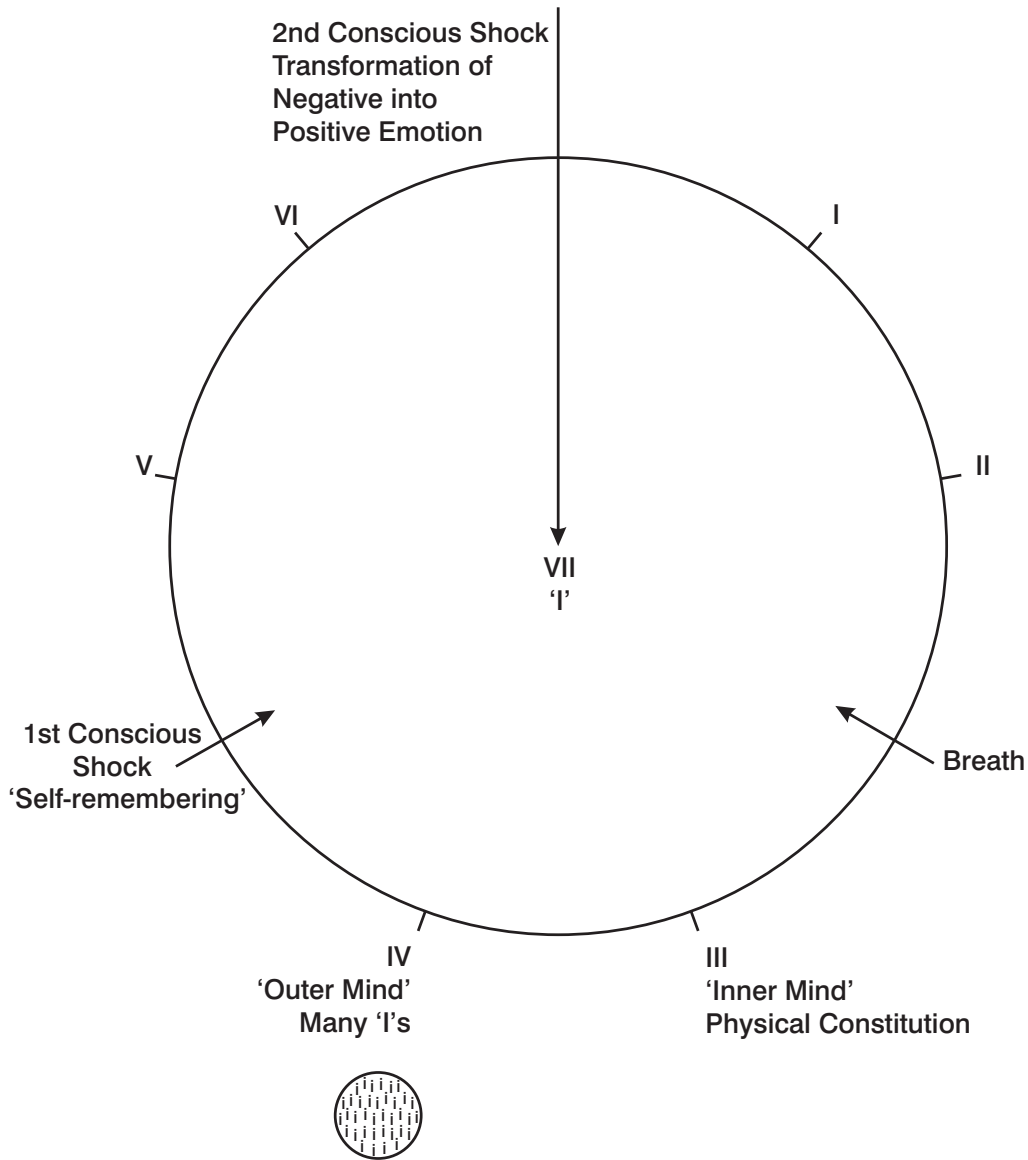


February 1960

READING 5

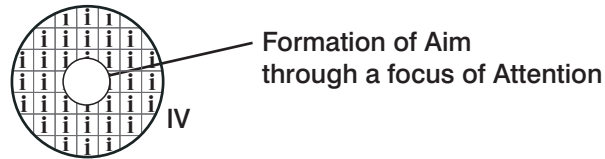
ALL GROUPS

My impression from what I have heard of your meetings last week is that it was all rather sad and difficult. Somehow (because of the way it has been put to you) the marvellous alchemy which right use of the Seven Principles could set up in you has only become just another problem to worry about.



The Fourth Principle – what we call our ‘mind’ – should simply be a mirror which, when polished, can reflect all Truth and beauty and let the Light in to the Inner Mind (III) which lives in the dark. While these two parts of the mind remain in their present disunited state, there can be no serenity or happiness. The shock that could unite them is called the ‘1st Conscious Shock’ – Self-remembering. We have all had glimpses of this back in childhood and since we came to the Work. All that we do together is meant to help us recapture those glimpses more often and make them go deeper and last longer.

