

29 January 1968

## READING 1

### PART 1

Years ago we formed a Society (about the same time as we bought the freehold of Colet House), a Society which we now call 'The Society for the Study of Normal Psychology' or 'Study Society' for short.

During most of those years official Psychology remained in the dark ages caused by Freudian theories based on the study of mentally sick people and by 'Behaviourist' theories based on the observed behaviour of animals (chiefly rats) under artificial laboratory conditions. It has only just been brought to our notice by friends in the USA, that a quite different kind of Psychology has been flourishing in more than one university over there, centering round the work of A.H. Maslow, of which his two books *Motivation and Personality* (Harper 1954) and *Towards a Psychology of Being* (Van Nostrand 1962) give a good account. We have not been able yet to make contact, so have no recent news, but it might be refreshing to you to hear the beginning of that second book:

#### INTRODUCTION

#### **Toward a Psychology of Health**

There is now emerging over the horizon a new conception of human sickness and of human health, a psychology that I find so thrilling and so full of wonderful possibilities that I yield to the temptation to present it publicly even before it is checked and confirmed, and before it can be called reliable scientific knowledge.

The basic assumptions of this point of view are:

1. We have, each of us, an essential biologically based inner nature, which is to some degree 'natural', intrinsic, given, and, in a certain limited sense, unchangeable, or, at least, unchanging.
2. Each person's inner nature is in part unique to himself and in part species-wide.
3. It is possible to study this inner nature scientifically and to discover what it is like – (not *invent* – *discover*).
4. This inner nature, as much as we know of it so far, seems not to be intrinsically evil, but rather either neutral or positively 'good'. What we call evil behaviour appears most often to be a secondary reaction to frustration of this intrinsic nature.
5. Since this inner nature is good or neutral rather than bad, it is best to bring it out and to encourage it rather than to suppress it. If it is permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful, and happy.
6. If this essential core of the person is denied or suppressed, he gets sick sometimes in obvious ways, sometimes in subtle ways, sometimes immediately, sometimes later.
7. This inner nature is not strong and overpowering and unmistakable like the instincts of animals. It is weak and delicate and subtle and easily overcome by habit, cultural pressure, and wrong attitudes toward it.
8. Even though weak, it rarely disappears in the normal person – perhaps not even in the sick person. Even though denied, it persists underground forever pressing for actualization.

9. Somehow, these conclusions must all be articulated with the necessity of discipline, deprivation, frustration, pain and tragedy. To the extent that these experiences reveal and foster and fulfil our inner nature, to that extent they are desirable experiences.

Observe that if these assumptions are proven true, they promise a scientific ethics, a natural value system, a court of ultimate appeal for determination of good and bad, of right and wrong. The more we learn about man's natural tendencies, the easier it will be to tell him how to be good, how to be happy, how to be fruitful, how to respect himself, how to love, how to fulfil his highest potentialities. This amounts to automatic solution of many of the personality problems of the future. The thing to do seems to be to find out what you are really like inside, deep down, as a member of the human species and as a particular individual.

The study of such healthy people can teach us much about our own mistakes, our shortcomings, the proper directions in which to grow...

(Pause for Discussion)

One further quotation (pp. 23–24) should give us interesting confirmation of the general direction in which our own methods of meditation, turning, and so on, should be taking us:

‘...I want now to discuss some of the differences that I have observed to exist between the motivational lives of healthy people and of others, i.e., people motivated by growth needs contrasted with those motivated by the basic needs.

...These healthy people were defined<sup>†</sup> by describing their clinically observed characteristics. These are:

1. Superior perception of reality.
2. Increased acceptance of self, of others and of nature.
3. Increased spontaneity.
4. Increase in problem-centering.
5. Increased detachment and desire for privacy.
6. Increased autonomy, and resistance to enculturation.
7. Greater freshness of appreciation, and richness of emotional reaction.
8. Higher frequency of peak experiences.
9. Increased identification with the human species.
10. Changed (the clinician would say, improved) interpersonal relations.
11. More democratic character structure.
12. Greatly increased creativeness.
13. Certain changes in the value system.

\*

Naturally we have many advantages from our own Tradition and direct experiences with the invaluable assistance of the Leaders of parallel Traditions (Shankaracharya, Mevlevi Order) which we are not prepared to sacrifice by ‘going over to’ the rather complicated language of this emergent psychology. Still (if we keep in mind that all progress must be based on firsthand

---

<sup>†</sup>*Motivation & Personality*

knowledge of the Self or Atman), there is something we might learn from these recent trends in forecasting the general direction in which our own Society might be able to develop its influence.

From these and other studies there is evidence that about 1% of people are 'normal', healthy people in this sense. Probably many more have occasional experiences and good impulses, but forget them. That 1%, however, have enough to show this different influence in their lives; of these again perhaps 1% are inspired to search for a way to take them further and not leave it just to chance. So it is those people with 'Magnetic Centre' (rated 1 in 10,000) who are rather valuable. For them we look around to see if we can help, and for their protection the rules of 'schools' are created. If you don't know about our rules, why not ask someone? These could be made a great help to 'Self-actualization'.

(Discussion)

## PART 2

It is suggested that you read again the quotation in Reading 6 (1967/36) about the Ladder of Self-realization, reprinted below.

### 31 October 1967 (4)

W. Is it possible to put a question in relation to the Real World and the unreal world. If the wakeful state is as it were the lower level of the consciousness of the Real World, what are the higher states in this world?

S. It would be good to refer to the details of the Seven Steps of Knowledge which had been given long ago. After leaving the three steps behind, when one comes to the Fourth Step of 'Pull of the Way' then the Sattva starts building up, and in that state many good things seem to happen just as, if one said something, it might come true; one might see future events or have some visions or read the mind of other people whenever there is influx of Sattva.

When you reach the Fifth Step of 'Insight', then the attraction of the physical world starts losing its hold. The good things of the material world become easily available, but one doesn't wish to use them even though the physical forces for that way of using them are working. Due to presence of the Sattva and the True Knowledge, one just prefers to ignore them. One also develops a sense of 'seeing through' the things and situations. The next (6th) stage is of the 'abundance'. In this stage one begins to experience the Self in all things. Instead of looking at the outer form of matter, one looks into the heart of matter where the Absolute abides. This is practically the highest state in the world.

Beyond it is the state of 'Turiya' (7th Step) when no cognition of any duality is possible. Everything is just one, and even the knowledge of the manifested world seems to be lost for one sees only unity, and the world of manifestation and division is no longer seen. Turiya state doesn't last for long. It is mostly preceded by Samadhi, in which state there is no idea, no form and no word; it is all One.

### 31 October 1967 (5)

R. When a person is getting on to the Fifth stage, the physical world loses its attraction and he is seeing the subtle connections between things frequently. What lies behind the physical world?

S. All manifested world of multiple form has originated from one single root. When

one sees the unity behind all the diversities then the forms and laws governing them become secondary. One then sees the cause of the causes, and not only the effects. In the life of Shri Ramakrishna, once a snake appeared before him and he welcomed it as his lovely god in disguise. In fact, everything, even the trees, the leaves, the beasts and all other things seem to look like the Atman. This is a special kind of sight by which everything seems as the Atman.

\* \* \*