

Stress

Transcribed by J. Bailey (1995)

*Transcribed, diagrams and arbitrary headings by J. Bailey
Square brackets [] denote additions made to clarify points.*

[Eugene begins, as he does in many of these sessions with the reading of a written question.]

We have a very sticky problem tonight that has been worrying us for thousands of years: the question of whether we are tried more than we can actually bear. You know that according to the best theologians we are never tried more than we are able to bear the trial. And the question has just been raised, *how does this apply to the suicide?* Has he been tried too much?

We will start off with a circle to represent the *tabula rasa* of the scholastics, the man with a blank mind which is the hypothetical individual coming into being for the first time, so that his mind is presumed to be a kind of blank sheet upon which anybody may write, and which the first stimulus, entering, finds no opposition whatever. Let's pretend for a moment that this is a possibility. It isn't actually a possibility at all, but we will pretend that it is.

Imagine a being who comes in the world with no internal form whatever: it's just a just pure substance. This substance has only one power ... the power that the biologist calls irritability. And *irritability* means the ability to respond to a stimulus, to react to it, and to retain a trace of it — a memory trace — to retain the memory of both the incoming stimulus and its own reaction. And this is how the biologist uses the word, *irritability*. Irritability means the power to react to an incoming stimulus, and to retain the traces of the incoming stimulus, and the traces of its own response.

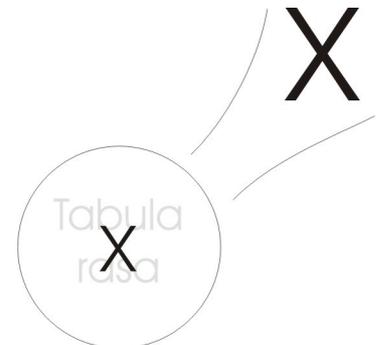
Characterising a Being

Now, let's pretend that we have such a being whose record level is zero, like the number on the gate outside that's lost its '1', [*possibly referring here to the gate at the front of the Liverpool venue*] and we have here simply this plain being, so that when a stimulus comes in, the stimulus enters into a zero characterised field ... so there is no formal capacity to react at all. Let's call this the first level of testing.

Now, when this first energy comes in, it enters a non-characterised field. That being so, there must be no resistance whatever to the incoming stimulus. Let's pretend for a moment that the incoming stimulus — the first one — is the first of the temporal series. We can call it, if you like, 1TS, the first of the temporal series. Now, when it comes in, it is coming in to a being of zero characterisation ... that is, a being that is formless on the inside. Consequently, the incoming stimulus cannot have a formal reaction. But the first temporal stimulus is its first *temptation*. Temptation simply means the presentation of temporal stimulation. So that when you are tempted it merely means that in a given time, a situation is presented to you, and you are to respond to it. And the mode of your response is your reply to the temptation.

Now, if you had the zero characterisation — that is, you are formless — when the stimulus comes in, we'll pretend this stimulus is X, it just goes straight through the being and writes X within the being. Now if this is so, this mysterious X, the experience form, cannot be evaluated at all because there is nothing to evaluate it against. It is the first formal presentation and it is coming into a formless being. Because the being is formless it cannot judge at all, and consequently the first stimulus simply writes its own name inside the being.

So its first temptation is quite simply one that it meets innocently. The first dispensation is the dispensation of innocence. If you read the theological development in the Bible, you will find that Adam in the Garden of Eden, prior to the Fall, is said to be in the dispensation of innocence ... which means that when the stimulus comes to him for the first time, he cannot possibly know anything about it. Consequently, his reaction to it is nil. It simply

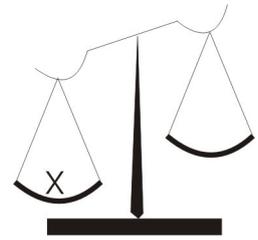


means that the incoming stimulus writes its own name inside this protoplasm.

So his first temptation, he responds to innocently.

Now, how about the second temptation? He hasn't judged on the first one because he had nothing to judge it with. The symbol of judgement — we've said it before — is simply a pair of scales, a balance. So in the first place he had nothing in the pans at all ... so he hasn't got a weight.