The first need is to still this restless Outer Mind and one way is to give it a focus of Attention. That is why one is told to focus the attention on one's hand, adding a new point of view about one's hand each week, but at the same time being aware of oneself as a whole. Even this is evidently too difficult without the help of emotion.



So now in trying to find something to get you out of your 'February Blues', I recall that you were greatly helped two years ago by an extract from a small pamphlet called *The Alchemy of Happiness*. Here is part of the paper given you on February 24th, 1958:

As far as I know the phrase 'The Alchemy of Happiness' was coined by the Sufi Mystic Al-Ghazzali. His great work (the *Ihya ut ulum*, meaning 'The Revival of the Religious Sciences') has been one of the corner stones of the Mohammedan religion. It is full of stories, fables and parables, some of which were borrowed by Rumi and used in the Mathnawi. Because of the great length of his book, Al-Ghazzali made a much shorter version which he called the *The Alchemy of Happiness*.

The pamphlet mentioned above is shorter still, and from its five pages the following remarks can be quoted:

My subject tonight is the Alchemy of Happiness. The highest state of the soul in the Sanskrit language is called Atman which means happiness or bliss itself... Today we often confuse happiness with pleasure. Pleasure is only an illusion of happiness, a shadow of happiness, and in this delusion man perhaps passes his whole life seeking after pleasure, and never finding satisfaction. ... (Happiness is a state of the inner man and is not dependent on outside things.) The one who is happy is happy everywhere; in a palace or a cottage, in riches or poverty, for he has discovered the fountain of happiness which is situated in his own heart. ...

Happiness cannot be bought or sold, nor can you give it to a person who has not got it. All religions, all philosophical systems have taught man in different forms how to find it... And wise men have in some form or another given a method... and have called this process *Alchemy*. ... The stories of the Arabian Nights which symbolise these mystical ideas are full of the belief that there is a philosopher's stone that will turn metals into gold by a chemical process. ... Gold stands for Light or Spiritual inspiration... A person who follows a religion and has not come to the realization of Truth, of what use is his religion to him if he is not happy? A religious person must be happier than one who is not religious. If a person who professes religion is always melancholy, in this way religion is disgraced; the form has been kept but the spirit is lost.

The whole process of making gold is described by the alchemists in a symbolical way. They say gold is made out of *mercury*; the nature of mercury is to be ever moving, but by a certain process the mercury is first stilled, and once stilled it becomes *silver*; the silver then has to be melted, and on to the melted silver, the juice of a herb is poured, and then the melted silver turns into gold... The real interpretation of this process is that mercury represents the nature of the ever-restless mind realised especially when a man tries to collect his attention. ...

Such is the nature of mind, it becomes more restless when you desire to control it; like mercury it is constantly moving. When by collecting the attention one has mastered the mind, one has taken the first step... but for this stilling of the mind a special method is necessary and is taught by the mystic, just as singing is taught by the teacher of voice production. (Different methods are used in different Schools, in ours the method is 'Self-remembering'.)

When the mind is under complete control, and no longer restless, one can hold a thought at will as long as one wishes. This is the beginning of phenomena; but some abuse these results, and by dissipating the power, they destroy the silver before turning the silver into gold. The silver must be heated before it can melt, and with what? – with that warmth which is the Divine Essence in the heart of man which flows out as sympathy, humility, unselfishness in a stream of a thousand drops... The moment this happens the man really lives; he has unsealed the spring of happiness which overcomes all that is jarring and inharmonious.

After the heart is warmed by the Divine element, which is love, the next stage is the juice of the herb which is the influence of Truth itself. The love of Truth alone is not sufficient, knowledge of the Truth is clearly necessary. Knowledge of Truth strengthens man's belief in the Truth, throws light on the individual and on life. Things become clear; every leaf on a tree becomes a page of a holy book to one whose eyes are open to the knowledge of God. When the juice of the herb is poured on to the heart and warmed by the love of one's fellow men, then that heart becomes the heart of gold, the heart that expresses what God would express. This man has not seen God, but he has seen the reflection of God in man, and when this is so, then everything that comes from this man comes from God himself.

This, in brief, is the 'Alchemy of Happiness', and every one of us is capable now of taking the first step at any moment when one 'comes to oneself'.

Having stilled the 'mercury' it is necessary to solidify it into 'silver'. This can be done by repeating to oneself over and over again some short and simple prayer or aphorism which affects one emotionally. Prayer is used in this System to *fix* the harmonious state produced by the union of heart and head. You have had many examples in the different programmes which have been given you. Let each choose his own form of prayer but do not speak of it to anyone else. It is to be one's own secret. If you are at a loss which to choose, here are two examples – one a prayer the other an aphorism from the System:

1. 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.'
2. 'Give up your suffering and create Moon in yourself.'

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