

REFLECTIONS ON THE HIGH INDIFFERENCE

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It is a common misconception that feeling is, in principle, capable of deeper penetration into the Beyond than cognition. While it is doubtless true, in the case of the majority of individuals, that a profounder insight is attained through the higher affections than through cognition, yet, as a matter of potential power, cognition can reach at least as deeply as the former. The fact that relatively only a small number of individuals have unfolded the higher possibilities of cognition simply implies that the difficulties are greater and this road requires the higher degree of self-conscious mastery. To prove, or at least build a strong presumption that the penetrative potentialities of cognition are not inferior to those of the higher affections, all that is necessary is to show that one individual in the history of the world has penetrated through cognition to a spiritual depth equal or superior to any reached by Those who have attained through the higher affections.

Now it is a fact that within the historic period no man has reached to a spiritual height superior to that attained by Gautama Buddha and by Shankara. With both these men, cognition is active at the highest level of Their expression of which we have record. This fact alone should be sufficient to cause men to pause and consider well before dogmatically asserting: "Not by thought but by feeling we enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Reflection concerning the state of Consciousness which I individually experienced while profoundly enveloped in the High Indifference has led to the suggestion that cognition not only has a power of penetration equal to that of the higher affections, but may, indeed, possess a superior penetrative capacity. In the discussion of the High Indifference in *Pathways* I stressed the fact that this was a State beyond desire and even one from which the individual could choose to act through Compassion, the highest of all the affections, but was Itself a level superior to Compassion as well as to all other differentiated qualities. The very word "Indifference" itself implies a Consciousness that is non-affective. Further, although I have submitted the Consciousness of that hour to the most careful examination I am not able to find in it an affective quality, save in the sense that all affections, as well as all other qualities, exist There both in the sense of potentialities and finished blendings. Of course, it is true that this consciousness is not cognitive, save in the same potential and blended sense.

It is clear that this Higher Consciousness as such must be completely non-relative. This Consciousness simply IS, and is the One Reality where now, and forever, all is, from an electron to a star. This Higher Consciousness is not what penetrates but is penetrated, and this penetration is done by some phase of the relative consciousness. The individual or subject-object consciousness phase of myself was present, at that time, on the sidelines, as a witness. Thus, in addition to the Space-I, the ever birthless and deathless, there was also present the point-I, and this supplied a self-conscious light superimposed upon the primordial Light of Universal Consciousness. Only because of this superposition was, and am I, able to say I was and am There and know this to be so. Now this self-consciousness implies the presence of some phase of relative or subject-object consciousness, and the real question is, "What was the quality of this relative consciousness?"

The relative consciousness that was present was highly alert in the cognitive sense. In fact, the feature that most impressed me at that time, and continues to seem of highest significance, was

that here was a Consciousness where the most primary principle of relative consciousness was no longer applicable. I refer to the fundamental principle of logic known as the Law of Contradiction. I not only noted this fact but studied it rather carefully while self-consciously in the State itself, for I realized that right in this fact was a principle of the very highest philosophical importance.

I found that the law of contradiction was not violated, but simply was and is not relevant in the ultimate sense. I am here noting the fact of this reflective state which proceeded *pari pasu* with the immersion in the High Indifference in order to make clear that active cognition did penetrate as far as I was self-conscious.

In contrast to the cognitive quality of the super-imposed relative consciousness, the affective quality was of the most perfect dispassion that I have ever known. Affectively I was indifferent. I was indifferent whether the body continued to live or not. The whole idea of a humanity suffering through entrapment in the world-field existed merely as a memory in the same sense that one may remember a dream. The whole problem of the world-field vanished because it was clearly no more than an illusion. The Self or God and finally sheer Being was the all-in-all, and nowhere was there anything that would possibly produce real suffering. The suffering we talk of in this relative field is only a dream, and that of only momentary duration.

I remember that the highest spiritual Authority who has spoken within historic times taught and exemplified the high value of compassion; I remembered that I had long been convinced that the Renunciation of Nirvana in the name of Compassion was the better course; I realized that there were those in this world who would feel that something was lost if I left the world-field completely; and finally, I remembered that I had been warned but a few weeks previously that a time would come when the drawing toward disembodied consciousness would manifest with extraordinary power; yet during the period that the relative consciousness was blended with That of the High Indifference there was no feeling relative to these considerations. For all relative considerations were too utterly unreal to arouse an affective state.