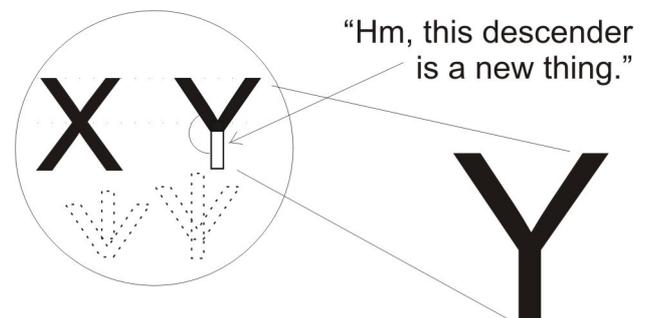
So, if we put X on one side suddenly — that's the incoming stimulus — it simply means that X weighs down the scale, the balance arm tips, and the other one goes up. It can't help going up at all, because there's nothing to weigh against the X. So it responds to its first temptation by simply accepting it. This is what happened to Adam and Eve when the first temptation — whether they would eat of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil — presented to Eve, she hasn't got a reason to refuse. After all, God didn't tell Eve not to eat it, He only told Adam, and as Adam happens to be Eve's husband, there is no reason at all why she should take any notice of what hubby has said.



So consequently, she listens to the *serpent*, which means the *external stimulus*, and the external stimulus going in simply writes its name on her, and says a three-fold thing: "This knowledge of good and evil is a fruit, good to look at, pleasant to eat and conferring knowledge like the gods have." So she eats, innocently. They've not yet been in trouble, so they haven't got anything to judge it by. Adam does as his wife says, and then they're both in trouble.

So the first temptation is simply the presentation of a stimulus into a state of formlessness. The formlessness cannot formally react, and therefore it simply accepts. So the response to the first stimulus is the acceptance — which is the letter *aleph* or the Greek *alpha*, which is the infinitely formless — accepts any stimulus whatever, and therefore the first character is simply the character of the incoming stimulus. Now the statement is that *a being is never tried more than it can stand*, and when this first stimulus comes in, certainly the being is not being tried more than it can stand because it assimilates the incoming energy. It simply becomes characterised by the incoming stimulus.

Now let's pretend another stimulus comes inside, and it isn't X — this time it's Y. So now the incoming stimulus comes in and it writes a letter Y inside the being. The being now looks at the X inside itself and at the incoming Y, and it can feel that X is not Y. Now at this point it has two forms, one that's been in for some time and that it has adjusted itself to, and a new one that it has not adjusted itself to in the same degree. But as it comes in, it can then evaluate where the new stimulus energy is either similar to or different from the first stimulus.



You can see from the letter Y that it would fit the top half of the X quite nicely, vibrate with it, harmonise with it, but the descender of the Y would not fit the X. So we would say the being now would now respond by saying this Y fits the top part of the X but it does not fit the descender on the Y. So it now feels a peculiar form in the centre, the descender of the Y, as a new thing.

Now at this point, it can, if it wills, say, "I don't like this," and proceed to repress it. Or it can say, "I do like it," and proceed to try to enhance it ... maintain it in existence. If we look at it we find that this new descender — unlike the two top parts of the Y that correspond with the top part of the X — the new descender introduces another formal interest into the being. In fact, it gives a sort of three-fold mark, upside down, something like the mark of Cain or a mark of Her Majesty's postbags and criminals; the three nails of the Cross or the bow and arrow.

And then we can see that the introduction of this letter Y into the already engrammed X situation produces a possibility of a greater enrichment of form. And it introduces several new angles which we can examine, and which produce new harmonics, new experiences. But, the being is actually presented with an occasion of choice because it can, if it wills, press on this Y and try to stop it vibrating, try to reduce it to its minimal form. It cannot eliminate it completely. It can reduce it to a very low level. Whether it does so is entirely within the will of this being. And because it's in the will of that being to either repress or to augment the vibration of the incoming stimulus, therefore we talk about the responsibility of the being to make a choice, in a situation where choosing is presented. [11:17]

Here then we see on the presentation of the second stimulus that the being, having experienced X and now experiencing Y, can choose to repress either the X or the Y, or to maintain them in equilibrium. Nothing can constrain it not to do either of these things, or force it to do one at the expense of the other. It can respond within the stimulus framework. So that in the second stage, it is no longer innocent because it is characterised by the first stimulus. So it has some mental furniture to which it refers when it is making its choice.

Viewed algebraically like this it doesn't perhaps seem very concrete. But in fact, if we change X for one person and Y for another person and call our original being A, A is presented with X and Y — that is Albert presented with Xenophon and Yetta, the girl with the curly hair from the delicatessen shop, presented with both at once — will have a certain kind of complex response pattern. But here again we can see that the occasion of choice is quite simple. This being is not being tested beyond its power to respond. It has got form within it, and it does know the form that it has, and it can evaluate the incoming stimulus with the stimuli it has already assimilated inside itself. So it is not being presented with a stimulus situation that it cannot react to adequately.

