

24 November 1975

READING 7

PART 1

There's another exciting and very practical discovery that came during our present study of four states of consciousness from a sudden insight which linked statements by the Shankaracharya with Mr. Ouspensky's Psychological Lectures and much else.

It came as an answer to the question – 'How can we recognise the Conscious Being (the Atman) within us, which is all the time manifesting itself in such a great variety of forms?' Here the chief philosophies of India all unite at one point, namely that The Absolute has three characteristics expressed by the triple word: Sat-Chit-Ananda. These the Shankaracharya has described as:

1. *Sat* = *Truth* (something which is always true),
2. *Chit* = *Pure Consciousness* which does not fluctuate,
3. *Ananda* = '*Bliss*' or happiness which does not change with conditions; like 'Positive Emotion' (Love, Faith, Awe), it is either felt or not felt; but can never turn negative.

Way back in 1965 R. asked him: 'What is it which wakes one up some days with a strong feeling of truth – could that be Atman?'

S. There are three characteristics of Atman (the Self) – Sat-Chit-Ananda – and any one of these is known by the other two. To know the truth for instance, one must judge by the other two indicators.

For instance: if I have to meet somebody I don't know at the station I may be given certain indicators which would enable me to recognise him. Suppose I am told that he is dark-complexioned and wearing a blue shirt; the moment I see a dark man with a blue shirt I recognise that this may be the man, and going up to him I get some conclusive proof.

Similarly, to recognise Consciousness which you don't know, you get to know it by the other two indicators, Truth and Bliss.

Now at the time of those Psychological Lectures, forty years ago, Mr. Ouspensky gave us only two indicators as follows:

From Second Lecture:

Another definition of the four states of *consciousness* can be made from the point of view of our possible cognition of *truth*.

In the first state of consciousness, that is, in deep sleep, we cannot know anything of the truth. Even if some real perceptions or feelings come to us, they become mixed with dreams, and in the state of sleep we cannot distinguish between dreams and reality.

In the second state of consciousness, that is, in waking sleep, we can only know *relative* truth, and from this comes the term 'relative consciousness'.

In the third state, that is, in the State of self-consciousness, we can know the full truth *about ourselves*.

In the fourth state, that is, in the state of cosmic consciousness, we are supposed to

be able to know the full truth *about everything*: we can study ‘things in themselves,’ ‘the world as it is.’

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Not knowing enough of the third element (Happiness) Mr. Ouspensky remained very unhappy up to the last week of his life when he suddenly experienced Full Consciousness – ‘came into the clear’. And, until the coming of the meditation through the Maharishi whose chief platform was ‘Bliss’ – we remained very unhappy too.

This now has become my constant guide – if I am unhappy *I know I am not conscious*; and if I hear somebody teaching however learnedly, and he is not happy, or doesn’t make other people happy, I know he isn’t conscious either! Each time we meet the fully Realized man, in the first moment we suddenly feel happy; and if we meet the True Self, the Atman, we get this marvellous inward ecstasy that Boehme described. At the same time in both these cases we ‘wake up’ and we also experience some new facet of Truth.

The poets also describe this: Shelley writing of our ordinary state of ‘sleep’ wrote in his Ode to the Skylark:

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

And Shakespeare in Sonnet 29 goes further:

When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
...
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate;
For thy sweet love remember’d such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings!

That’s a true description of the emergence of self-consciousness out of the general gloom of waking sleep – like being in love it is.

(Pause for Meditation)

PART 2

In the very scientific but very unhappy world of today, this must be somehow remembered and applied in all walks of life. Doctors, however skilful or knowledgeable must at least cheer and reassure their patients; schoolmasters must see that the children are happy or they won't learn and retain anything taught them, and so on.

And above all, whatever we do at or around Colet House must have something of these three ingredients – awakening, truth and happiness. Then the voice of our Society may be heard in the world around.

Thus in that same year (1965) we took some questions with us from Irene Nicholson on behalf of her group in Mexico – though she was even then showing signs of the cancer from which she died. Two of these, with H.H's answers were as follows:

Q1. How can we increase our sensibility to know what is wanted from us by the people who are helping us – such as yourself?

S. Empty yourself of your wishes, then the Leader's wishes will prevail; and remember that the mighty Atman lives within you.

Q4. I have been asked by the BBC to join a panel of people discussing *Happiness*. That sounds promising, doesn't it?

S. One should keep in mind that people have forgotten the real meaning of happiness. People mistake pleasure for happiness; but pleasure and suffering are derived from material things and their association with one's state of mind. Pleasure and pain chase each other like day and night. Man's relation to pleasure and pain is always temporary and always changing, and everyone draws his share of these two, like a daily ration from the food shop.

By contrast happiness (Ananda) is one of the natural ingredients of the Atman of which there are three: Bliss, Consciousness and Truth. These are experienced in a higher state of Being. When one reduces the Real Self to petty desires or associations, then one gets pleasure only when the desire is fulfilled and suffering when it is not fulfilled. This may also contain a little happiness but only to the extent of the truth involved in that desire or association.

This happiness is always just above pleasure or pain. You go to the theatre and see actors in laughter and tears, but because you are only watching the play without being involved in it, you come out happy. *So happiness is that derived from truth and consciousness.* In the case of the big play, you enjoy truth and consciousness from true characters and conscious plan. One should be careful not to confuse happiness with cycles of pain and pleasure.

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