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Freud's Superego and the Biblical *Syneidesis*

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# Freud's Superego and the Biblical

## *Syneidēsis*

By ALLEN NAUSS

IN recent years much interest has been aroused by studies relating to man's conscience. A dozen years ago Erich Fromm's *Man for Himself* contrasted the humanistic with the authoritarian conscience and pointed to their importance for the ethical problems of the day. Alfred Rehwinkel defined the Biblical concept in *The Voice of Conscience* in 1956. The same topic was treated in a symposium on theology, psychology, and psychiatry published in 1958 under the title *What, Then, Is Man?* Other recent publications could be enumerated. Each author in the cited works treats the topic as vital for a proper understanding of mankind and not merely as interesting in terms of research.

This paper is an attempt to define the terms "superego" and "conscience" as they appear in Freud's works and to compare his usage of these concepts with the *συνείδησις* of the New Testament. No application to man's problems of today will be made. This is rather an attempt at clearing the air, as it were, by calling attention to some similarities and differences between the Biblical and the Freudian meaning and usage of these concepts.

Debate between clergymen and psychologists on various issues has sometimes resulted only in confusion. On this particular subject divergent views have also been expressed. Some claim that Freud's use of the superego concept is evidence of an unconscious alignment with the Bible. Others aver that Freudian psychology is

basically at odds with Christianity and cannot be viewed as having any points of agreement.

However, the argument in some cases may be primarily semantic. A battle of words is waged without locating concrete points of agreement or conflict. The ill feeling between religionists (the term is used here generically) and Freudians was perhaps touched off by Freud's well- and not so well-tempered diatribes regarding the "great delusion of the masses." Ernest Jones suggests that they immediately evoked a defensive hostility on the part of some,<sup>1</sup> comparable to the opposition that met Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

But if we regard words as symbols rather than as signals eliciting immediate emotional reactions, we may be inclined to be less categorical in our rejection of Freud. It may be worth noting in this connection that he enjoyed and valued the friendship and work of a Protestant clergyman.<sup>2</sup> It is also true that religiously oriented men, both liberal and conservative, have recognized the validity and usefulness of contributions made by Freudian psychoanalysis.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1957), III, 360—362.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, II, 46; III, 352.

<sup>3</sup> Joshua Liebman, *Peace of Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946); *What, Then, Is Man?, A Symposium of Theology, Psychology, and Psychiatry* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958).

The questions therefore that we shall attempt to answer are: How do Freud's superego and the Biblical συνείδησις agree and differ? If they differ, to what extent is the conflict basic and irreconcilable?

#### THE CONCEPT OF SUPEREGO ACCORDING TO FREUD

In the formulation of his psychoanalytic system Freud did not initially provide a definition of the superego. In fact, he apparently did not use the term as such before the publication of *The Ego and the Id* in 1923.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the first indication of it is found in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in which he refers to the phenomenon of censorship in dreams.<sup>5</sup> A more definite indication of its adoption appears in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), which introduces his idea of conscience<sup>6</sup> and reflects his growing concern with problems of moral prohibitions, religion, and the Oedipus complex. Conscience as a function of the superego is treated in his final theoretical work, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*.

Apparently the division of the ego into several parts, including *das Ichideal* or ego ideal, later regarded as a function of the superego, appears for the first time in *On Narcissism: An Introduction* (1914).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Major Works of Sigmund Freud* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), p. 703, hereafter referred to as Britannica.

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, translated by A. Brill (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), pp. 223, 224.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 859—861.

<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Psychological Works*, trans. under editorship of James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955 to 1957), XIV, 93 ff., hereafter referred to as Strachey.

