

21 June 1971

## READING 7

### PART 1

Is it really true that time was spent last week on making a conflict between the giving-up aspect of Self-remembering (as in Mr. Ouspensky's description of his early struggles) and the recent advice (over 50 years later) to expand our consciousness to that of the Param-Atman? Weren't we told before the meditation reached us that 'in order to be born we must die'; and later, that during a half-hour we had first to reach emptiness and then 'this emptiness will become a fullness'? All we need is the resolution to get on and do it – hold the Param-Atman in mind whenever the mind is idle. Perhaps the advice of the Angel to Esdras (this time from the *New English Bible with Apocrypha*) could increase that resolution:

'Rise up, Esdras, and hear the message I have come to give you!' 'Speak, my Lord,' I said.

'Imagine a sea set in a vast open space, spreading far and wide, but the entrance to it narrow like the gorge of a river... If anyone is determined to reach the sea... he has first to go through the narrow gorge.

Or again, imagine a city built in a plain, a city full of everything you can desire, but the entrance to it narrow and steep, with fire to the right and deep water to the left. There is only the one path between the fire and the water, and that only wide enough for one at a time. If man has been given this city as a legacy, how can he take possession of his inheritance except by passing through these dangerous approaches.'

'That is the only way, my Lord,' I agreed.

For me these are two good ways of picturing that 'final common path' idea mentioned last week, and I'm grateful too for the hint about the Gunas – 'fire to the right and deep water to the left'.

[Pause – not for discussion but for practice! It is within our power to hold the idea of the Param-Atman ('Your own Self that lives in the hearts of all') for 2 minutes without any other thought intervening. With practice we can extend this to 5 or even 10 minutes. A whole half-hour would change one's life!]

### PART 2

The central theme of last week's paper was that we require some more knowledge of the one part of the mind which needs to remember to hold the idea of the Param-Atman all the time; and to know All-Knowledge through that universal consciousness it is only necessary to know very little. So two of us have been to some trouble to consult the original papers about the great discovery of the 'Alerting Mechanism' which dated from a chance observation published by Moruzzi & Magoun in 1949. This contains two clues essential to us, but which the research front of neurology has passed over and forgotten.

The first is that this alerting system was originally proved to be *non-specific* – that is, entirely created for awakening and attention and quite distinct from any other mental activity whatsoever. This exactly corresponds to the following statement by H.H.:

The true feeling of 'I' is related to the Atman, and out of this feeling can come the aim of service to humanity. But if the feeling of 'I' is connected with the body, the senses or the mind, or anything with which one seems to have become associated, such as one's own particular name, one's position or profession or knowledge, then all these things when associated with 'I' are the false 'I'.

(Record, 26 January 1970)

The next clue is referred to again in a later paper by one of the two original discoverers of the alerting system (Moruzzi, 'The Physiology of Sleep', *Endeavour*, 22, 1963). He pointed out that in major changes of consciousness all experimental work shows that *'there is not a disappearance or reappearance of mental functions but rather a reorganisation on a different basis.'* When we wake in the morning from physical sleep, the brain is reorganised ready for the daytime activity. The mechanism for this reorganisation is provided by nature. But we can continue the argument by saying that if we want to awake spiritually we must gradually have reorganised the top of the brain on a different basis; and that is why it takes time, because nature does not do this for us. The practice of referring everything to the Param-Atman would be a most potent means of 'reorganisation', but it is bound to take time.

The process is accelerated by 'shocks' which we don't like, but which we should learn to welcome and turn to good use. An analogy came to hand today:

Our Mini car is often lazy in its reaction to the self-starter. At last the senior mechanic at the garage said, 'It's probably the terminals; you'll have to give her a bash.' So this morning on getting a very sleepy reaction to the button, my wife took a hammer and gave the battery a bash, whereupon the engine started up at once!

Now while I don't recommend this method for general use on cars, nor to doctors for general use on patients, yet I do find that my 'alerting system' needs a bash or two every day. One must not repine, therefore, if the pressures of life do this for us; for we've been told that one can't go straight from Tamas (sleepy inertia) to Sattva, and that the demands of the outer life at any moment can give the shock of Rajas that is required.

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