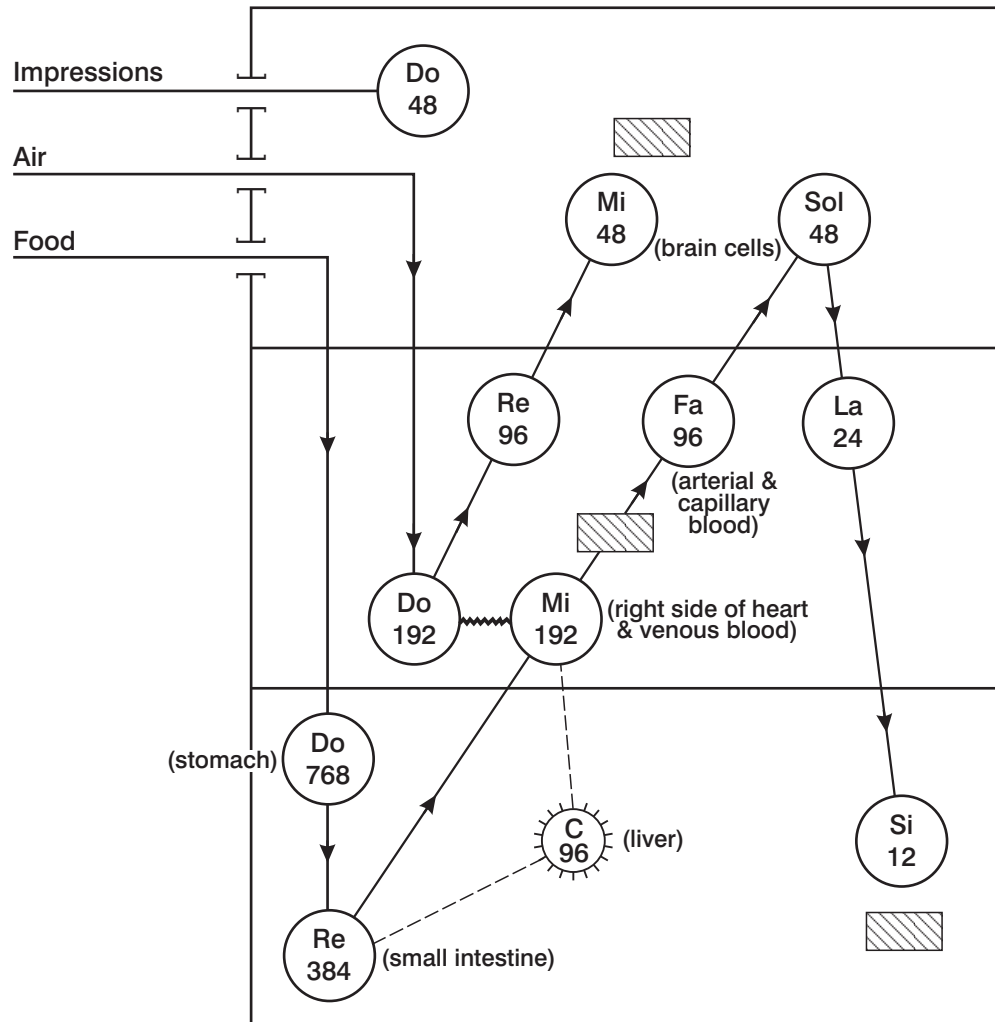


5 March 1962

THE METABOLISM OF FOOD (CONTINUED)

PART 1

(Put up Diagram of Metabolism, as before. [62/7 p.24])



You remember it was said that man was born an incomplete being; that Nature provides for his development only up to a certain stage, leaving him to do the rest himself. The Diagram of Metabolism shows three stages of development and you have seen Stage 1, namely the stage to which Nature brings him, and in which the vast majority of people live and die. Now we have to find out all we can about two further stages which man has to accomplish if he wants to realize his latent possibilities.

We said that whereas the necessary carbons are present in the organism at the entry of solid food and of air, no Carbon 12 is present at the point where impressions enter. What can that mean? What ideas have you from your own psychological experience?

