

1 July 1963

READING 8

PART 1

From beginning of Monday Meeting, Colet House, 24th June, 1963:

R. I am afraid I cannot deal with anything like all the questions, but I have picked a few:

Q. If everything repeats then would it not seem that the Universe itself will have a life which will repeat? Is there an analogy here between man's life which starts, if you like, with the big bang of one cell exploding and multiplying and the Scientist's idea of the universe starting with a bang, in which case both theories would be tenable?

Answer. That is of course said in many Systems to be true. As regards the Universe being created with a 'big bang' out of nothing and then being allowed by the Creator to run down during his perpetual absence, it does not somehow make sense – especially when you think of such as thing as the creation of *mind*. All the evidence points to the very long build-up in the Great Laboratory of Nature before the first man-like beings appeared; and it would be against the rules of the game to create something quite new out of nothing with no previous experimentation in different materials and different forms. Have you thought on those lines? You know the geological record about man and the gradual process in Organic Life (so very evident) by which a Self-creative being was at last produced. That seems to be the way things are done, and Astronomy reveals today all manner of galaxies and stars in process of evolution.

Then that theory of the running-down of everything and increasing randomness; the running-down of everything in the 'course of time' is too plain as only one of the six kinds of processes evident in the world.

So in the simile of the Garden we clearly discern two descending processes – the gradual formation of different varieties and then the choking of all that by excess and defect whereby harmony, balance and rhythm are lost. Besides these two there is room for an *upward* process of 'gardening' and other forms of disciplinary action which overcome the randomness – the universal tendency to running-down.

What was your story, Miss W., about the old gardener who made a wonderful job of the garden of the Vicar? He dealt with the Vicar's garden very well. The Vicar thanked him: 'You have done very well, my man, with God's help of course.' And the gardener said 'H'm. Don't know about that. You should have seen the terrible mess it was in while 'E 'ad it to 'Imself!'

The Outer Circle of Humanity can be looked on as a garden and there is room for gardeners from the Inner Circle. Schools are necessary and within the scheme of things – witness this quotation from Plotinus:

God had formed Man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. By reason of his body man belongs to the world of matter; by reason of his Soul he belongs to the world of Mind. In man alone Mind and Matter, the worlds of *noetos* and *aisthetos*, intermingle and interpenetrate; through man alone the material becomes articulate in the praise of God: without him 'Mind and Sense remained distinct within their boundaries bearing within themselves the Magnificence of the

Creator Logos, but praising silently... Nor was there any mingling between them; nor yet were the riches of God's goodness manifested... till Man was placed on earth as a kind of second world, a microcosm, a new angel, a mingled worshipper, ... visible and yet intelligible, ... to be the husbandman of immortal plants'.

(*Byzantine Aesthetics*, Gervase Mathew, 1963, p.23)

Then I think the Tuesday Working Party ought to have an airing; we have not had their questions for some time:

Q. A sort of balance can produce rhythm. Growth of plants and human beings. They are not identical. There is a balance. Some pictures could be described as rhythmical.

- A. Frequency sets the kind of rhythm that applies. I mean in man that frequencies of the range of 20 to the minute involve many of the chemical processes which take place in connection with breathing; that frequencies in 1,000's per second represent the rhythm and pattern set up by impressions; but there are many other rhythms in man which set up their place in the scale like 'density of matter'.

I don't like this tendency to say, 'My rhythm is so and so', which seems to go on in a lot of Groups – this speaking in generalized abstractions. We have all possibilities of rhythm in us. But the idea of introducing the subject of Rhythm was from the point of view of *Doing* – for until one finds the rhythm which is required by a particular job you won't be able to do it! For instance, taking a meeting: If a certain rhythm is found and started and begins to get momentum, many things become possible. So even taking a meeting depends on feeling for the rhythm required. And in all the principal forms of creation it is the same. So *learning to Do* is the *practical* reason for introducing you to this idea of Rhythm.

Q. If rhythm was entirely repetition it might imply that there was mighty little new?

- A. Yes, quite right; but we have said *rhythm with variety* – repetition with a difference.

Q. (continuation of previous question): Looked at on a large scale it would seem that everything had been before, or capable of continuing again. If it was only repetitive. So I question the fact that rhythm is only repetitive?

- A. Certain things – the most mechanical things – all repeat again and again without variation and they are boring in the extreme. Some people's lives are very boring – they repeat again and again; but luckily a great amount of variety is possible, and most people's lives admit of much variation. In them only a few events repeat – those which affect many other people besides themselves – one has to be at a certain place at a certain time again and again because much else depends on it.

Q. I should like to know how many degrees of density there are in impressions alone. Starting from everyday impressions and going on to rarer impressions that seem to have different effects on the organism.

- A. Yes, exactly. A very good way of studying, because all the left-hand side of the triangle in the Symbol relates to all kinds of degrees of densities in the world of impressions and they are most amenable to observation. One can see that one must be careful about the impressions to which one pays attention from that very point of view – opening oneself to influences which take one to higher energy and the less dense, and leaving those of increasing density.

Q. I find the traffic analogy is striking. If you say there is one car per nine of population, then you say there are 400,000 cars on the road. The only correct picture is when they are on the roads and possibly why. It is absolutely in time. You have the number in space. It is only when you see it in time that it has any significance at all.

