

4 February 1980

READING 2

(For two weeks, please)

PART 1. THOSE DESIRES!

It seems to be the common experience that one doesn't think in terms of specific desires or of finding gaps between the accomplishment of one single desire and the start of the next one; but our situation is more like this description by Mrs. Howitt (B.R.H.) at the second of their recent audiences:

B.R.H. At times, when for a moment the habitual identification with the moving mind (Manas) weakens, I am aware of a continuous undercurrent of desires like a car engine left running. This seems to determine the limits of one's ordinary level of consciousness. Occasionally there is a brief space, completely different from the ordinary state (which seems by contrast to be very limiting and confined) and this brief space feels like an 'opening out'.

(Pause. Is this the way you'd describe the usual state of affairs?)

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This observation led to the description by H.H. given in the second part of Reading 1, and also to some further discussion quoted at last Monday's meeting, which people have asked to hear again:

S. It is the multiplication of vasana ('desires' or 'obsessions') which has to be reduced in order to gain energy. If there are numberless desires we get lost and there is much wastage of energy; so only a limited number of desires should be entertained and the superfluous ones discarded. Some of these come from passing impressions (like dreams of possessing a car like the very good one we may see passing by) but most come through inborn tendencies in the essence, which repeat again and again.

He was reminded of an old lady who happened to come to the Ashram. She was blind and she had four sons. The first thing she asked was:

'Sir, do something to get me back my sight,' and a moment later: 'The second of my four sons has no child, can you bless him so he has one?' Then: 'The wives of my sons don't obey me, kindly do something to make them obey;' and next she said: 'My eldest is not doing well in business, please shower your blessings on him so he will improve.'

H.H. heard her patiently, and, when allowed to speak, said: 'Look here, you are nearing death, why don't you beg the Lord to have pity on you and help you achieve the purpose of this life with happier lives hereafter?'

Similarly, (he added) we have so many conflicting desires that even the Lord (Param-Atman) will find it very difficult to fulfill all of them, and many of those are not exactly essential!

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PART 2. ENERGY STORAGE

We'd like you to hear that part of the original description given to Mr. Ouspensky at the St. Petersburg group in pre-revolutionary Russia which still remains completely true:

We want to do many things, but in everything we do we are tied and limited by the amount of energy of different kinds supplied by our organism. Every function, every state, every action, thought or emotion, requires a certain definite kind of energy. We can (for instance) come to the conclusion that we must 'remember ourselves'. But we can 'remember ourselves' only if we have available in us the energy for 'Self-remembering'. Similarly we can study, understand, or feel something only if we have the energy required for those faculties.

What then is one to do if one begins to realise that one is short of the energy required to attain the aims one has set oneself? The answer to this is that every normal person has enough energy to *begin* work on himself. It is only necessary to learn to save most of the 24 hour supply of energy we possess instead of wasting it unproductively.

So this is one valid reason for putting a curb on our less important obsessions – to stop a main leak of energy. But there are other reasons even more important.

(Pause for discussion)

PART 3

In early 1916 the St. Petersburg group were told at length about 'one feature of the organization of the human machine'. The gist of this was that the bilateral symmetry of body, nervous system and brain provides for a paired system of small accumulators (or batteries) supplied from and feeding back into a big accumulator (power house or main supply).

On the 29th December last at their third audience (which reached us only *after* we had introduced the subject at the January Meditation Meeting) the Shankaracharya described this same thing in these very simple words:

S. The Antahkarana ('Inner Organ') can be equated with a power house of electricity. The power house feeds the energy by which we can operate a fan, a lighting system, radio, television etc. – but the source of energy remains the same (the Param-Atman) though we can use it for all sorts of purposes with the help of different instruments.

You will be hearing that our Western System describes precisely different kinds of energy needed by a living creature – mechanical and chemical energy (oil, petrol, electrical current), biological, psychological, energy of consciousness etc. – all stored in the big accumulator – which is *not* inter-convertible. That is, no amount of coarse energy can make a thought or a moment of consciousness. The mechanical sciences forget that they can't make a single living cell, much less provide the psychological and conscious energy required for human life, by mechanical means. That must be done *from above*. The Power House is fuelled by the Param-Atman, that Self who lives in the hearts of all; for only man's mind-body machine lives by food, air and sensory impressions.

Though in 1916 and during Mr. Ouspensky's life-time that was unknown to us, yet we can quote (from the original description) this passage which remains as true as ever:

Our aim is to learn to connect the necessary centre with the large accumulator... small accumulators suffice for the ordinary, everyday work of life. But for work on oneself, for

inner growth, and for the efforts required of a man who enters the Way, the energy from these is not enough. We must learn how to draw energy from the large accumulator.

This, however, is possible only with the help of the emotional centre, the other centres can feed only on the small accumulators. This is precisely what people don't understand. Therefore the aim must be the development of the power and purity of the emotional centre (which is wasted by all our negative emotions based on identification and depressing thoughts).

This teaching (with the violent and artificial methods so often employed in carrying it out) led to small success and many tragedies. Guru Deva and those around him recognised that, whereas in times past until then 'the Kingdom of Heaven suffered violence and the violent took it by storm,' some gentler method had to be found for the Western way of life. Their system of meditation enabled higher energy to be taken straight from the main supply in small daily quantities, starting at the 7th step of classical Yoga; providing that the main waste of energy could be stopped. It is worth remembering how lucky we are, before complaining about the difficulty of finding two half-hours a day!

We are assured that it is not big efforts but understanding of what is needed, unfaltering persistence and the right approach, that bring success – H.H. has said:

What we have to do is to have recourse to that immense source of energy, the Param-Atman, with the deepest concentration and humility. Intellectual knowledge can only sign-post the way; to control desires and impure emotions undemanding love of Param-Atman is required. First to know, and then inevitably to love that glorious source of energy, leads to Bhakti, the Yoga of emotion. If we begin to love Param-Atman it would be Param-Atman himself who comes to help us.

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