

2 December 1963

## READING 9

### PREFACE. THE FIFTH DIMENSION

We must come back again to the idea of *Rhythm*, for without it we cannot understand the Laws of Nature, particularly those which underlie the 'setting up of Consciousness' in the Fourth Room and the chief obstacles to it, namely imagination and identification. The Fifth Dimension means *Repetition*, and Rhythm is connected with the patterns set up by repetitive cycles. To take a spatial example – a carpet consists of the repetition of an infinite number of units; the pattern of the carpet is the visible rhythm set up in the course of this repetition. But underlying *spatial* patterns are the patterns of repetition in *Time*, and this is one of the points at which all branches of Science are making their greatest advances today.

### PART 1

We have spoken of *Movement* as a very important means of using the newly discovered 'Arousal Mechanism' for harnessing the Power to light up the Screen in the 'setting up of Consciousness'. Now the learning of all skilled movement depends upon repetition, involving the 'feed-back' mechanism through which constant improvement becomes possible. Rhythms – patterns of movement – play a major role in 'movement memory', which is another name for the feed-back. How difficult it is to remember and repeat any complicated succession of movements unless one discerns and follows their rhythm!

It is always valuable to learn from an expert in a given field of experience, and we have her permission to quote from one of three articles by Dame Ninette de Valois now appearing in the *Sunday Telegraph*. Here are three paragraphs from the second article called 'What makes a Dancer':

All the arts are subject to laws of their own – laws that must be accepted – and many of them seem to be as much wrapped in mystery as the laws of the universe. They are there to be accepted for all time. The art of movement is no exception. We know through the analysis of dance movement that the symmetry of the body responds to many laws. We have to learn not to break them, whether as dancers, teachers or choreographers.

The dance execution of a ballet dancer is as wonderful to analyse in theory as it is beautiful to look at in action. In preparation the training covers all those demands that nature permits to be made on the body when it reaches a higher plane of development and movement. Even here the limitations are set by the laws of nature. They must be recognised, for to overstrain the mechanism of the body is as serious as to overstrain the mechanism of the voice.

Most of our movements in life come to us naturally, through years of habit. A dancer, every day of his life when he dances, has to remain aware of movement, aware of the brain message to his body. The answer to that message amounts to a very important form of self-discipline and control, neither of which can ever be relaxed. The movement may be carefully memorised so that it can be repeated, but never can it be repeated without conscious attention to what is actually taking place.

Very humbly I relate this to our present study in the following way:

The ballet dancer, starting early in life, is learning to use the Higher parts of the Moving centre, and through that to arouse the Higher parts of other centres. As I understand those paragraphs, the chief point is that even though technically perfect, the dancer will remain a perfect machine unless the Screen is kept illuminated while dancing, and only then will fellow dancers and great audiences be similarly aroused, and the aims of composer, choreographer and director be fully realised.

If I am right, then I want to ask two questions:

- 1) What can we ourselves learn from experts in this field about the setting up of Consciousness through our own techniques of rhythmic movement?
- 2) What is it that can *stop* the dancer from keeping the Screen illuminated during dancing? What can put out the Light and limit or nullify all the long effort of preparation for the big occasion?

## PART 2. PUTTING OUT THE LIGHT

The neurologists have recently established the existence of what they call '*reverberating circuits*' – circular nerve-paths through which current passes round and round firing off perturbations in all directions. There are probably many of these in the human nervous system, but perhaps the most important is what is called the '*Limbic System*'. This connects 'B' (the Light) with the most primitive parts of the brain and is probably the chief means of establishing memory in all mammals since it draws together the senses of sight, smell, and hearing, the balancing mechanisms, as well as the deepest instincts like self-preservation and reproduction. In man we are very ignorant still about its natural and useful function ; but we do know that it plays a big role in connecting excitement and depression with *thought* processes and can effectively put out the Light in the Fourth Room. I myself believe it to be the chief mechanism underlying imagination and identification as obstacles to Consciousness. Once a man's attention becomes caught in such a repetitive circuit, he is like a small boat caught in a whirlpool or any solid object in the path of a cyclone or tornado.

Here is a real-life example of a 'reverberating circuit' from last Saturday's *Daily Telegraph*:

'This case,' said the Judge at Westminster County Court on November 29th, 'began with two ordinary normal motorists arguing over the right to occupy the most precious of things, a Leicester Square parking lot.'

Months ago in a three-litre Rover, on their way to see the film *Lawrence of Arabia* one night, were Mr. and Mrs. M. of Kensington. Behind, also in a three-litre Rover, also with his wife, also on his way to see the film and also searching for a place to park was Mr. G. of St. John's Wood.

