate exclusively on one tiny detail.

But active imagination does not imply such singular concentration, which kills off anything happening. It must be possible that while the image stays firmly in mind unconscious fantasy can also join in. If this can be done, then something gets going. If one observes with the most relaxed attention possible, then one can perceive that some other material enters in that enlivens the situation. If one practices this, one can allow an entire system to unfold from any point of departure. In doing so, one always thinks that one does it oneself, one is inventing it, but in reality these are spontaneous thoughts. With such images one may not say that one created them oneself. If a roof tile falls on your head, you have not made it happen, nor have you done it yourself. These are "freely arising perceptions" as Herbart¹⁰⁴ has already said. If one gives up tense expectancy and only gazes at the emerging possibility, then one perceives what the unconscious is creating from its perspective. In this way, an image is stimulated. When this occurs, a glimpse into the unconscious can be gained. People often dream in a very fragmentary way, or the dream breaks off in one place—then I ask the dreamer to imagine it further. I sort of ask for the continuation. In principle, this is nothing other than the usual

¹⁰⁴ Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), German philosopher, psychologist, and educator, whose scientific pedagogy set the standard of the nineteenth-century educational system ("Herbartianism"). His "dynamic" psychology is based on the concept of a mechanics of interacting *Vorstellungen* (ideas, representations). Herbart introduced a model of a threshold of consciousness from which unconscious ideas, once they have reached a certain strength, will cross over into the conscious mind. Herbart's works include *Lehrbuch zur Psychologie* (1816), *Psychologie als Wissenschaft* (1824/25), and *Psychologische Untersuchungen* (1839/40). For Jung on Herbart see Jung (1933/34), p. 29; and Jung (1946), § 350.

technique of creating the dream's context. I elicit the entire texture in which the dream is embedded. As it appears to the dreamer. There are some simple ideas: we believe water is the same for everyone, but that's not the case. If I ask twelve people what they associate with water, one is amazed at what they say. So, if, instead of asking for the entire fabric of the dream, I were to ask how they would dream it onwards, then I would get as a reply material that would correlate exactly with the meaning of the dream. One can also sabotage such a quest. Someone already brought me a dream right out of the dictionary which I was supposed to be convinced by. Unfortunately for them I noticed this.

Active imagination is a making conscious of fantasy perceptions that are manifesting at the threshold of consciousness. We must imagine that our perceptions possess a certain energy through which they can become conscious at all. It is a great achievement to be conscious. For this reason, we are exhausted after a relatively long period of consciousness. Then we must sleep and recover. If primitives are asked quite simple questions, after a while they too become exhausted and want to sleep. If you leave them to their own devices, they think of nothing, sit around, don't sleep, but they also do not think. Something is happening that is not in the head, that is quite unconscious. Some are insulted if you ask what they are thinking. "Only crazy people hear something up there in the head," not them. You see from what night our consciousness in fact comes awake.

There are four different states of psychic content:

Consciousness	0—0—0—0	Conscious perceptions.
Threshold perception	θ—θ—θ—θ	Contents on the threshold of consciousness, below which darkness reigns (background perceptions).
Personal unconscious	0—0—0—0	Unknown or forgotten contents which however belong to the personal domain.
Collective unconscious	0—0—0—0	Thoughts which have already been thought in other epochs. The most interesting are these most profound contents which are not individually acquired but can be thought of as instinctive fundamental patterns, and thus as a type of category.

Each of these layers, even the uppermost, is influenced and modified if content from the collective unconscious arises. If the process of becoming conscious takes a natural course, not convulsively, then the whole of life proceeds according to the basic pattern of the collective unconscious, naturally shadowed individually, although the individual motifs are repeated in everyone. Hence, we find the motifs of the collective unconscious in the folklore of all peoples and in all times, in mythology, in the religions, etc.

Any concentration of attention in this technique is very difficult. This is something that can be achieved only through practice. The great majority of people lose themselves immediately in chains of associations, or they inhibit them and then absolutely nothing happens. Occidental man is not educated to use this technique, but rather to observe all external sense perceptions and one's own thoughts, although not to play host to the perception of the background processes. The East is way ahead of us in this respect. This is a meditation, i.e., an impregnation of the background, which becomes animated, fructified by our attention. By this means, objects of still-developing circumstances emerge clearly. The Latin word *contemplatio* comes from *templum*¹⁰⁵—a zone for living encounter is defined, a specific field of vision in which observation takes place. The augurs used to delineate a field, a *templum* for observing the flight of a bird. A protected domain from which one can observe the inner contents and can fertilize them with attention. And the word *meditatio* actually means to consider or ponder.

