

22 May 1978

READING 4

Next week being Bank Holiday with no Monday meeting or material, today seems to be the best time for some 'stock-taking'! We started the term by giving some account of an ancient teaching which established certain relationships between the individual units (Vyashiti) and the whole universe (Samashti) made up of these 'atoms' – e.g. cells in a man, species in a biosphere etc. How far has this been a stimulus or a help to anyone's Self-realization? Great claims are made for this method because in the moment of full realization that as an individual 'I have nothing of my own', then immediately comes the sequel 'Then everything in the universe is mine'. Has anyone recorded this (which of course cannot be defined mentally but only experienced in Consciousness)?

(Pause for 'stock-taking')

As a test for ourselves we tried to bring this idea to bear on the oft-debated problems connected with human life and fate. There would of course be enough experienced people to remind us of the System teaching about the four orders of Laws – *Cause and Effect, Accident, Fate and Will*. Unfortunately the main things were not mentioned. Chief among these omissions is that (as given us in pre-meditation times) they belong to a world seen by us as 'out there', with no reference at all to the experience of the Divinity within us. 'Cause and Effect' yes, that for which the individual can be held personally responsible – the results of his own actions. There being innumerable such lines of causation criss-crossing all the time that they are only materially calculable on a statistical basis – the present attitude of the sciences. So those first two orders of Laws, 'Cause and Effect' and 'Accident', are definitely as seen by the Vyashiti looking out at the material world around and they are responsible for the absurd view that everything arose by chance.

But even primitive peoples have observed that this is not enough – that there is another set of laws to account for the bias, good or bad. Some people seem to have a bad 'fate', they get into the path of a hurricane, earthquake or war and mostly they don't seem to deserve it. So mankind is supposed to come under a third order of laws which are unpredictable and inescapable and so are called *Fate* or *Destiny*. But it was also observable that while the little people were under this sort of blind destiny, there were certain bigger people, kings, leaders and history-makers, who seemed to have a fate of their own which put them above the ordinary laws and rendered them immune. So it was only such people whom our System described as being under the Law of Fate, which might, it said, be auspicious or disastrous. And of the fourth kind of Law – the 'Law of Will' – very little was said except that it was remote from us because we have a thousand conflicting wills and no single will of our own.

But the tradition of the Meditation as demonstrated by the example and teaching of our Shankaracharya, approaches the subject from precisely this unexpected direction. We can, he says, with persistent effort and with Grace and help, bring ourselves under the Law of Will from the first and that is the only safe and sure way, the Way of Bhakti. Then the tradition to which we become qualified will bring us a new Fate strong enough (by the fifth step) to overrule any

adverse fate we as individuals may have contracted. That is what is so valuable about the teaching on Vyashti and Samashti when combined with meditation; and there was evidence from the meeting reports that some of you have already come to see it that way.

(There are a number of illustrative stories that distinguish between the rational and the superstitious involving sinister characters like Yama and Azrael, which we no longer require. A very potent passage comes in the *Mathnawi* 1: 103: 'Give up O black Death, what thou hast devoured... O brother collect thy wit for an instant (and think) from moment to moment (incessantly) there is autumn and spring within thee.')

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