

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### PSYCHOANALYSIS AS A PHILOSOPHY :

Psychoanalysis is basically scientific in outlook and it is not primarily interested in formulating any kind of philosophical theory. Yet no one - not even the analysts - can avoid philosophy. The analysts are interested in the problem of man, and hence their psychological theory automatically leads to the development of some kind of philosophy, specially, the philosophy of man.

We shall in this chapter make an attempt to explain the philosophy of Freud and Adler as it is implied in their psychological theories or as it emerges out of these theories. It should be noted that the philosophy which we may develop out of their theories is primarily a philosophy of life and not an abstract metaphysical world-view. We may add here that we have had an idea of their philosophy when we discussed their views on religion and morality. The philosophy of life which their theories imply is fact-oriented and does not a priori presuppose any kind of norm.

I. PHILOSOPHY OF FREUD : Freud was at first thoroughly opposed to the idea of any kind of Weltanschauung (world-view) stemming out of psychoanalysis. "As a specialized science, a

branch of psychology - depth psychology or psychology of the unconscious - it is quite unsuited to form a Weltanschauung of its own; it must accept that of science in general", said Freud.<sup>1</sup> He believed that if psychoanalysis is at all to develop any kind of Weltanschauung or philosophical world-view, it must acknowledge allegiance to the nineteenth century scientific methodology. But though Freud had no desire to build a grand metaphysical system a Weltbild, after the manner of Spinoza or Hegel, he could not long avoid some kind of philosophy of man. Psychoanalysis, as we know, started as a therapeutic method, but it gradually formulated certain theories of mind. Thus though Freud did not care much for a clear cut distinction between science and philosophy, he introduced a distinction between the case histories obtained in course of therapy and the speculative 'theory' which he developed to justify his interpretation of the symptoms. This is, in his own words, a distinction between psychology and metapsychology.<sup>2</sup> The view of man, which is his philosophy of man, is mainly based on the following metapsychological views : (i) his theory of pleasure-principle and reality-principle (which constitute the economics of personality), (ii) his theory of Eros and Thanatos (which constitute the dynamics of human motivation), and (iii) his theory of Id, Ego and Super-Ego (which constitute the topography of mind).<sup>3</sup> Further, Freud's metapsychology develops in the con-

<sup>1</sup> Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Freud does not seem to be very consistent in his use of the term 'metapsychology'. Sometimes he takes the term to mean a merely descriptive psychology.

<sup>3</sup> .See Chapters I & II.

text of Darwinian conception of man and nature.

Freud was very much influenced by the philosophical beliefs prevailing in the nineteenth century and he was a child of the materialism of nineteenth century science.

As we have said above, Freud started his metapsychology largely in the Darwinian fashion. Bergson's explanation about the aim of our mental functions had a similar genesis but there is some difference between them. Bergson is neither a mechanist nor a teleologist. Darwin is mechanist. Darwin emphasizes matters in the explanation of the origin of life. For Bergson elan-vital or life-principle is ultimate, - matter originates due to the inhibited and consequently the inverted movement of the life-principle. Both Freud and Bergson were influenced by biology and the dynamic outlook.

Darwinian biological evolutionary theory implies that things which we are <sup>now</sup> ~~not~~ observing were not in the same form in the past but they have been developed out of previous stages. The present manifestations are not only conditioned by the past but they contain nothing but the past. So in interpreting the origin of human life Freud accepted the biological evolutionistic theory of Darwin in which he stated that human being is born with animal instinct, acquiring some special characteristic added to it according to certain fixed laws of nature quite accidentally (about which

we can form no correct conception). And in explaining the basic personality-structure Freud accepted a view of psychic determination in so far he maintained that every individual is bound to pass through several stages of life in the infantile period. He supposed the oral, anal, phallic and genital phases and presumably the Oedipus Complex, to be innately determined and therefore relatively unaffected by environmental or cultural factors. Freud's mechanistic outlook appears in his assumption that the attitudes of an adult are nothing but a repetition of the same attitude in childhood, that nothing new happens in our development after the age of five, so that later reactions are to be considered as a repetition of the past ones.

So Freud reasoned that if life develops out of matter, then the living things will feel a constant compulsion to return to the inanimate state and this must remain even for conscious human livings the first and basic purpose.

Freud's another basic discovery is that every mental desire is motivated. An individual is born with the animal instinct with the motivation of its immediate gratification, i.e., the human instinctal life is always dominated by the pleasure-principle. But if this pleasure-principle gives the programme of life's purpose and if it dominates the whole mental apparatus then life is sure to be doomed to failure and frustration. So

this constant seeking for pleasure; i.e., the pleasure-principle or the psychological hedonism is in conflict with the real world. This is the trouble which is to be found with whole struggle for life. Hence, there arises the necessity to change this principle which alone is possible through reality principle. Thus arises in the individual mental apparatus a conflict between the pleasure-principle and the reality-principle under the pressure of the necessity, human demands and expectation are replaced and the pleasure-principle gradually is being changed into the reality-principle.