In antiquity, as far as I am aware, there were no detailed descriptions or instructions for this technique. It actually contradicted the classical spirit. By contrast, in the Middle Ages certain ideas were already emerging. The old alchemists—by which you must by no means imagine just any old crazy gold makers but rather natural philosophers—defined the term *meditation* as a dialogue with another who is invisible. This other may be God or oneself in another manifestation, or the good spirit, the guardian spirit of the person with whom they can be led into dialogue in meditation. St. Victor¹⁰⁶ had such a conversation with his own soul. The

¹⁰⁵ *Templum*, lat. for a temple, shrine, or sacred place; also an open area, especially for augury.

¹⁰⁶ Hugh of Saint Victor (1096–1141), medieval philosopher and mystical writer, laid the foundations for Scholastic theology, becoming the head of the school of Saint Victor in 1133. He combined his philosophical and theological writings, Aristotelian in character, with mystical teachings about the soul's journey to union with God. According to Hugh,

Middle Ages thus already had the inner counterpart in contrast to the external counterpart; and that inner counterpart possesses a meaning in its own right, so that one can, in a sense, have a conversation with this other. So, in one word: this internal other replies. This procedure is called *imagination*. I not only surrender myself to fantasy but I also concentrate my attention on what is to be contemplated and observe what happens in the process.

In the Middle Ages the philosophers used this term to describe the possible transformation of the elements. They can be transformed through meditation. By concentrating on the chemical matter, the image that is within us is imprinted upon matter. This image within us is the soul, and it is round. Roundness is perfection, therefore gold has a round form because it is a perfect body. One can imprint a model upon the image of one's own soul, and then it must be transformed into gold. One thinks that *gold* is meant. In truth, however, one is taught that it is not normal gold but the gold of the soul. It is difficult to understand these lines of thought, because things were not understood in our sense of the term, instead they took place in matter, thus in matter that one handles. It is as if the unconscious were located in chemical matter, in minerals.

But we must not forget that the chemical constitution of bodies was a great puzzle in the Middle Ages, a great dark puzzle. There was no knowledge about these things, hence their internal world was understandably projected onto them. The same is true for us. If we do not understand someone, we impute every sort of quality to him all the same, and assume a great deal about him, when in fact it is precisely what is within us. We can say nothing about him except what we see through our own lens, and we humans do this utterly without shame. We try to get in close with concepts, but we mystify our own mystery into matter. The same happened to the Middle Ages. Gradually people became a bit more conscious, but not enough. Then came the scientific age and interrupted this entire development. Not so in the East. There it was possible for these ideas and efforts, which had been present from time immemorial, to develop

the rational soul contains "three eyes": Thought searches for God in the material world, meditation does so within us, and contemplation connects the soul with God intuitively. His main work is entitled *De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei* (c. 1134); his mystical writings include *De Arca Noe Morali* [Noah's moral ark], and *De Arca Noe Mystica* [Noah's mystical ark] (1125–1130), *De Vanitate Mundi* [On the vanity of the world] and *Soliloquium de Arrha Animae* [The soliloquy on the earnest money of the soul]. Hugh's works are published as vols 175–177 of the *Patrologia Latina* (1854). On his psychology, see Ostler (1906). Barbara Hannah wrote an article on Hugh's conversation with his soul in *Soliloquium de Arrha Animae* (Hannah, 1981).

analogously: they had not been interrupted by exclusive concentration on external things. Very early on, we find in Indian texts the concept of the *tapas*, i.e., heat, glow.¹⁰⁷ It is used as an expression to represent the fructifying influence of attention, hence is translated as “creative heat.” In the *Rigveda* it says: *tapas* is seen among the things that carry the earth.¹⁰⁸ The earth is carried through truth, size, strength, through *rita*, i.e., the law of right action, *tapas*, *brahman*, and sacrifice. This idea is almost immutable in its form.

A hymn from the *Rigveda* says:¹⁰⁹

What was hidden in the shell,
Was born through the power of fiery torments.
From this first arose love,
As the Germ of knowledge,
The wise found the roots of existence in non-existence,
By investigating the heart’s impulse.

