

November 1960

READING 8

ALL GROUPS

TWENTY YEARS AFTER (Continued)

PART I

Last week you were asked ‘What Principles and Rules of School work would it be most useful to remember and apply in order that we should play our proper role in the Maharishi’s large-scale-experiment of giving the Meditation to the world?’

The impression that reaches me is that the favourite answer to this question is something like this: ‘Words and actions of each individual taking part in the work of the School should be based on “Self-remembering” and “external considering”’.

In this connection ‘Self-remembering’ might mean a lively sense of ‘Who am I and what am I doing?’, while ‘external considering’ is based on ‘doing as you would be done by’. External considering cannot exist without a certain degree of Self-remembering. It can be evidenced just now not only in carefully bringing one’s experience to help others learning the art of Meditation, but also in not over-playing one’s hand as an all-conquering and cosmic meditator in the presence of someone not so spectacularly successful!

In pursuit of Consciousness it helps to be aware of its opposite, namely ‘falling asleep’ – the processes of ‘identifying’ and ‘inner considering’ – which are so insidious and which are quite unknown, or at least unregistered, in ordinary psychology.

It would seem to be useful to close our quotations from the Psychological Lectures with the following description:

‘Identifying’ or ‘identification’ is a curious state in which man passes about half of his life, the other half being passed in complete sleep. He ‘identifies’ with everything: with what he says, what he feels, what he believes, what he does not believe, what he wishes, what he does not wish, what attracts him, what repels him. Everything *becomes him*, or it is better to say he *becomes it*. He becomes all that he likes and all that he dislikes. This means that in the state of identification man is incapable of separating himself from the object of his identification. It is difficult to find the smallest thing with which man is unable to ‘identify’. At the same time, in a state of identification man has even less control over his mechanical reactions than at any other time. Such manifestations as lying, imagination, the expression of negative emotions and constant talking *need identification*. They cannot exist without identification. If man *could* get rid of identification, he could get rid of many useless and foolish manifestations.

Identification, its meaning, causes and results, is extremely well described in the *Philokalia* [volume III, Saint Philopheus of Sinai, paragraphs 34-36] which was mentioned in the first lecture. But no trace of understanding of it can be found in modern psychology. It is a quite forgotten ‘psychological discovery’.

The second sleep-producing state, akin to identification, is *considering*. Actually, ‘considering’ is identification with people. It is a state in which man constantly worries about what other people think of him; whether they give him his due, whether they appreciate him enough, whether they like him enough, whether they admire him and so on, and so on. ‘Considering’ plays a very important part in everyone’s life, but in some

people it becomes an obsession. All their lives are filled with considering, i.e. worry, doubt and suspicion, and there remains no place for anything else.

The myth of the 'inferiority complex' and other 'complexes' is created by the vaguely realized but not understood phenomenon of 'considering'.

Both 'identifying' and 'considering' must be observed most seriously. Only full knowledge of them can diminish them. If one cannot see them in oneself one can easily see them in other people. But one must remember that one in no way differs from others. In this sense all people are equal.

The quotation from St. Philopheus of Sinai referred to, has been translated as follows:

Each of us must guard his senses... First comes *impact* of sensations (prosvolē – contact, when a thing thrown hits the thing at which it is thrown); then *coupling* (syndyasmōs – joining together; attention is fettered by the object so that there exist only the mind and the object which has occupied it); next comes *merging together* (the object which has occupied the attention has provoked desire, and the mind has consented to it, has merged with it); thus going into *captivity* (the object has captivated the mind which desired it and is leading it into action like a fettered slave); finally comes passion or suffering (*pathos* – sickness of the soul) induced by frequent repetition and by habit so that it has now become a feature of character.

We can learn something very important from this and can understand the meaning of the System aphorism 'Give up your suffering...' It is significant that much confusion has been caused by the double meaning of the old English word 'suffer' used by the translators of the Bible for two quite separate Greek words. One Greek word is that which means 'suffer, allow, permit' as in 'Suffer little children to come unto me...' The other Greek word is the verb from which *pathos* is derived, meaning 'to be affected or afflicted by'. This, as the Philokalia shows, means the final stage of identification. So 'give up your suffering' means 'learn to give up identification *while it is still possible*' – that is at the second stage, *before* merging or captivity.

