

December 1960

READING 9**ALL GROUPS****TWENTY YEARS AFTER (Continued)**

Part 2 of last week's material indicated a very tentative approach toward a platform from which we could talk to people today. On Thursday last I tried a different one. Here is a kind of composite of the two:

AN APPROACH TO 'NORMAL PSYCHOLOGY'

When people come to see us here we ask them: 'What do you want? Why did you come? If a good fairy gave you one wish, what would it be?' I'm asking you that question now:

Miss R. 'I feel like a jigsaw puzzle, and that all the pieces are there but they're in the wrong place and need to be fitted together.'

Miss N. 'I'd like to learn to be used to better purpose; there is something better that I can't use because I don't know how... we're working off the wrong steam, somehow.'

Mr. H. 'I would like to be able to interpret scientific knowledge in a more unified way... It started for my own amusement but now I feel it might be of some use.'

Mrs. R. 'I'd like to reach different consciousness so that I am not always being dragged back to myself when I am trying to do things... which really aren't personal at all.'

Mr. G. (When I first read)... the parable of the mustard seed, something in me leapt, and I want to know what this was. At times I feel this leaping in the heart is the only thing that's real in life. It's very closely tied up with the idea of perfection and newness and of something eternal.'

Do you see that all these questions arise from the realization that there is something missing, something very important of which you have had glimpses, but which you have to do without? What is that something? – *Yourself*, Realization or Consciousness of oneself.

Let me show you what that means. If you put on one side all theories and philosophies, there are just two basic facts for each of us: my inner life – my own inner world; and then the outside world around me – my environment. Try two experiments now:

Experiment 1. Explore the inner world. Shut your eyes, withdraw your attention from all external sensations. Try to find Yourself with the question 'Who am I?'

(2 minutes)

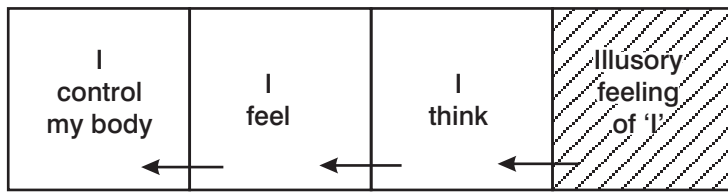
Experiment 2. Now the outer world. Open your eyes, try to take in all the external impressions you can, your body on the chair, feet on the ground, other people. Try to feel – 'I am here in this room.'

(2 minutes)

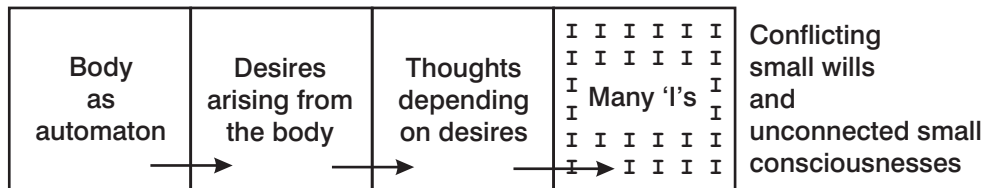
Well, what do you notice? Something missing from both? What is that? Consciousness of Yourself? Did you notice how this consciousness fluctuates like a candle flame in a room?

What is this *Self* that you found to be missing? Just now I will give three aspects of it:

1. *Man as he thinks he is:*



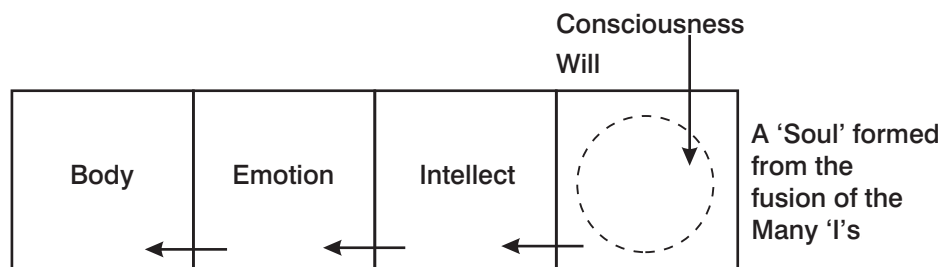
2. *Man as he really is:*



Many of you have felt this; it was put very well by Miss R. Perhaps you've felt it from time to time or you wouldn't be here. But Miss R. is right, *all the pieces are there*; every normal person has in potentiality everything that the human race has shown – but it is latent, not in circulation. But having felt this, one can't be altogether happy, one has to step out towards:

3. *What man could be:* (or perhaps what he has been before but has lost.)

You might think that 'Oneself' would be just one of those 'I's grown large or dominating. We see that, for instance, in a business tycoon with one dominating drive – the power of money. But that is not a good thing to have.



A soul has to be created by special methods; it is a big illusion to suppose that all men have souls. Perhaps the chief mistake people make at all stages of development is to confuse the Higher Will with their own will, which is really only self-will or wilfulness. An early Latin poet had the idea right:

I pray thee, Lord of Summer, look on me and incline
My restless wills to follow a higher will than mine.