Now, once we've understood this principle we can see that no matter how many new stimuli we have put in, we are always putting them into a being already characterised, which being has actually assimilated the first one innocently ... and the next one not quite innocently, but in a very simple judgement based on the comparison of two different stimuli, quite simply.

Now according to the way it chooses, so at each level it is presented with another choice, and the choice at each level is simply the resultant of all its previous responses to given situations. So that no matter how tense the situation may be later on when it is very fully characterised, the situation is still exactly the result of the series of choices made. And it is the inevitable result of those choices made, and consequently it cannot be said that something has been imposed upon it that it didn't ask for.

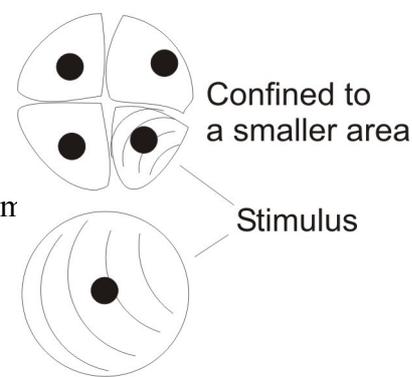
This means there is no injustice. A mysterious, omnipotent God behaving in an arbitrary manner and imposing tests on people that they shouldn't be subjected to, is just not true. When a test is subjected, or a test is put on a subject, the subject has progressively put himself in the position to get precisely that test and not another, because he has in fact made the necessary choices beforehand to get there. [14:45]

Continuity of Protoplasm

Now, we had this the other day when a patient quarrelled very bitterly about being put in a position of choice by his parents. And he that he had not done this himself, he had been put in the position of this choice and it was unfair that he should have visited upon him the necessity of making this choice. And I said, "Let us look at a very simple diagram," because this particular man is an architect and he draws plans and things. I said, "Let us draw a circle and say that is any given human being. And we know that this human being, if it is multiplied, must divide. So in order to have a child, it must cut itself. It may cut off a little bit, another time a little bit, or it may cut itself a big lot off, but it cuts some off. What we call the sex cells inside any being are simply portions of the original plasm, the protoplasm of that being, the living plasm cut off specifically to extrude ... to make a child.

Now, before it is cut off, before this division into the somatic or body cells and the sex cells, the whole thing is one protoplasm. Now, if you remember that when the little worm in *the lowly worm experiment*, was subjected to an electrical shock and an electrical lamp was switched on, so that after repeated electric shocks and switchings on of the lamp, the worm jumped when the lamp was switched on ... even when there was no electrical shock. Now subsequently, the division of this worm and the progeny of this worm reacted in the same way that the original worm did. That is, after several generations when you switched on the light they all jumped. Now why did they jump? Did they jump because they were individuals unjustly imposed on by their wicked jumping worm ancestors? No. In fact, each one of those worms was a tiny bit of the original protoplasm that had received the shock. It was not another worm. It was in fact the same protoplasm ... it was the shocked protoplasm that had again jumped.¹

Now in exactly the same way, the whole human being, before the process of cell division within the egg, the egg is a whole egg with no divisions, and we say that it responds protopathically — that is, it feels in the original mode that life feels — utterly without discrimination. Prior to the wall being built inside the egg it is responding totally, non-



¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planarian> see under the heading "bio-chen

discriminatingly ... that is, protopathically. And in so doing, it is reacting as if it were an innocent. But as soon as we get a form inside it, the form of the first wall — before the others have appeared and it divides itself into many millions — on the appearance of the very first wall, if a stimulus is now inserted, it goes through the protoplasm, hits on the wall and is reflected. And thus the stimulus is confined to half of the egg. And if it goes on dividing itself more and more, progressively, when a stimulus comes, it is confined to a smaller and smaller area. So in the process of this internal division there is in fact the isolating of a stimulus to one particular point and the relative freeing of the rest of the protoplasm from the reaction. [18:48]

Any given one of those given cells can become a child of the next generation. But whatever it is, it is still the same protoplasm of the so-called preceding generation — it is the same protoplasm. And at this point, no child can say to its parents, “I should not have had this inflicted on me by them,” as if in fact they were separate ... they are not. This existing child — the existing protoplasmic masses in this room — are all simply the continuations of previously existing masses of protoplasm, and they are all engrammed, formally charged and emotively charged, by the experiences the same protoplasm has had in the previous generations. So there is then no conceivable excuse for any given generation pretending that it is suffering unjustly. [19:49]

Has this man sinned?

There’s a rather tricky problem raised in the New Testament where the rabbis say, trying to catch Christ, “Which sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind” [John 9:2].