Perhaps we now understand why the Maharishi said at Church House:

No, Christ never suffered... The man from the platform of suffering saw him suffering: you put on the green glasses and everything is green! That is all the suffering of Christ. If the Son of God, the Saviour of Humanity suffered, then who would enjoy? ... He is found suffering only in the eyes of those who are suffering in life.

And we now know perfectly well that Christ, the supreme example of Consciousness, could not possibly be identified. The expression used in the Epistle: 'Thus it behoved Christ to suffer,' thus becomes 'thus it behoved Christ to accept, to bear bravely, *without complaint* as an example for all mankind for ever and ever.'

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PART 2

We have given you a sample of the way in which the System was introduced to new people twenty years ago. How would we introduce it now at a first meeting? You would help us by listening to the following attempt derived from trying to speak to people and listening to their questions:

NORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction

If an ordinary normal person wants some psychological advice today, wants to know how to get the best out of himself, there is no one to whom he can turn, in spite of all the psychiatrists and psychologists there are around, and all the stuff that is being published. Since the beginning of this century, psychology has lost its way in a mass of conflicting theories and confusion of tongues. We cannot distinguish any longer between what is actually known and what is merely someone's theory.

Psychology means the study of the human psyche with all its possibilities, and this is a subject which must not be narrowed down just to perversion and disease. People want to get the best out of themselves not the worst.

Everybody today, in any field, wants to start quite fresh from what they can actually see for themselves – they don't want to hear about what their parents or ancestors believed in. There are just as strong religious and artistic, as well as scientific, aspirations among us all today as there ever were; so that any system of psychology must be large enough to include all these different sides of man's nature. This is what our Society (alone in the world as far as I know) is setting out to provide for as many people as possible – namely the Study of *Normal* Psychology.

Well, then, what are the basic facts that we can see for ourselves? There are just two obvious facts for each person that no one can possibly deny; namely, 'the existence of the world in which he lives; and the existence of a psychic life in himself'. In spite of all the theories and philosophies, the sole obvious fact remains the antithesis of 'I' and 'Not I' – our inner life and the outer world. And although there are countless sciences which study the outer world and countless works of art depicting it, yet the Science of Sciences and the Art of Arts is the development of a harmonious relationship between the two for every individual person. Now, I am going to ask you to try three small experiments to show you what I mean:

Experiment 1. (Inner World) Shut your eyes and withdraw your attention from all external sensations. Try to penetrate through the mass of thoughts, dreams and pictures towards the centre of your nature with the question: 'Who am I?' Try to find a place within you where there is no movement or change – T.S. Eliot's 'Still place in a changing world'.

(Two minutes; then observations)

Experiment 2. (Now the Outer World) Open your eyes and take in sensations from your body, from the other people and from the room. You become at once aware of those two characteristics of the outer world – Time and Space, upon which depend all movement and change in our environment.

(Two minutes; then observations)

Experiment 3. To discover the link between the inner and the outer world, sit relaxed with eyes open but still and unfocused. Try to have the feeling 'I am here now'. Turn your attention from all thoughts and impressions simply to this feeling 'I am here' for two minutes.

(Two minutes; then observations)

The upshot of these three experiments is that the all-important connecting link is the development of *consciousness of oneself* of gradually increasing intensity, whereby both the inner and the outer world become more enjoyable and more true. For the time being, all that I will ask you to do is to '*come to yourself*' whenever you remember, for it is the one completely saving thing to do even when you are crossing Piccadilly Circus. It becomes easy to realise that if more people made a practice of 'coming to themselves' and never departing far into forgetfulness, there would be far fewer accidents, if any.

Now, in just this same way, this *System of Knowledge has two parts*. First, a description of the *structure and constitution* of man, so that we have a precise language for all inner experience; and Part 2, a description of the *world in which man lives*. This is a natural basis for Psychology – first man's mental structure and constitution, and then the influence on it of his environment. Each week now it is suggested that we divide the evening's discussion to take in both these scales, the scale of individual man and the scale of the world around him.

[Now may I have your suggestions as to how we should begin and the order in which the ideas are given in each case?]

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