

7 December 1964

READING 7

PART OF REPORT OF MONDAY MEETING, COLET HOUSE, 30TH NOVEMBER, 1964

Dr. R. Two written descriptions, gratefully received, help us to answer important questions:

1. Mrs. Leaman

When I was thirteen I had to write an essay. The subject escapes me now, and is of no particular importance. The essentials of the essay I wrote, I remember. It was in the form of a dream. I was in a small room in a large unknown house. Outside, there was a wide, very beautiful, rather barren garden stretching – almost blending – into the sea which was all round. I wanted to go out into the garden and reach the sea, which contained in its remoteness – or so it seemed to me – all the answers to every unasked question that had ever crossed my mind. I knew that I could not go into the garden until I had first explored the house and discovered the infinite possibilities that I sensed were there. This I had to do alone, and I was aware that it might be either a moment, or a life-time before I reached my sea. I finished my essay, and I understood, in that moment, who I was and why.

When I was questioned as to why I had not written the subject set, and what I thought my essay was about, I could not answer, and was once more locked in myself with the words I had no way of expressing.

Dr. R. We can all remember things like that, and I read this to illustrate the world of Buddhi on the one hand – the dream often, when enlightened, revealing a Truth – and the world of Manas which has no connection with it and doesn't know anything about it. This is the trouble of humanity that these two levels of mind usually become separated; Meditation, the Dervish Turning and special disciplines bring the two together and weld them together so that they are *permanently one*. It is very, very important to become One – only it won't happen by chance!

2. This one has been sent to me by Mrs. Mabey. It is an extract from a school magazine written by a girl of thirteen. Her daughter was given it by a friend at that school. It is called 'The Longest Day':

Have you ever experienced what one calls at the end of it the 'longest day of your life'? I have, but for a change it was a long happy day instead of a long dreary day that just wouldn't end.

The alarm went off, as it always does, at five to seven, five minutes before I am due to get up. However, as soon as I woke up, I felt something was different from other days: instead of feeling utterly tired, I felt exhilarated and alive. The sun was streaming through a space between the curtains and I spent my five minutes looking at the rays and listening to the gentle breathing of my sleeping brother and sisters. The paper boy arrived at seven o'clock; he ran whistling up the front path and sent a thrill of happiness through me. An hour later, I walked down the street, smiling at everything I saw, whether workman, cat or falling autumn leaf.

The words 'I am happy, I am happy' throbbed in my brain and I was bursting with happiness for no specific reason.

At school I looked on the cheerful side of everything. A few girls in the form above me teased me about my thick stockings, unfashionable hair-style and lack of interest in 'pop music'. This was quite a normal occurrence, perhaps intensified today by my happy looks, but instead of running away severely hurt and nearly crying, I smiled at them. Although I said nothing their words had left no scar on my happiness.

The day went on, lesson after lesson. One's dream school-day always makes lessons short, but my lessons were as long as any day in spite of the fact that I was as happy as in the most wonderful dream. At dinner time the food was no better than it usually is at school, but I ate it with a most uncommon zest. Hunger was not the cause, but happiness, sheer and simple happiness.

At home, doing some very dreary Maths homework, I worked it all out and wrote every detail in such an unusual frame of mind that it almost showed in the technical diagrams and equations I was writing. My homework took an extra long time that evening and bed with no reading followed immediately after it. I didn't mind; hard work even if you are happy makes you tired though not exhausted. I had a quick bath, with no luxurious soaking, and lay in bed, awake for only a little while before I fell into a refreshing, happy sleep after the longest, happiest day in my life.

Dr. R. Well, even if we have not got as far as that child, we know that that is what is normal though so rare! And if it could take one through school next time it is worth working for! That is a picture of Buddhi and Manas working harmoniously together with no clouds in the sky.

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I have just had a letter from the Shankaracharya which gives us some help. I may say that I wrote him two letters, and in the second one I thought I was being rather clever! I wrote a story which came to me about how we make bargains with the Atman, whereas probably we ought to consider not wasting his time. Almost immediately after sending this to him, I realised that it was all stupid, as he says in this letter!:

27 November

Dear Dr. Roles,

Blessings with love.

Received your enthusiastic letter and noted the content. It is pleasant to know that people are in high spirit and that there is great zest for the meditation. The great demand for meditation is also a natural move from the Atman. But as you say that the weaker self can't digest the heavy material, so it is quite appropriate that only gradual supply of food be made. Keep up their enthusiasm slowly and steadily. Whatever material is given, if one practises even a little part of it, one would begin to see a lot by himself.