Goethe said the same:

You follow a false trail;
Do not think that we are not serious;
Is not the kernel of nature
In the hearts of men?¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ *tapas*, Sanskrit for “heat,” “ardor,” “glow”: an ascetic practice of Hinduism that is used to achieve spiritual power or purification. Whereas in the Vedas *tapas* is mainly introduced as part of the creation myth, according to which Prajâpati created the world by means of asceticism, in later Hinduism it becomes an essential part of yogic practice. The *Yoga Sûtras* regard it as one of the five *niyamas*, acts of yogic self-discipline. According to *sûtra* 3.43, *tapas* leads to the perfection of the body and the senses. As noted by commentators, Patañjali’s positive valuation of *tapas* contradicts other yogic scriptures (Feuerstein, 1997, pp. 304–305).

¹⁰⁸ Jung’s understanding of the concept of *tapas* largely follows the arguments of Jakob Wilhelm Hauer in his study *Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis im alten Indien* (1921). On Hauer, see note 116. For a further discussion of *tapas* in the Vedas, see Blair (1961) and Kaelber (1976).

¹⁰⁹ *Rigveda*, Book 10, CXXIX: 3–4. Jung owned a copy of the German translation by Paul Deussen (1894). Jung also quoted the same passage (in Deussen’s translation) in *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* (Jung, 1912), §§ 243–245. There Jung linked the production of fire through the rubbing of sticks to sexual coitus. This interpretation was criticized by Gopi Krishna as a misreading of the production of Kundalini energy (Krishna, 1988, p. 67). See Shamdasani (1996), p. XIX.

¹¹⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: “Ultimatum,” in *Poetische Werke*, vol. 1 (Berlin: 1960), pp. 556–557. In *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* (1912), § 599, Jung had already linked the passage from the *Rigveda* with Goethe’s poem in *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* (1912), § 599.

These verses from the *Rigveda* propose that the existence of the world is in fact a psychic function. They would have us understand that these human qualities constantly generate heat, and that this glow begets the world. The world to our way of thinking is not begotten in this way, but to the Indian that's what the world is: namely, consciousness. That is why he can also say: the figures created internally are the world, an illusion—and in that sense the concept of *mâyâ* invites a similar understanding. Another passage where the concept of the *tapas* plays a role occurs in the myth of the creator of the world, Prajâpati. In the beginning, he was alone. Apart from him there was nothing:

Pragâpati had the desire of creating beings and multiplying himself. He underwent (consequently) austerities. Having finished them, he created these worlds, viz., earth, air and heaven. He heated them (with the lustre of his mind, pursuing a course of austerities); three lights were produced: Agni from the earth, Vayu from the air, and Aditya from heaven. He heated them again, in consequence of which the three Vedas were produced.¹¹¹

This means “he heated himself with his own heat,”¹¹² in *commutatio*.¹¹³ “He brooded, he hatched.”¹¹⁴ He incubates himself. This is the word used for the technical concentration exercises out of which yoga developed.

The similarity between this technique, which we use in a psychological way, and Eastern Yoga should not be overlooked. The Western technique is a pitiful thing in comparison to what the East has to say about it. In any case, there exists a certain principal difference, not only because the East surpasses itself with a rich literature and an exceptional differentiation of methods. Yoga as it is practiced now and has been practiced for many hundreds of years is a system. The Western technique is not a system, but a simple process. In the East, it is a technical system. As a rule,

¹¹¹ Aitareya Brâhmanam 5.32 (1863), p. 253 (Deussen, 1894), p. 183; cf. 181, 183, 187–188, 189, 200, 205. Jung quotes this passage after Deussen (1894), p. 181, in *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* (1912) (Jung, 1912, § 596).

¹¹² Deussen (1894), p. 182: Jung refers to Deussen's translation in *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* (1912): “The strange conception of *tapas* is to be translated, according to Deussen, as ‘he heated himself with his own heat, with the sense of he brooded, he hatched.’ Here the hatcher and the hatched are not two, but one and the same identical being.” [“Der sonderbare Begriff des *Tapas* ist nach Deussen zu übersetzen als: ‘er erhitzte sich in Erhitzung’ mit dem Sinne: ‘er brütete Bebrütung,’ wobei Brütendes und Bebrütung nicht zwei, sondern ein und dasselbe Wesen sind.”] [Jung, 1912, § 597].

¹¹³ Latin for change or mutation.