It’s a trick question. They want to say to him, “Has this man sinned? If so you are teaching Old Testament justice. He is a re-incarnating soul, he has sinned in a previous existence and now he is blind and that is our Old Testament justice. Therefore do not talk to us of forgiveness, that is, of injustice.”

On the other hand, if he says, “It was not this man who sinned but his parents”, then this man is paying the price for his parents and it is still Old Testament law, because it says the sins of the fathers shall be upon the children to the third and fourth generation. So if he answers the question in either of the two ways they want him to, he will support the old dispensation. This he has no intention of doing, and therefore he says, “Neither this man nor his parents caused this being born blind, but he was born blind that the works of God might be made manifest.”

“That the works of God might be made manifest”

What does that mean? “That the works of God might be made manifest.”

Let’s start with the biggest sphere we can conceive, the one that the theologians used to prove the existence of God. And we’ll call this the big work of God. This is His Magnum Opus, the Cosmic Logos. This is the cosmic body of the Christ, and inside this cosmic body, again there are divisions. In my Father’s house are many mansions [John 14:2]. So we have to draw many mansions inside it.

Now here’s the progressive in-working within the universe of God — that is the spiritual power — having circumscribed the great big sphere, any subsequent working He does is going to be inside the sphere. Now imagine that this sphere contains within itself in perfect dynamic equilibrium, all the forms of all possible activities whatever, and all forms therefore of every conceivable individuality whatever, because an individual is simply a type of actuality. Individuals are actualities ... that is, they are ways in which power is acting. And the characteristic form of any individual is simply the characteristic formal way in which he has acted and is acting. [22:35]

Now, one man is born blind in here, and the rabbis want to know, did he sin or did this larger chap, of which he is a bit, sin? Now, the thing about that question, it reveals them not to go far enough back. They are thinking in a very short time scale about this man and his mother and father, possibly his grandmother and grandfather, but they’re not thinking back out of the time process into eternity. And eternity as we’ve said before, means the Hé trinity or three-fold spiritual power. And the whole sphere of Cosmic Being is *the* work of God. And to manifest that whole sphere there must be at least one of every possibility. There must be a blind man, and a crippled man, and a crazy man and so on, within this universal sphere, because without them we can never comprehend all the possibilities of being. So if there is a blind man inside there, he is only blind in order that the works of the whole macrocosmic sphere may be made manifest.

Manifest means *made fast in order to be evaluated*. You know that the root *man* means *to evaluate*,

to count. *Manifest* means *made fast in order to be evaluated*. Now this man is born blind, and by means of this blind man all the other men round about can look at this blind man and meditate on the meaning of eyes.

Perhaps, here is Lazarus and he's died and he is an occasion whereby it is shown that death is not a final state ... because he can be lifted up. Did Lazarus sin that he died in this way? Was he saved from his sin, or was the whole situation simply another necessity of manifesting the totality of cosmic possibilities? [24:40]

Good, Bad and Temptation

As soon as we allow that God is omniscient, we say 'He knows everything.' And He doesn't only know good things, He knows rubbishy things too. He knows every conceivable aberration that ever infested the schizophrenic's brain, but to Him they are not things that are wrong, they are all right. Everything He knows including the silliest joke is valid, not as a good thing but as a good-bad thing. So, if there is an apple going rotten, it isn't a *rotten* rotten apple, it's a very good example of a rotten apple. And when we can understand that everything that does occur within the universe, the so-called good and the so-called bad, are all good — especially the bad ones — then we can understand what it means that any given thing, like a man being born blind, or another man smelling four days in the grave and annoying his relatives in order that there can be a resurrection, when we can understand this, then we are raised to the level where temptation becomes for us just another means whereby we exercise ourselves more efficiently. [25:50]

We've seen that the original protopathic or formless state of a being is such that when a stimulus comes in nothing happens, except that the stimulus records itself. So that the innocent — that is, the person with no formal knowledge at all — responds simply by accepting. But when the next stimulus comes in he doesn't have to respond simply by accepting, he can respond by comparing the old stimulus, accepted in his innocence, with the new one. And as he chooses to superstress one or the other, or to equilibrate both, or try to repress both, so he moves on to his next stage of development. But at each stage he is presented with a concrete situation in the time process. And this concrete situation in the time process is called the temptation. Called the *temptation* because the *tempt* in tempt means *time*.

When we come into the situation, and we see the man born blind or anything whatever that we don't like, we have to evaluate it against the existing forms within us, or we have to refuse to evaluate it. And we can refuse to evaluate it either negatively, that is, in a repressive manner and create a neurosis for ourselves, or we can say, *I refuse to evaluate it serially at all, I have not sufficient data to evaluate it properly, but I comprehend that ultimately it must be evaluated within the whole sphere of universal actualities*. And when we go into it at the universal level we say we accept the thing, no matter how bad it is.

