

25 October 1976

## READING 4

### PART 1

The questions asked last week were most impressive, particularly those at the two new groups which showed how quick you are at grasping ideas which, though as old as human nature, are seldom presented to us today.

Don't let us be impatient; remember that 'a man is an infinitely more complex machine than any machine invented by him' (P.D.O.); and that 'we can only fill our flask from the great stream of knowledge, and take with us just enough for one day's journey'. (S.)

Questions were asked about the arrows in the diagram which indicate a two-way stream, and I'd like you to hear an illustration from the Shankaracharya's tradition, which also appeared centuries later, in the Persian poem the *Mathnawi*:

There were two painters who went to a King saying they wanted to please him with samples of their respective arts. They promised to present the same scene by two different methods. The King gave them a hall with a wall at each end and a partition down the middle so they couldn't communicate. One painter washed and plastered his wall and painted a mural with all the technical skill possible. The other used neither colours nor brushes but only kept on polishing his wall. After an agreed time they declared themselves ready, the partition was removed and the hall illuminated. The King was surprised to see on both walls the same design – one was a perfect reflection of the other.

'The Eightfold System of Yoga', continued the Shankaracharya on one occasion, 'is like the fresco painting, while our System of Meditation is like the polishing – both can produce the same result in the end. But the Yoga System is a hard and full-time job involving a total withdrawal from a householder's life, so only the brave can undertake it even under a worthy guide. Under conscious direction our Meditation has been greatly shortened and made compatible with the ordinary life of a citizen today. Yet it also requires systematic and measured efforts before all the individual's functions and activities are brought under control. If this is not happening then he is not meditating as well as he might be. We must learn always to be the Master in our own house.'

One can see that the greatest painters have by their own testimony used *both* these methods at different stages in their career – Rembrandt and Turner are examples that leap to the mind. But in the light of today's scientific discoveries, we could see also that the story of the 'two painters' illustrates the functions of the two sides of the brain in everybody, whether gifted or not; one side is designed to search for and express the truth in the outward material world; the other is turned towards the source of truth within. Both require training and educating, and both are needed for a full and productive life. We in our Society are among those who go for the *union of the two* – for there exist inner connections between the two sides if one can find and use them.

## PART 2. CAUSAL BODY

At a later conversation that same year (1971) we put to the Shankaracharya this written question from the head of the School of Meditation here:

Q. The tendency in the School of Meditation is to think of the Causal Body as remote. How to believe that it is immediately present, and capable of purification and modification?

S. Causal Body is not at all remote; it is immanent, present all the time in every individual, and is subject both to purification and pollution. Just as you have one kind of experience of the body, in the waking (daytime) state; a very different kind of experience in the dream state (where the body can go through doors or fly on a magic carpet); yet, though you seem to have no experience at all in the deep and dreamless sleep at night, you are, in fact, experiencing the Atman in pure state at that time. Though one can recall nothing of it yet one wakes refreshed, with a complete change of mood and sometimes with a true solution of some important problem, or the memory of where something one had lost is to be found.

This third state (lowest room in the diagram) is very much related to the Causal. It is like a deep darkness in which all things are present though they can't be seen; and yet there remains the fragrance of the Self. There being nothing of any other knowledge but that, the Causal body is called the 'body of non-knowing'.

Thus the Causal Body is experienced in two ways; in deep sleep it is full of Tamas and then its functions are dormant, covered with darkness and ignorance. But when the light of Consciousness falls on this region, then one experiences the full glory of the Self in the light of Sattva. This does not mean that one would know all that is contained in the Causal Body (the whole human potential is present there in seed form, never fully realized by any one person); one will actually *experience* only Light and Bliss; but this will charge the Causal Body in such a way that purification will take place and could be known through the efficient, attentive and creative work produced by the individual in any walk of life.

Influenced as it is by the three Gunas, it is like different types of houses built of different materials. You may have one built of bricks and concrete, and (if the shutters are closed), you can see nothing whether inside or outside, being in complete darkness. This is the state of Being of a person living in Tamas. But a house built of glass would always be bright throughout, whether closed or open, so you can see both inside and outside. This is the Sattvic Causal Body; within it is the Self which, like the sun is always shining however obscure the atmosphere.

(Record, 2 February 1971)

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