

18 September 1977

## READING 1

We were very pleased when we got back from holiday to read the taped report of the Meditation meeting on the 13th September, copies of which are now in circulation. Lord Allan and Mr. Caiger-Smith developed their own line with your help but without any prompting from us. This line fits in with my plans so well that I'd like to start at the beginning of it where Allan is saying that he'd been asked the following question:

What is the real meaning of Self-realization, because this is what all this (work) is about, isn't it?

He continued:

The value of a really basic question like that is that it makes one think about phrases or concepts that we bandy about and sooner or later take for granted...

Thinking it over, it seemed to me that *Realization in its simplest form is the product of Knowledge and experience...* For example: children can be told that it is dangerous to cross the road except at a zebra crossing; but until they have some experience of traffic, they do not *realize* the danger. Adults too, as the result of experience use such phrases as: 'Till then I never *realized* how complicated it was.' And about people they may say things like: 'I realize now what he must have gone through.' So it is only when experience unites with Knowledge that we get Realization.

Continuing on this theme with several examples he came to the final stage of Realization which he described as follows:

We can begin to understand how the Indian saint could see God even in the cobra snake. This, in turn, points to the final stage where experience and Knowledge meet, and that is the stage of union with our Creator when, beyond time or movement, all is One – single without a second – no diversity. And even a taste of that should help us at least partly to realize our true Self as being One with God. And if this were fully experienced emotionally... that would be full Self-realization.

There followed a constructive discussion prompted by Alan Caiger-Smith who wanted to go deeper into the subject in the light of individual experience. In the course of this Mr. Lucas said:

I thought it was a wonderful description of what the Meditation can do, because I, for one, would not have been able to understand that without the experience of Meditation.

Then came a most important question which needs a rather different answer from the one it got off the cuff at the meeting:

What is the connection between Self-realization and that other expression, 'Self-remembering'?

As Allan rightly said, we originally owed the expression 'Self-remembering' to Mr. Ouspensky for whom all the high spots of our experience were moments of Self-remembering, and all the work of any real 'School of the Fourth Way' centred on getting more of those moments, so that by the end they would become so continuous that we would die Self-remembering.

But we should also recall that what convinced me that it was indeed the Shankaracharya and his Tradition that Mr. Ouspensky had sent us out to search for was, first, that here was a man that

I could see was remembering himself *all the time*. And secondly, that at one of the first talks I heard him give by the banks of the Ganges in 1961 (with the Maharishi translating) he began by saying:

All our difficulties arise because we do not remember ourselves; but this is hard to understand so we do not begin with this idea...

He was the only teacher other than Mr. Ouspensky who used this expression.

How hard it is to explain this only becomes apparent when one realises that it involves the idea of continued existence before and after physical death – the same idea that Mr. Ouspensky called ‘Eternal Recurrence’. Before we go into the new evidence that has appeared recently in support of this idea of continued existence, I would like you to read the second number of our magazine *The Bridge* which is promised us round about October 7th.

For now however, let’s remember that both for Mr. Ouspensky and for the Shankaracharya Self-remembering must be practised constantly and not just ‘thought about’. One of the aphorisms belonging to our Western System was:

Help us to remember ourSelves, so that we may avoid all involuntary actions through which alone evil can manifest itself.

Strangely enough this is implicit also all through the Gospels as when Christ says ‘My meat is to *do the Will* of Him that sent me, and to finish His work’, but also warned, ‘Not everyone that saith unto me “Lord, Lord,” shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the Will* of my Father which is in heaven’.

So the expression of our Self-realization lies in control of the machine which is always moving. In Meditation we are, in effect, saying ‘Lord, Lord’ – we are pronouncing one of the names of God. Unless through Meditation, or by any other means, we are receiving the help of the Divine Self for our guidance through life and expressing it in our behaviour, we should ask for further help and advice.

In order to carry out this practice from day-to-day over a long time one needs special energy which we call ‘Sattva’ the ‘energy of awakening’. There are two chief ways of making this available; one is to cultivate ‘good company’ and the other to read some inspired writing every day. Here is one extract from a talk given by the Shankaracharya in 1972 to the crowds at the annual religious festival (Mela) which never fails to do this for *me*:

In the ageless continuum of time, it seems so futile to take separately all the events which go on making and unmaking themselves in an unending chain. A little while ago, we were preparing to set up this Mela; now we are preparing to wind it up. Thus anything that begins has to end, and anybody who comes into the world has to go.

Many people say that there is no rebirth. Actually each birth writes down the destiny of death, and each death writes down the destiny of birth. The *Gita* says that there is neither any ‘birth’ nor any ‘death’, but they are part of a cycle of apparent changes that is going on all the time. One who sees a changelessness in all the changes that are going on, sees correctly.

It is a body that is born and dies. The Atman itself which inhabits the body is birthless and deathless. It is enough to understand only this much of the subject, because in trying to understand everything we often end by understanding nothing at all.

(Record, 23 January 1972)

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