Now if we learn the lesson of this, we find any given individual — who is just a little snippet of the Super Individual, the Cosmic Being — any little individual complaining that what is happening to him is unjust, is simply misconceiving his real relation with the universe. He is a portion of the universe. And in so far that he is a time being, he is the embodiment of all the previous choices of his same protoplasm when it was in the ancestor's body. [28:18]

Thus, if Abraham made a certain choice about Isaac, and then later on Isaac breeds and has babies, those babies are a portion of the same protoplasm that was very nearly sacrificed, and escaped. So they have a sort of engram pattern in them that when they are being sacrificed there will always be a ram to appear and save them. And this gives them a sort of positivity to the idea of being sacrificed. They believe, when they feel that somebody is trying to sacrifice them, they immediately will sit down and wait for the ram to appear. And they expect that the ram will appear.

Now people that have been sacrificed and no ram has appeared and they have been killed, then they do not breed in the time process immediately but they lapse from the time process and their energy returns into its original focal centre. And then, if it's lucky, it may get back into the time process elsewhere, plus the memory of the fact that when sacrificial night descends, lo! it really does descend, and this modifies their behaviour.

But, each time they are presented with an occasion of choice, they are never deficient in the form within themselves that can enable them to solve the presented problem. This means that no being can actually get into a situation that it is unjust for him to be in. This means that when a so-called innocent

baby — let's take these Siamese twins that were born recently, and a surgeon separates them and one dies — is it unjust that one dies and the other lives? Well, not really, because this particular protoplasm which became these twins, was obviously needing this separation process in itself, otherwise it wouldn't have joined itself together in this way. There's an excessive stress on the saturnine process. There's too much clinging in the beings that are generating. And they are the same protoplasm that was in the parents, and these parents are the same protoplasm in the grandparents, and so on. The psyche of the one that dies thus returns into its prior equilibrium beyond the time process, and waits its time for re-entry, plus its own lesson. [30:50]

If we can accept all these things properly, simply as occasions whereby we reassess our own position in relation to the whole, then we are alright and we can survive any kind of test whatever. But if we pretend that really any single one of these little houses within the big macrocosmic dominion — if we pretend that any one of these houses is severable, separate from the others, and has a vacuum round it and is independent — then the sense of injustice arises within it because it cannot account for the peculiar way that it suffers experience. And with the erroneous concept that it is a separate being, evaluating itself from this concept it will always get into progressively worse trouble. And it must be driven inevitably to the point where it can feel its identity with the very thing it has rejected, because ultimately when it separates itself from the rest, it does so egotistically to lift itself above the rest. And dialectically the end result of that is ... it must be overthrown by the rest.

So that any given individual, whether it's a Hitler or Mussolini or even a more tolerable fellow like a Churchill, climbing up to a certain level, in separating himself from the rest — in so far as he conceives himself to be really separate, and triumphing by means of his separativity — by that measure he will be brought down to realise that he is not separate, not severable, and must have a reaction back onto his centre from every other portion of the Cosmic being.

We see then very shortly that no being can in fact be presented with a stimulus situation for which he has not got adequate internal form to respond to. No matter how bad the situation may appear, no matter how much injustice the partial view in seeing it, the wider view will always see that precisely this individual and not another one has moved inevitably step by step from generation to generation, into just that position. [33:30]

Recently there was a case of digging up an old murder trial again, and the psychologist tried to show that this given murderer had been badly repulsed as a young man, by a girl, and tried to show that if this girl had been less obnoxious in the way she got rid of him, he wouldn't have resented so much as to start killing women later on. Now if the analysis is true, it simply means that when he started killing ladies and then hiding them under the wallpaper and so on, that he was in fact simply responding to an energy input from one of the beings of the same order that he was killing. In other words, he has a mental picture of woman as a repulsive thing that pastes you under the wallpaper. And he represses this thing and then later on he finds himself in a stimulus situation with large supplies of wallpaper and women, and proceeds to get the brush out and put them under the paper. Now he does this in this analysis quite mechanically, because he has no awareness of his real position. In the purely mechanical sense this kind of thing does happen.

We've had other occasions that we've known about, with murder mysteries and so on, where the particular type of the crime has indicated the mental state of the person committing it. And by means of a study of the type of the crime it has been possible to isolate the characteristics of the murderer and eventually to run him down and find him. Whereupon he — who has really been scape-goated by the persons releasing the forces that force him to do it — now has to pay the price and send back to them the lesson of pursuing him. Because of course if they had any mercy they wouldn't pursue him in any case. Then, if they had any mercy in the first place they wouldn't have been doing it.

