

2 February 1976

## READING 2

(To last two weeks)

Based on the large Monday Meeting 26th January, 1976

## PART 1

Inherent in human nature at all times and places have been certain fundamental questions which are difficult to verbalise and therefore mostly remain unanswered. These were recently expressed very well in a school essay by a little girl of eight entitled 'My Thoughts':

I sometimes feel who am I? Who is that person outside my body. I do not know what I really look like. I look in the mirror sometimes but that is only my reflection I do not understand myself who am I? Is God true is he Magic no but God once came down to make Peace, Joy, Love, Kindness, we never succeed in it. I do believe in God in one way and I don't in another way. It seems very hard to me I do not understand life... I have always wondered what did God create the whole universe for, or did he just create the earth.

Just as there have been those questions at all times and in all places, so many ways have been discovered by different people of coming to the realisation that there *is* a Source of Power within everybody, and that there are ways of reaching it. Those who discover this 'big Secret' know that it gives the whole reason for living through what is otherwise a *meaningless* life.

In his fifth Psychological Lecture to us and our friends back in the 1930's, Mr. Ouspensky pointed out that 'all our troubles come from not remembering ourSelves' whereas self-remembering is part of the human endowment (part of our birthright) and if we could learn how to realize it, all our troubles would disappear.

'We must begin,' he said, 'by learning to control those parts of our make-up which *can* be controlled by such will as we have. Schools in the East often begin with control of *movements*, but this requires very arduous training over a long time.'

Some of us have learnt this, ourselves, through the Dervish Turning and 'Movements to Music' both of which have to be done for a long time to get their full results. Moreover people seem to find that they need something *in addition* to carry them through their ordinary life in between.

In that same lecture Mr. Ouspensky continued: 'In modern life in the West it is usually more simple and direct to choose that other department which we can get under control, namely our Mind' – with its intellectual and emotional apparatus, both of which depend on *consciousness*. For that there is a special way: We know that we have *no* direct control over consciousness (our consciousness fluctuates all the time, for it is only the changing reflection of the Real Consciousness which always remains the same); but though we have no control over Consciousness itself, we can arrange our mind in the way it would act, or in the direction it would take, in those moments (or episodes) of consciousness which seem to come by chance, we can in that way bring consciousness. This is what he called 'Self-Remembering'.

Since a System of Meditation (designed for universal use in the active life of today) reached

us in 1960, we have given little thought to these words of Mr. Ouspensky; though meditation puts this method of his within the reach of everybody. And the Shankaracharya (one of the four heads of a twenty-five centuries old tradition based entirely on meditation) has ever since I first met him in 1961 been describing and demonstrating to us exactly how the mind *does* work in conscious man. He, by the way, has been the only other man I ever met who used the words 'Self-Remembering' and has demonstrated it visibly in all his actions.

We know from him, and now from our own experience certain invariable characteristics of conscious mind: 1) that the way to it is by one-pointed attention, 2) that the supreme consciousness exists *out of time* and has to be experienced always in the present moment, 3) that the mind at such times naturally sheds the illusion of passing time, and the burden of past and future, 4) that it also gives up all personal thoughts such as 'I am the doer', 'I am separate from other people' etc., 5) that for conscious mind there is no dualism – no difference between intellect and emotion – everything is one. So by training our mind along these lines, we have proved that we can bring more consciousness more often.

This then is the method which we must learn to make a part of our nature, and to carry on along with whatever else we do and whenever we are not doing anything at all. This is what *he* also calls 'Self-remembering' – keeping the Supreme Consciousness (Param-Atman) in our emotional memory all the time.

In order to illustrate the situation we are in until we acquire the art of Self-remembering as above outlined, I will now quote part of an answer to the questionnaire, sent in by a man who is at the very centre of all we do at Colet, and who moreover has a busy life in the City and a wife and family to support:

In practice it doesn't seem to be quite like the way the question was put; more that after a period of trying to merge with the Real Self – Meditation, Fourth Selam (of the Mukabeleh) the Dervish Prayer (in the 'Movements') then for a short time afterwards a lovely state of connectedness can exist – there is this Energy of Delight! While this lasts one can take action, drive a car, converse on the telephone, and somehow (still) be in a state of acknowledging the Source – there is happiness, effortlessness, and yet control, certainty. Then the personal viewpoint returns and strengthens, the delight fades, vaguely one is aware of something lost.

**Conclusion:** Though individuals will always differ in their nature and their opportunities at different stages in their lives, the art of Self-remembering needs to be acquired by everybody, each in his own way.

## PART 2

Now I would like you to read part of one of the audiences we had at our recent visit to India. I asked His Holiness a question relating to different methods available to people today for Self-Realization, and quoted back to him part of one of the discourses he gave to the general public (at the annual Religious Festival at the Confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers) where he had put it all very simply. He replied as follows:

S. Usually there are two ways in which discourses take place: one is general, and the other personal. There are occasions when one speaks to the common man – to *anyone*;

and there are occasions when one speaks to individuals. When one speaks generally to the crowd, then the Knowledge aspect has to be very simple, simple in the sense that the ordinary man does not have much basis from which to respond. So he is given very simple incentives, and through these simple incentives it is expected he will get *something* and begin moving.

The nature of this incentive is that God (the Universal Self) is certainly available to everyone everywhere and in the most simple and direct way; but the simplicity has been lost, so people get separated (from God). Not that they are, in reality, separated, but they *feel* separated, because they have forgotten the union. It is *forgetfulness* which comes between the Absolute and the individual. Otherwise the Absolute is simply available to everyone who desires him.

This should be a great help to all of us, both for work on ourselves, and as to how to talk to new and unprepared people in contrast to the way we talk among our own friends who are already (at different stages) on the Ladder of Self-Realization.

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