In fact, on the level of the High Indifference, it was impossible to choose a course of action that was either ethically meritorious or the reverse. In principle, any course could be chosen, but there was absolutely no basis by which one could judge any particular course of action as superior to any other. As a consequence, any decision reached There had to be formed by the relative consciousness before the Hour of the superposition of the relative upon the Higher Consciousness. The State itself is too completely dispassionate, too utterly balanced, to produce the attitude of 'care' or 'inclination' which are absolutely essential for the forming of choice in any direction.

I have stated that I was cognitively active, but this activity was not induced by nor aroused in the Higher State. Individually, I entered the State while cognitively active, and this activity simply persisted by something which we may call its own momentum. Thinking was in no sense necessary for the Higher Consciousness.

We come now to the question: How is it possible for cognition to penetrate into such a balanced and dispassionate State? The answer seems to be clear: Pure thought is essentially neutral and detached. Hence it is possible for thought to enter a field without introducing a quality of tension or disturbance. The result is that such a field can remain what it is, while thought records and judges, as an unconcerned witness. On the other hand, if thought is blended with the affections in any sense, the neutral or unconcerned quality is destroyed. This sets up a relationship of tension,

in some sense, with the field in question and the resultant is a distortion in greater or less degree. Now, any distorted field, however high or fine it may be, is something other and less than the perfect balance of the High Indifference.

The conclusion seems unavoidable—that neither pure affection, no matter how high, nor thought blended with affection in any degree, can penetrate to the level of the High Indifference so that self-consciousness may be retained on that level. Affection involves a relating of one's self as an individual to a given idea, situation or object and usually, if not invariably, implies an acting or reacting in some sense. All this is quite incompatible with the perfect balance that is a sine qua non of the High Indifference.

He who has once succeeded in blending self-consciousness with the Primordial Consciousness of the High Indifference knows thereafter, unequivocally, that he is identical eternally with that grand, spatial and selfless SELF. Let him act as much as he may within the myriad manifold of the formed worlds, he knows that he is but playing a part in a sort of dream-drama. He may play his part carefully and conscientiously, as a good actor must, but he never can regard that part with the same tragic seriousness which he had formerly. Deeply he may feel amused or bored with the play, but in any case it is all essentially something irrelevant so far as the enduring values are concerned.

In the High Indifference, he taps a Field of simply illimitable Authority and Power, and all this lies behind and within him as he plays his part. Knowingly he is identical with That which stands superior to all the Rulers of the formed worlds. These Rulers may have evolved far beyond him in the development of organs or relative action, reception and cognition; but, knowingly, he is rooted where They are rooted and thus derives Authority from the same and original source of all Authority. He recognizes, therefore, but one Master, and that is the High Indifference. All Others are Brothers, some older and more evolved in the time-field, others younger and less developed, and some of comparable degree. It is possible for him to speak and act with original and not simply derived and delegated Authority. In the name of that SELF, with which he knows himself to be identical, he can assume full responsibility. Only by forgetting or obscuration does he again become involved in guilt. Otherwise he is Free and Self-determined and one with the very LAW itself.

As I look back upon that Hour when the self-conscious light of the point-I was superimposed upon the primeval and eternal Light of the Space-I, I feel a decided drawing Thence. To be sure, THAT I is neither there nor here but everywhere and all-encompassing, but from the perspective of the point-I consciousness there are points and places and states. Thus, when in the relative sense, consciousness is focused in the world-field, that State when it was superimposed upon the primordial Light seems like a There or a Beyond. It is in this sense that I speak of what seems like a drawing toward Otherness. Here and now it seems as though there were imperfection and the endless travail of becoming. There, in that seeming Otherness, there is naught but Perfection and the absolute completeness of timeless Reality. Contemplated from the perspective of this outer dream-world, It looms as the utter adequacy of the Infinite Beauty, unmarred by any crudity of approximation.

How vain and childish seem all the desires, ambitions and achievements of this little world! How small are the victories of battlefields; how puny the power of all Caesars; how inadequate are even the achievements of science and art! Beyond all becoming with its inevitable crudities there

lies the eternal Perfection, and this is rich, beautiful, lovely and intelligent, far transcending the grandest flight of human imagination. There in that Place, which is no-place, now abides completed all accomplishments in time, whether of past or future. More than any man could possibly wish is There, and closer far than any possession of the form-worlds. For the Self of all is not other than that Supreme, All-encompassing and Eternal Perfection.