A. That is exactly what I mean, that you have to take these things in space-time. It is no good just seeing things in numbers; and if they are going to take a check of cars on the road – density of cars – they make a certain count at a certain place over certain times like peak hours; so one must get into the way of thinking in space-time and not in one or the other quite separately. Many mistakes occur in thinking from that.

Q. How is density in the physical sense related to density in the System sense?

A. Density in the physical sense is *mass per unit volume*. Mass is difficult because it is commonly measured by weight, and many things which have a definite density cannot be weighed. The idea is there in the term ‘density’ as used in the System, but ‘density’ as physically defined is only a very small part of ‘density’ as used in the System. ‘Density’ in the System sense refers to the nature of something in terms of its physical, chemical, biological, scientific and Cosmic properties *altogether* in relation to the *totality* of things. But ‘density’ is a thing that in physical measurements can be easily measured, and you get many examples of what the System means by density from that.

Q. Is there some pattern or rhythm in world events? A lot must depend on things like the different times of the year.

A. The trouble about human affairs (and I felt that is what Miss N. means by ‘world events’) is that the *Law of Accident* comes in. If there was no Law of Accident – Law of Chance – the repetitive pattern of human affairs could be relied on and you could predict. To a certain extent broad schemes can be predicted – civilizations, empires start off in the same sort of way, reach the same kind of zenith and then decline in the same sort of way – only broadly, because the Law of Accident breaks up octaves at every point, enters all the time in human affairs. And it is this that people are so terrified of at the moment, but they are terrified of it in the wrong way!

Take ourselves: our habits are very fixed, but owing to the random nature of our minds and feelings, those habits are not safely predictable. We are under the Law of Chance because of the randomness of our thoughts and feelings when our attention is not engaged on something. It is the same in a big way in humanity, even more so. But if you take the world from a *Cosmic* point of view – the rhythm of the Earth and the Planets – it is beautifully ordered and accidents get fewer and further apart. As you go out and out into space there is less and less chance of stars colliding.

Through the Inner Circle we can free ourselves from Accident and become part of this rhythmic pattern.

PART 2

During this month we are resuming our enquiry into the Sources of the various ingredients of the System or ‘Perennial Philosophy’ as it finally reached us. We have all along been following a

valuable piece of advice given us by Mr. Ouspensky. If, he said, by searching for *practical methods* for the attainment of Consciousness you find a man or men who can teach them, that will lead you toward the Source of the System. This certainly proved true when the man who taught us the Meditation put us in the way of finding what was probably the remote origin of part of the System in the India of 2000 BC. But so great a gap exists between the Indian and the Western way of life that many people find that difficult. By what steps did the System reach Europe from India? Again we look for a *method*, and the clue this time may be the 'mystical dance or Sema, symbolical of celestial rhythms and of the birth of the Soul', which is still performed in honour of its Founder, Jelal-ud-'din Rumi (Mevlana), the Sufi poet of Khorasan who wrote the Mathnawi. A sheikh of the Mevlevi Dervishes comes here to-morrow to pick and train a team which will (we hope) be able to perform the ritual and the dance which are known to be able to lift both the performers and the audience into a different state of Consciousness.

And how does this connect with our System? Well, I hope to meet this week a man from the remote town in Afghanistan where G. is said to have been taught the System by a very strict School, who are also closely connected with the Mevlevi. Perhaps next Monday you will hear more of this rather entertaining story.

A word about the relation of our own Organisation to these researches. By being strong and coherent and sure of our Aim, we are in the happy position of being able to welcome any Tradition belonging to the Fourth Way and any Enlightened man who can help us attain this aim of ours without *shifting our own ground*. We must also find our right place in close relationship to that great Stream of Influences from the Inner Circle, which shows signs just now of uniting in a vital endeavour to help humanity in its next great step on the way of evolution, namely the attainment of Self-consciousness as a prelude to Cosmic Consciousness.

This translation from Rumi (the Founder of the Mevlevi Dervishes) shows you the attitude of his Tradition to the search for Consciousness within oneself:

He asked: Who standeth at my door? I said: Thy indigent slave.

He asked: What dost thou here? I said: I am come to greet Thee, O my Lord.

He asked: How long wilt thou persist? I said: Until Thou call me in.

He asked: How long wilt thou desire it? I said: Till the last day of time, O Lord.

I laid claim to His Love; I took solemn oath that for love of Him I had renounc't wealth and power.

He asked: Doth not a judge demand a witness to prove a claim? I said: Tears are my witnesses, and my pale face the evidence.

He asked: Is thy witness trustworthy, when thine eyes are wayward?

I said: I swear by Thy great Justice, they are pure and free from sin.

He asked: What desirest thou of Me? I said: Thy Constancy and Friendship...

He asked: Who was thy Comrade? I said: The thought of Thee, O King.

He asked: Who call'd thee hither? I said: The rumour of Thy Feast

O ask ye no more of me. Were I to tell you more words of His,

Ye would burst your bonds; no roof nor door could restrain you.

(From Robert Bridges' Anthology – *The Spirit of Man*)

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