(Discussion)

Perhaps we can understand more about it if we think by analogy in this kind of way. When solid food is seen or smelled by a hungry man, his mouth waters and the manufacture of enzymes

is speeded up all through his digestive system so that plenty of the necessary Carbon 192 is ready prepared for the first mouthful. It is the same with the second kind of food, the air he breathes. The intake of solid food into the stomach starts a reaction whereby an extrinsic factor in the food (probably part of the Vitamin B complex) meets with an intrinsic factor in the stomach to prepare a powerful material which is stored in the liver and is essential for the manufacture of red blood corpuscles. Consequently the blood (being pumped from the right heart into the lungs about three times during each breath cycle) is fully provided with the Carbon 48 in the form of the haemoglobin with which the oxygen in the air must unite. Quite apart from the air hunger produced by a shortage of oxygen in the air (as at high altitudes or deep in coal mines), we see examples in certain families of the absence of the necessary Carbon 48. Some families in whom there is a genetic lack of intrinsic factor in the stomach have a high proportion of people who develop pernicious anaemia, and we have to supply the necessary carbon either by giving injections of Vitamin B12, or of liver extract, or by feeding them extracts of normal stomach lining. These people have no hydrochloric acid in the stomach either, and this may have to be supplied to give them a sense of appetite.

Now what about impressions entering the organism as Oxygen 48? Why do some people appear to have a kind of pernicious anaemia as regards impressions? It is probable that in normal people there is enough Carbon 12 in the body but it is locked away somewhere and not in circulation. We notice that at the end of the food octave there is Si 12 in the lower storey, and this seems to manifest itself in sex or creative energy. While this powerful energy is limited to the lower storey, its function is confined to reproduction, which after all occupies a comparatively small amount of our time and energy! If not aroused it simply lies dormant and we are unaware of its existence. Perhaps those who know the feeling of really being in love, about which so many poets have written, will recognise the change that takes place all through the body and particularly in the vividness of impressions received in this state. One might say that Carbon 12 in the right place might mean being in love with Higher Impressions so that in relation to impressions one is able to 'separate the fine from the coarse'. In that long poem, the *Mathnawi*, Rumi likens the hunger of the mystic to a cat watching at a mouse-hole. At one time a mouse has come out of that hole, so the cat is there watching expectantly!

Or it may be that a man does certain School work or uses a particular method without expectation, but just because he is instructed to do so; and then moments follow in which he receives unexpected impressions from his environment, but because he has brought the necessary Carbon to the right place he is able to enjoy them.

One or two examples from literature illustrate this sudden and unexpected change. The first is from Fechner, who wrote:

On a certain morning I went out to walk. The fields were green, the birds sang, the dew glistened, the smoke was rising, here and there a man appeared; a light as of transfiguration lay on all things. It was only a little bit of the earth; it was only one moment of her existence; and yet as my look embraced her more and more it seemed to me not only so beautiful an idea, but so true and clear a fact, that she is an angel... But such an experience as this passes for fantastic. The earth is a globular body, and what more she may be, one can find in mineralogical cabinets.

The second is an account of Jacob Boehme's first experience in 1600 when he was 25 years old:

Sitting one day in his room his eyes fell upon a burnished pewter dish, which reflected the sunshine with such marvellous splendour that he fell into an inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could now look into the principles and deepest foundation of things. He believed that it was only a fancy, and in order to banish it from his mind he went out upon the green. But here he remarked that he gazed into the very heart of things, the very herbs and grass, and that actual nature harmonised with what he had inwardly seen. He said nothing of this to anyone, but praised and thanked God in silence...

It seems then that this very necessary Carbon 12 is locked away somewhere and only a particular key at any moment will work the lock. Therefore in the ordinary way the chances are a million to one against getting the right key at the right moment, as we know so well in our ordinary experience of love. So then from time immemorial men have asked whether they had to rely on this rarest of chances or whether some more or less universal method could be found. Many mistakes have been made about this First Conscious Shock, as it is called in the System, of which the essence is the mysterious expression, 'Self-remembering'. The particular triad which is needed to bring this shock is that described last week as the third kind of triad beginning with Nitrogen and ending with Carbon. On the analogy of artistic creation, where the idea in the artist's mind has to be manifested in the work of art. Many mystics have tried to meditate on the idea of 'God', or of 'Love', or of the 'Self', for long hours and even years; but as has been so vividly pointed out to us recently, this does not lead to Cosmic Consciousness. You are merely, we have been told, creating an artificial picture of God which, though it gives seemingly satisfactory results up to a point, definitely puts paid to full development. We can say that such an artificial picture could not be Carbon 12; it is merely something else on the level of 48. Something more clever and subtle than that is evidently necessary. In some systems, for instance that of Zen Buddhism, a shock is given to the ordinary feeling of 'I', the ego, so that by being enabled to forget the small personal self, one can realize or remember the Real Self, the Divine Self:

Matajuro wished to learn swordsmanship and found the famous swordsman, Ban-Zo. To his chagrin he was taken on, but told never to speak of fencing and never to touch a sword. He cooked for his master, washed the dishes, made his bed, cleaned the yard, cared for the garden, without a word of swordsmanship.