So we find that whatever the initial form put into a being immediately conditions the nature of that being's responses, so that the next stimulus coming in must be evaluated over against the first one, or the first one must be suppressed and the new one reacted to as if it were the first. That this is always an occasion of choice. It's a very simple statement, but if we absorb the meaning of it properly we will never resent anything whatever that happens to us, no matter how bad it may be. And, when something horrible does happen to us we will know that we have wangled ourselves into that position. No matter how many generations it has taken us to get there, it is this very protoplasm which has taken those steps, one by one, that has put us in the position we find ourselves. And therefore, absolutely, there is no injustice at all.

One of the things raised was whether the gentleman who fell in the sea after doing a bit of orbiting today, whether he had, in fact, been treated badly. Supposing all the men who were doing the calculations miscalculated. Was it an injustice that this man fell in the sea? Supposing he had been drowned, would it have been bad for him to drown? Would it have been wrong for him to drown? Would it be unjust for that volunteer to drown?

And the answer is it couldn't be unjust, because he got into that position. He puts himself in the position. No matter how weak a person is they can put themselves in a position by choosing. Whether they choose to go under a surgeon's knife, or under electric shocks, or simply under the state of marriage, whatever it is they put themselves under, they will suffer it because they have actually evaluated their own inner form in a certain way, and this has led them inevitably to be presented with a new occasion of choice. [37:56]

Can we say anything more about it?

Does the X, in this sense, as it were, condition the Y, then? X once having been as it were impressed into the being, is the nature of the next stimulus partly its initial forming pattern's attraction, as it were?

Conditioned Responses

Well we have actually said this, except that it is not that the X conditions the Y that's coming in. Let's draw two men. We'll pretend the big circle is a woman. And there are two men here. This is man number one — he's her first experience. He's what the characterologist would call a picnic type. He's a jolly little fellow you see? And this woman is characterised by this experience. And he's a very jolly little fellow and she has twenty years of delightful existence with him. Then he suddenly blows a fuse and dies, as this type tends to do. Now the next time she is presented with a situation, it might be that the next man is an Essenic type with a very long body and gangly arms hanging down, and a long nose.

Now she is presented with an occasion where she will say to herself,

- “Oh, either I can say this one isn't like my first one which I enjoyed and therefore I reject it.”
- Or she can say, “This one is not like the first one I enjoyed, I wonder if possible that this one could be enjoyed in another way. The first one could roll about, perhaps this one can stand up and be run around or something.”

In other words, the being with the experience is in a position of either seeing it positively as a new opportunity for further characterising experiences, or it can say it isn't like the old pattern of my joys and therefore I'm not going to have it. Now it is not that the first form — in this case the picnic man — is determining the response to the second one. That isn't so. If that were so, the whole universe would be entirely mechanical. If the first form put in, in the experience, were the determinant of the attitude to the second form, then all behaviour would be purely mechanical, and the word *freedom* would be meaningless.

What actually happens is that when the experience is had — in this case, the joyful experience with the picnic type — when this experience is had, all that happens is that the cyclic, the being having the experience, chalks up the characteristics of this particular experience. But the will of this being can say to itself, “I would like more of this,” or it can say, “well, maybe I've understood enough of this and I should try another type.” And this is entirely within the free choice of the being itself. It is not in any sense mechanically determined by the first stimulus.

And we have to be quite clear about this, because if a person believes that it is characterised by the first stimulus, he will suffer from self-hypnosis. He will actually respond mechanically to a stimulus situation, because he has said to himself, “My first experience conditions my second one.” So the way we view our experiences, the way we verbalise them, and specifically the way we suggest to ourselves that the response will go, is really simply super-imposition of a form of experience by a being upon itself. There is no mechanical determination by the form of experience quite independently of the will of the being. All the form of the situation can do is record that it was pleasant or unpleasant ... and in what way. It cannot of itself force the reaction to the next stimulus. But, if the will of the being is very strongly orientated towards that old pattern, it is the will and not the pattern that determines what will be the response to the next situation. [42:38]

Freedom

I know a woman who has been married five times. She is a very positive woman. She wore out four husbands, and that was because she was a very strong woman and they were very weak husbands. She has never felt at all guilty about this, although her unmarried sister thinks that she should have felt very, very guilty about it, because she could have used any one of the four dead ones. Now, in this kind of situation the positivity of this much married lady shows itself to be what it should be — namely life, unconditioned by its previous experience. And this is the real message of religion. Whether we talk about Christianity or Buddhism or Taoism, any kind of religion is talking about freedom of how to gain it.

