

13 May 1968

READING 2

PART 1

The response to the call for help has been truly gratifying; thank you all very much. Under all three heads we now have a wealth of examples from which to select what could be put into a book.

Reading through all that you have sent in, brings me to certain tentative conclusions:

1. In Mr. Ouspensky's words: 'A moment of consciousness brings very vivid Memory', and your own memories from the past match exactly the descriptions sent in by friends who have only just begun to meditate (without having heard any knowledge); and they are also completely in line with those recorded in books (like Maslow's or Marghanita Laski's), and many others which record spontaneous occurrences of the sort. Though extraordinarily varied in form, they all contain the same 'something' which is universal.
2. What seems to be happening (with some of you at any rate), is that now almost anything can trigger them off, whereas before it had to be some rather unique situation which mightn't come again, like these:

An occasion occurred one Sunday evening when I was aged 12 when I had attended school chapel. My father had also been to the same service, and as we walked home together I was aware of a sense of great happiness and felt on a plane of harmony and mental co-ordination with him which was quite outside the ordinary experience. The sense of those 15 or 20 minutes of sympathetic exchange whilst we walked has lasted to the present time...

(Mr. C., Higham's Farm meeting, 9.5.68)

Another vivid moment is when I first really 'saw' my mother as a young and beautiful woman; I can remember every detail of the particular gesture and what she was wearing. I was about 4 years old.

(Mrs. J. T., 10.5.68)

3. Among descriptions of long-term benefits from 'True knowledge and good company' – this one (A.C-S.) is particularly well expressed:

The fearful pendulum-swing between elation and intense depression died away after coming to meetings to hear about the System. One began to take certain things more seriously, but less heavily. At the same time I became a good deal more lighthearted and 'happy without cause'. A growing enjoyment of other people and feeling for them. A more emotional tone to my life, and freedom from the cerebrations which used to come between me and really living. After initiation, much more spontaneity of expression generally. Also the growing knowledge that *all* life has its place not 'against the void' but from an inner source of fullness.

4. Many of you find grandiose terms like 'Ecstasy' or 'Peak experience' rather off-putting, so that some say, 'I never get anything like that'; such reactions of 'over-belief' or 'under-belief' merely bear testimony to individual differences of character and upbringing. They shouldn't

divert us from the quieter impulses that everybody gets – so easily overlooked, but by no means to be despised. e.g., ‘A feeling of happiness which comes – and goes! – and has an odd sort of quizzical detachment’ (Miss C.N.), or ‘Moments of peace and freedom at the giving-up suddenly of attitudes, wishes, opinions, of non-assertion, in an interior way, of oneself and self-will’ (Miss B.M.)

5. One feels so friendly towards people who write these things. We often don’t realise what a lot of good we can do one another, however daunting our own situation. ‘After visiting Irene,’ said T.B. yesterday, ‘I felt so happy that a poem came into my mind and wrote itself.’

PART 2

So now we have enough for the record and are ready to go on and seek out what, in fact, is the object of this whole exercise and of all other exercises. Every such experience should, as the Realized Man says, dispel some particle of ignorance, add a particle to our knowledge. Knowledge of what? Knowledge, surely, of the nature of that Ultimate Observer, the hidden Divinity in each of us and the ultimate Source of all such ‘good impulses’.

What is valuable to us in any of these descriptions is what they tell us about the nature of that Divinity. We have only a fleeting interest in what they tell us about the personality of the experiencer – likes and dislikes, feelings and opinions, habits, troubles and pleasures, friends and family, etc. And this is the most important thing to remember in the moment of an experience, for ‘attention’ directed towards the Source is what makes the experience last and come back again later. Loss of attention (which inevitably puts up the shutters), is to let it turn back on to the merely personal which will happen inevitably if we haven’t got the strong aim ‘To Be, to Be One’, which comes from a loving interest in that One.

The manifestations of the Creator are so many and varied, and often in the ‘Peak’ so unlike the dogmatic descriptions on which we were brought up! The sudden intrusion of the Creator gave that racy rogue, John Skelton, the peak experiences that made Walter de la Mare call his poem to Isabell Pennell ‘the loveliest and gayest song of praise and sweetness to a young thing I have ever seen’:

Wherefore I make you sure,
It were an heavenly helth,
It were an endeles welth
A life for God himselfe,
To here this nightingale,
Among the birdes smale,
Warbelinge in the vale, ...

(Pause for Meditation or discussion)

PART 3

It's worth recalling some more recent and authoritative descriptions, for it is the growing consciousness of the Creator that makes the Meditation or the Mukabeleh take you the full distance:

The being to whom this voice belonged knew everything, understood everything and, above all, was free from thousands of small and distracting 'personal' thoughts and moods. He could take everything calmly, could take everything objectively, as it was in reality. And at the same time *this was I*. How this could be so, and why in the ordinary state I was so far from myself, if this was I – that I could not explain.

(P.D.O. 'Experimental Mysticism', *New Model*, p.325)

Or:

The person at the peak is Godlike not only in senses that I have touched upon already, but in certain other ways as well, particularly in the complete, loving, uncondemning, compassionate and perhaps amused acceptance of the world and of the person.

(Maslow, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, p.87)

Or:

S. Atman is a part of Absolute... Absolute is limitless, creative, the giver; never claims anything for Himself for 'He Is'. Atman is separated from Him only in ignorance. That's why we have limits, boundaries; we possess and we claim. This is all ignorance. Absolute created the Universe... and we create boundaries – 'This is my land, my country'... He creates men; we create the Indian and the English.

(3 September 1964)

'The Good Impulse' as the beginning of a process:

S. There are main railway lines and there are 'points' at diversions. Everyone starts in life on the main line, but our Essence is responsible for a change of line. Suppose we get diversion to a spiritual line. This diversion has to start from the first step. The next two steps can only give us glimpses of some change in us, but unless one reaches the stage of Abundance one can be derailed. Beyond that stage, the cycle of desire, action and result may stop, and at the top nothing remains but the Atman. No cause and no effect. Such Realized Men have united their Atman with the Absolute. For example: if you disconnect the microphone of your recording machine, although the reels will turn, nothing will be registered on the tape which remains clear. That is what we call liberation.

(28 August 1964)

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If, then, you are going to send us more, can you record (in a 'peak moment') some fresh insight into the nature of what you *are*, rather than descriptions of what you are *not*!

Also perhaps you would consider Madeleine D's very salutary remarks at Rogate last week and see if you can answer for yourselves the important questions she puts:

I feel it is one's birthright; how one should be. Anything else is a limitation, even a kind of hell. I just feel that such experiences are normal... How could one be sure that anything is due to work and not to chance?... I keep coming back to the question: 'Why does one follow a method; why does one seek these experiences'?

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