

November 1960

THE MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT SELF-REMEMBERING

To direct attention on oneself without weakening or obliterating the attention directed on something else is impossible. To imagine one can do it before one has arrived at the state of Self-consciousness is mere self-deception; such a process attempted in the state of relative consciousness is only spoiling both worlds – the inner and the outer. For until a man has found Himself it is impossible for him to remember himself in the midst of external activity; and to find Himself often demands that for at least half-an-hour, twice a day for many months, his mind should turn in quite a new direction away from all external impressions and away from all his ordinary psychological processes—but without resisting them!

It is Plato's cave again, where the chains of the prisoners *'are arranged in such a manner as to prevent them from turning round their heads... and moreover when any one of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to go up and turn his neck round and walk and look at the light he will suffer sharp pains... and when he approaches the light he will have his eyes dazzled and will not be able to see any of the realities which are now affirmed to be Truth.'* Therefore the process must be very gentle and gradual; a special method is required, and expert help and guidance needed.

Quite early on Mr O. began to think on correct and independent lines. In the very same passage in *Fragments* before the mistake occurs he writes (*p.118*):

I decided to draw no conclusions whatever, but to try to remember myself..

The very first attempts showed me how difficult it was. Attempts at self-remembering failed to give any results except to show me that in actual fact we never remember ourselves. ...The first impression was that attempts to remember myself or to be conscious of myself, to say to myself *I am walking, I am doing*, and continually to feel this I, *stopped thought. When I was feeling I, I could neither think nor speak; even sensations became dimmed.*

About 1935, when I first began to sit with him alone he would often say: 'Something is missing in the System. Either G. didn't know or he forgot. We are told that everything depends on remembering ourselves and next minute we are told "You can't remember yourself". If man is meant to remember himself there must have been some simple natural method. But it's been lost. I could never find it. Once in India, I heard an echo of such a method.' And he told it me, 'Try it if you like,' he said, 'but I can't teach it because it's not the real thing—it's only second hand. Perhaps you have to find the real thing.' And from that time on he began to send me to see anyone who came to London with any claims. I saw the most fantastic Yogis, etc., but never anything real until last January.

Then one of our people mentioned to me a certain Indian Master¹ then in London who had

¹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

a very interesting method which her daughter was trying with great success. As usual I went to try it with the scepticism engendered by previous disappointments. Judge of my astonishment when I recognised the exact method of which Mr O. had given me the echo! No doubt of it. Well then, was this man a charlatan like the others, was his method the real thing, or again only secondhand?

I saw a great deal of this man. He was not a charlatan. He had the signs of higher being; he belongs to a great Tradition; he was sincere. I had hours of coaching in the method which was giving me results beyond anything I could hope for. I got about twenty old hands to try it simply as an experiment. They at once got results; they found the use of the method gave them more moments of self-remembering, more understanding of certain ideas of the System. So then I decided that all our people should have a chance. Now 380 people are doing it with gratifying results—only a handful have failed or refused.

With the successful use of this method has come the solution of the problem about attention and self-remembering. We are back now on the right lines—the lines which successful mystics like Jacob Boehme have always followed:

The Disciple said to his Master:

‘Sir, how may I come to the Super-sensual life, so that I may see God and hear God speak?’ The Master answered: ‘Son, when you can throw yourself into that where no created thing exists, though it be but for a moment, then you hear what God speaks.’

Disciple: ‘Is that, where no created thing exists, near at hand or is it far away?’

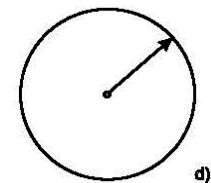
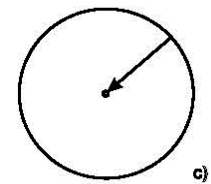
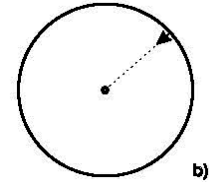
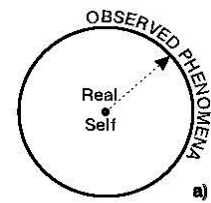
Master: ‘It is in you, and if you can, my son, for a while only *cease from all your thinking and willing*, then you will hear the unspeakable word of God.’

That I have now experienced through this method, for without such a method known in a Tradition 5,000 years old and guided by a Master, one cannot learn to ‘throw oneself into that where no creature dwelleth.’

But at what point on the double-headed arrow is the observer situated? Where is his standpoint? It is no more at the inner end of the arrow than at the outer. In each case his attention is supposed to be directed towards these points.

If it is taken instead that *there is never more than one arrowhead* at any particular moment, the idea of attention being divided is overcome. It can be taken that the inner end of the arrow is the standpoint of the observer, and from there his attention is directed outwards—and this may mean on either external phenomena or what is happening inside his own mind. It is easier to see the stages of development of consciousness if the arrow is taken as a radius of a circle, the centre of which is ‘Real I’ and the circumference being the world of observed phenomena.

- a) Relative consciousness or waking sleep: the inner end of the arrow is rooted very shallowly and there is no connection with one's Real Self. The degree of consciousness depends on the place where the observer is 'rooted and grounded'
- b) In order to penetrate deeper, the direction of the arrow is reversed; sensations of external phenomena are dimmed and the arrow of attention penetrates within.
- c) Self-consciousness is reached when the head of the arrow penetrates the centre of the circle and remains there
- d) The inner end of the arrow is then fixed here and the attention again directed outwards. When this becomes possible, the state of cosmic consciousness is achieved. The observer has full attention on external phenomena at the point of the arrow, the inner end being rooted and grounded in the Real Self.



Many stages must exist between (b) and (d), with different degrees of penetration towards the centre, and different points along the line where the inner end of the arrow is fixed when attention is again directed outwards, since the point of anchorage is not necessarily situated at the same point reached by the inner end of the arrow in the previous stage. This must come only with repeated practice, as we are reminded in the simile of 'dipping the cloth in the yellow dye'. Only after repeated dippings will it retain the yellow colour. Only when the anchor is let go and firmly fixed deep down on the sea bed is the ship safely at rest.