I also received your second letter and read the story of the man who wanted to see the King, and his ideas of not wasting King's time. This is all intellectual. If someone loves someone, he can't rest until he meet him. The benefit can only be derived by meeting, so a combination of Knowledge and Love is necessary to materialise the goal. Without Love, the knowledge is incomplete, and love is also incomplete without Knowledge too. Thus even to say nothing one has to write 'Nothing'. At least it conveys the contentment.

After arriving at Allahabad from Lucknow I am continuously moving from place to place, not staying more than three days at one place. Your letter came to me hopping on a long journey, being directed from one place to the next, and finally reached me at Jubbulpore. I also received a letter from Mr. MacLaren with yours. His questions are duly answered now. There were no questions from your side, only the report of well-being and organisation of the groups. Please convey my best wishes to the group and yourself.

Shankaracharya

Dr. R. So that is a challenge – questions! Quite a number of your questions about Buddhi and Atman have been translated and sent out to him last weekend.

I feel his sentence – ‘A combination of Knowledge and Love is ‘necessary to materialise the goal’ puts the whole thing in one; and Allan has given you quotations establishing what he means by True Knowledge – the Knowledge that the Atman and the Kingdom of Heaven lie within one.

But I feel it is also necessary to keep reminding ourselves about what the word ‘Love’ means when *he* uses the word. Just as we have to learn what Will is in contrast to self-will, so we must learn what Love is in contrast to self-love. It was Fénelon (in the 17th century) who suddenly became painfully aware – not of being the victim of any obvious vice, but of that thoroughly respectable *‘amour propre’* or self-love which is the obstacle to all true spirituality. He wrote: ‘The whole root of our troubles is that we love ourselves to the point of idolatry, and everything that we love outside ourselves, we love only on our own account.’

So it is just that we call the wrong thing ‘I’ and love it; but if we could love ‘Real I’ – the Atman – even to the point of idolatry, we would surely have everything we want! I feel it was put very simply in that familiar folk-song (the traditional air was set by Vaughan Williams):

I will give my love an apple without any core,
I will give my love a house without any door,
I will build my love a palace wherein she may be,
And she may unlock it without any key.

That is what with all our efforts we are trying to do – to build this palace. A Third Body (the ‘Spiritual Body’) must be built to be the home of the Atman where he can come and rest because, you remember, ‘the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay His head.’ There is nowhere for the Atman to stay; we have to build a palace suitable for him. If he is residing in his palace, then through the Buddhi ‘all the powers of the Kingdom perform their right functions and the servants come and go; this benefits the whole population and also brings due honour to the King’.

Mrs. H. Caiger-Smith: Do we have to build a palace, or could we just open the door?

Dr. R. We could well stop thinking even that there is a door or that a key is needed! But something steady where he could live has to be made. It is no good if everything in us is made of shifting material, changing every minute. Probably a *changeless* place is what is meant.

Before we stop, I would like just to read this observation that was sent in (the writer wants to be anonymous):

To-day, having been listening to Palestrina, I sat down to meditate. I only seemed to reach the silence for very short periods, but later when I was in a tube train (and remembering why I had wanted to meditate, and what I could receive) the mantra surged up in me, with a great warmth and poignancy. Walking through the park, aware of the beauty of the trees (which always, and particularly in winter, arouse emotion), the sky, clouds and sun, wheeling sea-gulls, the feel of dried leaves underfoot, there was a feeling of joy and wonder and understanding.

At the same time there was an awareness, that there was more available if I could only reach it. The feeling lasted for quite twenty minutes and has not, some hours later, completely left me.

Dr. R. This reminded the writer of what Mr. Ouspensky described so well in *Experimental Mysticism* as the two thresholds. At the *first threshold* he passed into a different world. During the half-hour we also come into a world quite different from the ordinary world, which has more in common with dreams (sometimes beautiful but unreliable), and sometimes voices. He realised after a time in his experiments that what he had to do was not to listen to the voices, not to be distracted, but to go on just patiently Being. Remember he did not have the mantra to help him!

Then suddenly once more something would happen – a shock would again be felt all through him and he would pass the *second threshold* into a wonderful clarity where everything was vivid. The voices had disappeared; in their place was *one Voice* and, although that Voice was sometimes there and sometimes not, it was the *only* Voice. He realised that all he wanted would come only after the *second threshold*, and that he must be patient enough to pass through the first.

I don't believe *we* are patient enough. Perhaps we get tempted by pleasant dreams in the first stage; but we should keep right on, not being distracted from the silence by anything; and sure enough (as this writer describes) we will get at unexpected times many things which belong to the second stage.

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