

5 June 1967

READING 3

Please Note:

Part 1 is only for the larger meetings at Colet House. Part 2 for all other groups.

PART 1

At the beginning of this term we took as our subject for study the new state of Consciousness which we call 'awakening'. It was my intention to get our groups (small and large) to help us put together a small book or 'Monograph' on the subject intended, when we are fully satisfied with it, for general publication.

A start was made in a rough draft of an 'Essay on Awakening' which was tried out by Prof. Guyatt on Wednesday and Dr. David Connell on Thursday evening. This began, quite correctly, by taking what has been well-established in scientific circles during the last decade or two:

'The work of Moruzzi and Magoun (1949)', it said, 'described the Reticular formation of the brain and its role of producing wakefulness'. This *could* be the beginning of a new understanding of wakefulness and consciousness if this knowledge could be applied to man and extended thereby. So far two states of consciousness only have been established, and these only on experimental animals, because the methods used – implanting electrodes in the brain, removal of parts of the brain and so on – are obviously not applicable. All that need be done in that way has now been done; what is now required is observation by observers using special methods for producing wakefulness, together with a careful record of week-to-week observations; and combined, if possible, with the rather rough method of EEG recording from the scalp.

The Essay took the next step also by referring to the work of Oswald and others which demonstrates that sleep is made up of different layers, one of which is called 'Paradoxical sleep'.

Proceeding from this we can establish quite readily that the daytime state of semi-wakefulness is also made up of different levels. At this point we must be very certain of defining these levels correctly, being careful not to base our definitions on *functions* such as motor or sensory perception, heightened emotion and so on. By definition the Awakening mechanism is *non-specific*, that is, relating to a general process of integration and not to any separate function. Further, there is no definite *order* of awakening of those functions, for the order varies in different individuals and in the same individual at different times. You cannot say, for instance, that the first step is a 'heightened physical awareness (motor and sensory)', for the Meditation has already proved the contrary.

The best way to define these levels is the one that the Essay then refers to in the words, 'One of the main characteristics of this progression of wakefulness is an alteration in the feeling of the ego'. The most striking manifestation of the next level of consciousness is the vivid feeling '*I am here now*'. This may or may not be (depending on the circumstances, situation, etc.) accompanied by heightened sensory perception and in the ordinary daytime state this feeling of 'being present' fluctuates and disappears for long periods. Moreover, when there in the old state, it gives a personal slant to everything, resulting in falsification and wrong deductions. But in the new state (which we may call 'Self-consciousness') it brings with it a vivid discrimination

between what is true and what is false; but within the limited sphere of the observer, his immediate surroundings, things and people that he personally knows, his own life, etc.

There is any amount of evidence, however, that there has existed at times, and for some people, a further state characterised by a revelation of abstract Truth in which the observer's ego ceases to exist as a separate entity. This further state has been called 'Cosmic' or 'Objective' Consciousness.

If we are to continue with the larger discussion groups on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, they could be useful only if based on these now well-established conclusions and continued by much more systematic assembly of observations with the idea of a published Monograph on 'Awakening'.

PART 2. THE TEACHING ON COSMOSES

Many of us have had by now sufficient experience of the state of Self-consciousness (above described) to take another step forward. We often 'wake up', but we still remain 'very personal people'. That is chiefly because all our thoughts are about ourselves and our own affairs. His Holiness has stressed, too, that Meditation is greatly helped by cultivating a feeling of 'expansion' in which the observer finds no barriers and no differences between himself and the bigger world in which he lives.

This is just where the Teaching on Cosmoeses can be of such remarkable value. It is quite impossible to think constructively about Cosmoeses, develop or apply the Teaching practically and still remain personal and egocentric. So it can be made a means of rising above the personal and of developing that feeling of expansion. Now hear again that one of Mr. Ouspensky's many introductions to this subject which was read to you two Monday's ago, though today we must make certain amendments:

'Knowledge begins with the Teaching of the Cosmoeses'

You know the expressions 'macrocosm' and 'microcosm'. This means 'large cosmos' and 'small cosmos', 'large world' and 'small world'. The universe is regarded as a 'large cosmos' and man as a 'small cosmos', analogous to the large one. This establishes, as it were, the idea of the unity and the similarity of the world and man.

The teaching of the two cosmoeses is known from the Cabbala and other more ancient systems. But this teaching is *incomplete* and nothing can be derived from it, nothing can be built on it. Nothing can be derived from it because this teaching is merely a fragment split off from another, much fuller, ancient esoteric teaching about cosmoeses or worlds, included one within another and created in the image and likeness of the greatest of them, including in itself all the others. 'As above, so below', is an expression which refers to cosmoeses.

But it is essential to know that the *full* teaching on cosmoeses speaks not of two, but of seven cosmoeses, included one within another.

Seven cosmoeses, taken together in their relation to one another, alone represent a complete picture of the universe. The idea of two analogous cosmoeses, accidentally preserved from a great and complete teaching, is so incomplete that it can give no idea whatever of the analogy between man and the world...

You see that in the general order of the seven cosmoeses the Microcosm and the Macrocosm stand so far apart from each other that it is impossible to see or re-establish any direct analogy between them.

Each cosmos is a living being which lives, breathes, thinks, feels, is born, and dies...

The interrelation of the cosmoses is permanent and always the same. That is to say, one cosmos is related to another as *zero to infinity*. This means that the relation of the Microcosmos to the Tritocosmos is that of zero to infinity; the relation of the Mesocosmos to the Deuterocosmos is that of zero to infinity; and so on.

In order to understand the meaning of the division into cosmoses and the relation of cosmoses to each other, it is necessary to understand what the relation of zero to infinity means. If we understand what this means, the principle of the division of the Universe into cosmoses, the necessity of such a division, and the impossibility of drawing for ourselves a more or less lucid picture of the world without this division will immediately become clear to us..’

(*In Search of the Miraculous* pp. 205–207)

Now for an amendment. The Shankaracharya’s is one of those ancient Systems which speaks of only two cosmoses, yet one cannot say that in his hands ‘*nothing* can be derived from it, nothing can be built on it’. He gets very clear and practical results from it among the people whom he teaches; for few, if any, of them could understand the ‘Seven Cosmoses’. I have often felt when I’ve heard Indian sages arguing about ‘Subject and object’, ‘Knower and known’, the ‘drop of water and the Ocean’, how much futile argument could be saved if they understood about Cosmoses. For us the two can happily co-exist and we can get very much from either, but at different times and in different moods.

But it’s true to say that it *is* impossible to relate our Western scientific knowledge to so oversimplified a description as that of ‘Microcosm reflects Macrocosm’, for scientists would be well aware that the ‘two stand so far apart from each other that it is impossible to see or re-establish any direct analogy between them’. Yet at scientific discussions over here, I’ve often felt how much waste of time and argument could be saved if *they* only knew the Teaching on Cosmoses and could follow up its implications in relation to Time and Magnitude and many other things.

But we must try to understand more ourselves, so now I ask you: ‘What can you say about this fundamental relation of zero to infinity? What examples and illustrations can you give?’

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