

15 March 1965

## READING 8

## PART 1

I have taken some of the questions from last Monday and tried to answer them more fully:

Q. It is difficult to grasp feeling of Life Principle going to the Moon when one sees the latest photographs of it looking so dull and dead.

A. That is just the point – though the Moon is not dead; it is not born yet; but, just as it looks, it *is* a very bad place to be, worse than the earth, and when the astronauts get to it they won't like it a bit!

This is the equivalent in the System of the Homeric and Virgilian Hades, the land of gibbering ghosts, where all the failed heroes went. It is also in the Gospels the 'outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth', and you see there, too, that it applies to someone who has made a good start and from whom good things were expected, but who has failed the test. It is not a pleasant place at all, and psychologically one knows it only too well, where nothing is any good any more: 'Abandon hope all ye that enter here'. It can have this psychological meaning as a spur to us if, when we taste it, we realise that our work has stopped. Of course it also could have a meaning in relation to the lives of people who, having developed some permanent spark of Consciousness, don't get far enough; they are aware of the unpleasantness of the Moon, whereas most people don't notice any difference. It is a place of separation from all that we love; come away quick and feel the Love!

Q. Is the Atman always there in us even if unmanifested?

A. Yes, the Shankaracharya assures us that the Atman is always there just as the Sun is always there, and that we are separated from Him only by clouds. Even if we know it, we are always forgetting this most important fact.

Q. (same, contd.) Would an unmanifested Atman of someone who dies be there when he is born again as part of his Essence?

A. The Atman is born with everybody, but if it is unmanifested it makes no difference to a man's life when he is born again with it. What we want is to create a permanent vehicle in us, a permanent home in our psyche for the Atman, so that *now*, before we are born again we shall know and remember and not be separated from Him; He must be manifested in our lives *now*.

Q. Mr. M. found the connection between Essence, Life Principle and Atman unclear.

A. Permeating the physical body and forming a new body in each life is the Essence which, if it were developed enough, would cause us to live under the Law of Fate, under the influence of our particular combination of Planets. That 'fate' might be favourable or unfavourable, but at least it would be *genuinely our own*. We would not be under the general Law of Accident or influenced against our own judgement by other people; *we would be ourselves*. The heroes in Homer had names; they were individuals governed by their own fate or divinity; the rest were just the unnamed crowd.

Likewise, we are all born with a Life Principle (otherwise we would not be alive), and when we die the Life Principle leaves us and that is that! But this Life Principle could be manifested by growing to become part of the Universal Spirit of Light and Truth all through the world. That is how I see it, but you have forgotten that the Life Principle has a *different materiality* from the Essence and the Essence from the Physical body. They are under different laws.

- Q. Mr. de L. suggested that the Sun might be thought of as giving the active Life Force, whilst Earth acted in the passive Mother role, and that planetary influence was the third modifying force shaping our lives.
- A. That is a very good way of thinking of it.
- Q. One wonders about the Life Principle in a stillborn baby, or one who only lives a short time. Could it ever be that the Fate of such a one might be changed?
- A. I feel we are very wrong in the way we look at many of these things. Mr. Ouspensky used to say that maybe a stillborn baby or a baby that did not live very long was *learning to live*; that it may be difficult to establish life in this hard world, and perhaps many attempts have to be made by some who have a very young Essence. So try not to look at such things as unmitigated tragedy; there is very much we don't know. (The Father of a baby stillborn the day before was present).
- Q. Everyone has a complete pattern of life, therefore, no loss of possibilities, e.g., Mozart, although he died so young.
- A. Mozart is a different case. He lived his life at twice the pace of the ordinary person. All through the night something in him was composing and dipping into his treasures; all through the day he was manifesting them in writing music – he lived twice the pace of ordinary life. Again, Mr. Ouspensky had the idea that a great artist would escape from recurrence ('What use to make Pushkin write the same poems more and more perfectly?'). So Mozart may have been in the process of escaping. We think it a great privilege to live here, but it isn't!

