

8 June 1982

A DISCUSSION PAPER

Now that we have been told by Dr. Roles that we must learn to think for ourselves and have heard, over the past few weeks, the Shankaracharya's exposition of the ten principles of Sanatan Dharma, it would be useful if we turned our attention to the question of influences.

They rain down on us continually and, we have been told, they are different in kind, coming from different levels: those coming from a conscious origin; those which although originally conscious, have, through entering life, become mixed; and those coming from life itself. It would be interesting to view these influences from a slightly different point of view, and consider them as coming from the Casual, the subtle and the physical worlds.

As has been said, 'All work on oneself consists of choosing the influence to which you wish to subject yourself, and of actually falling under this influence'. And it is most stimulating to review one's life and try to see the influences which have shaped it. We have been told about the illusion of 'doing', and that in reality things *happen*. Yes, we can *change our attitudes* and through discrimination choose to recognise conscious influences and come under them. This could also be seen as a description of School work and the necessity for School. Mr. Ouspensky used to say that *the real purpose of a School of the Fourth Way is to develop the influence of Conscience in the individual*. And remembering the Self can be seen as the effort to respond to influences higher than those generated by ordinary life.

This quotation from the Vedanta was read at a Meditation Meeting on June 12th 1979 (translated from the Vedanta by Swami Shivananda):

Conscience is the light of the Soul that is burning within the chambers of your heart. It is the little spark of celestial fire which makes known to you the presence of the Indweller, the author of the Divine laws of Truth and Holiness.

It raises the voice of protest whenever anything is thought or done contrary to the interest of its Master. Conscience is the voice of the Self which says 'yes' or 'no' when you are involved in a moral struggle. It is a call from within to do and act, or avoid it. Conscience is the internal monitor. Conscience is a form of truth. Conscience is like a silent teacher. It is the inner voice without sound. It is very delicate and easily stifled. It is so very clear that it is impossible to mistake it.

Cowardice asks, 'Is it safe?' Avarice asks, 'Is there any gain in it?' Vanity asks, 'Can I become famous?' Lust asks, 'Is there pleasure?' But Conscience asks, 'Is it right?' A glad, clear conscience is the temple of God.

And Dr. Roles commented: 'Now this is where the Meditation should be taking us.'

And in 1974, H.H. said:

When one is coming into spiritual contact, and under spiritual influences through the words which are being imparted to you, they are not only physical – they are not just words being heard, because through the words the spiritual influences enter the subtle and the causal worlds. They are being put in there automatically – this is an involuntary process: through the physical world some effect comes into the subtle world – the mind – of the individual, and is passed on automatically into the causal world – the soul.

(Record, 18 January 1974)

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NOTE TO MEETING TAKERS

We have called this a Discussion Paper because the subject matter could be developed in a variety of ways. But what is perhaps most important to bring out – whichever line the discussion takes – is that we are being constantly shaped by influences whether we know it or not, and that through responding to higher influences, nothing succeeds like success.

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