

12 June 1972

NOTES ON THE BOOK *A LASTING FREEDOM*

Many have asked, over the years, how to speak to friends who would be likely to appreciate the Meditation or are looking for some source of True Knowledge. Along with this question usually comes the one about 'what book shall we recommend them to read?' But any book you can buy, though it gives some aspect of the truth, contains much that is useless or has lost its meaning today. So that, last year, when one of us was asked to give two lectures in New York designed to encourage invited, but quite unprepared, people to come and try the Meditation, he determined beforehand to make them the basis of a book – a book that *had* to be written.

The first purpose of such a book would be to describe some means by which 'Self-realizing people' could use their 'moments of Truth' to take them along the Way. A Zen story puts in a nutshell what I mean:

Dai-Ju visited a Master, who asked him, 'What do you seek?' 'Enlightenment,' replied Dai-Ju. 'You have your own treasure-house; why do you seek outside?' asked the Master.

To the further question, 'Where is my treasure-house?' the answer came, 'What you are asking *is* your treasure-house.' Dai-Ju was enlightened! For ever after, he urged his friends, 'Open your own treasure-house and use those treasures.'

That was indeed the message of the lectures, which the New York Society has decided to print just as they were recorded on cassette with the minimum of editing.

But from the point of view of our Society here, the book had to contain other things as well, and these have been put in the form of Notes which add another third to its length. It had to correct certain misconceptions that are abroad in the world today – about Mr. Ouspensky and his teaching; about the origin of the System of Meditation; and to refute the current denial of the presence of the Divine Self in *everyone*.

What is true from the past has to be revived and the rest buried for ever. Once those ghosts have been finally laid, the future will be seen to lie in relating the eternal wisdom of the Shankaracharya's Tradition, from which so many others sprang, to our fragmentary System and to established scientific knowledge. A new message for this day and hour has to be delivered if only because we, as a Society, have a big debt to repay those to whom we owe our existence and our life.

Before recommending this book to anyone else, I would like our members and associates to study it carefully in private and to ask themselves: 'Is it the right book? Will it help to answer our own and other people's perennial questions? Which of our friends should read it?' Not much is coming out of our weekly meetings at present; we often say nice things but don't have a really agreed basis on which to build a house for the future.

A paramount consideration about the distribution of this book is mentioned in its Preface. English copyright law demands that it should be for *private study only*; this is for the protection of this Society, the publishers, because of the authors quoted in it. It is reinforced by the Shankaracharya's permission to use his teaching only for genuine seekers after the truth; for he

warns us against letting such knowledge get into wrong hands, thus becoming merely the subject of controversy or even a cause of offence to people who have been taught to think differently.

At the next two or three Monday meetings I shall welcome recommendations on some of these questions. Would you read this paper at meetings but don't discuss it yet; use the recent material, particularly Reading 11.

\* \* \*