Three years passed. Still Matajuro laboured on. Thinking of his future, he was sad. He had not even begun to learn the art to which he had devoted his life.

But one day Ban-Zo crept up behind him and gave him a terrific blow with a wooden sword.

The following day when Matajuro was cooking rice, Ban-Zo again sprang upon him unexpectedly.

After that, day and night, Matajuro had to defend himself from unexpected thrusts. Not a moment passed in any day that he did not have to think of the taste of Ban-Zo's sword.

He learned so rapidly he brought smiles to the face of his master. Matajuro became the greatest swordsman in the land.

Unfortunately, except on the very highest level of School, this method only engenders prolonged identification and negative emotion – the opposite of Self-remembering!

In certain Sufi Schools another method is used. This is based on the fact that while the psychological wheels are turning all day, one never sees oneself, one never sees what mechanicalness is; just as you can only appreciate the revolution of a wheel by putting a stick between the spokes. An account by a traveller to Mecca in *Blackwood's Magazine*, December, 1961, contains a description of a visit to a Sufi retreat, and such of the work there as this novice was allowed to see:

One remarkable exercise was carried out by all members of the fraternity. At intervals during the day, when Sufis might be coming and going, or carrying on various allotted tasks, the Murshid would appear and suddenly shout the command 'Quiff!' Literally this means 'Stop!', and stop they did. Everyone froze in his tracks until the word 'Hu!' was given. During the period of 'freezing', the meditation of the Sufi Point of View, as it is called, was taking place. The theory behind this is that when a person is at an intermediate stage between one action and another, he can free himself from the limitations of the ordinary thought processes, which are held to be a barrier to concentration. I took part in this exercise in common with the rest.

In our Work, the special method of meditation which we have been studying seems to have in it similar great possibilities, but much more beside. Descriptions of it are meaningless; it is necessary to learn to practise it. It might, however, improve our chances of fulfilling all the possibilities of this method if we understood clearly about ourselves, why at times it seems clearly to bring the Carbon 12 to the right place whereas at other times it does not. We judge this not only by the half-hours but by progress over days and weeks, observing increasing function, warmth, interest and efficiency in daily activity. There is a hint in *The New Model* p.238:

... learn to distinguish the opposite currents in the rainbow stream of the present.

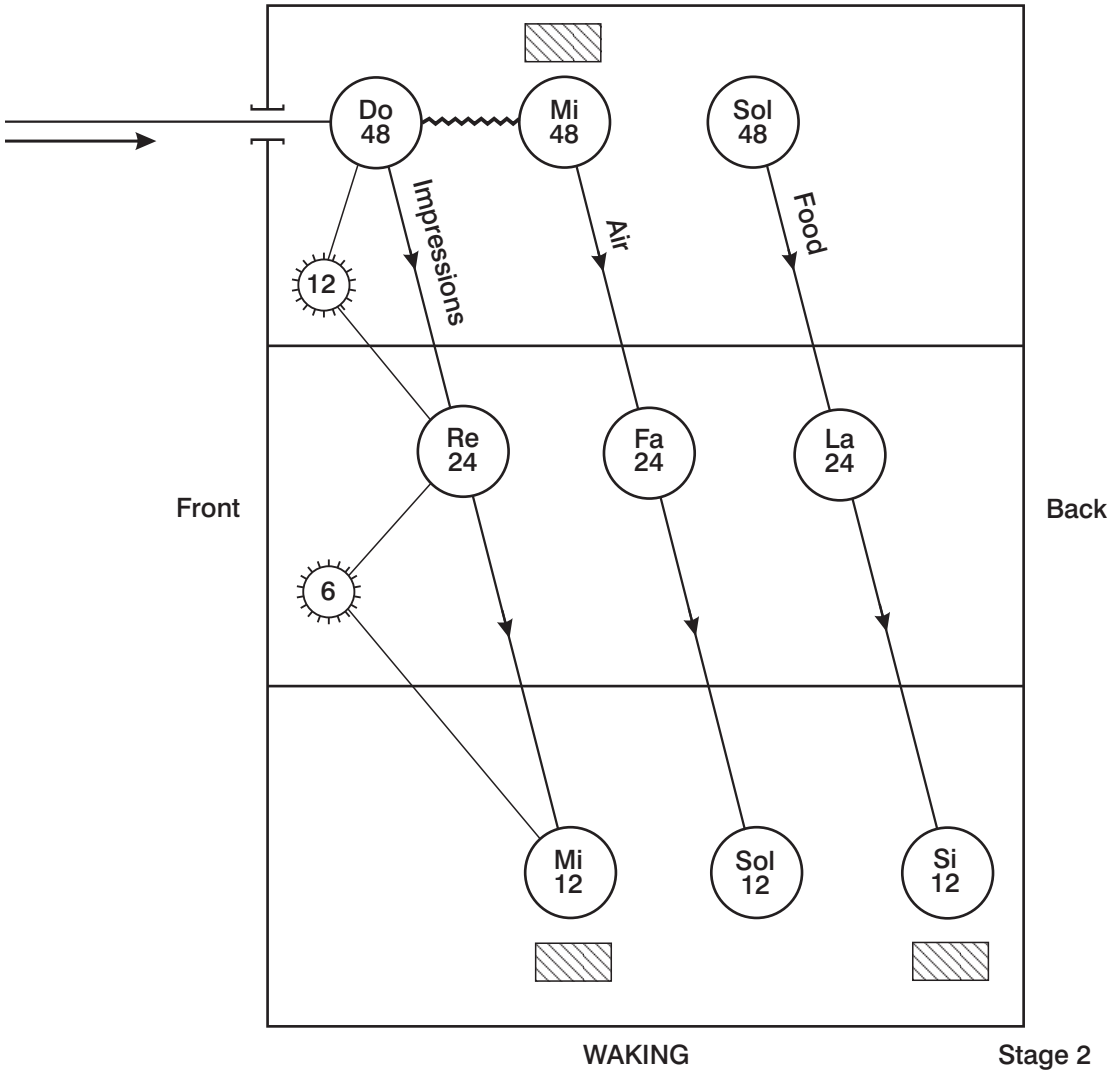
[Only for those practising the method of meditation:

