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INTRODUCTORY PAPER FOR GROUP-TAKERS ONLY

Not a few of you told me before Christmas that your groups had been refreshed by the lift to a bigger scale which was introduced in the last two readings under the heading 'New Dimensions'. These you'll recall were based on Colin Lucas's work on the eleven papers of the (September 1970) issue of the *Scientific American* about the Biosphere, with the inner Noösphere – a sudden 'coming-of-age' of Vernadsky's work published in the 1920's.

We concluded that we would like to begin our programme for 1971 by trying to arrive at the laws of this Noösphere, the Mind of Nature, which gives off the manifest forms of 'Organic Life on Earth'. It seems obvious today that although the Noösphere must have been present for millions of years before the appearance of the Self-creative species '*Homo*', yet its full development requires a big step forward in the psychology of mankind. This (as Mr. Ouspensky maintained in his *Psychological Lectures*) 'does not mean the psychology of man as we know him or as the vast majority of people believe him to be, but from the *point of view of what he may become*' as demonstrated by those rare men who have occasionally realized the full possibilities latent in us all as human beings. Just as the full possibilities of a cell are only realized in the fertilised germ cell, so the full possibilities of man have so far only been realized in the germ cell of humanity, 'the Inner Circle'. In other words, '*Homo*' as a species has still to become '*Homo sapiens*', and this Society is only interested in those systems of psychology which study man from this point of view.

But before we can define the laws of the Noösphere on the subtle level, we must take a look at the still more fundamental level which the Shankaracharya's System calls the *Causal*. It is there in this precious flowerbed that the seeds must be sown which would make the 'different being' which evolution now urgently requires.

[Before continuing please make sure that this main thesis is understood.]

PART 1: GOOD AND ILL-WILL

In casting about for the most simple and practical expression for the change that has to take place on the Causal level, a new insight was sparked off during the Christmas festivities by a very good idea contained in a new best-seller – *Passenger to Frankfurt* by Agatha Christie. For this idea alone one feels she richly deserves her DBE!

Shall we, for a few minutes, go along with the Queen of Crime fiction? Let me try to express her idea and the use to which I feel we can put it. Look around at mankind today and you see little else but '*ill-will*'. Not only is this evident in all revolutionary movements, strikes and 'demos', which start with a sense of injustice but quickly set themselves up *against* somebody or something; but a very big and expensive part of technological research is engaged on destruction of some potential enemy. Behind the Iron Curtain, as one would of course expect, vigorously repressive measures are directed against any attempt at intellectual or emotional freedom; but in the so-called 'free world', also, we see only too clearly the seeds of destruction of its own comparative freedom in this climate of ill-will.

This new ‘thriller’ pictures a top biochemist as having discovered, not a *destructive* nerve-gas or drug or hormone, but an equally potent chemical which could induce in people not ill-will but *good-will*. This he calls ‘Project Benvo’ (standing for ‘benevolence’[†]), and he conceived it (in the novelist’s own words) as:

a deterrent to be used in war, in mass risings, riotings, revolutions, anarchy. He didn’t think of it as merely medical. It does not (directly) produce happiness in the subject, only a great wish for others to be happy. That is an effect, he says, that everyone feels in their life at one time or another. They have a great wish to make someone, one person or many people, to make them comfortable, happy, in good health – all those things. And since people can and do feel these things... there is a component which controls that desire in their bodies; and if you put that component in operation, it can go on in perpetuity. He was not preaching, but doing something in his laboratory to bring about this result by purely physical means. He claims that once this chemical change is made in somebody it would be irreversible – that is, permanent.

Of course all this was used just to make a good thriller, and we can laugh at it along with the author because we know that, though such a chemical *does* exist in the body, (it has been known as ‘sympathin’), it is so unstable and evanescent in laboratory conditions that it changes into something else and disappears from the bloodstream in less than 3 seconds; so you can’t isolate it and spray or inject it. Nevertheless, after a number of experiments, one can learn how to produce it in oneself in sufficient quantity for all one’s needs and even impart it to other people.

First it requires knowing ‘oneself’ – this inner organ, the Antahkaran – rather well. Casting a sidelong glance at it from time to time, one catches it throwing off *ill-will*, which in turn keeps poisoning first one’s psychological and later one’s physical well-being. Just recognise the ‘ill-will chemical’ and learn how to transform it into its opposite! We know from the meditation and other methods that one must first have good-will towards one’s own true Self, ‘the Atman’, (or ‘love of the Truth’, or however one would express it), and only then can this love expand to merge with the Param-Atman and include other people, and eventually all Creation. The business of the discriminating mind or Buddhi must be to decide firmly ‘yes’ or ‘no’; but that ‘no’ must not be allowed to go on reverberating at the level of feeling. We know also that, if the meditation remains entirely selfish, it dies; to get its full effects we have to use it to help others – to promote good-will.