This reality-principle adds a new concept to the natural hedonism of pleasure-principle, that of the useful, and this reality-principle is conservative in so far as it strives for the protection of the self against damage. The products of culture and civilization are a tribute to this intrinsic conservatism.

This dualistic assumption of the natural hedonism of the pleasure-principle and the reality-principle underlines the Freudian metapsychology. It is a typical of Freud's theoretical formulations.

The transformation of the pleasure-principle into the reality-principle requires a profound modification of the original instinctual structure of man, a deflection of impulse from its original goal and an inhibition of its primal aim. It means that

the immediate satisfaction should be sacrificed to delayed satisfaction. This conflict between the irrational nature of man and the rational demands of reality can be observed in the transformation of primitive animal nature into civilized society.

In his theory of instinct Freud made a distinction between two groups of primal instincts, the "self-preservative" or "ego" instinct and the "sexual" instinct. But in his later writings he revised his entire view and divided them into "love-instinct" and "death-instinct" which he named "Eros" and "Thanatos". The aim of "Eros" is to bind together, to make unities, whereas the aim of "Thanatos" is to disperse, to destroy things. Life-instinct aims at organic complexity, while the death-instinct at inorganic atomicity. Though they are different from each other in respect of functioning, all actual experience is both a conflict and a compromise between these two trends. War and artistic creation are the two sides of an eternal principle. Herbert Marcuse has explained the sense thus : "Freud's meta-psychology is an ever-renewed attempt to uncover and to question the terrible necessity of the inner-connection between civilization and barbarism, progress and suffering, freedom and unhappiness - a connection which reveals itself ultimately as that between Eros and Thanatos".<sup>4</sup>

4.

Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization : A Philosophical Enquiry into Freud, p. 17.

Freud's main thesis is that man is basically asocial in nature gifted with an animal instinct, but in the course of his growing up he is to come in contact with the social environment which demands his social ability, which again forces him to sacrifice much of his egoistic interest and participate in the common good; in short, it indicates the mode of socialisation which transforms the human individual as an impulsive animal being into the purposive agent having rationality. So the basic nature of man is always the same, i.e., irrational and asocial and ego-centered. But under the pressure of social environment and as a result of his mutual interaction with the social environment he is forced to change his nature and adopt something new in kind. Here Freud tried to establish that the basic nature of man will always remain the same and by endeavour one can change his mode of expression and the style of behaviour. So for Freud although man is born basically asocial in nature, ultimately he is to be made social by the pressure of reality. This is the philosophical implication, the meaning and purpose, of Freudian theory.

For Freud man becomes neurotic because he cannot stand the restrictions that society imposes on him by virtue of its cultural ideals. Civilisation and culture are built upon this compulsive restrictions imposed on man. It sets a radical limit to the sexual life of the individual. It sets a superior value upon the higher mental faculties. It demands order and cleanli-

ness in the life of man. So every man is virtually an enemy of culture. The study of civilisation is a study of the different forms of expressions of the instincts, of their repression, sublimation, transformation etc.

As to the origin of the ethical ideal of man Freud referred to the killing of the primal father. As the sons after killing the primal father of the group repented for it and decided not to make the repetition of the same crime, they introduced law. So the killing of the primal father introduces a new organisation of the society. It is the foundation of law and morality.

Here is a paradox. Because law and morality are conceived to be rational enough in themselves, they originate from a deed which is recognised as a crime. Repenting over the killing of the father and deciding not to repeat them they evoked the sanctions of law. Thus the motivation of civilisation is deeply rooted into the sense of guilt. This very sense of guilt has its origin in the Oedipus Complex, the complex which every child is bound to pass through during his infantile period from age one to five. During this period every child is sure to form his idea of the sense of guilt as a result of his attitude towards his father. This sense of guilt again was acquired when the father was killed by his son. This is the idea which has been

carefully dealt with in Freud's Civilisation and Its Discontents. The same idea is also to be found in his Totem and Taboo. Freud interpreted the origin of religious idea in man in the same way. Religion also arose in man's mind as a result of child's feeling of helplessness and his longing for protection and securities. In a word Freud explained the origin of religion, ethic, society and art as they all meet in Oedipus Complex. It covers his entire findings of Psychoanalysis. For him the nucleus of all neurosis is in the Oedipus Complex. Freud regarded this Oedipus Complex as the foundation of all neuroses and he solved all the problems regarding the origin of religion, art, society and ethics with the help of this principle, i.e., the individual's relation to the father. The relation to the father is the architypal pattern for all Freudian explanation. It has its basic root in the Oedipus Complex. Freud's psychology is as much an individual psychology as a social psychology. For it derives the nature of the individual as well as the social complex from the situation within the family. So we find that the Freudian psychoanalysis is ultimately a kind of Social Psychology. Because all the problems of Biological Psychology are transformed into the problems of sociology. Freud laid an immense emphasis upon the influence of the group in case of interpreting the origin of society as well as the foundation of social elements in the individual personality structure. Freud dealt

with the basically ego-centred individuals inside a group. So with certain exceptions Social Psychology and Psychoanalysis do not contradict each other.

