

Temptation **by Richard Rose**

Shortly after his profound experience in the spring of 1947, Richard Rose wrote *The Three Books of the Absolute* (published in *The Albigen Papers* and *Profound Writings, East & West*), the description of his realization that came to him in blank verse during one inspired sitting. He wrote the following thought-provoking paper later in that same year, on the subject of temptation as it relates to the spiritual path.

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Several days ago I chanced to have a discussion with my friend R.J. on the subject of temptation, and it struck me at the time that it might be worthwhile to put the thoughts down on paper.

The first thing of importance to consider is the existence of temptation, -- next the advisability of dealing with it or submitting to it. I cannot help but conclude that there are salutary influences assailing man, and that there are also possibly unsalutary influences assailing man, either from within or without his being or both.

Of course there is the ever-present denial that temptation exists except in one's own mind. However if only for the sake of tentative argument we take the concept of mind being universal (or Brahma) then we can assume that we are dealing with a problem in the mind-world and go on from there.

I believe that there is temptation from external sources, and temptation from within. A habit tends to repeat itself, but there is another urge to form new habits. There is the undeniable fact that others will tempt us to gratify their pleasure. Now if the thing or act into which one is tempted is not considered injurious then we can hardly say that we are tempted. With the word temptation must go the connotation then that the word is to be used in this writing in regards to some act that is injurious. We cannot say that we are tempted to eat. But we can say that we might be tempted to gluttony. There are several acts indulged in by mankind that most of us will claim to be unimpairing either to body or spirit, such as normal sex desire in married life, [or] an occasional drink of alcohol... It is my aim to try to draw the line of distinction as to that which I consider injurious.

How many people that we know flee to religions or psychiatrists and still consider their habits sane! Why does man need these stays? I have heard the hard-bitten alcoholic weep in his glass in one breath and in another minute philosophize that liquor is the best of pleasures.

If we are to take a glimpse at mankind we will find a universal striving to release itself from the forces that makes its peace of mind less peaceful. Is war just, and a natural function of nations, and is the succeeding national remorse merely an aberration and a useless worry caused by world-religion-indoctrination, -- or is the voice of remorse a questioning voice of a wiser ego checking on the organism. My answer is that actions invite counteractions, therefore a mind that seeks solution of problems without violent action is aiming at a more consistent progress.

In my estimation of things I place the man as being more valuable than his coat, and his brain as being more valuable than his epidermis. The skull that surrounds the brain can be seen as the house of the brain. The house is valuable and must be protected by the housekeeper against external elemental ravages in order that the housekeeper will have a place in which to live. The housekeeper must therefore manage his house.

In sexual excess, in alcoholic excess, or in any excess that is apt to debilitate or delude the mind we have an instance where the body habit conflicts with the equanimity which the mind is seeking. I will admit that if the entity or person is too phlegmatic to seek betterment by willed progress, then war will exist within the spirit until an adjustment is made. That is wisdom by attrition.

It is therefore my conclusion that mankind is dissatisfied with these excesses, that mankind strives against them, and that they are injurious because mankind as a whole repudiates them.

I am of the opinion that (as Spinoza infers) man is seeking more perfect happiness. In time he transcends certain pleasures in order that the mind may enjoy a longer and more perfect happiness or peace. I deny the existence of the pleasure that is sought after by most people. As far as the body is concerned, they exist. The body feels them, the mind denies them. They will detract from higher consciousness, from clear thinking. The drunkard awakes each morning to a new personality.

If we are to have a better mind to enjoy serenity, then that mind must be free from hypnosés. If we are obsessed we can hardly say that we own ourselves or possess the pleasure thus seemingly found.

In this perspective of the human being we can take either the monistic or dualistic viewpoint. The body can be part of the mind hence we would be monistic. In that case it would be the same as the arm getting burned, the central brain causing the arm to draw back. The mind could inhibit an organ which we recognize as the body.

