

11 May 1981

PREVIEW READING 2**(FOR GROUP TAKERS)**

We are still awaiting further instructions from the lecturer at our AGM as to the use he wishes us to make of the proofs he gave us of the need of a new model or 'paradigm' which Western scientific knowledge has to substitute for the worn-out one on which all our century-old thinking and education is still based. Meanwhile there is still much to be done to prepare ourselves for the change.

To begin with, let us concentrate on the nature of man himself before we speculate about the Universe. The Meditation has shown us at first-hand (by opening for us the door of the silent inward-looking half of the mind) that a human being cannot be regarded as a physical body only; he has within him a mind of several departments, a source of emotional energy (the 'sympathetic') and the possibility moreover of higher states of Consciousness and of Will. He exists on four levels ('bodies') not just one.

Both Systems, the one adapted for the West which we learned from P.D.O. and also the much more complete and durable non-dualistic system of the Shankaracharya's, have very similar models which greatly extend that limited conception. From the East we get the simile of the chariot, the horses, the charioteer and the owner; and from the West the cart, the horse, the driver and the master. (It is not difficult to update this simile by substituting 'car-body and engine' for 'horse and cart'!)

'Man' said P.D.O.'s instructor in pre-revolutionary Russia, 'is a complex organisation consisting of four parts. The cart is connected with the horse by shafts, the horse is connected with the driver by reins and the driver is connected with the master (permanent 'I') by the master's voice, which the driver must learn to hear and understand... so that the organisation can act as a single whole. The connections are therefore no less important than the parts... Work on oneself must begin with the driver which is the (discriminating) mind. In order to hear the voice, the driver first of all must wake up and then he must learn the language.'

It looks like being a pretty long time before a Western scientist can get to know all this, apply it to himself and express it in simple language for the ordinary person. Better not wait for that happy day! Moreover both systems assert that the way of development does not begin on the level of ordinary life. Between the two lies a smaller ladder or 'stairway'. This is how P.D.O.'s instructor described it:

The moment when a man who is looking for the way meets a man who knows the 'way' is called the *first threshold or the first step*. From this first step the stairway begins; only by passing up this stairway can a man enter the 'way'. In addition the man ascends this stairway with the help of his guide; he cannot go up it by himself.

In fact all the scientific facts about the structure of man which would be necessary for that are now known, but no one can make use of it, because no scientist knows how to apply it to himself or express it in simple language. Therefore, instead of waiting, we should put into practice more intensively what we have learned over twenty years from our guide, the Shankaracharya.

He has described in detail this small ladder or stairway, and maintains that it consists in giving up all the illusions of our personal psychology. On the way up this stairway we begin to get guidance from our own Self, the Atman, which alone has the power required to harness the emotional energy and control the whole organisation under a single Will. He has also prescribed the method which can be used by the ordinary citizen without changing our outward life – namely ‘to substitute for the “feeling of I” the attitude that the body, the mind and the emotions all belong to the supreme intelligence that governs the Universe (Param-Atman) and so offering them all to Him’.

Compare that with these passages from the Maitri Upanishad (one of the earliest of writings):

This Self which thou seekest is verily thine own. What Self is that Lord?

Thou must go aloft out of the darkness of thy present state into that which breathes without breathing, that which though motionless reaches all worlds. There only wilt thou find the Self.

Once this question was asked of the teacher of the Gods:

‘To what Being, higher than the senses, belongs the power whereby this body has become united with mind? Who is its driver?’

He answered. ‘It is from above and not from below that this body is endowed with intelligence. There is that Self, above the senses, above the mind, pure, tranquil, firm and everlasting. He abides in His own greatness. By Him this body is endowed with mind. Thus it is that the driver stands upon the cart... Pure and stainless He abides in Himself; hidden by the veil of the Gunas, He remains firm. Yea, He remains firm.’

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