Finally, a rigid determinism characterises Freudian Philosophy of man. Freud believed in dark fatalism. It is well illustrated in the story of Oedipus which occupies a pivotal position in Freudian psychoanalysis. It is well described by Stevens in the following lines :

"The son

And the father alike and equally are spent,  
Each one, by the necessity of being  
Himself, the unalterable necessity  
Of being this unalterable animal.  
This force of nature in action is the major  
Tragedy. This is destiny unperplexed,  
The happiest enemy" <sup>5</sup>

II. PHILOSOPHY OF ADLER : We may develop Adler's philosophy from his basic psychological concept. It should be noted at the outset that Adler was no professional philosopher and he does not deliberately develop any explicit philosophy of

<sup>5</sup> Quoted by Albert William Levi in his Philosophy and the Modern World, p. 196.

life. We may, however, develop Adler's philosophy in the light of what he <sup>said</sup> says about the structure of human personality. Regarding human personality Adler <sup>said</sup> says that man is social in nature. The social character of man, however, is a part of his personality. The development of human personality is determined amongst others by certain factors, e.g., position of the individual in the family and his style of life.

Adler, like Freud, also made certain important assumptions in the field of psychology. The most important assumption which made him absolutely different from Freud was his introduction of the feeling of inferiority which naturally led to 'the striving for superiority'.

Adler said that it is innate in the sense that it is a part of life. He said that from birth to death this striving carries the individual from one stage of development to the next higher stages. It is in accordance with the evolutionary process of human development. It is a dynamic principle. He also maintains that although this basic striving for superiority is something innate, but it may be manifested in various different ways. It is the goal of human movement. The neuratic also strives but he strives for a selfish goal where as a normal person also strives a goal which is social in nature.

Next to the introduction of this striving for superiority he made another important assumption, this is his 'social-inherent'. This social interest means co-operation. And this co-operation manifests itself in the relationship between mother and the child. The striving for superiority becomes socialised under the influence of the ideal society. By working for the common good the man compensates for his individual weakness.

The social feeling is inborn. Man is a social creature by nature and not by habit. But his social interest is not developed spontaneously; every man has to develop it by practice.

In Freud's theory there is an initial antagonism between man and society; but for Adler man is basically social in nature and it is gradually developed as man encounters his environment. Recognising man needs to develop this social feeling, Adler devoted much time of his life to establish child guidance clinic and believing that its first manifestation occurs in the relationship between the mother and the child, Adler laid repeated importance upon the duty of a mother regarding the method of rearing children.

The conception of man and the nature of his personality which Adler offered varies from his young age to older age. So long Adler is associated with Freud he offered the portrait of man as he was driven by his insatiable lust for power and domi-

nation in order to compensate his deep-rooted inborn feeling of weakness and inferiority, in his old age this Adler gave altogether a different picture. Here man, for Adler, is motivated by an inborn social feeling which induces him to subordinate selfish gain to public welfare. Social interest here has replaced selfish interest.

Adler achieved much reputation as a personality theorist. A very important slogan of Adler's personality theory is his formulation of the concept of style of life; it is also a distinctive feature of his psychology. This 'style of life' is for him the principle by which the individual personality functions. It is the whole that commands the parts. This principle explains the uniqueness of a person. Every person has his own style of life which is distinct from others. Adler defined this 'style of life' in this way that every person may have the same goal of life, i.e., the striving for superiority, for powers, but its manifestation may be different. One may try to be superior by developing his intellect, other may try to attain this goal by achieving muscular perfection. The first one has a style of life which is different from that of the second one. Every man does everything which is in accordance with his own style of life.

All of a man's behaviour springs from his style of life.

This style of life is formed in the early age, from one to four or five. So his attitudes, his feelings, become mechanised at an early age and it becomes so to say impossible to change this style of life thereafter. A person may acquire different ways of expressing his style of life but this very basic style of life was formed at an early age.

