

21 February 1977

### READING 3

Next Monday, at a meeting (to which all who come to our weekly groups are invited) the system which follows from the ray of creation will be demonstrated. Meanwhile please concentrate this week on applying the discipline which the Shankaracharya provides for those who want the quick and simple way to Self-fulfilment.

The first objective is to convert any 'good impulses' one gets into *consistent thoughts, words and deeds*. This demands attention at any given moment. No artificial codes of behaviour are demanded; just the practice of bringing our words and actions into line with what one knows to be true. In our system there is a little prayer:

Help me to remember mySelf so that I may avoid all involuntary actions through which alone evil can manifest itself.

The Shankaracharya uses the following simile:

We want pleasure but we get pain instead. This comes about because each pleasure contains the seeds of pain. But the seeds of a thorny plant do not show any thorns; the thorns may appear only much later when the seed has germinated, has grown into a bush, which again has given rise to other bushes, so that people can't move around without getting hurt.

Sometimes, though, the seeds germinate very quickly! Among the many good observations received last week (not only from you in London but from our groups all over the world) came this one from Mexico:

Some friends from Mexico City went across the US frontier to Dallas in Texas to do some business. In the hotel lobby on the way home they met other friends also returning to Mexico, so they all travelled together; and in the party was an Englishman. At the airport when they came to have their hand-luggage examined by the X-ray machine, the Englishman remarked, *as a joke*, to the Security men: 'Have they found the gun yet?' Immediately they were surrounded; their luggage was taken off the plane; they were all interrogated individually and had to prove why and how they were there. They missed the plane of course. The alarming thing was that the Englishman couldn't even remember what he had said to cause all this!

Is it to do with 'dispersion of the attention' that we say and do things quite unnecessarily and cause no end of trouble to ourselves and others?

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This principle becomes of very great importance on the journey to Self-fulfilment. I recall vividly an early transgression of my own about forty years ago. In the car one evening on the way home after a weekend at Lyne, I made some jocular remark at Mr. Ouspensky's expense. This was reported to him by someone in the car. A week later I had been sitting up all night with Mr. Ouspensky and was falling asleep at 7 a.m. when he recalled the incident saying: 'every idle word shall be remembered in the day of judgement.' I fell asleep with the words 'every idle word' ringing in my ears!

That's why there has always been a rule in our Tradition not to say anything in someone else's absence that you wouldn't say to their face. And this (with other rules which we should make it our business to know, for 'ignorance is no excuse' in law) has a very positive side to it. People often notice a pleasant atmosphere pervading Colet House; a hint of a new relationship with other people (though often of a very different nature and background). We warm to each other and gradually come to trust each other and those in authority. The practice of these rules prepares the way to those 'Conscious impulses' which we are now discussing; and for the 'Harmonious Development of Man' which, though it was the earliest official title for our branch of the Work, has never yet been successfully achieved even in a small family like ours with all the help we have been getting.

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