Further references to, and developments of, the concept of superego are found in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1915),<sup>8</sup> in his *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1915—1917),<sup>9</sup> in a series of essays published in 1919: *The Uncanny*,<sup>10</sup> *A Child Is Being Beaten*,<sup>11</sup> and *Preface to Reik's Ritual: Psychoanalytic Studies*,<sup>12</sup> and in the essay *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921).<sup>13</sup>

A major outline of his theory appeared in 1923 in *The Ego and the Id*. Here he defines the superego as a special part of the anatomical personality separate from the ego and labels it *das Überich*.<sup>14</sup> After a brief reference to it in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927),<sup>15</sup> he develops his views regarding the origin and application of the superego in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929).<sup>16</sup> A general explanatory summary of the concept is offered in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1932).<sup>17</sup> A final reference occurs in his last publication, *Moses and Monotheism* (1938).<sup>18</sup>

Freud considers the superego a genuine structural entity. It is an agency or institution located, he believes, in the anatomy

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246—248.

<sup>9</sup> Britannica, p. 622.

<sup>10</sup> Strachey, XVII, 235, 236.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 262.

<sup>13</sup> Strachey, XVIII, 74 et passim.

<sup>14</sup> Britannica, p. 703.

<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (New York: Doubleday and Company, n.d.), p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Britannica, p. 785 et passim.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 830—840.

<sup>18</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katharine Jones (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), pp. 149—153.

of the mental personality together with the ego and the id. Heir to the restrictions, the demands, and the morals of parents and educators, it is intent on watching the ego and impelling it to impose injunctions and prohibitions on its activity. The superego therefore engages in self-observation as well as in holding up of ideals and in repression. The function of reality testing, which Freud had previously attributed to the superego, he later assigned to the ego itself.

Conscience and superego develop in a person, Freud believes, as a result of the individual's sense of guilt, which in turn has its genesis in the Oedipus complex. The latter is based on a hypothesis by Darwin concerning the primal state of human society. The jealous father kept all the females for himself and was both loved and hated by the sons. The sons banded together to slay the father and thus satisfied their hate. Their love and admiration for the father, however, found expression in feelings of remorse and a sense of guilt. This love and corresponding guilt produced the superego as the brothers identified themselves with the father who was represented in them as the power and authority for punishment and restriction.

Freud asserts that every child experiences the Oedipus complex and must master it in order to live a mentally healthy life. In its early years parental authorities prevent the child from enjoying the satisfaction of its incestuous desires. Aggressive impulses arise in the child in response to prohibitions, but they must yield without being satisfied. By the process of identification the child then takes or absorbs into itself the aggressive parental authority, which becomes its superego. Feel-

ings of guilt derive therefore, first, from the dread of authority which threatens external happiness and causes the renunciation of instinctual gratification, and secondly, in chronological order, from the dread of the superego which represents the internalized authority and criticizes the ego harshly for not measuring up to its ideal. In the latter state, since mere renunciation of instinctual gratifications does not suffice, and since the wish itself persists and cannot be hidden from the superego, the individual encounters dread of conscience. The tension between superego (in its function of conscience) and the ego is called the sense of guilt. Because of the omniscience of the superego the mere thought or intention of an aggressive act can also call forth guilt feeling as easily as the act itself.

Guilt, then, is regarded by Freud as "the expression of the conflict of ambivalence, the eternal struggle between Eros and the destruction or death instinct" (*Britannica*, p. 796), for it stems originally from the initial aggressive impulses (manifestations of Ananke, the external necessity, or death instinct) and from love for external authority, the love which causes identification with the authority (a manifestation of Eros).

#### THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF ΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣΙΣ

Freud's superego is not a Biblical term. However, there is a word for conscience — *συνείδησις*.

It appears 30 times in the New Testament, exclusive of its use in John 8:9, which is part of a section generally regarded as an interpolation. The English word "conscience" does not appear in the

Old Testament in the KJV. In the Septuagint *συνείδησις* is used once to translate a Hebrew noun, best interpreted as consciousness (Eccl. 10:20). Hence our material will be taken primarily from the New Testament, though certain passages from the Old Testament will prove to be pertinent to our discussion.

