

24 September 1979

AUTUMN 1979

READING 1

Today we welcome the party back from a most successful visit to the Shankaracharya who gave them eight beautiful audiences, after already having given six to Maurice Pickering who made his own arrangements. In the end we had to send eight people to India for H.H. asked translator Jaiswal and his wife to come as well; we had decided beforehand not to interfere, but to let members of the party ask their own questions. When the taped verbatim reports have been sorted out and retyped, you will see what riches are there and how well our friends succeeded in this mission on our behalf.

Meanwhile there's much we can do to prepare for those riches. If they had done nothing else, our party deserves our gratitude for bringing back the solution of a problem vital to us all; and my wife and I have got great benefit by putting that into practice even just in the fortnight we have had this material. Their discussion of this subject went on over several audiences and is difficult to understand unless we refresh our memories of what we have previously heard on this same subject, which concerns something practical that busy people can learn to do in order to 'remember themselves' during the day.

The earliest reference to the method about to be described came from the Maharishi when seventy Westerners were staying at the Ashram near his Meditation site on the Ganges in 1961. He talked then about how there are many small changes of consciousness going on every day, as well as a few big ones like deep sleep, dreaming and waking. At those times of *change of consciousness* there could be a 'gap in the curtain in which momentarily one could experience glimpses of Turiya (enlightenment)'.

[We have since realised how important this becomes at the time of the biggest change of consciousness that ordinary people ever get, namely at physical death and rebirth.]

The next year, during my first private sessions with the Shankaracharya, I recalled what the Maharishi had said and asked whether it was not rather advanced for us? He replied: 'What Maharishi Mahesh said is right, but, it is not seen in the earlier stages' (Record, 12 October 1962); and after that he refused to be drawn on the subject for several years. I believe that his first reference to us about using this as a practical method came in answer to Mr. Whiting in 1973, when in discussing the 'three levels of rest or stillness', he said:

The rest at the subtle level appears between the end of fulfilment of one desire and initiation of the next desire. This is the 'state of non-desire', which provides rest at the subtle (mental) level. One stops all hankerings, and the thinking process comes to stillness... This cessation of conflicting desires brings another dimension to the idea of rest. In this dimension of rest efficiency arises, and this works through all activities – ordinary work or artistic work.

(Record, 9 November 1973)

We were told later that it is *not a question of stopping the physical activity* (which is reckoned to go on continuously all day in modern life), but of *stopping the mental accompaniment* – the

‘background noise’ – for moments in the course of it. So for the first week or two we would recommend that you and your groups try to do this in the course of a meeting and should also discuss ways in which busy people can apply it more effectively in everyday life.

[Those who have done the ‘Movements to Music’ will have been taught to practise an exercise intrinsic to the System that was given to Mr. Ouspensky – namely the ‘stop exercise’. To this there were two equally important aspects – the outer and the inner. The outer one can only be given by the man in charge of the Work; but we have been encouraged to perform the *‘inner stop’* for ourselves whenever we remember it. Whenever we catch our minds ‘going on’ about some trivial and, particularly, some negative thing like a grievance, or a criticism (whether of ourselves or someone else) we say to ourselves sharply ‘stop that!’ Those who have practised this will find no difficulty in understanding the new way of applying it. Incidentally people have found that this ‘stop’ can be a great help to meditation especially at times when it seems to be especially difficult.]

The new material contains another way of tackling this ‘struggle with mental habits’. Much depends on what each person understands by the word ‘desires’ in the above quotation – it means more *‘identification* with some pleasant or unpleasant train of thought’, rather than what our *word* ‘desires’ usually seems to mean.

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(**Note to Grouptakers:** The parts in square brackets should be used with discretion. That is to say, each grouptaker should decide whether to use them and when, for you must be able to give some first-hand answers to questions about them, without discussing the personalities whom you have never met!)

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