

7 June 1976

READING 4

This can only be a short paper – perhaps bringing some new light to bear on the happy task we all face right here and now, and on its better accomplishment. We ourselves underwent a very definite ‘awakening’ during our three weeks in New York; and, while there may be doubts as to how much we helped them, there’s no doubt at all about what that splendid group did for us!

The ‘awakening’ came from trying to learn from what they needed, instead of having set ideas about ‘delivering *our* message and teaching them what they ought to know’. Even in the five years since our last visit so much has changed in the life of the citizen throughout the big cities of the world, and in the direction of current thought, that a fresh start is needed wherever the influence of our Society extends. New York, for example is a parched and barren wilderness where spiritual influences are hard to come by, and the ‘media’ just wallow in the muddy problems of finance and politics and scandals of all kinds; of which most people are heartily sick.

We found that (whether at the lectures or within the group) they – like us – are thirsty for just one thing. They ask for a fuller experience of the kind of energy that H.H. calls Sattva, and Mr. Ouspensky called ‘a third force’. They just couldn’t bear anything that tasted negative like certain aspects of our old teaching such as ‘realising our own helplessness’, etc., things that H.H. stamps on whenever he hears them!

This ‘Sattva’ had to be conveyed by example rather than by clever talk; and by means of the meditation, the turning, H.H.’s words, and the simple teaching ‘in a nutshell’. If one has enough of it, all kinds of unexpected benefits appear, which seem like lucky accidents, and what looked impossible comes about quite naturally. So by our last meeting with the group (the evening before we flew home) we were all united, and the separate individual problems had melted away. We hope to try to recapture that at next Monday’s full meeting.

In demonstrating the three gunas we followed H.H.’s example of starting with our own feeling of ‘I’, of which he said:

There are two main aspects. One is the final state achieved through meditation (Samadhi and Turiya or ‘Enlightenment’) where the feeling of ‘I’ is not confined to one separate individual nor his mind nor his body nor any separate thing; but has the feeling of the Universal ‘I’ with no qualifications of any kind.

The other feeling of ‘I’ changes with the interplay of the gunas; if one has Sattva in abundance he will always have a Sattvic feeling of ‘I’ which is very close to the Divine Self (Atman). Then everything is seen in its right proportion and we are ready to deal with any kind of situation. If it is too full of Rajas we are domineering and try to convert other people to our own ideas of right and wrong; if full of Tamas we are weary and dejected and sell ourselves short. In both these cases we are narrow, unreceptive and impervious to the needs of other people.

(Record, 21 January 1970)

Can we begin by practising this ideal attitude each of us for oneself?

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The 'waking up' we referred to feels like the breaking-down of a wall one has built up inside. And there's another 'wall' that needs to come down. The form of our meetings and our activities in general was started just 50 years ago when Mr. Ouspensky first came to London. A new generation of people must find the new shape, and let's hope, without re-building the wall! Here is a verse by the great New England poet Robert Frost which expresses the feeling:

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
 Something there is
 That doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.

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