*Συνείδησις* is used by Paul, Peter, Luke, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Since all four writers attach the same or similar meaning to it, it may be regarded as a unified New Testament concept. It should be noted that in 1 Peter 2:19 and in Heb. 10:2 the context indicates the connotation of consciousness or awareness rather than conscience. Although the KJV retains the term "conscience" also in these verses, the RSV translates *συνείδησις* as "consciousness" and "mindful" here.

#### SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SUPEREGO AND ΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣΙΣ

The superego and *συνείδησις* appear similar in several respects. In both we find

1. *A Judicial Function.*<sup>19</sup> Freud conceived of the superego in the form of a dream censor or a critical observer of the ego. The activity of the superego "consists of watching over and judging the actions and intentions of the ego, exercising the functions of the censor." (Britannica, p. 797)

When we turn to the New Testament, we find that the author of the Letter to the Hebrews (10:22) says that as the high priest sprinkled himself with blood to cleanse himself, so faith in Christ cleanses

men from the sins for which an evil conscience judges them. Similarly Paul in Titus 1:15 declares that certain men's consciences are so stained with filth that they are no longer able to serve as an accurate moral judge of right and wrong: "To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted."

In several other passages the modifier "good" or "clean" is applied to conscience to indicate that the one judging himself is not aware of any guilt before God. In Acts 23:1 we read: "And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, 'Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience up to this day.'" (Cf. Heb. 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:3.)

2. *The Obligatory Function.*<sup>20</sup> This function involves an "oughtness," or "must" character, as implied in the "Thou shalt" commands. Freud refers regularly to the injunctions which the superego imposes on the ego, such as the precept: "You *ought to be* such and such (like your father)" and also the prohibition: "You *must not be* such and such (like your father; that is, you may not do all that he does; many things are his prerogative)." (Britannica, p. 834)

The obligatory function of conscience in the Bible is based on the Decalog and other clearly enunciated norms of conduct. (See, e. g., Lev. 19:2; Deut. 6:6, 7; Matt. 22:37-39.)

3. *The Ego Ideal.* The ideal which a man sets up in himself in order to measure his actual ego represents the ego ideal in Freud's conception. It "is a precipitation of

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Rehwinkel, *The Voice of Conscience* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), pp. 59-61.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-59.

the old idea of the parents, and expression of the admiration which the child felt for the perfection which it at that time ascribed to them." (Britannica, p. 833)

The Bible sets up ideals for a "good conscience." In John 13:15 Christ refers to Himself as the Example, or Model, for others to follow. In Matt. 5:48 the perfection of God the Father is held up as the ideal: "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Freud, it may be added, recognized the Christian's ideal: "Every Christian loves Christ as his ideal and feels himself united with all other Christians by the tie of identification." (Strachey, XVIII, 134)

4. *Knowledge Plus an Emotionalized Conviction.* Freud recognizes that the superego, in order to act, consists of more than the knowledge or perception of visual and auditory impressions. "It is part of the ego," he wrote, "and remains to a great extent accessible to consciousness by way of these verbal images (concepts, abstractions), but the cathectic energy of the superego does not originate from the auditory perceptions, instruction, reading, etc., but from sources in the id." (Britannica, p. 714)

Likewise St. Paul points to the need for something beyond the mere cognitive aspect if the convert is not to offend his conscience when he eats the idol meat (1 Cor. 8:1-7):

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." "Knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by Him. Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an

idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and through whom we exist. . . . However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

5. *Lack of Distinction Between an Act and the Thought of the Act.* This similarity has been indicated earlier in the explanation of Freud's concept of the superego. On this point he says in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Britannica, p. 798):

. . . the omniscience of the superego robbed the distinction between intended aggressions and aggressions committed of its significance; a mere intention to commit an act of violence could then evoke a sense of guilt—as psychoanalysis has found—as well as one which has actually been committed—as all the world knows.

In the Bible, too, conscience is instructed that guilt results from more than the gross acts themselves. In Mark 7:20-23 Jesus says:

What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man.

