

25 October 1971

READING 3

It is thought that these extracts from our meeting last Monday might perhaps be of some help for next Thursday:

R.A. We have to move on to experience. This is the idea to elaborate at meetings now. To experience the thing *ourselves* is what Dr. Roles is trying to get us to do. Unless we have experience there is nothing for us to talk about at meetings! They become arid unless someone in the room is speaking from experience. I once asked the Shankaracharya a question about this. I said:

A simple phrase – perhaps a line of poetry – may sometimes bring home to one a flash of understanding. How can one communicate this flash of understanding?

He replied that knowledge is the material of Consciousness, and is available to all of us, all the time and at every place. It can only be had by human beings through the machinery which is theirs, and they can only get this Knowledge through that machinery. But because it is universal, it is a burden to ourselves to claim it as ours. If we say, 'It is my knowledge', then we destroy a large part of its power. He added: 'Whatever you do – whether you claim the Knowledge as your own or not, you must *experience* in order to get it!'

H.H. went on to say:

The question of communication presupposes experience... No one can ever show Truth... for it is always experienced through some *thing*, and things are always physical. At most one can define Truth as that which remains the same in all three times, i.e., remains the same in past, present and future. In physical world there is nothing which could remain the same in past, present and future; only Truth remains the same; and Truth is that Self which experiences all things and can communicate through the common medium of language. Those who have experience, they alone can communicate.

Then comes a very big idea for which everyone may not yet be ready:

For example, take grains of salt in a salt-bed which have been extracted from sea water. If they wish to fathom and measure the depth of the sea or ocean, they might get back into it again. The only thing that could happen to them is that very soon they will be dissolved into the sea... for they themselves have turned into sea and they *are* sea. How could they know it by being themselves? This happens as long as one is divorced from experience. The Absolute is like an ocean and individuals are like grains of salt... When reason is awakened and its gate open, then all divisions vanish and there is only one ocean. Those in search of knowledge have experience; become One with the Absolute...

He ends: 'Realize and then communicate'

(Record, 9 February 1971)

We must have this experience which comes in different degrees.

In the past some of us may have been put off by the somewhat extravagant terms in which 'peak experiences' have at times been described. We think that we never have them, that they are beyond our range! That is not true. However we may rate our own experience, we have all had them in varying degrees. For everyone in this room there has been a moment when they really have known some piece of Truth which was too profound for ordinary words, although perhaps the artist or poet may have had a shot at expressing it.

Q. Doesn't it do good to remember that it is our birthright to experience these things and that we have all the machinery available for this experience?

R.A. Yes, but in an organisation like ours, how can we help each other to have these experiences and to have more of them?

Q. Possibly by not dwelling too much on the surface.

Q. Communication is necessary with the person receiving the experience. Would it be right that through his communication – his understanding of the experience – a more enlightened person can help one to understand one's own experience, but that if you have not had it you cannot convey anything?

Perhaps what is communicated is the understanding, and understanding is necessary at both ends?

R.A. That is right. At our meetings we can spark off something within somebody else, but we cannot give *our experience* to somebody else. What we can do is to try and help him or her to experience something for him or herself by speaking from absolute Truth ourselves.

The Shankaracharya often uses the analogy of a map to illustrate this point:

If you are going on a journey, you go round asking for help. Somebody will give you a special route, somebody will give you money, somebody some food, somebody warns you of the dangers, others give different types of advice, but it is *you* who has to make the journey.

Here is another thing he once said:

If you to go through Lucknow you buy the best map you can. It takes you through the city and puts you on the road onwards, but it cannot complete the journey for you. It is only you who reach the destination, not the map!

(Record, 16 August 1964)

What we do together, then, is to map out that journey which each of us has to make.

Q. About ten years ago – before I came to this Work – I used to be very interested in astronomy and it posed questions for me and set up a wall. I would look at distant galaxies and somehow this seemed to be frustrating for me, and I was left with the question, 'What is beyond? – What contains this?' On one or two occasions it came very strongly to me that it was contained in that which is immeasurable. I could not formulate this. When I came to the Work the answers seemed to come. There was affirmation that this 'beyond' was what I was looking for...

R.A. We have all had that experience. Many of us when we first came to this Work felt the attraction of stretching the mind. It was for me one of the most valuable parts of the

Teaching then given. Trying to hold the concept of the Param-Atman is, in many respects, the same thing – or at least on the same lines.

Q. One way of stretching – expanding – is thinking of time... feeling the past, present and the future.

R.A. Yes, but strive to go beyond thought to *experience*. Stretching the mind is a prelude to crossing over the threshold of the subtle world. Knowledge and understanding come from the different levels which require movement from the subtle level to the causal level.

In the area of silence where ‘there is time no longer’, one approaches the Causal level; but one must *not think* about it for that bars the way.

Q. It is always like a leap into the dark which is quite different.

R.A. Or it can be steady progress, which is better.

To quote again from His Holiness:

There are two ways to supplement expansion: one is to think, discuss and hear from men of higher Consciousness, or reading books related to spiritual subjects.

In this way you can go at a steady pace. We study these maps in the shape of the great Scriptures of all the Religions of the world. They are for guidance so that we can make preparations and avoid the ‘leap in the dark’.

The other is practising it in one’s own life as much as one can remember. By practice and study the expansion and awakening would come quicker and stay longer.

Persistent practice is the key. One must go on practising. He quotes an example of one who wants to learn to ride a bicycle. When he has to start, he selects a lonely corner and attempts to ride. He falls and tries again. When he can just ride and move, he takes to lanes, and by and by tries his skill in the traffic, and thus he moves around freely without any nervousness, hesitation or fear.

The same applies to the field of Spiritual Knowledge. By persistent practice and study the awakening becomes nature. Once it becomes nature then one wouldn’t forget.

(Record, 11 August 1964)

The purpose of our meetings should be for each of us to provide a helping hand to the other in preparation for the journey. We need inspiration as well in order to undertake the journey at all. That is why we have material – why we listen to the words of Realized men, read the great Scriptures or – most important as far as we are concerned – hear the *instructions of our Teacher*.

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