And freedom is freedom from something. There is a freeing and there is a doming and there is a self-determination within freedom. And what we have to free ourselves from is our past judgements, based on our past experiences, so that we can evaluate now in the light of the presented situation — not determined by the past one so that we are forced either to reject or accept the new one — but to evaluate the new one simply as a new kind of experience. If we like to look at the characterisation of ourself derived from previous experiences, and then write a little note about it in relation to the present experience, that is alright. But if we allowed our past experience in any way to condition our present response, we are to that much irreligious ... in the real sense. [45:04]

Immediacy and Importance

Spirit is free. And when Jesus says *the Spirit blows where it lists and you can't tell where it goes to or where it came from [John 3:8]*, he is talking about what the Zen Buddhists call *immediacy*. You must respond immediately in the present situation to a stimulus. If you allow yourself to be conditioned by your previous experience, it simply means that your previous experience has locked you up, tied you up and reduced you to a kind of machine. And it has only done this with your consent ... because nothing can lock you up unless you will it to do so.

If we remember that the word *important* means what it says, *in-carrying* [*'port* as in the French *'to carry'*], the letter N becomes M before a labial, P is pronounced on the lips and the N isn't, so economy says either pronounce the P where the N is, in which case it won't sound like a P at all, or pronounce the N where the P is, in which case it will become an M. It is more economic to say *import* than to say *in port*. Because when you say *in-port*, your tongue has to go just behind your teeth and when you say *import* you say it with your lips.

So N changes to M before a labial sound. So *in-port*, *in-carry*, turns into *import*. And that is *important* into which we carry our will. This means there are no importances whatever in the whole universe or in any worlds whatever other than this simple fact: wills are carrying themselves into the situation.

Not very long ago, a woman whose husband died said to me, *I am not going to die, I am going to dig the garden instead. I will now have more time than I used to have to dig the garden*. But funnily enough, she died very quickly. But she died because she wanted to let her husband know very, very strongly, that she was digging in the garden. And it seemed to her that it was terribly important that she should let him know. So off she went. Now if she had *really* thought the garden was more important than the husband she would have stayed to dig. But in fact she was thinking he was more important than the garden, so she went to find him.

Now this very often happens with people who are related together closely, emotionally, but it is not a necessity at all. It is simply that the will of A has willed to go to B, and there is no other bondage whatever in the whole universe, or in any worlds whatever other than this: the will creates importances and it does it by simply willing-in, carrying itself in to the situation.

So, if anybody says, *Are you aware of the importance of this?* One should say, *Who is carrying in his will into this situation?* Because there is no importance other than this. So if you see a note is marked *important* and an arrow pointing to some words, it probably means that the fellow who arranged for the printing of this notice wants you to carry your will into the situation, and is giving you a directive. You might think it is not important and write a strange symbol underneath it. If you do so it will be an index of how important you think something else is.

Karma and Samsara

The important thing to realise is that the will is the sole creator of importance. And therefore there can be no injustice whatever because the will has willed every step of its own evolution and has retained, by the law of the irritability of its protoplasm, the characterising forms of its experience. And consequently when it wills to refer to its experience and to act upon the basis of its experience, it is willing to act like a machine. And it must then mechanically go on calculating what to do next on the basis of what it has already done ... but this is bondage, this is slavery. [49:31]

You see this in the simple word of the Indian philosophers: *Karma*. Karma means action/reaction, or action on the basis of experience and trying to relate to a present situation in the light of a past situation. It doesn't mean anything else, because it is made, if we leave the R, from the word Kama, which means love or desire ... the Latin cupidity. Kama ruling is Karma, which means to say that the records of all the things you have desired inside you, in your protoplasm, these records will determine your activity if you look at them and will to look for something similar. So that if in fact one has a series of formal experiences, records them, looks at the form of them, and then looks at the present situation in the light of the past situation, one is willing to behave like a machine.

And the whole universe considered in this way is called Samsara, which simply means the breathing, differentiating of a primary seed ... in other words, the working out of the logical implications of a prime act. If you work out logically the implications of your acts, you will always act logically. But if you act logically you will act like a machine, because logic is a machine ... especially Aristotelian Logic. If we fabricate another logic called para-logic or the logic of the illogical, this helps us to get outside the logical machine. And if we remember the argument between the Franciscans and the Dominicans, the Dominicans thought that logic persuaded God to behave, and the Franciscans said, "No, He behaves and one of the results of his behaviour is logic."