In His Sermon on the Mount Christ referred to mere intentions as being transgressions of the Fifth and the Sixth Commandments. (Matt. 5:21-29; also see Matt. 15:18, 19)

6. *The Faulty Nature of the Conscience.*

In his 31st lecture on psychoanalysis Freud satirically pointed out that many men's consciences are far from perfect, as one should expect if conscience is of a divine origin. He says (*Britannica*, pp. 831 to 832):

The philosopher Kant once declared that nothing proved to him the greatness of God more convincingly than the starry heavens and the moral conscience within us. The stars are unquestionably superb, but where conscience is concerned God has been guilty of an uneven and careless piece of work, for a great many men have only a limited share of it or scarcely enough to be worth mentioning.

The Bible recognizes that men's consciences are not always in accord with God's will (cf. John 16:2; Acts 26:9; and Acts 23:1). In 1 Cor. 8:7-12 Paul compares the newly converted Christians who have weak consciences with others who have strong consciences. In a similar context he says: "For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples?" (1 Cor. 10:29)

#### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUPEREGO AND ΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣΙΣ

We must, however, note serious differences between the superego and the Biblical concept of conscience, particularly when we examine these four areas or aspects: the essential character of man, the source of power for the fulfillment of the demands of conscience, the need for the superego, and the origin and transmission of the conscience.

1. *The Essential Character of Man.* The judicial activity of a person's conscience depends upon his knowledge of right and wrong. Conscience can point an accusing finger to a wrong only if it actually recog-

nizes something as wrong. The question of the difference between Freud and the Bible in reference to the essential character of man as being good or evil is therefore pertinent here.

Freud often holds up man as a creature that is guided, if not ruled, by his aggressive instincts. He wrote in a letter to Pfister, his Protestant clergyman friend, on Oct. 9, 1918 (*Jones*, II, 457): "I don't cudgel my brains much about good and evil, but I have not found much good in the average human being. Most of them are in my experience ruff-raff, whether they loudly proclaim this or that ethical doctrine or none at all." He explained himself more carefully in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (*Britannica*, p. 787):

In circumstances that favour it, when those forces in the mind which ordinarily inhibit it cease to operate, it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals men as savage beasts to whom the thought of sparing their own kind is alien. Anyone who calls to mind the atrocities of the early migrations, of the invasion by the Huns, or by the so-called Mongols under Jenghis Khan and Tamurlane, of the sack of Jerusalem by the pious Crusaders, even indeed the horrors of the last World War, will have to bow his head humbly before the truth of this view of man.

Such is the character of man, he stated, "that the tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man" (*Britannica*, p. 791). This disposition stems from the death instinct. Yet he did not label this elemental instinct as either good or evil. Only its manifestations, he would say, are classified as good or evil. In addition, he wrote that "small children are notoriously a-moral" (*Britannica*, p. 850). Though he would regard the

biologically mature man (or man at an earlier stage of life) as basically evil or bad, he seemed to prefer placing no value judgment on man at birth or in early childhood.

The Bible, on the other hand, holds that man is basically evil or sinful since the fall of Adam (Rom. 5:18, 19). The corruption of all of Adam's descendants sets in at the time of conception (Ps. 51:5). The innate sinfulness of all men is made clear in John 3:6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (Cf. John 3:5; Rom. 8:7)<sup>21</sup>

2. *The Source of Power for the Fulfillment of the Conscience Demands.* Freud readily realized the existence of such "conscience demands" as "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" and "Love your enemies" (Britannica, p. 786). He knew that Christians are to "love all other Christians as Christ loved them." (Strachey, 134, 135)

But he makes no direct statement regarding the source of strength to carry out the injunctions of the conscience. Because of his agnostic, or possibly even atheistic, orientation he would hardly recognize any power beyond that in the human being himself.

