

## Chapter 13

### THE DYNAMICS OF PAIN

#### II: THE ATTACHMENT TO PAIN

If the natural order calls for the life stream to flow unhindered and to create pleasure, why do human beings hold so strongly to negativity and pain. Why is it so hard to give up the pain? Why are so many people suffering? Most people would be shocked at the idea that they prefer pain to pleasure. But there are several reasons why human beings cling to their pain. People create pain by stopping the flow of positive feelings as well as negative ones. Feelings of love and expansiveness may be blocked as much as feelings of spite, fear, or the desire for revenge. One part of the person wants movement and pleasure, but another part wants nothing to do with these good feelings. The part that suppresses the feelings of pleasure is unconscious. But the person expresses in other ways the conviction: "I don't want any help. I don't want to have pleasure. I want to stay with my pain." The person prefers pain because it is safe and known. There is security in it. And pain gives a person a sense of limits.

The person may sulk with or rebel against pain, but still feel deserving of it. It is the price paid for something else, or "benefits" that come from taking the pain. People cling to pain as a way to get others to take care of them, to attract sympathy and attention. Witness, for example, the hypochondriac who complains constantly of one discomfort or another. Or pain can be used to punish others. People take secret delight in getting vengeance against others for what they lack. Pain may provide benefits and security, but in a distorted way. The price paid is intense pain and a lot of illness. The point which is being underscored here is that people may have a negative wish for pain. This wish often is not known to the person in pain. The negative wish creates a tension which produces the pain. But due to lack of self-awareness, a gap exists in the person's understanding between the negative wish and the creation of the pain.

The gap creates confusion, because the person says consciously, "I don't want the pain; are you kidding?" The confusion arises because the person does not know that the other part exists. The connection between cause and effect — the wish and the pain — is lost in the gap in awareness. This lack