

28 June 1971

READING 8

PART 1: A COMMON LANGUAGE

We must agree on a word capable of being defined precisely for that important part of the brain which we have to know intimately if we are to realize our potentiality. Some people don't like long Indian words like Antahkarana, others don't like scientific words like 'forebrain' or 'prosencephalon', and still others don't like religious words like 'Soul' or mythological words like 'Psyche'. So I propose once again that we adopt the word 'Soul' (as being the shortest) and define it precisely as the 'vehicle of Consciousness' – the pattern and connections within which make each individual what he is, and different from anyone else.

When we use this word on the physical level we think of it as the part of the *brain* through which alone all impressions (whether from within or from without) have to enter our consciousness. Neurology can tell us of the breathtaking scope and unexplored possibilities of this vast area, so educated people can no longer think of it only as 'head' or intellect. When we use it on the subtle level we think of it as our psyche, the roots of all our psychology. When we use it on the causal level we picture it all as one; and (though it is subject to the three Gunas) it can be made the dwelling place of God or Spirit or Param-Atman and brought under one Will.

In a few moments of the stillness of clear Consciousness we feel it instinctively, emotionally and intellectually all at once, and we can remember the words of the old Hebrew Psalmist who was saying exactly the same thing as our present guide the Shankaracharya, or Mevlana or any other enlightened Man. I quote from Psalm 91 in psychological language:

O you who are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High (Param-Atman) and abiding in the shadow of the Almighty;

'I' (Ego or Ahankara) will say to the Lord who is my strength and my fortune, my God in whom I trust,

That he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler (self-deception) and from the noisome pestilence (negative emotion).

He shall defend you under His wings, and you shall be safe under His feathers; His faithfulness and Truth shall be your shield and buckler.

You shall not be afraid for any terror by night nor for the arrow that flies by day;

For the pestilence that walks in darkness: nor for the sickness that destroys in the high noonday.

A thousand shall fall beside you, and ten thousand at your right hand, but *it shall not come near you...*

In other words: 'you, my Soul, must not be identified with anything in the world – only with God, who is your True Self.'

Words like that when carried with one, can again and again lift one out of the lowest depths – 'the dark night of the Soul', as some mystics called it.

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When we were first given the system in Western form we were told that man was made of four parts: Body, Essence, Personality and Soul. Owing to the loss of the practical method of

Meditation which should have gone with the knowledge, the idea that the Divine Self is always present in all people had been lost, and so the idea of 'Soul' had been reduced just to 'Life Principle' like the rest of Organic Life. But now we have to raise the meaning of 'Soul' to its full status as the vehicle of Consciousness. With the aid of all the recent discoveries of science in that area, we can equate the word 'Soul' with the Antahkarana of the Shankaracharya's system as long as we manage to experience more and more of it in ourselves. Thus while the Body is on the physical, Essence and Personality on the subtle, and Soul on the causal level, we now know that each is contained in the one above; so that there is a department of the soul which governs the body, another which governs our psychology, and a third which is purely for the dwelling-place of consciousness.

PART 2. A FORM OF PRACTICE

How to hold the idea of the Param-Atman in mind all the time?

Yet another answer reached me yesterday in a further talk by the Shankaracharya to the poorest people who frequent one of his Ashrams, just before he went off to his mountain retreat last month:

There is something or other in all of us which is special or outstanding; some are intelligent, some unintelligent; some are strong, some weak; some are learned and some ignorant; some are rich, some poor.

Each should try to please God (or serve God or worship God as the case may be) with that attribute in which he alone excels. It is sure to work, as it has always done in the past. Sudama was the poorest of the poor; he could only express his worship for Krishna with rotten rice, and even that was borrowed because he was so poor. But this worship worked and Sudama got enormous wealth in return.

Little things are no longer little when their consequences become great. In fact, all great things begin from little. A tiny seed of *babul* will first of all grow to be a big thorny bush, and that will produce innumerable others until the whole place gets full of them and nobody can move through them without getting hurt. Similarly a little wrong action can cause much harm, and a little good action just the opposite.

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NOTE: One is reminded of those short parables (as in Luke, 13) which Mr. Ouspensky so admired:

The kingdom of God... is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and cast into his garden; and it grew and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

In just the same way, one tiny good seed or idea sown at the Causal level in the Soul (or Antahkarana) can have enormous consequences, and equally we must take great care to keep out the seeds of thorny bushes!

Later in this talk His Holiness points out that there is nothing impossible about holding the idea of the Param-Atman, for we do a similar thing every day of the week:

A strong and deep affection lives in our heart for our son or father or wife; yet we go about our normal business and don't recite their names all the time. This is exactly how we should keep God in our Soul and go on doing our duties at the same time.

The method is: do what each of you is meant for, and do it in a spirit of service to God (the Param-Atman). Let eating, drinking, sleeping, taking a bath, etc., all be dedicated to God. You can reach God through doing your normal duty in service to God; but if you think that your own duties are no good, and take on other people's duties because they appeal to you more, you would lose your way and ruin yourself. Thus doing your own duty and dedicating it to the Universal (human Spirit) is the golden rule for peace and happiness.

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