

2 December 1968

## READING 8

Having feared that you would be suffering from indigestion from a surfeit of Knowledge and Sanskrit words, I had a surprise during the reports by telephone about your meetings last week. Many people had actually asked for more! They wanted to know about the five 'sheaths' or 'veils' into which the general fog on the glass walls between the rooms of the house can be broken down. This is available in full detail in the paper 1967/39 for those who are specially interested – though we have made one change since then; having reversed the description of the 'veils' round Buddhi and Manas.

But it must be said that for most of us a better way (stressed by His Holiness) is to develop our *innate love of Truth*; one looks *away* from the fog (in whatever room one happens to be) towards the Light of the Fourth Room (the true Self), and from time to time the fog will blow away until one learns how to prevent it collecting again. A good example came from the three groups in Essex and the one in Cambridge this week. They all started much asleep, deep down in the fog, for about the first quarter of the meeting. But during the reading of the story from the *Mathnawi* the fog suddenly lifted; and with it came the realization: 'There is nowhere one has to go; the Light is here within us, whether we know it or not.'

Lord Rosehill also voiced this at the Rogate meeting. Here, too, Geoffrey Irvine said: 'When I observe myself I see only perpetual change. How can I find what never changes?' This is the most important question one can ask, and the most important of all aims is to find that. It's worth quoting one of many of His Holiness's remarks on this last September:

R. Years ago (almost the first time I heard you) you said: 'Through meditation we begin to be what we are; but first we must come out of what *we are not*. We have begun to see some of the things we are *not* (changing ego, turning thoughts and conflicting feelings), but how can we begin to see what we *are*?'

S. Whenever one has lost something in the physical sense one has to get some light in order to look for it and find it. There are many different kinds of light one can use – a candle or lantern, oil lamp, electric light, moonlight, sunlight. One of these would do according to the type of thing one is looking for; those are sufficient for the sensory world.

In the subtle world of Manas, Buddhi and Chitta, if one has lost anything there, one has to get the light of Knowledge which is the light of the subtle world, and with that light one can find what one has lost – that light of Knowledge is the Self (the Atman). The Self is always within the experience of everyone whether one is lost in the physical darkness or within the subtle darkness of ignorance.

[Even if one has been knocked unconscious or is under an anaesthetic] the Self is always present – one does not need any other agency to find out the Self and experience the Self, and no one could deny that existence except the Self! So the Self is always available and is never deficient in light. The light we need is only the physical light or the subtle light of Knowledge from the System, from a Realized Man or Teachers.

The Self is Eternal, and the Self is the Light of Lights. The Self is Consciousness, and happiness and Truth as well. One has simply to dispel the physical or the subtle darkness which is prevailing...

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Returning to Figure 2 of last week (1968/30), we need to know more:

S. Death is in no way destruction, for it only means a change of form, and this change is taking place not only throughout, but at each moment. The whole of creation is undergoing change all the time in all things. This change has two directions. The downward one starts with the desire of the Absolute to become manifest, and goes on becoming coarser manifest forms, and secondly having fulfilled the destiny of those manifest forms it returns upwards back to its cause.

Thus the particles of earth are merging into their cause which is water, water into fire, fire into air, air into ether, ether into Mahat-Tattva, into Apara-Prakriti, into Para-Prakriti which is Unmanifest, and the Unmanifest into the Absolute. Although the forms are changing yet the Law of Change itself is eternal in comparison to changing things. It is only the Absolute which is changeless and eternal as Truth; everything else is changing and so temporal, but the law of change is also eternal.

R. His Holiness has said a great deal about Para and Apara-Prakriti but I want to understand a little more about *Mahat-Tattva*. Is this a principle of Universal Being?

S. From earth and up to the 'ether' one could see the interplay of elemental material although the first three are formal and the last two without form; but all these are part of the manifest world. Above these five elements is the Mahat-Tattva which literally means the great principle or the Universal or individual Being. From this principle manifest those five elements, their five qualities and also the five senses of knowledge and five organs of action. The senses collect the knowledge of the qualities of the elements, just as ears collect the quality of sound which belongs to 'ether', skin or sense of touch appreciates the air, eyes appreciate the form and colour, tongue appreciates the taste which is the quality of water, and the nose appreciates the quality of smell which comes from the earth. The act of appreciation is going on simultaneously and all the time in the Universal Being through the Mahat-Tattva and also in the individual Being through the Manas.

Though *Manas* can appreciate all the five qualities, it does so only one at a time. It is only due to this reason that one can really know anything, otherwise there would be knowledge of a mixture of five qualities all our life. This is done by Manas in individual level, and the same is known as the Mahat-Tattva on the Universal level. This is the intermediary. It takes in knowledge of the phenomenal world through the senses and passes them on to the Inner Being and it also passes the orders from the Inner Being to the organs of action. This works both on individual and Universal level. In the Universal level, the desire of the Absolute is being passed to the phenomenal world through this Mahat-Tattva which allows manifestation of all forms, and it is only through this Mahat-Tattva also that all the knowledge of the phenomenal world is passed to the Absolute Being.

The next point is the Apara-prakriti which has three manifest Gunas and the cause of all manifest forms. On the Universal level it is the Nature as a whole, and on the individual level it is the *Buddhi* which discriminates according to the Gunas and decides the nature of the individual.

Beyond this is the Para-Prakriti, the unmanifest nature of the creation, and similarly the *Chitta* (individual Consciousness) which stores all the knowledge and remains unmanifest until agitated by a desire to manifest. The manifestations arise as ideas or thoughts or desires and manifest in due course in different forms of Being on Universal level, and in artistic creations and constructions on individual level. Beyond all these is

the Absolute on the Universal level and Atman on the individual level. This is the cause of all things, and all things originate here and also merge here.

