

16 November 1970

READING 8

A RECAPITULATION

It might be useful at this point to quote part of the verbatim account of last Monday's meeting – useful both to those who heard it and to those who didn't.

- R. I want you to realise that we picked on the subject which has confused every kind of organised religion or philosophy right back to the beginning of time! If you equate this idea of the *Antabkarana* as the central 'inner instrument' – if you equate that with what has been loosely termed 'soul' – you might say that the whole problem of mankind has always been to understand what was meant by the 'soul' of man. Whenever Enlightened people discovered in themselves (by arduous methods of self-discipline) the contents and possibilities of the soul, then their followers have stopped carrying out the discipline and have begun to talk theoretically about 'the soul', and the whole idea has been lost!

The matter is of crucial importance, because Self-realization depends on the purification, the awakening, the arousal and integration of something which we might call the 'soul' or 'vehicle', through which the Light of the Spirit has to be felt and experienced. When the members of any School, or the adherents of any religion, get lost (as they are bound to do from time to time), it is because they exclude some part of this entity; and the part that usually dies out and gets forgotten is the *Emotional element of Conscience*. Our System says that Conscience in the emotional sphere corresponds to Consciousness in the sphere of knowledge; it means '*feeling* altogether and at once' and leads to the Emotional Realization of Truth.

We ourselves have had bitter experience in our Tradition of the disappearance of conscience in the course of our history. This Emotional realization of Truth has to grow from small beginnings where conscience spotlights the inconsistency between the Truth and some particular act of some particular individual in a particular situation. This is how we commonly feel conscience, which bites us if we do or say something inconsistent with what we believe to be right. But this same element of the Emotional realization of Truth expands and expands until, in the highest form of Self-consciousness, with the experience of Higher emotional centre (which is what the Shankaracharya describes as Nirvikalpa-Samadhi), you get the full development of the emotional side of the 'soul'.

So it starts with the promptings we get and, as we were told by our System, it is in everybody but asleep, and has to be awakened; and you have to keep shaking it for it falls asleep again and again. You cannot be confident that, because your conscience has woken up once, that it will remain awake, or wake up automatically when you need it! It has to be awakened *every day!*

Now when Mr. Ouspensky received the System, this element had been lost or misunderstood, and it was the emphasis he placed on it that has enabled us to keep it alive to some extent even today.

Any questions about that so far?

[Pause]

The term 'discrimination', as used by the Shankaracharya, refers to an *intellectual* process. If one has an impulse to do something (which may alter one's whole life through some strong desire) one has to go through a *reasoning* process to see whether this strong desire is going to be for one's ultimate happiness, and the achievement of one's ultimate Self-realization, or whether it is likely to take one away. That needs clear thinking, but this intellectual discrimination of the Buddhi *alone* is not trustworthy; it has to be backed up by the *emotional element of conscience*, and if the two agree then you can trust it.

I want you to be very clear on all this, because a lot of your questions are skating around this area.

Q. When you say conscience has to be awakened, do you mean from the state we have allowed it to get into? – because it does seem in one's own children, and looking back to one's own childhood, that there is something strong that I would call 'conscience' present in a child?

A. Yes, there is an element of conscience in everybody. This element gets mixed up with borrowed points of view – 'local morality rules,' shall we call them? – what is 'done' and what is 'not done' in a given society; so that the clear, sharp sword of conscience (from the point of view of waking up or falling asleep) is lost – is mixed with a lot of other considerations. In that sense it needs to be purified, lifted up, awakened all through one's education; but it keeps accommodating itself to compromise and public opinion, and so falls asleep again and again.

It is a weakness which a few brave voices in the literary world are now revealing behind the Iron Curtain, where it is very difficult and dangerous for the individual conscience to be heard at all. Let's be clear about all this; do ask about it.

Q. Is this invariably an individual thing, or can it be corporate in a body such as ours?

A. It is a very individual thing; it starts and ends as an individual thing. If you are lucky enough to find a School where it is valued and understood, then it can sometimes become to some extent collective; but the individual has to do his utmost to keep his own conscience awake in whatever School he belongs. What the School has to do is not to suppress the individual conscience, but to clean it and sharpen it. This is often highly inconvenient to the management, so it is very difficult to keep our collective conscience awake!

Q. (Dr. D.C.) What is the difference between the higher flights of Conscience and the lower flights of Consciousness?

A. It doesn't really go like that; better leave the words 'higher' and 'lower' out of your question. Do you remember how His Holiness put it to us at our last visit?:

The End of the way is the same – Self-realization. As we have been told there are two lights, the emotional light and the intellectual light, so it is possible that people might get to the end by either way. But it is also possible that there will be answers to vital questions left hidden. To satisfy such needs it is essential that one under discipline should work on both these lines, the intellectual and the emotional. Particularly for a person who is destined to be the leader of a group, is it most essential; because there are bound to be a hundred-and-one situations of different types which he will have to tackle in order to give them a lead. So keep both ways running together.

(24 January 1970)

I don't think that a person can be unconscious and yet have an awakened conscience; it is a contradiction in terms.

