

8 June 1970

READING 6

SINCERITY

PART 1

We have been repeatedly told, both by Mr. Ouspensky and by the Shankaracharya, that 'attachment' in the sense of 'identification' is the chief obstacle to Self-discovery and Self-remembering in the Fourth Way, the 'Way of Liberation'. It is this identification mainly which is our prison.

During our visits to the Shankaracharya we are always being told that the only Truth, the only Reality is the Pure Consciousness of the Creator, whether in the individual or in the wide universe. All manifested Nature is a great Drama or 'show' put on by the Creator which can demonstrate to all seekers after truth the nature of that Consciousness through the Natural Laws which show its nature. The surest way to achieve liberation from identification is to say and do everything as if one were playing a role in this drama. Whenever people are ignorant of, or forget this, trouble invariably ensues, as we see all over the world today.

During the smaller meeting last Monday questions were asked about how to do this, and it was said that we gradually learn the art by working with other people who are also trying to regard all that takes place as part of one small play within the big drama.

In particular we are reminded that there is a great difference between performing with detachment our allotted role to the best of our ability, and *acting* – that is 'putting on an act'. Mr. MacOwan confirmed that this difference becomes very obvious to a director of a play in a theatre. It involves the principle of sincerity.

From last Monday's report:

R. Originally when the System came to Europe during World War I, it was said that there is sincerity and insincerity and of these two, that 'there is clever sincerity and stupid sincerity, and there is clever insincerity and stupid insincerity.' But now we are being taught that there should not be any insincerity at all in our work. The Shankaracharya, and in fact Mr. Ouspensky, have no use for insincerity, either 'stupid or clever'; so we must concern ourselves only with Sincerity; that there is undoubtedly clever sincerity and stupid sincerity, and we have recently had a lot of examples of stupid sincerity.

Q. I cannot see how sincerity can be stupid or clever; it is just sincerity.

R. Not at all! Apart from deliberate lying when the speaker knows he is lying, which is comparatively uncommon, most of the troubles which men and women bring on themselves come from stupid attempts at sincerity.

First as regards ordinary life, *nobody knows the full Truth about anything*. Truth, Happiness and Beauty belong to the Creator only. So we can agree with that anonymous Elizabethan poem 'The Phoenix and the Turtle (Dove)' which some attribute to Shakespeare himself:

Beauty, truth and rarity,
 Grace in all simplicity,
 Here enclosed in cinders lie.
 ...
 Truth may seem but cannot be;
 Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
 Truth and beauty buried be.

Yet virtually nobody in ordinary life takes it in that way. A cynic might be amused, for instance, to observe that anyone called into the witness box in an English court swears on the Bible 'I swear by Almighty God to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.' So if one took that literally, every witness commits perjury punishable by a term of imprisonment! But by a convention this little drama is taken to mean, 'I swear to try to speak the truth in answer to particular questions, to the best of my knowledge'; in this way the procedure works very well.

But then, our System teaches us other aspects of sincerity. Mr. Ouspensky in his third *Psychological Lecture* (p.31) answered the question 'What is lying?' as follows:

As it is understood in ordinary language, lying means distorting or in some cases hiding the truth, or what people believe to be the truth. This lying plays a very important part in life, but there are much worse forms of lying, when people do not know that they lie. I said in the last lecture that we cannot know the truth in our present state and can only know the truth in the state of objective consciousness. How then can we lie? There seems to be a contradiction here, but in reality there is none. We cannot know the truth but we can pretend that we know. *And this is lying.* Lying fills all our life. People pretend that they know all sorts of things: about God, about the future life, about the universe, about the origin of man, about evolution, about everything, but in reality they do not know anything even about themselves. And every time they speak about something they do not know *as though they knew it*, they lie.

This agrees with how the Shankaracharya speaks, but he takes it further when he says: 'No fully Realized man would ever voice the claim that he knows the Creator or the whole of His Truth.' Further he advises us not to study lying and keep analysing ourselves, but to go for the truth and love the truth; then the false will gradually disappear, as we in fact find it does if we meditate sincerely.