The style of life, Adler said in his earlier writings, is largely determined by the individual's basic feeling of inferiorities. This style of life is a compensation for a particular inferiority. If a child is physically weak, his style of life will take the form of doing these things which will produce physical strength. But Adler himself was not satisfied with this answer. So he looked for another dynamic principle to account for this style of life and made another important assumption, viz., that of 'creative self'. It is a very remarkable achievement of Adler as a personality theorist.

It appeared somewhat difficult even for Adler to give an exact definition of the creative self. Adler meant that creative self is formed out of an individual's hereditary experiences and the environmental influences. Heredity gives some implicit abilities and environment gives certain impressions. The interpretation which a man makes of these experiences, builds his attitudes towards life which determines his relationship to the outside world. This creative self acts upon the facts of the world and transforms these facts into a personality which is subjective, dynamic and unified. It is the attitude towards

life. It gives meaning to life. It creates the goal as well as the means to the goal. It is the active principle of human life.

This is the conception of man which Adler portrayed in his 'Individual Psychology'. Adler's system, though fact-oriented, gave certain instructions in the nature of a norm, viz., the instruction to develop the basic social feeling.

III. A COMPARATIVE ESTIMATE : From the foregoing discussion we find that Freud explained the human behaviour as motivated by his inborn animal instinct whereas Adler defined human behaviour as purely governed by inherent social urges. For Freud, the humanist, man is born basically asocial and irrational in nature whereas for Adler man is basically social in nature. Freud defined the very ~~oriented~~ nature of man as biologically oriented whereas for Adler man is socially oriented by being exposed to social processes. For Freud man is inherently asocial, although the very expression of its biological instincts may be made different according to the influence of the external environment. But for Adler, man is inherently social in nature although the types of relationship with people and social institutions, which develop are determined by the nature of the society into which a person is born. The very act of developing the inherent social feeling begins at home, in the family first. Both for Freud and Adler family plays

an immensely important role in the case of individual's act of developing this sociability. So in one sense Freud and Adler are biological in their view points, in so far as both of them assumed that man has an inherent nature which shapes his personality. Freud laid emphasis upon sex Adler on social interest. The social determinant of behaviour was not given primary importance by Freud in his psychoanalysis and its acceptance was the greatest contribution of Adler in the field of psychology. Adler was an advocate of social justice and a supporter of social interest.

Taken in this sense human personality is determined and Adler comes close to Freud in this respect. Both Freud and Adler are determinists, Freud believing in determination by libido and Adler believing in some form of social determination. But while Freud made man selfish, Adler made him social. As Adler made man social, it follows that every individual, to develop his personality fully and squarely, should cultivate a social outlook. It may, therefore, be said that Adler's philosophy of life is social and based on the principle of love. An individual in order to live in society must live in co-operation with others. Like Freud, Adler also believed that every individual has his own shortcomings and defects, but while Freud held that an individual can overcome his shortcomings by some kind of aggressiveness, Adler held that a man can overcome

these short-comings by developing a social feeling. In other words, while Freud would say that an individual would develop some kind of uniqueness of his own, Adler would say that an individual should develop an art of being one with others. So the philosophy of life, patterned on Freudian lines would advise an individual to lead a life over others, the philosophy of life patterned on Adlerian lines would advise an individual to lead a life in tune with others.

Again Freud was a hard determinist. The factor of determination plays an important role in his whole theory. But no such rigid determinism can be found out in Adlerian Psychology. Still a mild form of social determinism is admitted there. There is no reference to dark fate in Adlerian theory. Adler's conception of the nature of personality implies that man can be the master and not the victim of his fate which is a complete antithesis of Freud's theory of 'fatalism', according to which man is bound to bear his own fate which is formed during his Oedipus Stage.

Freud is a believer in 'hedonism'. He stated that a man is guided by pleasure-principle (though later on Freud spoke of reality-principle). On the other hand, though Adler did not use the term 'reality principle' he advocated ~~for~~ altruistic love or social feeling for all. This shows that Adler was also a realist in the sense that he realised the fact that no individual can live to himself.

Freud was an evolutionist. As an evolutionist he was fond of mechanism. Adler was also an evolutionist but he implicitly believed in teleology, because he held that man develops his personality to a goal, namely, the overcoming of his inferiority.

But, as we have already hinted, neither Freud nor Adler was perhaps completely different from each other. In Freud, the emphasis ~~is~~ on man's selfishness is very great, still Freud could not altogether deny the important role of the society, specially family which is the primary social group. Similarly inspite of his altruistic and social outlook Adler could not altogether avoid reference to egoistic feelings, when he said that man is guided by consideration of overcoming his own inferiority. This is, no doubt, a form of self-love of which Freud made so much use. It seems therefore, that the basic factors of the philosophy of life, as formulated by Freud and Adler are the same. But it seems that in Freud Selfish factor dominates upon the altruistic factors, whereas in Adler, it is just the reverse.