

12 May 1969

READING 2

Comments on your meetings last week

For the moment, let's not concern ourselves with the question: 'Who (if anyone) is going to read a book about the Expansion of Consciousness?' We should rather take this as an exercise to ourselves to see if we get the message which last week was: 'All our troubles come from not remembering ourSelves, and to be able to do that we have to come out of what we are *not*.' Next, it is an exercise in trying to express what each of us has understood on this subject through a combination of direct experience and the True Knowledge we have acquired.

From this it follows that nothing is worth expressing in a book like this one unless we ourselves have experienced it – usually in the peace that follows that hour of quiet union (Dhyana) with our Creator. All the germinal ideas have to come from the Creator Himself; the working out, the arrangement, and the polishing can be done afterwards merely by the application of attention (Dharana). Therefore, it won't do you any good at all just to sit on the touch line criticising details; the way you can help yourself and me is to keep asking the question, 'How would I myself express this particular bit of the message in a convincing and appetising way?' That was how some very constructive suggestions came out of your meetings last week, for which I am truly grateful. Briefly these suggestions chiefly concern the *order* in which the ideas which are to be presented must be given. Instead of starting with the 'personal story', it is generally felt that we should begin with the idea that everybody ordinarily lives in a kind of 'twilight sleep', broken in perhaps 1% of normal, intelligent people by moments of consciousness which are being called nowadays 'glimpses of Truth', 'peak experiences', 'extrasensory perception', 'moments of ecstasy', and (by ourselves) 'good impulses'; that these moments are hints only of a source of Truth which is present in everybody; and that they will be forgotten and will die if they are not followed up and made more of in some reliable way which will differ in different people.

What I would ask you to discuss this week and give me back, are your answers to this question:

By what general characteristics can we know that these glimpses of ourSelves are true and reliable; in what way do they differ from pleasant but futile dreams or deceptively plausible impulses; and how do you preserve them in memory, follow them up, and profit by them in one way or another?

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Exactly a year ago we sent round a questionnaire to friends of yours to whom we had lately given the meditation, and we also asked you for your own examples of such glimpses. The results of these were given in the papers 1968/11, 12 & 13, the three formulations given by quite new people at the beginning of that last paper being particularly relevant.

My request now is not for more examples to be sent me, but for the chief characteristics which can be taken as the hallmarks of such genuine experiences which you have had before or since last year.

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Descriptions from higher sources are suggested here to refresh you: The first is from the Shankaracharya after I had put to him the plan to write a second edition of a book about 'Waking up':

R. Does this concentration of Sattva which often follows attention also lead to sudden moments of Truth which also feel like 'waking up', as when you wake up and see that yourself and also the people of the world are asleep and all their troubles come from being and doing in sleep?

S. *The effect of Sattva is new awakening.* It comes with a new opening and one is opened up to what actually exists, and not to what pictures we have in the mind. People wake up and see whatever there is. Just as with an oil lamp which is about to go out due to lack of oil, and when supplied with oil it brightens up. Whenever there is a wave of Sattva in the being it arouses a new awakening. How this new awakening is used entirely depends upon the essence (Sanskara) and the being. If only a casual drop of Sattva has crept in, the awakening is followed by sleep and the effect of Sattva is lost. If the presence of Sattva is constant and the essence is good, the True Knowledge and meditation available, then it can lead to higher consciousness, and use of awakening can be made to help oneself and others too. Naturally one can't have Sattva all the time. Most of our day is governed by Rajas and Tamas. At most one could be under the influence of Sattva for two or three hours.

R. Like some others, often I have the feeling that I have lived before and I have lived many lives, and then I know what is going to happen because the situation is familiar.

S. This effect is due to increase of Sattva. Those who are fortunate enough to have abundance of Sattva, they can retain the Knowledge and also revive the Knowledge of the past or see the future events. Those with too much Rajas and Tamas, they cannot even retain what they hear. They keep on hearing and also keep on forgetting. Due to the lack of Sattva nothing is retained. It is the Sattva that holds the knowledge.

The quantity of Sattva is also subject to increase and loss. It depends upon how a person lives his life. If he is under the influence of True Knowledge and practises meditation, the possibilities are more; when the life is directed only to sensual enjoyment and material gains, the Sattva will be reduced.

(30 October 1967)

Other descriptions which you may like to turn to in private are the two parables concerning 'talents' given in St. Matthew's Gospel. The first (18:23–35) stresses how we have to come out of what we are not (our merciless attitude towards other people); and the second (25: 14–30) makes clear the need to trade and turn the 'good impulse' to full account.

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We can now return to the question who, if anyone, is going to read such a book? It certainly won't be teenagers or busy students, who mostly don't read this kind of book. It could be only those mature people who have enough of these experiences and value them. There are plenty of such people around.

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