If this is so, if actually God's will is prior to His reason, then He can will any kinds of logic whatever. And the particular one that Aristotle was fond of for some weird reason, is only one type of logic, and of all the logics that might be is certainly the most mechanical, because all it says is that a thing is what it is ... which actually doesn't take you much further than you started. [52:05]

Escaping the Mechanical Life

If in fact you find yourself in any position — no matter what it is, pleasant or unpleasant — if you then look backwards into your experiences and look for similars, and then on the basis of your previous pleasures or pains you select from the present a given response, insofar as you do that you are acting exactly as if you were a machine and you might as well be one. [52:29]

But, if you say, *When I look at my past experiences, I can see the inevitability of them developing in that way because I was looking backwards. So that I can see that at thirty I acted just like that because at twenty I had an ambition which I hoped to realise by twenty-one, and it took till twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-nine, and at thirty it wasn't realised, but the inertia of the twenty year old decision carried on. And I felt impelled, foolishly, to justify myself — that is, to equilibrate myself — by actually fulfilling this most comical, youthful and foolhardy plan that I had fabricated in the dawn of my awakening mind.* If this pattern of behaviour that is seen at an early stage is willed into, and one then becomes egotistically determined to establish it so that one can witness oneself, one is actually behaving like a machine.

But if one reaches a certain level where it is seen that to act in the present in the light of the past is to be entirely mechanical, and that the only way to escape mechanics is to wipe out the whole of the past, including every relation you've ever had with any other being, no matter how personal, how intimate, if it is past, it is past time, and therefore to be utterly transcended, and one's life to be lived *now*, in the immediate moment. To do that is to be non-mechanical and is to be spiritual. [54:06]

Spirit is precisely this power to see, in the present, nothing except what is present. So that if I look around this room now, and I look and I say, *Who are these people? I don't know them.* And if I were to go unspiritual, I would say, *Well, last Thursday I think they, or some similar forms were here,* and I could start conjuring up in my memory — in the irritable protoplasm that I've got — names to which I could append the forms here. Now if I were actually doing that, and it appears at the moment that I am doing, insofar as I am doing it I am being mechanical. So that if one of you, while I was rushing to get out, trod upon my toe and hurt it, I might find a little mnemonic twinge in the toe, and cross that person off as a human being. But to do so would be mechanical.

In fact, if I look at you as I actually do look at you, and this is hard to believe, even for me, I don't know who you are. I've not the faintest idea who you are. There isn't even a vague reminiscence in me unless I deliberately conjure one up. You are entirely new, and because you are new I am interested. I am interested in your viewpoints, I'm interested in your feelings. I want to know exactly what you think about the universe, about yourselves. I don't want to know really what you think about each other, but I want to know what you think about yourself. Because if you told me about somebody else, you'd be telling me about yourself. So I'd rather get it first hand by you telling me what you think about yourself, and save time. [55:50]

If I can keep this entirely new look all the time ... to the extent that I do that I am being spiritual and I don't know who you are. But in not knowing who you are, I can adjust to you absolutely. And I can inquire out of the depths of your soul, if you're good enough to tell me what's in the depth of your soul, what there is there. And if you are not that good I can only infer that there must be some dark secret not yet to be revealed.

But the essential thing of the spiritual — that is, of the free life — is that it literally doesn't have a past at all. It has no reference to time as past. But it says a very peculiar thing: as every event in a now is simply inserted into now at right angles to the so-called time line, every form is an eternal; which means that every form in this room is an eternal, which means that even if I ignore my past, I still know who you are, as to your eternity. But if I go directly, not to your past but to your eternity — which is either the height or the depth of your soul according to whether you are standing on your head or your feet — and penetrate to the meaning of that, I am getting real value which I am not getting if I try to get into your past.

And this is tremendously important, because it is the key to all proper relation.

All real relation is immediate, and now, and felt, and enquiring. It is a quest. The question is its instrument, and it has nothing to do with what has happened in the past. This means if there was a married man in the room and he had a wife, he should actually feel he doesn't know who she is. If he succeeds, he won't be so mad at her. He might even think she's a nice girl, and bring himself into relation with her because he doesn't know her. He might actually find that he can bring himself into relation with her precisely because he doesn't know her — like he used to do when he didn't know her.

Whereas, if one believes that one knows any particular person, to the extent that one believes so there is that much less importance, because importance is the carrying in of the will. And if you exhaust the meaning of any given being by carrying your will into it, and then chalk up the record of the experiences and believe that those experiences as recorded constitute that individual — that you have exhausted the meaning of those records — you have no further interest in the individual.

Now if you can actually tell yourself that you really don't know this person, and that whatever records you have made in the past are simply the records of the observations of an undeveloped being with insufficient data, then you can relate more fully and more richly in the immediate present — and to do this is the meaning of the word *Spirit*.

[End]