

11 May 1970

READING 3

PART 1

Thank you for taking all that trouble to send those examples in to me before the weekend. They were so illuminating that they are all being put in the Library for any of you who have time to look through them. No need to send any more; it was just a little experiment. Knowing very well that, with a little more Sattva, all of you are now capable of *seeing the difference* between actions that ordinarily look alike, I wanted to know if you can communicate them. For in telling or writing them down, the 'false I' sometimes comes in, sometimes not! Some of you saw that also:

Mrs. Brunsdon: I tried to write down an experience at a different level. It took five pages. Discovered that *I* had been writing down, not the experience itself, but *my own* thoughts and feelings about it. When I tried again, it took five lines!

Depends which 'I', doesn't it? The one who writes it or says it is also subject to different combinations of the three Gunas! Some of the most genuine of your examples are almost too precious and private to read out loud. That's one reason for not sending more at present. Others are written for 'show' under the influence of Rajas.

But what is so encouraging is that many of them include a change of attitude *to other people* (children, or quite ordinary people) produced by special efforts on oneself. One can think of oneself as a super-meditator, or a prize 'turner' or meeting-taker; and then 'false I' would only be the gainer, and Self-realization stop short.

Then again, people told me that some meetings last week were quite 'magical'; and at other meetings nothing seemed to happen at all. 'I'm afraid you won't find anything here', said one group-taker leaving his report. But there *was* something, none the less. And anyway that is all just the play of the Gunas and must be accepted with detachment – sometimes 'magic', sometimes not; it's in the nature of this work. But we can keep on finding ways of getting more of that. To the fully Realized Man there is a magic in everything.

Conclusion: In the 'Alchemy of Happiness', the stilling of the mind must be followed by a melting of the heart; for only then will the juice of the herb in the form of True Knowledge (like the 'Law of the Three in One') be capable of 'turning the melted silver into gold'.

PART 2

We have said that nearly all the stories and similes of the Shankaracharya show a contrast between what is useful to the Atman and to Self-realization and what is against it. According to Mr. Ouspensky there are three triads which end up better than they started, and three which end up worse. This is what is so important, and through training in discrimination we gradually learn which of our activities lead in the direction of Truth and permanent Happiness, and which are merely for temporary gratification leading to self-deception and unhappiness later.

We must not neglect other sources of telling illustrations, and the Shankaracharya encourages us to look for them among the Scriptures and sayings of Enlightened Men. The

Christian Tradition, especially of course the Gospels, abounds in such examples, and this week we shall take a familiar story and look at it from our present point of view:

The Story of Simon the Pharisee

To appreciate this story we must remember that, just as there was more than one Simon, so there were several Mary's in the cast of the Gospel Drama: there was the immaculate Mother of Jesus; there was Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, whose very respectable house was always open to Him; and there was a third Mary – quite, quite different. She started as a woman of the town, a common prostitute; and ended up as the first person to see and talk with the risen Christ, and a symbol for all time of the triumph of complete and undemanding Love:

One of the Pharisees invited Him to sit with him; He went to the Pharisee's house and took his place at table. A woman who was living an immoral life in the town, had learned that Jesus was there and brought some precious oil of myrrh in a small flask. She knelt down weeping; her tears washed His feet, and she dried them with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with the myrrh.

When His host the Pharisee saw this he said to himself, 'If this fellow were a real prophet, he would know what sort of a woman this is that touches him – a sinner.' Jesus, turning to him, said, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Speak on Master,' said he. 'Two men were in debt to a money lender: one owed him five hundred silver pieces, the other fifty. As neither had anything to pay with, he let them both off. Which do you think will love him most?' Simon replied, 'I should think the one that was let off most.' 'You are right,' said Jesus, and turning to the woman, continued to Simon. 'You see this woman? I came to your house, you gave me no water for my feet; but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair; you gave me no kiss; but she has been kissing my feet ever since I came in; you did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with myrrh. And so to you I say, "Her sins, which were many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but the one to whom little is forgiven, shows little love." Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' The other guests began to murmur, 'Who is this, that he can forgive sins?' But He said to the woman 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

(Luke 7:36–50. Quoted mainly from the *New English Bible*, N.T., p.81)

Just as the story of the sandalwood trees shows a contrasting pair of triads in which the difference lies in the middle place of the triad; so this story contrasts two activities which *begin* differently – show different *motivation*. You could bring to your meetings examples showing this, and thereby discover for yourselves the triad of Self-remembering which, as Mr. Ouspensky said, should be the basis of all School Work, as well as the opposite one which puts a stop to it.

