Dr. Paul Brunton's Tape 1971

Tony has asked me to speak a few words to those of you who have read some of my books. If I agree, as I do, it is only on the condition that I am not taken as a guru. My job is writing down ideas which I have gathered in the course of a lifetime's study of world literature and particularly Asiatic literature, and talks with teachers themselves. If any of you find some of these ideas are helpful to you, you are welcome to them. But beyond this communication I make no claims and have no disciples. I live in retirement and semi-seclusion.

There is a danger in these studies that you may tend to over-emphasize the intellectual element, to regard them as another branch of academic work. This would be a mistake. In attempting to understand these books it is important to avoid such a wrong emphasis and to secure a proper balance instead. This must be a balance between the interests of the heart and the interests of the head. That is to say, the feelings must be brought into play just as much as the reasoning intellect. It is only by establishing a fine balance between the two that you come to the verge where intuition may be awakened; the intuition which can lead you to the higher truth.

Of course, you probably know by now that another important, most inportant process of awakening this kind of intuition is the practice of meditation. This has been very much misunderstood and there are even in the Orient all sorts of misconceptions about it. Yet the essence of it is very simple. You are all victims of a machine which is producing thoughts continuously and you have lost control of the machine. Meditation is a process to regain this control, and then the biggest obstacle in your way can be cleared. These thoughts make a screen between you and your inner Self; and in that inner Self lies the best part of yourself-the inner Self--The OVERSELF.

Now all the different systems of yoga you have heard about are mainly devices to bring the mind into concentration and to turn that concentration inwards so that you are able to withdraw attention from the world outside and learn to listen within. That is the basic principle of all yoga. When the mind is sufficiently quited then, and only then, can this higher part of your nature begin to make itself palatable to you.

But it is necessary to point out that meditation, because it offers so much, in the end requires you to give so much. What you have to give is time and practice, and even more than anything is patience. Without patience you cannot hope to learn meditation. There is no fixed time in which it can be learned because each of us is an individual and with some the process is quicker and with others it is slower. It is also a matter of the circumstances in which you happen to be placed at the time. They will hinder or help you in learning meditation. But patience is needed and many people I have noticed get discouraged in their earlier efforts because they do not see any progress coming, and that is a mistake to give up prematurely; but with patience will come it's rewards in the end. Part of this reward is the new imspiration you will receive.

Inspiration for whatever work you do, and especially for those of you who are connected with the arts. Inspiration in intellectual matters and inspiration in dealing with daily life. Certainly for the artist technique is only part of the game. He needs to become inspired as well, and meditation is one of the ways of getting inspired.

Another topic which is constantly being brought up is the necessity of the guru. Of course an instructor in any subject is a help to the student of that subject. But the fact remains that there are few competent instructors in the pursuit of truth. It is not hard to find those who have promoted movements, founded societies, created organizations along this line, but their reliability-competance is another matter. Generally they have something to give but it is usually mixed with opinion and interests which may not be so desirable.

There are finally two other points. The first is, bring to this quest a feeling of worship, because after all you are seeking a communion with a higher power, with something above, beyond and transcendent of yourself. You cannot approach it as you would your professor. There is something sacred and holy around the very concept, and you must try to awaken this attitude that it is like entering a Church which you really respect.

And the last point is the world outside you and around you, the world of other people is not much interested in the line you have taken and even may be hostile ot it. They may try to discourage you or to oppose you. This is understandable; their past history has made them what they are, just as your past history has made you the seeker that you are. I suggest, therefore, that you should not try to make pursuit of truth a conspicuous affair. After all it is something that does not really concern others except in its indirect consequences; so don't make a public show of it or any advertisement of it. Keep it to yourself. Only where someone else has strong doubts and is beginning to seek, and approaches you, can you profitably discuss it and even then one should not discuss it more than necessary.

The last words of the Buddha before he died were: "Be a lamp unto yourselves". He also said ----------.

Well, goodby, and may you have peace and tranquility which already lies deep within you and covered up by your ego and its thoughts. May that reveal itself to you.

PEACE PEACE PEACE

(text originally dictated to one of the boys from Vabois (Tim or Alan) revised by PB on Christmas 75-76 and approved as is, spring 1976)

THE SHORT PATH

IT WAS TIM

In order to understand the short path it might be helpful to compare it to the long path which consists of a series of exercises and efforts which gradually develops concentration and character and knowledge. But the long path does not lead to the goal. On the long path you often measure your own progress. It is an endless path because there will always be new circumstances wh ch bring new temptations and trials and confronts the aspirant with new challenges. No matter how spiritual the ego becomes it does not enter the whitest light, but remains in the greyish light. On the long path you must deal with the urges of interference arising from the lower self and the negativity which enters from the surrounding environment. But the efforts on the long path will at last invoke the grace, which opens the perspective of the short path.

The short path is not an exercise but an inner standpoint to invoke , a state of consciousness where one comes closer or finds peace in the Overself. There are however two exercises which can be of help to lead to the short path, but they have quite a different character than the exercises on the long path. The short path takes less time because the aspirant turns around and faces the goal directly. The short path means that you begin to try to remember to live in the rarefied atmosphere of the Overself instead of worrying about the ego and measuring it´s spiritual development. You learn to trust more and more in the Higher Power. On the short path you ignore negativity and turn around 180 degrees, from the ego to the Overself. The visitations of the Overself are heralded tyrough devotional feeling, but also through intuitive thought and action. Often the two paths can be treaded simultaneously, but not necessarily equally.

Often the aspirant is not ready to start these two exercises until after one or several glimpses of the Overself.

"The remembrance exercise" consists of trying to recall the glimpse of the Overself, not only during the set meditationperiods but also in each moment during the whole working span of the day - "in the same way as a mother who has lost her child can not let go of the thought of it no matter what she is doing outwardly - or as a lover who constantly holds the vivid image of the beloved in the back of his mind. In a similar way you keep the memory of the Overself alive during this exercise and let it shine in the background while you go about your daily work. But the spirit of the exercise is not to be lost. It must not be mechanical and cold. The time may come later when the r remembrance will cease as a consciouslsy and deliberatly willed exercise and pass by itself into a state which will be maintained without the help of the ego´s will.

The remembrance is a necessary preparation for the second exercise where

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you try to obtain an immediate identification with the Overself. Just as an actor identifies with the role he plays on the stage you act think and live during the daily life " as if" you were the Overself. This exercise is not merely intellectual but also includes feeling and intuitive action. It is an act of creative imagination where by turning directly to playing the part of the Overself you make it possible for its grace to come more and more into your life.

Ramana is second-rate. I've accepted that he is a sage. I've removed those references but I'm not stopping with that. I also want to remove the chapter itself and not mention problems with the ashram. The whole chapter must be removed, and some way found of how to do it.

There are two ways: first, to not mention anything negative and simply replace it with some introductory material; or, to save some parts of it which are worth saving, such as the three grades, which is important, and then expand that.

Another matter about the business of removing the discussion of the Maharshi and the Ashram is that those translations in foreign languages must be dealt with in the same way, and it is very difficult to get the foreign publishers to do so, either because they don't find it necessary to reprint the book, or if they do, they never tell me and I don't know whether they are going to reprint. If I tell them, they forget about it. I must find a way of handling it, by someone in that country who can keep in touch with publishers.

Better still, perhaps I could persuade Riders to keep the lookout for me and let me know.

( ) No one gets perfect freedom or a perfect marriage. There's no such thing as perfection. But a tolerably decent marriage, yes. But you can't just sit and romance about it. That's for young people. Karma, fate, and all those things come in as well.