†[R. This is most extraordinary because if you translate just the language of names, it is the same as our System except in one respect, and that is in what the scientists used to call 'ether', but which they say now does not really exist! What word does His Holiness use for this and could it be, for example the electromagnetic field?

S. The concept of 'ether' as usually understood is wrong. Even the concept of the five elements is also not understood rightly. From the element of earth to fire one may confine and contain in manifest form. But beyond that there is no manifest form so the ideas of 'Air' and 'Ether' are only inferential.

What we usually call air is not really the element of air. We see the dust of the earth moving or the leaves of the tree moving, or feel the hot and cold air blowing slow or fast and call it air, but in all these cases we see only the dust or leaves, and experience the cold or warmth of water and fire. The real air is nothing but movement, pure movement only and the sense of touch only experiences movement. One can never see air because air has no form and colour, which is appreciated by eyes.

The 'ether' is Akasha which gives way to everything. It is the space which gives space to all things and beings. This is the expanding phenomenon which goes on giving space. This element also cannot be seen, but only appreciated by hearing sound. The quality of Akasha is to give sound and the sound always travels in Akasha. This Akasha comes out of Manas or the Mahat-Tattva. It stands between the inner and outer worlds. The desire of the Absolute is bound into forms through this medium, and all bound forms are liberated into ideas (from the source of all Knowledge which is the Atman) only through the Manas.

So Manas (mind) can be the cause of bondage or liberation. It is very much like the interpreter. If the interpreter is attached to one or the other side, then he cannot do his job properly. He must fully understand both sides and be unattached to both. All misery in the world is caused by this attachment. Some minds are attached to the physical world, and like to dwell only in physical forms and pleasure. They only enjoy coarse world and remain poor and bound to the low level. Some minds are attached to the inner world and resign from the physical world and don't like to take to active participation in the world. Such people are usually lazy, inactive, unproductive, and live like parasites. They are known as Virakta. Although they are attached to the inner spiritual world, they are also not right and do not conform to the natural laws of the universe. We do not approve of such people. The really good life is unattached to both, and yet working with both the physical and spiritual world.]

## CONCLUSION

Can we summarise the main content of these quotations in our own language? Figure 3 of 1968/30 is a summary made after a careful study of what you have just heard. One can remember its main features better if one keeps the simile of the *chariot* in mind. Buddhi (7) is the Charioteer, and when awake he can keep his hand on the reins by seeing the state of the three Gunas at any moment. Remember that we keep the terminology of 'three Gunas' as a practical use of the Law of Three entirely in relation to Self-realization. But the fog on the glass between this and the Creator must in everyone be the last to go for it consists of 'I and Mine'.

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†This part not to be used at present.

**MANAS** is 'mind' in its emotional aspect; and our System says that there are five 'minds' or 'centres' which govern our chief functions – Intellect, Emotion, Movement, Instinct, and Sex. This is an interpretation of the 'five horses' of the simile, and Point 5 contains the *emotional* parts of all these – the motive force behind all *human* (as contrasted with *mechanical*) life.

**THE FIVE ELEMENTS:** We would find it difficult and time-consuming to get the true picture of what the Shankaracharya means by the 'five elements', and so much has changed in European thought since the terms earth, water, fire, air and ether were in use that for us it would be like going back to the Middle Ages. Our System contains a beautifully precise description, to which some of you may wish to return later. In effect, this gives the Causal, Subtle and Coarse material levels of the 'Creation perpetually in movement' by 'foreshortening' the universe into three Octaves of Radiations with twelve corresponding matters or 'Hydrogens' conveying them.

**'CONSCIENCE':** For now, however, we should consider the question: 'what is the meaning of Point 6 in the figure?' It is not at all certain that the answer I would now give is the correct one, but one notices a certain similarity between Mr. Ouspensky and the Shankaracharya in relation to the concept of conscience. Mr. Ouspensky latterly in New York kept saying that, on the way to Consciousness, conscience has to be awakened, and that an awakened conscience is a great help in the Emotional Realization of Truth and seeing the Law of Three in the Activities of Man.

When I asked His Holiness about conscience in 1965, he said:

Just as you have been told many times about the Kingdom of Buddhi in relation to the Kingdom of Manas, so there is a domain of emotion. In this domain of emotion the conscience arises. It is one of those functions which is not present by itself, but arises out of many things and this happens in the 'Antahkaran'<sup>†</sup>; which is composed of many elements in the subtle body of a human being... In the domain of conscience very few rules and regulations are sufficient... The domain of conscience is not subject to space-time; here things can be done more quickly and easily... The unity of the Antahkaran with the Realized Man is subject to levels. On the common level one wouldn't distinguish between impulses coming from him and impulses arising in oneself; but on a higher level one would be able to see where the impulses come from. Once that sort of connection is established, then if one of them wanted something, the other would also feel it. Or if the latter wishes to give an impulse to the former, it would be possible. In this relationship one could have many kinds of experience. A doubt or a question would find an immediate answer without the use of physical communication... Although it is possible to arrive at the mechanics of this relationship, yet the pleasure and beauty of it is better left as it is. The domain of emotion works secretly and if made open the pleasure is lost. So it would be better to let it work naturally, without digging it out.

(13 October 1965)

[We should take this hint and not discuss it, but remember the existence of that Point 6, which as we said is related to Point 9 in the Fourth Room, if we become emotional during a time of peace and silence.]

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<sup>†</sup>Literally, 'inner organ'.