

12 March 1962

(Put up diagram of Metabolism of Food – Stage 2; 1962/10, p.39)

We have now to consider practically the steps leading up to the Second Conscious Shock which can be expressed as the transformation of negative into positive emotion. We can take again as a simple guide the words from the *Alchemy of Happiness*, '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 first two steps are both comprised in the diagram you see before you. The stilling of the restless mind or mercury, is mainly a private matter in each individual whereby for as long as he can during the day, he finds some way of seeking that still place which is more nearly Himself.

But it is easy to forget that the silver has to be melted in order to be ready for the Second Conscious Shock and the juice of the herb. This melting of the silver is something which no one can do by themselves. It means School work. The hard, cold silver is the separate ego; 'This is mine and I don't care what anybody else says'; 'Me and those other people'; 'My School and all the outsiders'. Prolonged meditation certainly can still the mind, but prolonged meditation without the discipline of School (or constant attendance on a man of Higher Being who exacts devotion to the Tradition in every movement and word), will only give rise to a sort of cold holiness which will make more enemies than friends. Or, alternatively, with the added energy of the meditation the boisterous ego will become quite unbridled. Neither of these possibilities would lead to the Second Conscious Shock and the Cosmic Consciousness which can follow.

Something of this function of School in melting the strong personality is to be found in one of Plutarch's *Lives*, and the following extract is taken from his *Life of Alcibiades*:

Many persons of rank paid their court to Alcibiades, but it is evident that they were charmed and attracted by the beauty of his *person*. Socrates was the only one whose regards were fixed upon the *soul*, and bore witness to the young man's virtue and genius; the rays of which he could distinguish through his fine form. And fearing lest the pride of riches and high rank, and the crowd of flatterers, both Athenians and strangers, should corrupt him, he used his best endeavours to prevent it, and took care that so hopeful a plant should not lose its fruit and perish in the very flower. If ever fortune so enclosed and fortified a man with what are called her goods, so as to render him inaccessible to the incision knife of philosophy and the searching probe of wise advice, surely it was Alcibiades. From the first he was surrounded with pleasures, and a multitude of admirers determined to say nothing but what they thought would please, and to keep him from all admonition and reproof; yet by his native penetration he distinguished the value of Socrates, and attached himself to him, rejecting the rich and great who sued for his regard. With Socrates he soon entered into the closest intimacy finding that he... studied to correct the errors of his heart and to cure him of his empty and foolish arrogance... Thus despising himself, admiring his friend, adoring his wisdom and revering his virtue, he insensibly formed in his heart the image of love... It surprised all the world to see him constantly sup with Socrates, take with him the exercise of wrestling, lodge in the same tent with him; while to his own admirers he was reserved and rough... Though Socrates had many rivals, yet he kept possession of Alcibiades' heart by the excellence of his genius and the special turn of his conversation, which often

drew tears from his young companion. And though often he gave Socrates the slip, and was drawn away by the flatterers who exhausted all the arts of pleasure for that purpose, yet the philosopher took care to hunt out his fugitive who feared and respected none but him... Hence that saying of Cleanthes, 'Socrates gains Alcibiades by the ear, and leaves to his rivals other parts of his body with which he scorns to meddle...' In fact, Alcibiades was very capable of being led by the allurements of pleasure; yet as iron, when softened by the fire, is soon hardened again and brought to a proper temper by cold water, so when Alcibiades was enervated by luxury, or swollen with pride, Socrates corrected and brought him to himself by his discourses; for from him he learnt the number of his defects and the imperfections of his virtues.

The following Zen story also gives the idea:

The Gates of Paradise

A soldier named Nobu-Shige came to Haku-In, and asked, 'Is there really a paradise and a hell?'

'Who are you?' inquired Haku-In.

'I am a Samurai,' the warrior replied.

'You, a soldier!' exclaimed Haku-In. 'What kind of ruler would have you as his guard? Your face looks like that of a beggar.'

Nobu-Shige became so angry that he began to draw his sword when Haku-In continued, 'So you have a sword! Your weapon is probably much too dull to cut off my head.'

As Nobu-Shige drew his sword Haku-In remarked, 'Here open the gates of hell!'

At these words the Samurai perceiving the master's discipline sheathed his sword and bowed.

'Here open the gates of paradise,' said Haku-In.

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When the preparation is complete, the skilled Master can, by a deft touch, give the shock. This may not require to be very big or violent, just as in a super-saturated solution the addition of a single crystal may crystallise the whole mass:

A Drop of Water

A Zen master named Gi-San asked a young student to bring him a pail of water to cool his bath.

The student brought the water, and after cooling the bath, threw on to the ground the little that was left over.

'You Dunce!' the master scolded him. 'Why didn't you give the rest of the water to the plants? What right have you to waste even a drop of water in this temple?'

The young student attained Zen in that instant.

He changed his name to Teki-Sui, which means a drop of water.

It comes to this so well-expressed sentence from the writings of Irenaeus quoted by our new Archbishop of Canterbury in his inaugural speech last year:

Offer thy heart to God in a soft and tractable state lest thou lose the impression of His fingers, lest by being hardened thou might lose both His craftsmanship and thy life.

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Needless to say, great understanding is necessary at this point because no one would wish to crystallize, which means to attain a point of no return, while there was a single weakness or bad characteristic which could be so perpetuated. This point is illustrated by the story of Achilles, whose mother, Thetis, dipped him in the water of immortality but had to hold him by one heel, which remained his weak point throughout his career.

