

15 June 1964

## READING 6

### PART 1

It would be well worth your while to consider this evening a short newspaper report which seems to reveal clearly a point where science and our System might meet. The report reads as follows:

#### Gap between Mind and Matter

Athens, 1 June

One of philosophy's oldest problems – that of how mind and matter are linked – was broached tonight by Lord Adrian in the first talk of the Athens meeting delivered from the Pnyx site of the first Athenian parliament near the Acropolis.

Lord Adrian, the leading neurophysiologist, and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, won the Nobel prize for medicine in 1932. His lecture was attended by King Constantine.

Lord Adrian spoke of the gap between mind and matter. 'The metaphysical problem has lost its appeal and the attack has moved to the field of natural science,' he said. 'We can study the data on either side of the gap. We can try to describe the mental data which needs to be linked to material activities in the brain, and on the physical side we can study the chain of material events to see how far it can satisfy us as the basis of human thought; although some of the gap remains it can now be defined more sharply: it concerns the relation of matter to consciousness rather than reason. Machines can reason as well as or better than man, but we do not believe that they are conscious, aware that they exist as individuals. Our problem is to account for the fact that we are the sentient beings.'

On the physical side of the mind-matter gap there were far more data. Those concerned the structure of the brain and the events in sense organs, nerves and muscles. Research had led science as far as the neurones, the thousands of millions of cells of the brain, and the fibres which carry the signals.

Lord Adrian concluded: 'Perhaps we shall find in the end that the question (of consciousness) is outside the scientist's system of knowledge and must be referred again to the philosophical schools. But the science of living creatures has a great many questions to settle before it is fair to ask it why human beings are conscious.'

What do you think about that?

(Discussion)

#### PRELIMINARY COMMENT

This, in fact, shows a great advance in Adrian's thought even since his broadcast talk on 'What happens when we think' (published 1950 in *The Physical Basis of Mind*). The important sentence concerns '*the relation of matter to consciousness rather than reason*'. It is clear that the researches on the electrical activity of the brain which were initiated and presided over by him and which won him a Nobel prize, have indeed paid a big dividend.

Recently we have had intimate experience of two quite different methods by which men can liberate themselves from the power of the machine and become 'aware that they exist as individuals'. One way is the passive one of retreat from the machine to the Source of individuality; the other is the active one of forcing the machine to conform to entirely different conditions and in that way achieve Self-realization. The Kingdom of Heaven 'is taken by storm' – at the beginning; passivity comes later. Try to think about what those two different kinds of approach would demand.

## PART 2

Although Adrian has put his finger on the point where future possibility begins, yet we must be sure we realise fully the gap which exists between Higher Mind and common mind. At this moment particularly it becomes necessary for the future of this organisation (with all its branches throughout the world) to formulate for ourselves very clearly the differences between current points of view in the Outer Circle of Humanity and the body of Knowledge belonging to the Inner Circle, which remains eternally true. Here are 12 points for you to consider in an attempt at such a formulation:

<b>OUTER CIRCLE OF HUMANITY</b>	<b>INNER CIRCLE</b>
<b>Current 'Scientific' attitudes</b>	<b>Perpetual Truth in all epochs</b>
1. Understanding is the same as knowledge; the idea of 'Being' never arises in this context.	1. Understanding is the resultant of Knowledge and Being, both of which have many levels.
2. 'We can study the data on either side of the gap between consciousness and matter.'	2. 'Both Consciousness and the machine are material, but their materiality is different' – hence the gap.
3. 'This self is a fully integrated unity' – no 'other self' exists.	3. This self is plurality, but the Divine Self – the Unity – always exists and can be realized.
4. There are only two states of consciousness, sleep and 'physiological vigilance'.	4. These two subjective states of consciousness are unreliable; two higher and Objective states of Consciousness are possible.
5. Consciousness is the experience of bodily sensations.	5. Consciousness can exist independently of bodily sensations and other functions, psychological and physical.
6. Attention is either asleep or alerted.	6. Attention has three levels – it can be: a) absent or scattered, b) alerted but held prisoner, c) alerted and controlled by Will.

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| 7.  | ‘Mental functions normal or abnormal are the content of consciousness.’  | 7.  | Three levels (mechanical, emotional and voluntary) of all the psychological functions correspond with these three levels of Attention.  |
| 8.  | Man, like animals, is a physico-chemical machine.  | 8.  | Man can be conscious of himself as a machine, and also as a vehicle for Truth, happiness and pure Consciousness (Sat-chit-Ananda).      |
| 9.  | Unknown.   | 9.  | There are certain universal obstacles to Consciousness and Attention arising from misplaced functions of the machine.                   |
| 10. | Man is fully evolved, responsible for his actions, and his own master. (This conflicts with (8), but the conflict is not perceived.) | 10. | Individual evolution is possible but requires the discipline of a School or organisation directed by Higher Mind (Fully Realized Mind). |
| 11. | Unknown.   | 11. | Man is potentially a universe in miniature and his Understanding of the Universe depends upon his Realization of Himself.               |
| 12. | Unknown.   | 12. | Like everything else in the Universe, individual evolution is determined by the interplay of Cosmic laws.                               |

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