

11 March 1968

## READING 7

## PART 1

Before taking part in a Mukabeleh I nearly always read and ponder over the account of the meaning of the ceremonial which Mr. Resuhi gave us. This time what caught my attention was the 'Kum'. You remember that those taking part have been sitting in an attitude of prayer listening to the singing of the Naat and Ney solo. Suddenly there is a drumbeat, they beat the floor loudly with their hands and get up. The signal, he said, means 'Wake up and Be', and then follows the march 'three times round creation'.

Strange, isn't it, that in our System, in the Tradition of the Shankaracharya and in the Mevlevi Tradition the keynote is, 'Ordinarily we *are not*; to 'begin to *Be*' is the same as waking up – not just occasionally and by chance but by systematic efforts over a long time'? Half-an-hour later I felt this with peculiar vehemence when the 'Kum' came during the Mukabeleh.

Now many of us know very clearly what that means, but I thought it would be of interest and importance to us to hear something Mr. Ouspensky wrote about a crisis in his own work. In June 1919 he succeeded at last in leaving the Caucasus to start work on his own, and before leaving Russia he began to meet some of the people whom he used to know. He wrote:

There remains in my memory one of my first talks. My friend from St. Petersburg asked me, when we had spoken of the system and of work on oneself, whether I could indicate any practical results of this work.

Remembering all I had experienced during the preceding year... I said that I had acquired a *strange confidence*, one which I could not define in one word but which I must describe.

'This is not self-confidence in the ordinary sense,' I said, 'quite the contrary, rather is it a confidence in the unimportance and the insignificance of *self*, that self which we usually know. But what I am confident about is that if something terrible happened to me like things that have happened to many of my friends during the past year, then it would be *not* I who would meet it, not this ordinary I, but another I within me who would be equal to the occasion. Two years ago G. asked me whether I felt a new I inside me and I had to answer that I felt no change whatever. Now I can speak otherwise. And I can explain how the change takes place. It does not take place at once, I mean that the change does not embrace every moment of life. All the ordinary life goes on in the ordinary way, all those very ordinary stupid small I's, excepting perhaps a few which have already become impossible. But if something big were to happen, something which would require the straining of every nerve, then I know that this big thing would be met not by the ordinary small I, which is now speaking, and which can be made afraid, nor by anything like it – but by another, a big I, which nothing can frighten and which would be equal to everything that happened. I cannot describe it better. But for me it is a fact. And this fact is definitely connected for me with this work. You know my life and you know that I was not afraid of many things, both inward and outward, that people are often afraid of. But this is something different, a different taste. Therefore I know, for myself, that this new confidence has not come simply as a result of a greater experience of life. It is the result of that work on myself which I began four years ago.'

(*Fragments*, p.379)

This is an important thing for us to remember just now when new and unknown difficulties are lying in our path. To 'Wake up and begin to Be' may demand from us now three things:

1. To be brave; not to be afraid.
2. To speak the Truth, that is, to say only that small part of the truth which each of us knows for certain.
3. Not to defend oneself by attacking someone else.

Any testing time can be very valuable; it's no good blaming oneself or anyone else but to remind ourselves of another early statement:

What *to do*? It is impossible *to do* anything. A man must first of all *understand* certain things... With this question of *doing* [the word was emphasised], yet another thing is connected. It always seems to people that others invariably do things wrongly, not in the way they should be done... They do not understand, and do not want to understand, that what is being done, and particularly what *has already been done* in one way, cannot be, and could not have been, done in another way... *Everything happens*. All that befalls a man, all that is done by him, all that comes from him – all this happens. And it happens in exactly the same way as rain falls because of a change of temperature in the higher regions of the atmosphere or the surrounding clouds, as snow melts under the rays of the sun, as dust rises in the wind.

(*ibid*, p.20)

Before we can *Do* we must 'Wake up and Be' whenever possible, and then will come about those wise words in the Gospel:

Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

(Matthew 7: 24–25)

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## PART 2

An interesting question was put by Lady Clwyd at the Allan's meeting last Thursday:

What energy is circulating everywhere now and causing so much upheaval?