Both men spotted a car leaving a space. Both went towards it, one reversing, the other going forward. They stuck half-way. The result was that Mr. M. went across to Mr. G. and spat in his face. Eventually (after many weeks) Mr. M. had apologised by letter, but Mr. G. did not think this was enough and claimed £100 for assault. The Judge (rating this too expensive for just one spit) awarded him £10 damages. In Court Mr. M said, 'I lost my temper. Then it happened involuntarily. It would probably never have happened had Mr. G. not been smiling.'

Just think how those two circuits in Mr. G. and Mr. M. (not to mention the two in their wives) must have gone on reverberating over all those months! That this danger is recognised in many Systems designed for the 'setting up of Consciousness' is shown by several Zen stories, including the familiar one called 'Muddy Road':

Tan-Zan and Eki-Do were travelling together down a muddy road. A heavy rain was still falling.

Coming around a bend they met a lovely girl in a silk kimono and sash, unable to cross the intersection.

'Come on, girl,' said Tan-Zan at once. Lifting her in his arms, he carried her over the mud.

Eki-Do did not speak again until that night when they reached a lodging temple. Then he no longer could restrain himself. 'We monks don't go near females,' he told Tan-Zan, 'and especially young and lovely ones. It is dangerous. Why did you do that?'

'I left the girl there,' said Tan-Zan. 'Are you still carrying her?'

### PART 3. 'GIVE UP YOUR SUFFERING'

The *Philokalia* gives a most precise description of how *suffering* arises from getting caught in one of these repetitive circuits. Some group of impressions attracts your attention which unites with them, and a sort of mental 'copulation' (Synoūsia) takes place. By then you are past escape and Pāthos ('sin' or 'suffering') is the inevitable result; for the process, once established, is bound to happen again and again.

The perturbations affect the body as well as the mind, starting up many 'psychosomatic illnesses' like migraine or asthma. And what is more, it is through this triad (N-C-O) that one becomes bound to the wheel of recurrence in life after life. A hint of this is evident in a letter by Sir Charles Symonds in the *British Medical Journal* of November 30th – about an account (in the previous number) of failure of the adrenal glands (Addison's Disease):

Sir, The medical memorandum by Dr. M.E. Smith and others on Addison's disease in identical twins (November 23, p.1316) contains an observation of particular interest. The illness in each twin appears to have begun at approximately the same time. This was also true in the case of twins (probably non-identical) reported by me, each of whom developed the symptoms of Addison's disease in the same month at the age of 19. There is evidence here suggesting the operation of a biological clock set by genetic pattern. The nature of biological clocks has been discussed by W. Goody and by C.P. Richter. The purpose of this letter is to draw attention to the value in this connection of collecting data on the times of incidence of endocrine disease in twins.

The importance to us of this example lies in the hint it gives that a process of the kind we are describing, though it starts in the Personality may, if repeated often enough, enter the *Essence*.

Therefore you are earnestly enjoined in the System to '*give up your suffering and create Moon in yourself*'. The influence of the rhythm of the Moon, though unknown to science except in relation to tides, is greatly felt throughout Organic Life in perpetuating all repetitive movements just like the weight on the pendulum of a grandfather clock. By the creation of 'Second Body' our psychology and our movements must be governed from within the Fourth Room and not be driven mechanically by the Moon's gravity. Would-be Dervishes have learnt to give up their suffering, and it is very moving to see them 'creating Moon in themselves'.

Now we have learnt through the Meditation that the way to escape such whirlpools is not to have converse with repetitive thoughts – at once withdraw the attention from them by the ‘180° turn’. It is probable that no thought that repeats unintentionally more than once is worth anything. The late J. W. Dunne (*Nothing Dies*, p.33) recognises such a ‘regress’ (as he calls it) as the chief barrier to Consciousness. He wrote:

Where, then, does the barrier begin?

Well, suppose I declare that every child had a father. Does that initiate a regress? No, it is merely a definition of the meaning of the word ‘child’. But if I were to make the further assertion that every father was also a child – that is, had a father – then I should have entered an endless regress.

But if the repeated thought has any sort of suffering attached to it, then the process is immensely accelerated and one only has a breath or two in which to escape from the whirlpool.

To sum up the subject in a graphic simile of the Shankaracharya’s: ‘Suppose there is a lunatic at the door of our house, some systems say we should take the lunatic inside the door and improve him. But in our system of Meditation we leave the lunatic outside the door; if we once let him in there will be endless trouble.

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