*

But what is this Consciousness? Consciousness has become a dull word since it is used in so many different senses and usually in no sense at all. Mr. G. was 'getting warm' when he described 'a leaping of the heart' accompanying the flash of understanding of a parable. This impact of Higher Consciousness is indeed like 'falling in love'.

The following gives some of its implication (*Tertium Organum*, 2nd Edition., pp.41-43):

We are moving upon a plane, and recognise as really existing only the small circle lighted by our consciousness. Everything out of this circle, which we do not see, we negate; we do not like to admit that it exists. We are moving upon the plane in one direction...

We are going forward like a blind man, who feels paving stones and lanterns and walls of houses with his stick and believes in the real existence of only that which he touches *now*, which he feels *now*. That which has passed has disappeared and will never return! That which has not yet been does not exist. The blind man remembers the route which he has traversed; he expects that ahead the way will continue, but he sees neither forward nor backward *because he does not see anything*; because his instrument of knowledge – the stick – has a definite, and not a very great length, and beyond the reach of his stick non-existence begins.

Wundt, in one of his books, called attention to the fact that our vaunted five organs of sense are in reality just *feelers* by which we feel the world around us. We live groping about. *We never see anything*. We are always just feeling everything. With the help of the microscope and the telescope, the telegraph and the telephone, we are extending our feelers a little, so to speak, but we are not beginning *to see*. To say that we *are seeing* would be possible only in case we could know the past and the future. But we do not see, and because of this we can never assure ourselves of that which we cannot *feel*.

This is the reason why we count as really existing only that circle which our feelers grasp at a given moment. Beyond that – darkness and non-existence.

But have we any right *to think* in this way?

Let us imagine a consciousness that is not bound by the conditions of sensuous receptivity. Such a consciousness can rise above the plane upon which we are moving; it can see far beyond the limits of the circle enlightened by our usual consciousness; it can see that not only does the line upon which we are moving exist, but also all lines perpendicular to it which we are intersecting, which we have ever intersected, and which we shall intersect. After rising above the plane this consciousness can *see* the plane, can convince itself that it is really a plane, and not a single line. Then it can see the past and the future, lying together and existing simultaneously.

That consciousness which is not bound by the conditions of sensuous receptivity can outrun the stupid traveller, ascend the mountain to see in the distance the town to which he is going, and be convinced that this town is not being built anew for his arrival, but exists quite independently of the stupid traveller. And that consciousness can look off and see on the horizon the towers of that city where that traveller had been, and be convinced that those towers have not fallen, that the city continues to stay and live just as it stayed and lived before the traveller's advent.

It can rise above the plane of time and see the spring behind and the autumn ahead, see simultaneously the budding flowers and ripening fruits. It can make *the blind man* recover his sight and see the road along which he passed and that which still lies before him.

The past and the future cannot *not exist*, because if they do not exist then neither does the present exist. Unquestionably they exist *somewhere* together, but we do not see them.

The present, compared with the past and the future, is the most unreal of all unrealities.

We are forced to admit that the past, the present and the future do not differ in anything, one from another; there exists just *one present* – the Eternal Now of Hindu philosophy. But we do not perceive this, because in every given moment we experience just a little bit of that present, and this alone we count as existent, denying a real existence, to everything else.

If we admit this, then our view of everything with which we are surrounded will change very considerably.

*

Miss R. It gives a wonderful idea of purpose and that everything is there all the time; it's not something that just happens. This present is there all the time.

Miss L. In other words, we are in eternity. There's no future or past in the sense that we normally understand it. (We tend to break it up in sections.)

Miss K. If we could be conscious of ourselves and live in the present, then would this consciousness exist?

Mr. R. Speaking of the framework of future and past, what is it that dictates this framework? Is it in oneself or outside oneself?... So that movement within the framework is in one's hands?

We then went on to discuss the House of Three Storeys with the Fourth Room in terms of Attention.

Mr. H. I wondered if the aim I mentioned this evening could be the danger that you have just spoken of? (danger of entering through intellect)

Question. I feel that I would be able to value what I knew better (with consciousness).

Miss L. Is it because it's too analytical? To seek truth with the intellect is destructive?

Miss K. What do you mean by future? Do you mean here or after we're gone?

Mrs. F. To believe in this work, it's not necessary to believe in life after death?

Mr. B. Surely some conception of the future must govern the present?

Mrs. B. How can one find that passage in oneself? Where it is in oneself?

Mrs. B. (different person) Would you say that thinking too much might even block the emotion? Shouldn't you think afterwards?

After speaking further on Attention:

Miss J. Is this how one gets into the Fourth Room, through attention?

Mrs. N. When you say that we must pay, what do you mean? That when conscience awakens, we begin to pay?

Mr. R. Does conscience belong to the Fourth Room?

Answer. No, but it shows you the door to it.

* * *