The other way of expressing all this is to realise that the negative emotions, which are the chief obstacle to that positive emotion which is the summit of human ideals, are all based on 'imagination', lying to oneself, and 'identification'. Imagination in this System means all uncontrolled thinking processes which are going on without selection and discrimination. If discrimination is present, then this uncontrolled mental activity can be divided into that which leads to lying and distortion, and that which gives rise to creative ideas. In making this distinction certain laws of the Medes and Persians, a certain fixed standard or touchstone must be kept in the mind which is above doubt and above argument. For instance, 'I cannot do', or 'Negative emotions can never be justified'; or 'Help me to remember my own nothingness and Thy infinite greatness'; or the high ideal of the School if rightly understood.

'Identification' is a strange state in which the ordinary man spends half of all his time, the other half being spent in sleep in bed! Without School methods a man rarely gets out of this state even for moments. It is a state which gets worse the more emotional we are, a state of self-hypnotism, of taking everything personally, a state in which if you hear someone shout in the street you turn and think that he must be shouting at you. Or that some law is particularly directed against you; a state in which the small ego is the centre of the universe and everybody else must revolve around it. The meditation rightly used is a wonderful way of dropping all that, by bringing attention back constantly during a half-hour to a single impersonal focus. In finding ways of escape from these three curses, we allow the silver to be melted and we become ready for the Second Conscious Shock.

It is clear then, that for the melting of the silver discipline is necessary; but no one wants to have discipline for discipline's sake. It is too easy to imitate the methods of the beehive and the termitary. The School must have access to the 'juice of the herb' which is going to turn the silver to gold. The following extracts sent me by J.D.C. may help us to remember constantly the whole purpose of this Work:

From the Narada Sutra

1. We will now explain Love.
2. Its nature is extreme devotion.
3. Love is immortal,
4. Obtaining which man becomes perfect, becomes immortal, becomes satisfied.
5. And obtaining which he desires nothing, grieves not, hates not, does not delight (in sensuous objects), makes no effort (for selfish ends),
6. Knowing which he becomes intoxicated (with joy) transfixed, and rejoices in the SELF.
7. It cannot be made to fulfil desires, for its nature is renunciation.

Commentary

If any doubt remains as to the nature of Love of which the Sutra treats, whether it refers to human passion or that other wonderful attribute, divine in its nature, which man can manifest within himself, Sutra 7 sets this at rest. The very nature of Love is renunciation.

Love may be divided threefold:

1. Where the only motive is to receive. To take all and give nothing.
2. Where there is exchange, and the loving depends on being loved.
3. Where there is unconditional devotion, the giving all and seeking nothing, no recognition, no return.

In the first category must be placed the sensualist.

In the second, human love between man and woman, or between friends. Sometimes this is dashed with some fragrance of the third.

But he who holds the third, stands on the verge of himself being merged entirely in Love.

15. Definitions of love are now given according to different opinions.
18. Sandilya says it is the unbroken feeling of the Universal Self in one's own self. (duality)
19. But Narada says it is surrendering all actions to God, and the feeling of misery in forgetting God. (non-duality)
20. It is indeed Thus.

Sankaracharya the great expounder has pointed out that the teaching of non-duality comes as an amplification of other doctrines, not as a contradiction to them. The mind cannot always dwell on the highest but can drop back with safety to the conception of itself as separate from Deity. In Love there is no room for I, and Thou.

Self affirmation is death. Self negation is eternal.

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Our own Leader, Mr. P. D. Ouspensky, expressed the same thing in Chapter 15 of *Tertium Organum*:

But the problem of Love, in the contemporary way of looking at the world is regarded as something given, as something already *understood* and known. Different systems contribute little that is enlightening to an understanding of love. So although in reality love is the same enigma as is death, yet for some strange reason we think about it less...

In reality, Love is a *cosmic phenomenon* in which men, humanity, are merely accidents: a cosmic phenomenon which has nothing to do with either the lives or souls of men, any more than because the sun is shining men may go about their little affairs and may utilise it for their own purposes.

If men would only understand this, even with part of their consciousness, a new world would open, and to look on life from all our usual angles would become very strange.

...

Our entire world revolves around love as its centre.

Love unfolds in a human being traits of his which he never knew in himself. In love there is much both of the Stone Age and the Witches' Sabbath. By anything less than love, many men cannot be induced to commit a crime, to be guilty of treason, to reanimate in themselves such feelings as they thought to have killed out long ago. In love is hidden an infinity of egoism, vanity, selfishness. Love is the potent force that tears off all masks, and men who run away from love do so in order that they may preserve their masks.

If creation, the birth of ideas, is the light which comes from love, then this light comes from *a great fire*.

...

I have dwelt so long on the subject of the understanding of love because it has the most vital significance; because to the majority of men approaching the threshold of the great mystery, much is closed or opened to them in this way, and because for many this question represents the greatest obstacle.

In love, the most important element is *that which is not...* In this sensing of that which is not, and in the contact through it with the world of the wondrous, i.e. truly real, consists the principle element of love in human life.

...

He who is able to see beyond the 'facts' begins to discern much of 'newness' in love and through love.

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14 March 1962

The second conscious shock essentially consists in the transformation of negative emotion into positive. Positive emotions are those which cannot turn negative – Love, Joy, Faith – words which we use very lightly, emotions which we think we already have. They cannot be made out of nothing. They are made out of the material of our strongest emotions, Mi 12 and Si 12, which with us are always selfish and turn negative next moment. The shock has to be given at a moment when such an emotion is very strong in a given individual, and usually unexpectedly; such a situation has to be specially brought about. You can see, however, how far away we are from that. The slightest feeling of injustice or even of disapproval by someone else at moments when we are convinced we are right is enough to turn any of us negative and might even lead to our leaving the Work. Much further preparation is obviously necessary, and nothing more precise can be said at this moment. But since it is important to understand more about positive emotion, and how it differs from the strongest or finest emotions that we have, the following quotations may be helpful:

(see attached stencil sheets)

[Quotations missing]

