

12 October 1970

THE 'WORLD' AN ILLUSION (continued)

PART 1

In certain very emotional states or under the influence of some drug like hashish, which puts the logical mind to sleep and rouses more primitive parts of the brain, one knows very well that we ordinarily live in an illusory world.

What 'civilised people' need to do is to find some effective way of convincing the logical mind that this is true. One or two ways of going about this are suggested in Part 2 of the first paper. One can find plenty of examples in periodicals today (e.g. 'A Universe that thinks' by Colin Wilson, *Illustrated London News*, June 20, 1970).

But what many people are asking is 'What is the point of proving to oneself that the "world" is a mirage? Life's difficult enough to live anyway, but surely such a sceptical attitude would only make things worse and rob us of the meagre pleasure that we sometimes get out of it?'

These questions need clear answers before we will begin to take the necessary trouble to do it. One such answer is the self-evident truth that *a life led only on a materialistic basis does not bring happiness*. You can see that fact writ large over all the world today. And the reason for that is that the most valuable and permanent things that make human life worth living such as happiness, truth, Consciousness, loving-kindness, can never arise from this sensory world. The causes of these good things arise from some other world inside a person, and have to be sought out and encouraged at the expense of the world of physical sensation.

Those who knew someone like Irene Nicholson and saw her live several years right above all her physical sufferings and even die in hospital in an ecstatic state of happiness, may like to be reminded of one of her questions which we took to the Shankaracharya just after she'd had a very severe operation and was in great pain:

'I have been asked,' she wrote, 'by the BBC to join a panel of people discussing *Happiness*. It sounds promising, doesn't it?'

His Holiness (who knew her and her work in Mexico very well by this time) replied:

Yes, it would be promising *if* they could know what happiness really is. For one should keep in mind that people have forgotten the real meaning of happiness. People take mere pleasure for happiness. Pleasure and pain are the motivating force of all embodied life on earth, and in mankind pleasure and pain are derived from material things and their association with one's state of mind and the personal ego.

Pleasure and pain chase each other as night chases day. Man's relation to pleasure and pain is always temporary and always changing, and everyone gets his or her share of these two as people draw their rations from the shops in wartime.

But happiness is something different. That comes from the Causal level, being one of the natural states of the True Self (Atman). There are three states of the Atman, Happiness, Consciousness and Truth; and the real Self can never exist without those three aspects, which constitute a higher state of Being. When one reduces the real Self merely to some petty desire or association, then one gets pleasure when the desire is fulfilled and pain when it is not fulfilled. This may contain some happiness, but only to the extent of the truth contained in that desire or association.

Some cheerfully subject themselves to pain for a purpose (as when an athlete or a mountaineer undergoes prolonged physical suffering to achieve fame or self-conquest), though there is no virtue in pain for pain's sake; yet such a purpose would have a grain of truth, for the happiness they get is always just above pleasure and pain.

But the pleasures and pains which are inseparable from bodily life can be made conducive to happiness if we adopt a certain attitude. You go to a theatre and see actors in laughter and tears, and because you are only watching the play as an observer, without being personally involved in it, you come out of the theatre happy. So happiness is that which is derived from Truth and Consciousness, for in the case of the play it arises from true characterisation and conscious plan, and you are happy because you enjoy truth and consciousness.

But first your broadcasting panel should be careful not to confuse happiness with temporary physical or mental pleasure which is always followed by its opposite.

(20 October 1965)

[**Discussion:** It would be useful if individuals can be encouraged to formulate *for their own use* some important Truth which keeps encouraging them in their lives, but which could not be arrived at from an entirely materialistic outlook – something they can say to their children, for example.]

PART 2. 'THIS SOCIETY AND THE WORLD'

The following conversation from 1967 seems to be very relevant to our discussions just now. On my visit to His Holiness that year I took some questions from a Professor of Physics at the University of London with whom (since he was doing well with the meditation) I was then on friendly terms. This was his first question and the answer:

Professor B. We see two great forces – each commanding equal respect and love: on the one hand, His Holiness and the seers of all time, leading the search for the eternal Truths inwardly, through meditation, ways of devotion, and so on; and on the other hand, the great thinkers of the world, seeking those same Truths by patient, fearless discussion, scholarship and action in the world.

At present, however, we sense a gap between the Study Society and the world, and seem to find our own place in our very attempts to fill it. Would you be pleased to comment?

S. There is of course a gap between the Society and the scientific world, and it is bound to remain so because they are looking in opposite directions. The one looks inward for the solution to outward problems, and the other is looking only outwards. The scientific search is to examine the outward world of coarse materiality, and it has developed tremendously powerful instruments to study and make use of it. The instruments are made of physical materials to look at the physical aspect of matter, so the result is also crude like the matter it studies; and in order to build up a chain of ideas based on these findings they must be limited by the physical world.

The Spiritual or philosophical world, however, begins where the physical world ends. It deals with the subtle and abstract world and uses subtle and abstract ideas, so it satisfies the inner man. Everyone is in need of food, clothes, a house and other material luxuries, but he also needs satisfaction which tangible objects (and ideas related to them) will not give him. Let people take what they want from the technological achievements,

but no one can have all things, and who can say that if he had all the wealth of the material world he would be satisfied? Only when his appetite for all these is satiated, would he ask for something extra. At that point the School or the seers can step in to take him to the Source of satisfaction and peace. The gap will always be there, and the most one can expect is the rise of Schools to give some impulses now and then.

Mrs. B. My husband, scientist and mathematician, is not convinced; how can I ever convince him?

S. If one is out to try to convince someone it only creates further conflicts! If the person to be convinced is of inferior quality, then he might be persuaded to follow, but such followers are mostly useless. If, on the other hand, he is of superior quality, then the gap is only widened.

What then should one do? *We prefer to live what we believe, and wish others the good luck to be able to see the way we see.* Anyone who is intelligent and has eyes to see things for himself will very soon learn to appreciate it. The key is not to be at war in oneself, for the fight within becomes fiercer even than external war between armed forces.

Later: The physical sciences study a changing world, but we look towards the cause of this changing world. As far as Cause is concerned, there are different steps in causality. The causes of some moving objects derive from time and space; but beyond that is the 'cause of the cause'; the ultimate cause being the Absolute. So we look for the 'cause of the cause' or the ultimate cause, and that would be the Truth – that which never changes and must always remain the same in spite of changing fashions of thought.

(3 November 1967)

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Comment: So we in this Society should never try to *persuade* others, but answer only if and when they ask us. We are concerned first and last with seeing more of the Truth ourselves, and behaving accordingly.

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