Concerning the nature of these hypnosés it is possible that many of them come from external sources. It is possible that the real world is the world of the mind. We are constantly striving to find that which is more real. As we develop we begin to see the enormous and ever-expanding field that is the scope of the mind. If on this body world we have parasites and animals it does not seem illogical to me that we would have entities in the oceanic mind world. This brings to mind the various concepts on thought forms, poltergeists, incubi and succubi, and angels.

Although I advance no proofs on these entities we will not lose anything by taking those concepts into consideration when dealing with temptation. If their existence were valid, then parasitism would be possible. The mind could be inflicted with a false impression of pleasure while the parasite indulged in the more volatile ethers of the body and brain, and thus crippling the mind for future use. Although the concept seems far-fetched it is accepted by several different groups and is worth consideration.

Whatever the source of temptation we must find release from it. I will outline a system which I have employed, a system which is the result of years of thinking on the subject of continence and efforts toward it.

We must first learn the tricks that are played on the mind (perhaps by the mind) and then discover how to circumvent them. Man deludes himself with happy phrases, some of which are "In vino veritas," the rhyming aphorisms of Omar Khayam, the reverence for the word "Love" in relation to sexual satisfaction, and others. Love is a solemn sounding word that makes sexual excess seem almost a solemn duty. Few of us can give a definition for love, fewer will ever give a definition that is accepted by all lovers. Man loves himself.

Man's great adversary in dealing with temptation is rationalization. The mind plays tricks upon itself. I would like to say that the body argues for pleasure. I do not like to give the impression that the mind does not know what it wants, or that the body is arguing with another entity, the mind. Therefore I think it apt to liken the workings of the mind to a court. Every act is first debated in the mind. Once it is accepted and acted, the second time will require less deliberation, the third time still less and so proportionately into habit. Every act is weighed, but the mind is lenient in regards to curiosity. It will endanger itself and the body in order to learn. Thus most harmful habits gain entry into the system.

Some of the rationalizations that assail the reasoning of the mind are: laying the faults of the pottery at the feet of the potter; reminding oneself of the total ignorance of man, hence his inability to do anything good or bad; escape from another seeming worse dissipation, and others. Man is also apt to remind himself that his life is very short and that his pleasures are few in regards to his sorrows, therefore he must indulge.

In contradiction to these rationalizations I might say that I believe man to be an individual, and that if we conclude ourselves to be pottery that shall be later thrown back into the furnace, then indeed there is not any need for self-betterment. As for good and bad, good is what is best for body and mind, and bad the opposite. If alcohol is good for body and mind then I would advise drinking. As for the shortness of life I would say there is no measurement of time, except in man's consciousness, and if a man is unconscious or possessed or obsessed, then a life-span of one hundred years lived in dissipation would not equal twenty years spent in freedom from hypnoses.

When I am confronted with temptation my greatest argument is "Why?" After having freed one's self from a binding habit, the person is struck with the imbecility of ever indulging in the habit in the first place. When you ask yourself, -- what shall I gain from this pleasure-hypnosis, you can destroy much of the power of the suggestion. It is hard for a person to give a reason for pleasure outside of just saying "because it's fun." Eventually the mind denies itself the delusion, and finds a warming satisfaction in the freedom thus enjoyed. In time a general indifference to all fixations of pleasure will be the result of this method.

I have found that by developing indifference to temptation one also tends to develop total indifference unless a new driving power is found. Sex is the greatest driving power on earth. Man's mammoth achievements are all evolved from the sex-urge, -- the urge leading him to

feather his nest better. When indifference to all the maddening ambitions of conventional mankind is reached we are inclined to grow apathetic. Then there must be found a new motive or a higher motive for living, and one must study to find driving power to further it. It is possible that we must create and exert a will.

To revert to the methods used in overcoming temptation, besides applying “Why?” to deeds that might provoke a question, I have found that it is also beneficial to practice relaxation. Most of our excesses occur in periods of tension. There are various methods of relaxing, some are outlined in modern health education, some in hatha yoga. We must keep in mind that total relaxation promotes death unless will is exerted after freedom is gained from the animal motivation that automatically keeps our system fighting with its self.

Richard Rose
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If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as speaker and teacher, please read his books, which are available which are available at www.rosepublications.net or www.tatfoundation.org.