How many great artists have died young! The names of Masaccio, Giorgione, Mozart, Shelley, Keats, Pushkin and Lermontoff come immediately to mind as well as contemporaries like Nicholas de Staël, not fully appreciated as yet. But there is something true about the saying, 'He whom the gods love, dies young,' provided he was making good use of his opportunities.

- Q. Is there an unmanifested earth, and unmanifested planets, as there is Unmanifested Sun?
- A. Of course! How do you think of the Earth? Do you think of it as a lump of rock and mud revolving in the sky, or do you see it as a living being the way Fechner did? If we can see still further, then we see not only its life, but its own intelligence and consciousness; all these things are unmanifested.
- Q. If Essence grew, would it be under the influence of the Unmanifested Sun?
- A. As I see it from the Teaching in which we were brought up, Essence has to grow to enable us to come under the Law of Fate. Then, if Fate is kind and we find a School – find the way to create in us an 'immortal soul' – this 'Soul' or permanent principle would be constantly under the influence of the (till then) Unmanifested Sun. There are two stages at least.
- Q. Could you explain more about the meaning of the word 'unmanifested'?

- A. It has quite the ordinary meaning. We see the Sun; the light of the Sun, the Sun's disc are familiar facts in our lives; but we don't see the consciousness, the intelligence and the psychology of the Sun – the Spiritual qualities of the Sun, do we? It is the same with most things; we see somebody's face and physical appearance, and we say, 'That is old so and so'; but we don't *see them!* For each of us is, in a sense, 'unmanifested' – the best parts are unseen, leaving no outward trace on the world.
- Q. What is vaguely suggested to me is that to maintain this Life Principle you have to be a parasite – one uses something else.
- A. No, no! Many people have been inclined to see some sinister significance in the Doctor's example of the virus attacking the bacillus. But please don't read anything else into that example. We are not paramecia, we are not viruses or bacilli, or anything else unpleasant! The example was given because he dislikes talking in vague generalities. He wants more facts, and here are facts about this realm in the simplest possible case; and the more facts we can get just now the more we shall understand the Life Principle, Essence and so on. It is no good going on for ever talking in philosophical language. We must speak from examples, from facts, and that applies also to the Law of Octaves on which we need to be much better informed.

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## PART 2. (CHIEFLY FOR NEW GROUPS)

### Subjective and Objective States of Consciousness

We have recently posed difficult questions, some of which do not even seem to us important in ordinary states of consciousness; while in such states they are quite unanswerable, and even if we are told the answers they don't mean very much to us. So it's important above all things to move out of the world of the unreal (what we call 'subjective states') into the world of the Real. That world belongs to two Objective states of Consciousness; the first in which one sees *oneself* objectively, and the second in which one could see the world objectively – as it really is. One must pass through the one to get to the other. It must be realised that the Objective states of Consciousness are *added* over and above the events of the illusory world which go on just the same; appreciation of Reality begins to come in glimpses growing gradually more intense, appearing oftener, lasting longer, and leaving deeper imprints on the Memory.

What are some of the characteristics of more Objective states of Consciousness? One is the feeling of *difference* between false and True, illusion and Reality. You begin to see yourself pretending, putting on an act; and you see how unconvincing this is to other people, particularly to those who know you well. You might, you feel, save yourself the trouble!

With this you begin to be aware of what are called '*self-evident Truths*,' Truths which seem to arise naturally in very different people at different times and in different places. Can you mention some of these? Probably only in a moment when you are rather less subjective.