According to Biblical doctrine, God renews the heart through faith in Christ and

in the same way provides the power to live a sanctified life, "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10; cf. 1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Ps. 51:10)

3. *The Need for the Superego.* Although Freud finds it necessary "to do battle with the superego and work to moderate its demands" in psychotherapy, he realizes that it is a most valuable aid in society (Britannica, p. 800). "The fear of the superego should normally never cease," he writes in 1932, "since it is indispensable in social relations in the form of moral anxiety, and it is only in the rarest instances that an individual succeeds in becoming independent of the community" (Britannica, p. 843). By appealing to his concept of superego Freud is therefore able to develop a rationale for high ethical behavior without subscribing to a religion or to a renewal of the spiritual nature in man.

The Bible, on the one hand, recognizes the fact that ethical behavior is possible even without a "Christian conscience." Even non-Christians have a conscience and an innate knowledge of the Law, of right and wrong, and they follow that knowledge to some degree in their lives (Rom. 2:14, 15). However, the Bible distinguishes between the ethical, or righteous, behavior of the Christian and that of the non-Christian. Theologians call the former spiritual righteousness and the latter civil righteousness, i. e., "the natural desire to help one's associates, to serve man through an esteemed profession, and to contribute to harmony in the various communities" (*What, Then, Is Man?* p. 252).

<sup>21</sup> The hereditary corruption, or original sin, is also often referred to in the Christian church as objective guilt. The terms "sense of guilt" and "guilt feeling," as displayed, for example, by Judas (Matt. 27:3-5), and by the jailer at Philippi (Acts 16:29, 30), refer rather to the subjective aspects of the original guilt. It may well be, therefore, that psychologists and ministers talk past each other at times when guilt is the topic of discussion, as Meehl indicates in his discussion of valid and displaced guilt (*What, Then, Is Man?* pp. 152, 153).



Martin Luther also recognized this distinction. He said in 1538:

It is truly a great shame that the Turks, the archenemies of Christ, should have the honor and glory before us Christians that they speak the truth and also bring up their children and people to speak the truth. To teach children not to lie and deny their offense when they have done something is a fine worldly training. In addition to this, the Turk has other fine virtues. Indeed, no one is so bad but that he still has something good about him. But we Christians should surely follow this example.<sup>22</sup>

Breimeier points out that "the dynamics of the two kinds of righteousness are qualitatively different" though both display good and evil works. The difference, he adds, is evident from Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees (Matt. 21:31): "The tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." (*What, Then, Is Man?* p. 252)

Whereas Freud sees the superego as having worth only in maintaining moral standards in social relations, the Bible, in addition to recognizing the social value of conscience, considers *συνείδησις* necessary to the makeup of the Christian in conforming his behavior to the Law of God.

4. *Origin and Transmission of the Conscience.* Freud's conception of the origin of conscience is presented in the story of the conflict between the sons and the father in the primal horde, as mentioned above. Conscience, of course, as he states in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (Britannica, p. 832), was not a

natural endowment. Rather it developed out of the conflict between the elemental instincts of Eros and Ananke, the life and death instincts.

According to the Biblical account, Adam showed fear in the presence of God (Gen. 3:9, 10) immediately after his act of disobedience to God's command. He was at once conscious of an accusing and an excusing voice within him. Since the Fall every son of Adam is made in his likeness and has the voice of conscience within him, blurred and faulty though it may be, judging him and his acts.

It becomes evident that in establishing a basic difference between Freud's views and those of the Bible regarding the origin of conscience and also some of its other aspects, the question of the source or origin of life itself emerges. Basically it involves the alternative of a natural versus a divine origin.