It’s all a chemical expression of the Christmas message to the shepherds in the Gospel story. St. Luke, we know, wrote in Greek, and although this angelic message has received many fancy translations, the literal Greek words mean: ‘Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, in men “*eudokia*”’. This key word made up of two Greek words had the colloquial meaning of ‘good thinking’ or ‘right attitude’. Why not try it? It works. And having found it to become more and more potent as one practises it, one begins to see that it is not only an application of the Three Gunas, but also that it has a factual basis in the mutual relation of the two great divisions of our nervous system (each of them made up of three neurochemical components) – the *voluntary*, and the involuntary or *autonomic*. The clue to this is given in the definition of the first two steps of the Ladder of Self-realization, where the first – the ‘good impulse’ – arises in the domain of

[†](Note: These two Latin words ‘*bene*’ and ‘*volo*’ just mean ‘well-wishing’ or ‘good desire.’)

the involuntary; but the second must bring in the voluntary system by coming to a definite decision and learning to carry it out.

PART 2. ILL-WILL AS A HABIT OF MIND

Only a little observation is needed to prove in one's own case and in the people one knows well, that only a small fraction of our habitual ill-will is deliberate; just as only occasional moments of positive goodwill arise in us. Most of the activity of our minds is set up by a *negative sort of indifference*. The young A. E. Housman was worried by this when he came up to London from his native shire:

... I see
 In many an eye that measures me
 The mortal sickness of a mind
 Too unhappy to be kind.

A Shropshire Lad, 41

This is Tamas; the mind is closed to any inner and outer influences which could arouse goodwill. To watch this going on almost unconsciously, and see its terrible effects, is enough to make us actively desire good-will. Some people naturally enjoy more good-will than others and these can help us; but such valuable friends need to use some of their goodwill for Self-remembering and Self-realization, instead of dissipating it by getting lost in other people's troubles. So we begin right away with observations of 'self and friends' from this point of view.

Remember that on the subtle level changes for good or bad take place instantaneously, whereas their physical effects may only be noticeable long afterwards. But if one *has* some important physical damage as in coronary disease, the slightest access of ill-will may be literally fatal. There's a well-known story of the surgeon John Hunter who, given a blunt scalpel, hurled it at his assistant and dropped dead in the very act.

Choice of environment, and of the external impressions coming from it, is also of great importance. Much of our mass media in England today (newspapers, and Radio and TV programmes) sets up ill-will in us if we are not very careful in our selection. In the other direction it is more difficult to suffer ill-will in the presence of 'good company' and when the Buddhi is occupied with fine things. I find it quite impossible to have ill-will in the presence of His Holiness or even anywhere on his territory, or within his sphere of influence. Our organisation based on Mr. Ouspensky's house should have the same effect.

PART 3

In a true School whose discipline is perpetually linked with the Inner Circle, the principle of 'good-will' is central. The *first line* – work on oneself – means the consistent practice of good-will towards the Owner of 'this pleasure-ground' of mind and body and towards those servants (thinking, feeling, doing, etc.) which are at our command. The *second line* – work in a group – demands good-will between its members and particularly between them and those who have been put in charge; a good-will which nothing must distort. And the *third line* demands good-will towards the School itself – towards those senior to oneself, towards the Leader and the

Tradition to which it belongs. It is easy to practise when one is fond of the people concerned and when everything is going smoothly; but that is *not enough*, and progress depends upon the testing situations which are consciously applied from time to time.

Many well-known Zen stories illustrate such situations, particularly one which shows that good-will or ill-will determines the choice between heaven and hell:

The Gates of Paradise

A soldier named Nobu-Shige came to Haku-In, and asked, 'Is there really a paradise and a hell?'

'Who are you?' inquired Haku-In.

'I am a Samurai', the warrior replied.

'You, a soldier!' exclaimed Haku-In. 'What kind of ruler would have you as his guard? Your face looks like that of a beggar!'

'Nobu-Shige became so angry that he began to draw his sword when Haku-In continued, 'So you have a sword! Your weapon is probably much too dull to cut off my head.'

As Nobu-Shige drew his sword, Haku-In remarked, 'Here open the gates of hell!'

At these words the Samurai perceiving the master's discipline sheathed his sword and bowed.

'Here open the gates of paradise,' said Haku-In.

What is not obvious in this or similar Zen stories is the enormous *good-will* needed for a Master like Haku-In to be able successfully to treat a novice in so provocative a manner.

Preliminary Conclusions

But it must be born in mind that those three lines of work in a School are only a means to an end; *the end being to become incapable of ill-will towards anyone in the world*. Good-will must be no 'selector of persons'; it is the damage done to one's own soul (the Antahkarana) by even the smallest spark of ill-will which prevents Self-realization. We are speaking of *being* benevolent, not *doing* ('beneficence' or 'benefaction'). 'Do-gooders' are usually infuriating because they act from ignorance in a poor state of being.

The supreme example of good-will will always be the words of Christ on the cross who, even during his slow and agonising death, could express good-will towards his torturers and his fellow sufferer, the repentant thief.

So by learning to practise good-will all the time we can come a long way from this idea out of a silly little bit of fiction writing. But this gives probably the best answer to the question 'What sort of 'man' is meant at point 6 in the Biosphere diagram?'

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