I would like you all to discuss this but practically and in ordinary language. What, for instance, is the chief cause of the violence seen among University students in all countries today? And again, to what can the present succession of smaller wars be ascribed? Although the System says so, I do not find it particularly helpful just to repeat that it is due to Planetary influences, except in so far as it gives us a bigger and more detached viewpoint.

A remark made by the Shankaracharya recently in reply to a question by Mr. Geoffroy:

Q. What kind of physical action could engage the attention of all good men towards harmony and instruction from above in the way that war unites them when it is necessary to fight evil for survival?

S. The Creation is complete all the time, in peace and in war too. Even war is part of the drama organised by Divine forces and opposed by non-Divine forces, and the Absolute observes the drama without being attached to either. War comes because evil

forces become dominant, and to keep the balance, the good and just forces also unite to stop evil. War is a lesson for the ignorant 'not to do such and such or you will take the consequences'; but for a wise man it is a fraction of the great drama that is going on all the time, and he takes his place as the situation requires. To try to bring about a situation or organise good men towards harmony, in the way that war can do, is a mere fantasy. The wise man always looks toward the Self. Improve your own Being, and the rest will be done.

(3 November 1967)

The next evening we put a question from Mrs. Douglas Henry:

Q. In the Middle Ages men of the West practised religion because, mostly, they feared damnation and hoped for salvation. The Church was their refuge, excommunication a punishment severe as death.

After the Middle Ages religion in these countries gradually lost its hold over the lives of men in general.

And today? Today many Western people are turning once again towards inner discipline and learning to practise it. What are they looking for? What is it they desire? Not safety now, not salvation, but Realization; to become as their Maker intended them to be: to understand something of the Love of the Creator for the created.

And what does this desire mean in terms of a man's spiritual development? An advance, surely, from those earlier days when the driving force in the pursuit of religion was fear rather than love?

S. The world is not divided between East and West, neither have the religions divided the world. The world is One, and whole of the world is governed by eternal rules, and religions only preach these rules. These rules are so composed that they show what is right and what is wrong. Right is that which is according to the rule and wrong is that which goes against. If at all there can be any division, then the world is divided between the ignorant and the wise. The fear of damnation is for the ignorant and not for the wise. The wise man uses his discrimination and conforms to the rule of his own accord and not from fear. The ignorant is blind. Fear helps him to conform to necessary rules. These two should not be confused. The religion which shows fear of damnation also shows the way of liberation, the liberation from fear and misery. The trouble is with the so-called 'intellectuals' who would see the rules, but don't like to act according to them. For such people it is only a matter of talking or writing.

[‘Dharma’ is the word he uses which is translated as ‘Eternal Rules.’]

Mr. Allan then asked:

Q. Does the Shankaracharya see, now that the world is drawn closer together by modern transport and communications, does he see any form of universal new religion?

S. The nature of human beings or the nature itself, always likes to go to the end of the way. This can be a way of destruction or construction. Left to itself, it will not look back unless it reaches the end of the way. The world today hasn't reached the end of the way of destruction, so as they cannot see the destruction by themselves they would not look back; unless they are given the light of True Knowledge. It seems there is still time when they could look back.

(4 November 1967)

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At the next meeting, His Holiness returned to this question of Mr. Allan's:

S. Although it is very nice to believe that the people have come very close to each other due to modern supersonic transport and radios and televisions and one does appreciate the facilities afforded by them, all the same, science has also brought close the miseries. The disease which was two years away is brought next door. The experience suitable for adults can be had by youngsters, and the whole nature of human Society is being disrupted. In the past, when India was at its glory, the elders and seers purposely put the brake on scientific advancement to make sure of a natural life for all. Excessive mass production and scientific advancement had to be discouraged.

(5 November 1967)

#### SUMMARY

Both the reasons for all this and the possible lines of escape from the present predicament can be seen through understanding the Three Forces or Gunas. Of three forces there are six and only six possible triads of forces. By applying these six triads to the activities of man, Mr. Ouspensky showed very clearly that certain combinations of triads (such as those underlying 'destructiveness' and 'invention') are highly dangerous. Also that the triad needed for 'School work' cannot coexist with an excess of the opposing triad which he called 'crime'. Here is a chance to recall what some have understood from time to time.

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