Secondly, about clever and stupid sincerity as we were reminded last Monday, in the System the word 'clever' means Self-remembering; if you are remembering yourSelf, you are more 'clever', and the nearer you get to Self-realization the more clever you are. If one asked Mr. Ouspensky for advice on what to do in some difficult situation, all he would often say was, 'Be clever'. In the System stupidity arises from getting more and more identified or involved. It is stupid to tell people what they could not possibly understand rightly, for there are many things they are bound to distort; it is stupid to blurt out something which is going to cause misery all round, and not do any good at all. A 'candid friend' can be a dangerous neighbour. So if you want to avoid stupidity, *remember yourSelf.*

PART 2

A very interesting talk on this subject at our last visit to His Holiness, followed this question by Alice Bolton, which we took out with us:

Could you say something about keeping the line of honesty within? It seems like walking along a very fine line, and it is so easy to slip into a degree of pretence.

S. says that somehow the common man has lost the practice of keeping in line with the truth. That is why situations can happen where one would slip into pretence or lying. Those on the Ladder who are keeping the practice alive, it is certainly easy for them.

He gave a simile – a very wide broad road is created for human beings to walk upon, and for cycles and motor cars to use. But railway lines are fixed and straight and only about 4 inches in width. These support many engines and carriages running at great speed. Those who practise truth can ‘keep to the rails’ with great ease and speed. Those who do not, let the practice of truth waver and slip, and fall into pretence.

One has to understand the truth firmly in one’s mind which (through the meditation) has formed a firm base or foundation for the building. If the foundation of the building is secure, only then can one establish and make a good house which will stand for some time. But if the base is not sound then the building will fall.

One should exercise discrimination concerning truth as there may be cases when pure truth should not be expressed. In that case if one has to resort to a lesser truth, then this would not be taken as bad. But if one tries to use the truth for base motives which rest upon false ideas, then this would be called a crime.[†]

Jaiswal (our interpreter). How to establish the truth? Because it has been seen that different people have different conceptions of truth.

S. Truth is that which transcends all the three times (past, present and future) and remains the same. That which never changes is the truth.

Truth is the substance of the whole creation. Truth is the Absolute out of which the whole creation has emerged, and into which the whole creation will return. For an illustration:

Suppose clay is truth. Then from clay you can make things of many forms. These things will have their existence in time and space. In time they will be destroyed. So the forms made out of clay are also truth, but they are only relatively true; relative to time and space. Once they are broken, they go back to their origin, namely the clay.

So when we are assessing the truth of anything, we also examine or look towards the cause.

As far as the cause is concerned, there are different degrees of cause. The causes of some objects derive from time and space; but beyond that is the ‘*cause of the cause*’; the ultimate cause being the Absolute. So one looks for the ‘cause of the cause’ or the ultimate cause, and that would be the truth. That which would never change and which must always be the *same* whatever one likes to think. But about this cause, if one looks for certain ideas related to space and time, then one will see the variations in the reflections of truth. That attitude one should keep, and go on looking for the ultimate cause. As far as the ultimate cause is concerned, there can be no difference of opinion whatever.

[†]See Mr. Ouspensky’s description of ‘six activities of man’.

S. continues: One of the experiences which is common to everyone and which emanates from the truth is the feeling of pure 'I', pure Ahankara. An 'I' which is not qualified by anything; that is always the same with all people, in all times, and in all places. There can never be doubt with anyone as far as this pure 'I' is concerned.

Of course, there are false 'I's and other 'I's related to mind, knowledge, Buddhi, Chitta, senses, and body, and this or that in the phenomenal world. All these 'I's keep on changing from place to place, and time to time. Because they are changing, they cannot be called truth. Whilst they are present, they may be true; but after that, since they perish, they do not remain within the fold of truth. So as far as the individual is concerned, you can see that there is one truth common to all of us which no one has any doubt about.

(31 January 1970)

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