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PART 3 (alternative to Part 2)

For those who dislike 'feeling' or who are short on it, there is a way of approaching through learning to *think* in a different way. I'm afraid the 'computer mind' is not of much use when it comes to the Law of Three or seeing the difference between things. All it would come up with might be something like this: 'Among the activities of the 20 million people in Britain, the most probable distribution is physical (x%), intellectual (y%) and miscellaneous (z%).'

But we could get somewhere if we remind ourselves of this extract from the Preface to 2nd Edition of *A New Model*:

In order to understand what I mean by the 'psychological method' it is necessary to realise first that the ordinary human mind, the one we know, can also work on very different levels, and then to find the relation of the 'psychological method' to the 'esoteric method'.

We can see different levels of thought in ordinary life. The most ordinary mind, let us call it the *logical* mind, is sufficient for all the simple problems of life. We can build a house with this mind, obtain food, know that two and two make four, that the 'Volga falls into the Caspian Sea' and that 'horses eat oats and hay'. So that in its proper place the logical mind is quite right and quite useful. But when the logical mind meets with problems which are too big, and when it does not stop before them but starts out to solve them, it inevitably falls down, loses touch with reality and becomes in fact 'defective'. To this 'defective mind' and 'defective method' of observation and reasoning humanity owes all superstitions and false theories beginning with the 'devil with a goose's foot' and ending with Marxism and psychoanalysis.

But a logical mind which knows its limitedness and is strong enough to withstand the temptation to venture into problems beyond its powers and capacities becomes a 'psychological mind'. The method used by this mind, that is, the psychological method, is first of all a method of distinguishing between different levels of thinking and of realising the fact that perceptions change according to the powers and properties of the perceiving apparatus. The psychological mind can see the limitations of the 'logical mind' and the absurdities of the 'defective mind' – it can understand the reality of the existence of a higher mind and of esoteric knowledge, and see it in its manifestations. This is impossible for a merely logical mind.

This limitedness of the logical mind renders it powerless even before quite simple problems of ordinary life once they go beyond the limits of its accustomed scale.

The man of logical mind who demands proofs for everything, at the present time, for instance, looks for the cause of the world economic and political crisis everywhere except where it actually lies.

(pp.xiv & xv)

COMMENT

For Mr. Ouspensky the psychological method was based on knowing oneself and making allowances for one's own subjective point of view whenever one was thinking of important matters or making deductions about the world. In addition we have had some excellent examples from H.H. of defective thinking (taking a bit of rope for a snake); for all logical thinking on the physical level; and then for two higher levels of thought and feeling which he calls 'subtle' & 'causal'. When you hear some recent stories and examples you may agree with me that we can equate those two levels more or less with Mr. Ouspensky's psychological and esoteric method. Here is one of them:

There was a certain man who deposited his treasure of four drums full of gold coins underground in a spot where the highest point of the temple's shadow fell on a particular time and day of the year. He wrote a note in his Will that on such and such a date and time he has deposited his treasure under the zenith of the temple. After his death, the sons tried to acquire the wealth. They

even dismantled the top of the temple but all was in vain. They also consulted others but for a long time nothing came out. One day a Holy man came to their house, to whom they told their worry. He asked to look at the note and then advised them to call him a day before the date mentioned in the note, meanwhile to restore the temple in full and exactly as it was. On the appointed day and time he took them to the spot where the shadow fell and told them to dig and unearth the treasure.

(14 September 1968)

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