(Pause for Discussion)

One such is the obvious fact that *everyone in ordinary life is asleep*. You suddenly see that this explains so many things – for instance, the way people rush headlong into situations which needn't have arisen, but from which there is no way out until time moves on and circumstances

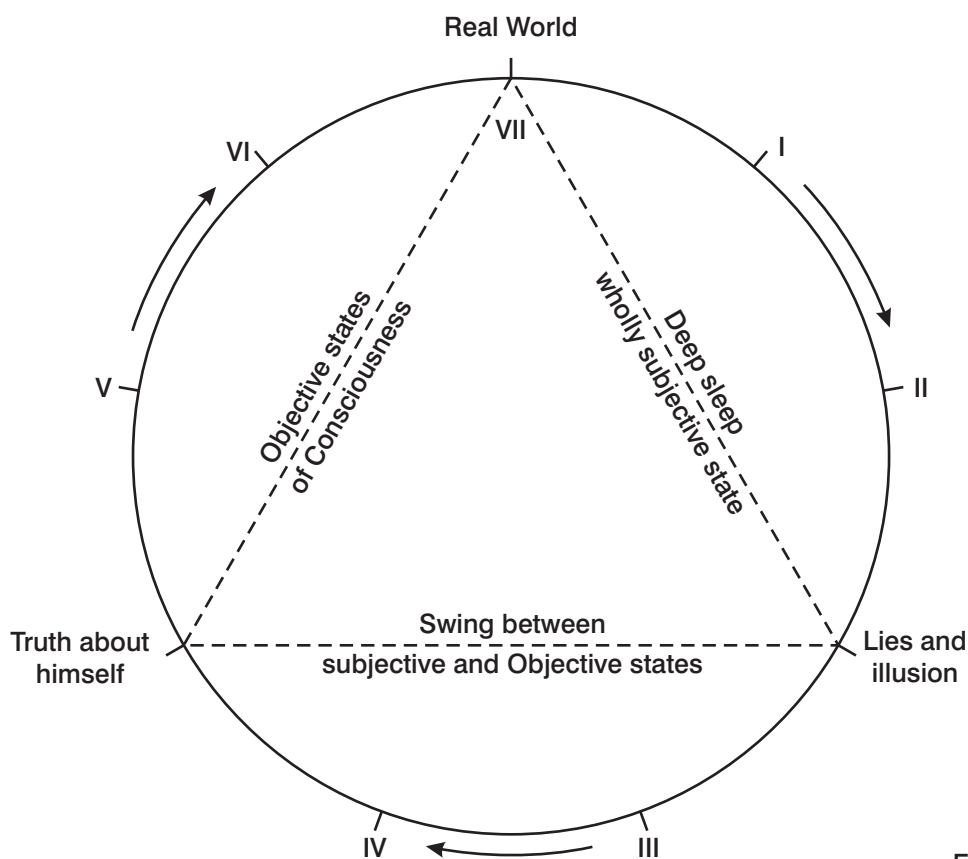
change. You only have to read the daily papers to see scores of examples of individuals or groups or governments rushing blindly into opposition and being unable to extricate themselves. In fact, in a waking moment you feel the absolute necessity that some fully Realized Man, a man who is already awake, shall come at the appointed time like the Prince in the fairy story, to awaken Briar Rose with a kiss and with her the court and the whole castle.

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In the ascending Octave of Self-realization we realise that there are three stages in passing from the wholly subjective states to the purely Objective. In deep sleep we do not even remember the existence of the Real world: good impulses are forgotten as soon as felt, and resolutions are unfulfilled. (Figure) In such states we are usually quite certain about everything – ‘there’s only one point of view and this is it!’ But when we are getting glimpses of the Real world, we begin to be uncertain; we don’t know what to trust; and we are astonished at the sudden changes from clarity to obscurity which we experience. Only when we have learned by practice permanently to distinguish and hold to the Truth, do we experience the happiness and certainty of the 5th, 6th and 7th Steps. Then we can take up our abode in the Real world and look in detachment at ourselves and all that goes on knowing it for what it is. So we must push on, reminding ourselves constantly of the great Aim:

Wakeful amid the heedless, keenly vigilant among those who are asleep, the wise man forges ahead, just as a charger outdistances a horse of lesser strength.

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Figure

He who possesses a mind serene will have nothing to fear inasmuch as he is vigilant.  
Let such a one deem his body as fragile as an earthen jar, but his mind as strong as a  
fortress; then let him fight Mara with the sword of Knowledge, and guard his conquest  
unswayed by transient desires.

*(Dhammapada)*

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