

19 January 1981

READING 1

Extract from Meditation Meeting (13 January)

After some announcements and general questions, the meeting continued:

Dr. R. Some of us believe now that the meditation, when it was given to the West some twenty years ago, was meant to restart a science of psychology for the free world which would include *all* compartments of the human mind and not just be a psychology representing a small part seen by the outward looking mind, which is what it is today. It has taken all these twenty years, but just lately there are signs that there is a bigger demand for this among the general public and that the biologists also recognise the need for such a system of psychology which will include all sides of man's nature. You see, technology has confused the issue so much that it is being forgotten that *psychology depends entirely on conscious experience*; if it's not an experience felt by oneself, then it is not psychology. For instance, 'if someone hasn't seen the redness of a poppy or heard the sound of a tolling bell, they could never have it explained to them that anywhere in this universe such strange things existed. No "scientific" description alone could ever do it'. That's how the mathematician Dunn stated it in the 1930s and I've never known it effectively contradicted. So psychology must be a study of conscious experience, and this is being replaced by the study of tracings and records by technological means, an *instrumental substitute* for human psychology.

Several of us have been trying to frame such a basic 'Psychology of Conscious experience' in simple form that will include current scientific knowledge, for example of the twin halves of the brain. For one is gradually coming to realise that the whole of the development of unity on the part of a human being depends on the bringing together of these two sides of our nature. After all, the word 'Yoga' means *union* and it is union between 'the inner and the outer' and between all the other conflicting dualities, which is the basis of this ancient system based on mantra meditation – the non-dual Advaita system – of which our meditation is a modernised form.

What are the boundaries within which human psychology functions? Here is a version of a familiar story which we have heard in only a truncated form up to now about 'The Lame and the Blind man'; but now you will hear a much more complete Middle-Eastern version of this story. There were a number in the Middle East and this is the version which Richard Burton included in his *Thousand and One Nights*, which centre on Haroun-al-Raschid, Caliph of Baghdad about 800 AD. This is an *Arabian Nights* story and we are going to read it in its original form. I'll ask you to forgive the rather flowery language that Burton uses but just hear the story and take it psychologically, take it as applying to me, myself, and asking who are these people it talks about?

Lady A. (reading) from Volume 9 of the privately-printed Limited Edition (1885), the story of *The Blind man and the Cripple* which was told in answer to the question: 'Are the spirit (Ruh = breath) and the body alike in reward and retribution?' To which the answer was given that 'in this respect they are like *The Blind man and the Cripple with the Overseer of the Garden.*'

A Blind man and a Cripple were travelling companions and used to beg alms in company. One day they sought admission into the garden of someone of the benevolent; and a kind-hearted wight, hearing their talk, took compassion on them and carried them into his garden, where he left them after plucking for them some of its produce; and went away, bidding them do no waste nor damage therein. When the fruits became ripe, the Cripple said to the Blind man, 'Hark ye, I see ripe fruits and long for them; but I cannot rise to eat thereof; so go thou arise, for thou art sound of either leg, and fetch us somewhat that we may eat.' Replied the Blind, 'Fie upon thee! I had no thought of them, but now that thou callest them to my mind, I long to eat of them and I am impotent upon this, being unable to see them; so how shall we do to get at them?' At this moment, behold, up came the Overseer of the garden, who was a man of understanding, and the Cripple said to him, 'Hark ye, O Overseer! I long for somewhat of these fruits; but we are as thou seest; I am a cripple and my mate is stone-blind; so what shall we do?' Replied the Overseer, 'Woe to you! Have ye forgotten that the master of the garden stipulated with you that ye should do nothing whereby waste or damage befall it; so take warning and abstain from this.' But they answered, 'Needs must we get our portion of these fruits that we may eat thereof; so tell us some device whereby we shall contrive this.' When the Overseer saw that they were not to be turned from their purpose, he said, 'This, then, is my device, O Cripple, let the Blind bear thee on his back and take thee under the tree whose fruit pleaseth thee, so thou mayst pluck what thou canst reach thereof.' Accordingly the Blind man took on his back the Cripple who guided him, till he brought him under a tree, and he fell to plucking from it what he would and tearing at its boughs till he had despoiled it; after which they went roundabout and throughout the garden and wasted it with their hands and feet, nor did they cease from this fashion, till they had stripped all the trees of the garden. Then they returned to their place and presently up came the master of the garden, who, seeing it in this plight, was wroth with some wrath and coming up to them said, 'Woe to you! What fashion is this? Did I not stipulate with you that ye should do no damage in the garden?' Quoth they, 'Thou knowest that we are powerless to come at any of the fruit, for that one of us is a cripple and cannot rise and the other is blind and cannot see that which is before him; so what is our offence?' But the master answered, 'Think ye I know not how ye wrought and how ye have gone about to do waste in my garden? I know, as if I had been with thee, O Blind, that thou tookest the Cripple pick-a-back and he showed thee the way till thou bearest him to the trees.' Then he punished them with grievous punishment and thrust them out of the garden.

Explanation: 'Now the Blind is the similitude of the (physical) body which seeth not save by the spirit (owner or Atman) and the Cripple that of the soul (Causal body) which hath no power of motion but by the body; the garden is the works (world of action) for which the creature is rewarded or punished, and the Overseer is the Reason which biddeth to good and forbiddeth from evil. Thus the body and soul are partners in reward and retribution.'

Then some 10 questions are posed, directed towards establishing the supreme importance of the Owner (Allah, the 'Lord') to this relationship. Instead of being just another expulsion-from-Eden story on the evolutionary scale, take it as a guide to Self-realization. Both the Cripple and the Blind man must obey the Overseer who must be present to preserve the interests of the Owner (Param-Atman) all the time.

Please take a week or two to ponder over it in relation to one's own psychology.

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