It seems that this ancient method works in the following way. A certain sound (carefully chosen) is repeated without any thought of the meaning. The restless mind is constantly brought back to the repetition and when it is fully on the mantra, this shortest possible sound can take the mind deeper and deeper through the level 48, that is from the realm of thoughts, to the level 24, the realm of physical instincts and sensations, and on through that to the depths of one's nature, the level of Hydrogen 12. In the course of its passage the sound picks up or is permeated with these Hydrogens so that as it comes to the surface again it brings with it some of Hydrogen 12. The constant repetition of this process of 'deep diving' brings more and more Carbon 12 to the right place, so that when enough is accumulated it will remain there after the half-hours and impressions will have a glow of vividness throughout the day. If, however, the mind is mainly on something else, the sound is repeated purely mechanically with only a small part of the mind; the mantra will obviously not be free to go deeper and the result will be nil, or merely partial. But even a few repetitions during any half-hour with *the whole mind* inevitably give results. Though possible for everybody, this method requires patience and strict honesty with oneself – one is inclined to blame all sorts of irrelevant circumstances when really one has just not been repeating with the whole attention, or one has been content with partial results and has not taken it the whole way.]

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PART 2

The Figure below shows the second stage which the organism reaches after the First Conscious Shock. It is seen that the Impressions octave proceeds through Do 48, Re 24 to Mi 12, where it meets the first interval in the Impressions octave. Now just as the first step in the digestion of air takes the food octave over the interval from Mi 192 to Fa 96, so does the first step in the digestion of impressions take the air octave over its first interval from Mi 48 to Fa 24, Sol 12, La 6 and even Si 3. The change in the breathing is a noteworthy accompaniment of moments of Self-remembering, and is the reason why the whole organism seems to work differently following such moments.



(In giving the meditation one is constantly noticing the effect on the breathing during the first minutes of pronouncing the mantra at the initiation. When the candidate begins, the breathing is as usual rather rapid, shallow and inefficient. As the mantra begins to go deeper, the breathing often becomes slower and deeper for a few cycles. During this time the deep breathing is washing out the carbon-dioxide and other acids in the muscles and tissues. The carbon dioxide is the chief stimulant to the breathing centre. When it is washed out the breathing often stops for half-a-minute, to be succeeded by a very economical, almost imperceptible

breathing until the carbon-dioxide begins to accumulate again, when there is often a deep sigh. This economical respiration extracts more energy from the air breathed with less effort.)

There is much more to be understood about what it would mean for us if the air octave were to continue beyond Mi 48. The idea is this: for all of us the inspired air is the same, but the expired air can be very different because either more or less can be retained in the organism. If one adds to the idea of air all that is dissolved in the air, all the different scents by which we are surrounded, one may understand that the air truly can act as a kind of food of which we ordinarily enjoy very little.

Thus at Stage 2, the state of the organism is that the food octave has reached its second interval at Si 12, and the Impressions octave its first interval at Mi 12. For full development of possibilities a Second Conscious Shock is needed. The First Conscious Shock was at the mental level; this Second Conscious Shock is emotional. It has to do with the transformation of negative emotions into positive.

A full description of this will be given next week.

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