

15 October 1973

READING 3

PART 1. THE 'LADDER' IN TERMS OF ENERGY

What we want from you at the moment is that you should begin to practise the first steps of this Ladder systematically from day to day, instead of analysing and debating it. A big incentive comes when you find *how much energy it saves*. The human machine is a refinery of energy and stores energy of different kinds – coarse physical energy, mental and emotional energy, sex energy (potent but explosive), and finally the energy of Consciousness, which is the most powerful but the most elusive of all. Proper use of each of those grades of energy in turn leads to release of finer grades.

The Ladder starts with the *two Steps: good* (i.e., attentive) *actions and thoughts*. When we race round doing things mechanically with our minds on something else, we waste pints of energy both physical and mental. For example, it's quite possible to drive a car fast through traffic with your mind in a dream-world busy on all the things you haven't done, or are going to do when you get there. Not only does this bad habit wear out your car and waste fuel, but it wears out your mind and wastes mental fuel; moreover, it paves the way for physical accidents if the unexpected happens. Steps 1 and 2 of the Ladder ensure that one attends fully to the requirements of the present moment with no irrelevant burden on the mind.

So make a beginning, and you will be much better off for energy. Two periods of meditation are meant to save all kinds of energy together; then you totally stop using any energy at all and put all that you save in the bank – both current and deposit accounts.

[Ask each person if they are really trying to practise even a little of this.]

PART 2. THE GAME OF SELF-DISCOVERY

This thrilling and always interesting game that we play together at Colet House, can also be played at home or even at work. The object of the game is to discover the Self in His private retreat, the Soul. The Self, too, is playing hide-and-seek with us.

Another simile is the game of chess which is all played round the King, though the King cannot be 'taken' and plays no active part. Checkmate (full Realization) is the end of the game, but all the moves before are determined by that final situation. We establish the idea of the King in our hearts (however occupied our minds may be), just as we never forget that we are human beings whether waking or dreaming, or even in coma or deep dreamless sleep when we know nothing else.

But (as someone remarked) the Soul and the Self seem so far away at first that it's impossible to have any ideas about them.

Of course, they are really near at hand but separated by clouds of ignorance and illusion.

So we begin nearer home by reminding ourselves that we all inhabit three worlds simultaneously – the physical, subtle and causal. The first world, the physical, is all too obvious, so we needn't discuss it just now; there's nothing wrong with it – what is wrong is to take the common view that it is *everything*. Once established, it repeats itself ad infinitum – any change

has to come from the subtle and causal. So the physical or phenomenal universe (which, as the scientists try desperately to assure us, has assembled itself entirely by chance) looks as if superficially –

Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.
(Omar Khayyam)

Seen with the eye of Consciousness, however, there is *no such thing as chance*, for everything follows the Law of Cause and Effect, and if you knew *all*, you would know all the causes that set up the world we perceive both outside and within. Looking away from Consciousness, as it is considered intelligent to do in the chaotic world of today, everything is black and hopeless but, when we begin to look towards Consciousness, life becomes full of glorious possibilities. So it is only up to us!

Next week we will begin to study the subtle level of our psychology where change begins.

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A thought to carry away: a Victorian poet [Tennyson, 'Locksley Hall'] wrote:

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger by the shore.

The Shankaracharya (referring to the wise man) asserts that, if we do the little we can, then –

Within the Soul the first ray of wisdom of the Self is touched off and then the whole machinery is put into gear.

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