FINAL INTEGRATION IN THE ADULT PERSONALITY

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All your anxiety is because of your desire for harmony. Seek disharmony; then you will gain peace. (Rumi⁰)

Contrary to most psychologists who study children, animals or the mentally ill in order to find principles which will contribute to the understanding of maturity or final integration, I believe that insight into the nature of fully-integrated individuals can greatly increase our knowledge of the mature man who exists potentially within the child. It can make psychotherapy a more effective and meaningful technique and can guide the socially-adjusted person to his state of individuation.²

This paper is an attempt to formulate a psychological theory for the study of final integration in the adult personality. It is not a report of an experimental study. Rather, it is based on personal visionary experience, objectivization of that experience, clinical study of cases of two cultures, and an analysis of final integration in autonomous individuals.

Several visionary experiences and a few experimental studies almost a decade ago convinced me of the significance of final integration in the adult personality. After seeking an understanding of it for the last few years, I have been able to formulate its psychological theory, its laws and mechanisms and to propose it as a measure for man’s progress, health and security, as well as a guide in training analysts, psychologists, leaders and educators.

The first psychical vision occurred in 1955 when I wrote a book (in Persian) entitled The Process of Human Growth.³ At that time I was deeply influenced by the works of Piaget, Erik Erikson and those in the Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago. In a conscious way my book sought to interpret the stages of human growth according to these Western concepts. Yet, when I came to discuss maturity, my thinking unconsciously led me away from Western thought; nor did I feel any sympathy for the pleasure principle and pragmatism, both of which seemed to me inadequate for interpreting human behavior in the state of maturity, even though they might be considered the foundation of growth. Moreover, I felt that not even social realism was sufficiently explanatory.

Finally, I concluded my book with a poem from Rumi, the fully integrated man of thirteenth-century Persia:

“I have resolved conflict within myself;
I feel only as an identity;
I seek unity, I speak unity,
I know oneness and I see oneness.”¹
Motivated by this feeling I studied the life history of certain great men from Eastern and Western cultures. I developed insight into the wisdom of the Far East and also into the concepts of Western psychoanalysts, especially Erich Fromm. Then I systematically analyzed the lives of Al-Ghazzali (died 1111 A.D.) and Rumi (died 1273 A.D.), representatives of Islamic culture, and Goethe, the universal man of the West. As a result, I came to believe that there exist certain universal characteristics, psychological laws and mechanisms which all individuals share regardless of time, place and the degree of culture. This paper is an attempt to introduce this subject.

I shall take up the following questions:
1) What are the characteristics of final integration? 2) What kind of individuals are psychologically ready for it? 3) What are its psychological laws, and what mechanisms have been used in various cultures to attain it? 4) What contributions can it make to the state of developmental psychology?

I SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF FULLY INTEGRATED PERSONS

My understanding of final integration is that it is an experience of inner evolution that begins with a state which I have named "existential moratorium"; it leads to anxiety, detachment from social realities, the attainment of a state of "void," and rebirth in totality, where one in the process of living externally creates "forms" and internally attains happiness. It is a universal state regardless of time, place and the degree of culture. It is characterized by certainty, and the search for truth and satisfaction, which are the final manifestations of the drives for preservation, activity and sex, respectively. Thus, it is related to an unterbau (infra-structure) of growth but it accepts cultural and existential states as transforming structures added to the natural state.

In Zen Buddhism, final integration is the state of deciphering koan (the state of enlightenment), koan referring to what everyone brings into this world at his birth and tries to decipher before he dies. In Near Eastern thought, Sufism (the art of rebirth) can be stated as "individuality in non-individuality," that is, becoming a creative truth by passing from "I-ness" to "he-ness" to "one-ness" (universality). In Khayyám's description it is an overflowing of the state of being born without attributes. In classical Chinese philosophy this state is called tao and is compared to the water current that resistlessly moves toward its goal. "Tao is the fulfillment, wholeness or vocation performed, beginning and end, and complete realization of the meaning of existence in innate things." It is also expressed in literature and art. Shakespeare (or whoever wrote the works attributed to him) portrayed the individual who has solved the contradictions between day-to-day roles and the single role of life; so too, perhaps, with Leonardo Da Vinci and his Mona Lisa. In our age Tagore's universal man, related to humanity, is characterized by benevolence and grace. In Goethe it is an insight into entelechy, which requires that the individual strive for its unfolding.

In recent Western thought, the problem of final integration is becoming more recognized in our age of increasing anxiety. It has been noted under such names as "spontaneous expression without reservation," "peak experience," "becoming one's self," "intensive visionary experience," "dynamic insight," "autonomy," as well as other phrases.

In short, the state of final integration is the end of the vertical growth of the adult personality and the beginning of the horizontal expansion into creativity.