

## Unit 2: Section D | A1 Notes

### 4.1 Name a moral theorist and give an account of the stages in personal moral development present in his theories

#### Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Most controversial and original theorist.

Highlighted the influence of parents during infancy of the person's development.

A group of behaviourists believed that child was a clean slate and therefore totally shaped by their environment.

One of the first persons who hinted that becoming a moral person was the result of a developmental process was Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

*Id, ego, and super-ego are the three parts of the mind*

*Id is the set of uncoordinated instinctual trends; the super-ego plays the critical and moralizing role; and the ego is the organized, realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego. The super-ego can stop one from doing certain things that one's id may want to do*

#### The Id

Immediate gratification

Act upon instinct

No thinking or reasoning

The **id**, which is the self-preserving part of the mind, only focuses on what feels good regardless of the consequences.

Id is the only component of personality that is present from birth.

It is the source of our bodily needs, wants, desires, and impulses, particularly our sexual and aggressive drives.

Contrary impulses exist side by side

The id "knows no judgements of value: no good and evil, no morality".

Example: A baby cries until he gets what he wants.

## **The Ego**

Logic and controlled behaviours

Can reason with themselves

Can be reasoned with

The 'ego' emerges spontaneously as the person begins to recognize their own identity as well as their difference from other ego's. It becomes apparent that not all pleasurable things are available or permitted, so the ego begins to negotiate between one's own id and the 'real' world. The ego operates both on a conscious and unconscious level.

Seeks to please the id's drive in realistic ways that will benefit in the long term rather than bring grief.

Attempts to mediate between id and reality

The reality principle that operates the ego is a regulating mechanism that enables the individual to delay gratifying immediate needs and function effectively in the real world.

An example would be to resist the urge to grab other people's belongings, but instead to purchase those items

Functions such as judgment, tolerance, reality testing, control, planning, defence, synthesis of information, intellectual functioning, and memory.

The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions

One cannot negotiate the world all by oneself, so help is enlisted from outside sources. This basically goes in two directions. Positively, the ego finds models that it attempts to imitate.

This can be done autonomously, or such models may be forced upon an individual by forces in his or her environment. In any case, this leads to the formation of the 'ego-ideal' that attempts to utilize the energy of the id to reach one's goals. On the negative side of the ego is 'conscience'. This carries the internalized restrictions, taboos and prohibitions that one again internalizes from her or his environment. Violating these negative rules leads to feelings of guilt or shame (which are not the same thing). The individual punishes oneself, which is the role of conscience – a function that is learned and put to use in controlling one's behaviour. Example: having to think about the consequences of cheating on a test to make a decision

### **The Superego**

A person's moral code

The conscience – morals are fully developed

Right and wrong is already established-automatic (no thought involved)

The super-ego works in contradiction to the id. The super-ego strives to act in a socially appropriate manner, whereas the id just wants instant self-gratification. The super-ego controls

our sense of right and wrong and guilt. It helps us fit into society by getting us to act in socially acceptable ways.

The super-ego's demands often oppose the ids, so the ego sometimes has a hard time in reconciling the two.

Around the age of five begins the development of the 'super-ego'.

The **superego**, on the other hand – appears to be the moral centre which carefully considers actions before executing them, based on what the environment dictates.

According to Freud, once the child is able to repress his id and allow his superego to function, then moral development ensues. When this happens, selfish desires are then repressed and are replaced by values that are accepted by the society.