Dr. D.C. I did not mean to imply that this was possible but, unless I misunderstood, there seems to be a meeting-point between conscience and Consciousness higher up?

A. Oh, yes, they meet in the end; and if that meeting-point is achieved, then one could truly be said to be an awakened individual. The intellect and the feelings are very often at war with each other in the ordinary man; but Yoga – the union of heart and head – must mean the meeting point of conscience and Consciousness.

Q. Could you tell us something about it – the way in which Mr. Ouspensky emphasised this in particular?

A. Well, by *example*. He himself would never decide on a course of action until he was told to do so from within. 'When in doubt do nothing,' he would say. In dealing with those who were with him, he was always, in every situation, trying to arouse the conscience of the person concerned. He would never allow anything to be done mechanically or from theory, or anything like that. (Appealing to a friend of Mr. Ouspensky's): Wouldn't you say that was true? (Yes). And that in each situation the necessity for the Emotional Realization of Truth was brought out? (Yes). There was not much teaching on the subject (No) – it was seen in action, in his own behaviour and in the kind of behaviour he permitted near him.

He did say (in New York) that as conscience led in the direction of the Higher Emotional centre, the 'difference between activities which look alike' would become evident; but that you cannot see the *true difference* between the activities of man without the *awakening of conscience and the Higher Emotional centre* (which you can call 'intuition' if *that* is what you mean by the word).

Does that answer your question?

Q. Very much.

Q. Do you mean conscience has to wake up without any qualification? In life you have a conscience which steers because of something?

A. Yes, without qualification or compromise.

Though love repine or reason chafe
There comes a voice without reply:
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the Truth he ought to die.

Until I met the Shankaracharya, Mr. Ouspensky and his pupil Rodney Collin Smith came nearest to that ideal; though Rodney was inexperienced and sometimes his judgement was at fault.

Q. When you say we must awaken our conscience every day, can you give us any practical help about this daily shaking?

A. First it has to govern all you do for this School – for instance, being in charge of a group, and seeing that you never say a thing wrong, that is one way. You could also use your business,

your occupation, by trying to carry it out with the greatest integrity possible – not only never do a crooked thing, but keep an unbiased point of view.

There was a good question at your meeting; P.S. ‘queried that discrimination was always felt in the head – could it not be an emotional realization or discrimination? (Conscience)?’

- A. Well, as the Shankaracharya uses the word ‘discrimination’, it does refer to the intellect (in the sense of ‘creative mind’); but he himself says that it needs the proper working of the emotional element to become pure and reliable. The two have to go hand-in-hand.

(Discussion)

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We concluded last Monday’s meeting, after a short Meditation, by quoting the way the Shankaracharya first spoke to us of these things. It is suggested that you conclude this week’s group meetings along the same lines.

Just as we have been told in the past about the kingdom of Buddhi in relation to the kingdom of Manas (that is, the relation of understanding to the mechanical mind), so there is also a kingdom of Emotion, about which you have not heard much yet. Within this domain of emotion, the conscience arises out of many things which have come together, and this happens in the Antahkarana, which is all One on the Causal level, but differentiated into many elements in the subtle body.

To correct anything physical or psychological in a man one has to resort to rules and regulations, but in the domain of conscience, very few rules and regulations suffice...

(13 October 1965)

As we went on asking questions, it came out that ‘conscience is not subject to space and time since it can work without them’; and, ‘in the domain of conscience, things can be done much more quickly and easily. Thus the physical body can never have communion with the Deity, or with the fully Realized Man; it is only through the Antahkarana that he will have experience of such communion.’

We went on probing, but in reply to further probing questions His Holiness then dismissed the subject with the words:

Although it is possible to see the mechanism of this relation (between pupil and Realized Man), yet its pleasure and beauty is more quickly realised if it is left just as it is. The domain of Emotion works secretly, and the beauty and pleasure is lost if it is exposed; so it is better allowed to work naturally without digging it up.

(*ibid*)

[ADDENDUM. To use for those who are still worrying about words.]

Some of you complain bitterly about half-a-dozen Indian names by which we can refer to those familiar functions of our minds with which we live every day! Yet those who are trying to instruct you have additionally to keep in mind the hundred different changing jargons of the scientific research front today!

Here, for example, is the 'simple' summary of the end of a current book, from just one of these research stations (Edinburgh):

Thus to put the matter crudely, the Hippocampus may lay down memories, the Amygdala (with Hippocampus) may determine what memories are laid down, and the Reticular Formation may subserve the complex switching and general programme organisation. Such a complex operation requires the entire limbic system may function to select the appropriate behaviour to any given set of stimuli. The cortex may in this context be regarded as a specialised computing sub-system to deal with problems of a higher order of complexity than the subcortical nuclei can manage, as well as supplying a permanent memory store and specialised functions related to social and spatial analysis, language, etc. as has already been suggested.

(Neurological Foundations of Psychiatry, Smythies et al., Blackwell, 1966)

If you prefer this language for daily self-observation, we shall be charmed to use it, provided you realise that both are trying to describe the same thing!

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