Though he does not elaborate the theory, Freud evidently accepts a naturalistic process in the development of life. From a cellular substance with the germ of life man finally evolved after millions of years, as we may infer from his reference to the "human species" and its development from apelike ancestors. (Britannica, p. 778)

Freud explains the transmission of such a characteristic as conscience in the following statements: "It seems that the male sex has taken the lead in developing all of these moral acquisitions; and that they have then been transmitted to women by cross-inheritance" (Britannica, p. 707). "The ethical strivings of mankind, of which we need not in the least depreciate the strength and significance, are an acquisition accompanying evolution; they have then become the hereditary possession of

<sup>22</sup> Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), III, 1220.

those human beings alive today, though unfortunately only in a very variable measure" (Britannica, p. 765). He seems therefore committed to the Lamarckian theory of transmission of acquired characteristics. Jones records his bewilderment at the determination with which Freud clung to his theory in the face of contrary evidence, with which he must have been familiar. (Jones, III, 313)

The Biblical passage most applicable to the question of the method of transmission of the contents of the superego or the "ethical admonitions" is Rom. 2:14, 15. Here Paul writes that people to whom the Law has not been revealed still have a knowledge of right and wrong; their conscience testifies to it, he writes, with their thoughts in them accusing or excusing themselves. The phrase in this passage "written on their hearts" is often interpreted as indicating that this Law is innate or inborn in man. This interpretation suggests itself especially if the Greek preposition ἐν is translated "in." However, the ἐν may also be rendered "on." In this case Paul may be understood to allow for the possibility that the individual may also acquire demands and injunctions of conscience throughout his daily life and development as a result of his natural endowment. Meehl's comments on the passage are pertinent here:

The *theologically* important distinction is between the revealed Law and an (imperfect) set of norms which can be discerned among those who have not had cultural contact with the revelation as such. This is the distinction with which Paul is concerned; he is not interested in the (scientifically important) question of "innate" versus "learned" behavior. But when the

contemporary psychologist comes across an expression such as "written on men's hearts" (especially if he ignores the other Scriptural texts, with whose assistance this must be interpreted), he naturally thinks in terms of the scientific issue which interests him, i.e., the innate-versus-acquired dichotomy. So he assumes that Paul is committed to the notion that all cultures have the same moral ideas, which is patently false. (Paul, being a cultivated and traveled Hellenized Jew, did not need a course in cultural anthropology to teach him that Romans, Jews, and Greeks differed markedly in content of their moral ideas.) And the psychologist may take Paul to mean that growing up with other humans around has nothing to do with the formation of a conscience, since "written on men's hearts" he reads as "inborn." (*What, Then, Is Man?* pp. 314, 315)

#### COMPARISONS NOT INVESTIGATED

We have not developed all points of comparison between Freud's concept of the superego and the Biblical συνείδησις. The following suggest themselves also:

1. Freud's concept of a cultural superego could be compared with the development of the Jewish people, according to the Old Testament account. Freud himself referred several times to the development of Jewish thought and tradition and also to the New Testament concept of *κοινωνία*, or fellowship.

2. Freud's Eros, which he incorrectly equates with the Apostle Paul's ἀγάπη (Strachey, XVIII, 91), may be compared with the New Testament words for love.

3. The prospect of heightening the standards of conscience to which Freud refers in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Britannica, p. 793) could be reviewed.

4. The revealing passage about conscience and the hypocrite in *Thoughts on War and Death* (Britannica, p. 759) might be investigated.

5. One function of the superego, that of repression, was not examined at all in this paper. Whether there are any correlates in the Old or New Testament might be of interest for a clinical psychologist to know.

6. Finally, the activity of the conscience of such Bible characters as Joseph, David, Job, Peter, Judas, and Paul might be compared with the explanation of the Freudian superego.

#### CONCLUSION

In this paper a picture of the superego according to Freud's development of the

concept has been set alongside the term *συνείδησις* in its Biblical usage and contexts to point out similarities and differences.

Many of Freud's insights have proved to be of value for psychology in the understanding of personality and mental health. But while his superego resembles the Biblical conscience in some respects,<sup>23</sup> there are basic differences between them that cannot be ignored. The gulf separating the two is deeper than the use of a different terminology.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. the implied correspondence in Granger Westberg, *Minister and Doctor Meet* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 35.

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