¹¹⁴ Deussen (1894), p. 182; see note 109.

the object of reevaluation or meditation is prescribed there, which it is not in active imagination, where it arises quite naturally from a dream, from intimations that manifest in consciousness in a natural way. In the East, the *guru*, i.e., the leader, gives the *tschela*, i.e., the student, a particular instruction about the object he is to meditate upon. Guru and student are not outlandish peculiarities. Every moderately educated person in the East has his guru who instructs him in this technique. It has been this way since ancient times, a form of education practiced by one whose qualifications as a leader are not endorsed by any university.

This is the teaching of yoga in broad outline. The classic text offering an overview of yoga teaching is a work from the second century BCE: the *Yoga Sûtra* by the grammarian Patañjali.¹¹⁵ It is an exceptionally deep book containing a plenitude of profound ideas, incredibly difficult to translate because it presents the secrets of yoga in an exceptionally concise language: four texts for a total of 195 tenets.

The goal of the practice is the promotion of *samâdhi*, i.e., rapture, ecstasy, contemplation, also suppression. Hauer also translates it as en-folding in contrast to an unfolding.¹¹⁶ One could also translate this as introversion. After that, the practice of yoga intends a diminution of the *kleshas*.¹¹⁷ By this term one understands instinctive elements in the

¹¹⁵ Patañjali, who wrote the *Yoga Sûtra*, is sometimes referred to as the author of *Mahâbhâshya* (Sanskrit for great commentary), a commentary on Panini's grammar *Astadhyayi*. As this was written in the second century BCE Jung dates the *Yoga Sûtra* to around the same time. However, it is disputed that Patañjali was also the author of the *Mahâbhâshya*. Recent research dates the *Yoga Sûtra* between 325 and 425 CE. See Maas (2006), p. xix; also introduction p. 1.

¹¹⁶ Jakob Wilhelm Hauer (1881–1962), German Indologist and Sanskrit expert, professor at Tübingen University, founder of the German Faith Movement [Deutsche Glaubensbewegung], the aim of which was to establish a specific Germanic faith firmly rooted in the Germanic and Nordic traditions, a religious re-birth from the inherited base of the Germanic race. In 1932 Hauer was invited to hold a seminar on Kundalini Yoga at the Psychological Club Zurich (3 to 8 October). Jung commented on Hauer's lectures in the following four weeks of the same year (Jung, 1932). Despite Hauer's strong support of the Nazis, Jung and Hauer remained on collegial terms, though further projects of collaboration were abandoned by Jung (see the forthcoming publication of the correspondence between Jung and Hauer, edited by Giovanni Sorge as part of the Philemon Series). Hauer's translation of Patañjali's *Yoga Sûtras* that Jung refers to in this lecture was published in the journal *Yoga* in 1931 (Hauer, 1931). The text was reprinted in *Der Yoga als Heilweg* (1932). Jung had copies of both in his library. Hauer's books include *Anfänge der Yoga Praxis im alten Indien* (1921), *Eine indo-arische Metaphysik des Kampfes und der Tat* (1934), and on the German Faith Movement *Deutsche Gottschau. Grundzüge eines deutschen Glaubens* (1934a). On Hauer, see Poewe (2006).

¹¹⁷ *Klesha*, Sanskrit, meaning "trouble" or "affliction." "These factors, which can be compared to the drives of an earlier generation of psychologists, provide the cognitive and

unconscious that actually should be repressed or at least diminished. The goal of yoga is to conquer these unconscious impulses, hence yoga, i.e., yoke; the yoking of uncontrollable powers of the human soul and in a different manner from how we do it. We simply suppress or repress certain emotions. The difference is this: when they repress, they know that they are doing it. If we repress, the content disappears but then neurotic symptoms develop out of this repression. One turns his attention away from something unpleasurable. This is a hysterical mechanism that takes place not only in the life of the individual but everywhere, even in politics. The *Yoga Sûtra* says: egoism, ignorance, attachment, aversion, and fear of death weaken you.¹¹⁸ Ignorance (*ávidyâ*) is the ground for all other vices or *kleshas*.

motivational framework for the ordinary individual enmeshed in conditional existence (*samsâra*) and ignorant of the transcendental Self.” (Feuerstein, 1997, p. 156). According to Patañjali, kriya-yoga aims at the attenuation of the *kleshas*.

¹¹⁸ In the *Yoga Sûtra* 2.3 Patañjali lists the five *kleshas*: ignorance (*ávidyâ*), egoism (*asmitâ*), attachment (*râga*), aversion (*dvesha*), and the fear of death (*abhivivesha*).

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