

Monday. 17 December 1962

S.E.S. MEETING, FRIENDS' HOUSE

To 900 Members of the School who are meditating

PART I

Dr. Roles. Once upon a time there was a *System* – a big framework of Knowledge about the structure and possibilities of man and his place in the Universe, a System which told us very precisely what man could get, but did *not* tell us just how to get it. This System reached us in the West when a strange man started a Group in Moscow about 1914. Well, it became apparent that this man had lost his connection with the Inner Circle, and that the System he taught was fragmentary. In particular, it left out any mention of a *direct practical method* by which the theoretical results described could be obtained. There were only enigmatic remarks about this System belonging to the way of the 'Sly Man' who – instead of spending months of hard physical exertion and exercises, or weeks of prayer, or hours of Yogic exercises – knew how to introduce into the organism just that material which was necessary; so he would simply mix a pill and swallow it, and the results would be obtained. That was the nearest we ever got to what was in the pill!

When I began having private talks with Mr. Ouspensky (through whom I learned the System about 30 years ago), I gradually understood his view that, if we could discover a man who knew that practical method, we would very likely at the same time find the origin of our System itself, be able to fill in the gaps, and also regain our connection with the Inner Circle and re-enter the stream of esotericism which must have existed away back in the dim stages of pre-history. And *so it has happened.*

We learnt the method of Meditation (which you are all doing) from the Maharishi, and on my first visit to India last year he introduced me to the Head of that Tradition, from whom we have now learnt that our System and theirs are identical in their main features, and all the *practical* parts are now being filled in. Most important, the *discipline* is the same – has the same tang – and by coming under this discipline we have now found again a close connection with the *Inner Circle.*

Now, by discipline I don't mean all the discipline that is connected with the running of a large organisation, the proper placing of individuals in relation to the whole; all that can only be done in *one* way at a given time, in a given place, and that is the way it *is* being done. Nobody from outside could alter anything in that, because everything hangs together and must hang together that way. I am talking about *another* kind of discipline which has to go on *at the same time*; I hope it will emerge in the course of tonight why! It is a discipline which is a private matter between an individual and the leader of the Group, or the Leader of the School; and if this School is properly connected with the Inner Circle, the Leader of the School and those around him with a *fully Realized man.*

In the Outer Circle we always like having everything well oiled, running very efficiently, logically, fairly; the nearer you get to the Inner Circle the more arbitrary, unfair and incomprehensible it becomes! Luckily I was used to this for sometime before my recent adventures; I will give you a typical example:

We had just got possession for Mr. Ouspensky (through Madame Ouspensky) of a large house in the country with a farm and a lot of land and were frantically decorating it for their arrival. I happened to be working alongside the key man – Reggie Hoare – and we were working fast putting the final coat of paint on the suite of rooms which Madame was due to occupy the next day. Just at a very crucial moment in the operation there was a message from Mr. Ouspensky: ‘Would Mr. Hoare go and see how many crayfish there are in the stream in the ravine?’ That meant probably a three-hour search in failing light! Handing me his paintbrush, Reggie said: ‘Have you ever read a book called *Milarepa*?’

I don’t know if you have read that book by Evans-Wentz? In it Marpa, the young Milarepa’s fierce Tibetan Teacher, told him to build a house for his son. Three times he got halfway; each time he had to pull it down and rebuild it in a different place and in a different shape. When he was well on with the fourth house, which was square and nine storeys high, he was told to remove the cornerstone and put it back where it came from – but by this time all the skin was off his back, so he had to give up.

This story was in my mind when I went out to India, in October this year, according to the agreement that I should begin to enjoy the discipline of the Head of the Tradition, the Shankaracharya of the North. I did not know what I was going to be in for! At one conversation he started to speak about the discipline by which people are prepared in his Tradition:

‘When,’ he said, ‘we find that somebody has a sufficiently intense desire, we usually prepare a situation with which he would ordinarily feel in opposition; but we do this intentionally to prove the depth of his faith and the strength of his desire to learn. With these checks we observe that he is improving on the Way; of course, if they pass the tests, then aspirants reach their goal much quicker. If we create only favourable situations they get slower and slower.’

I said nervously, ‘Do you in your Tradition go quite as far as Marpa did with Milarepa?’ Laughing very much he said, ‘Doctor, we tried it on you!’ and outlined a whole series of difficulties that had been put in my way since my visit last year, which I thought were pure circumstances, but apparently he had had a finger in many of them!

There had been, for instance, an examination paper of twenty questions set us during our stay at the Ashram last year about the Meditation. I put everything I had into my answers. Those who came out in Class I were going to be meditation guides; Class II would just keep on trying – learning. I was horrified to find that I was neither in Class I nor Class II, but in Class III! Laughing again he said:

‘I put you in the third class in the examination at Ram Nagar last year simply to see how much desire you would have to come back! And now all the people who received first classes then are going down to the third class, and the third class are now up in the first class!’ He went on: ‘The *force of Love* destroys anything wrong between two persons. If you have distrust, then wrongs are created. To establish the relation of trust, one must be put to the test.’

Occasionally the tables can even be turned on the Teacher by an apt pupil. In the early days when G. was playing it fierce, he locked Ouspensky into the garden shed as a punishment for some misdemeanour. When he let him out four hours later, Ouspensky emerged looking suspiciously cheerful. So G. went back into the shed to see after his precious skins of wine from

Cyprus – they had been consumed to the last drop! He was forced to admire the way his pupil had learnt the lesson of the Sly Man who knows exactly what fine matter needs to be introduced into the organism from without!

Now there is ample opportunity in an organisation like this just in the ordinary course of events: whenever anybody seems to feel some distrust it can be used as a test, and they can pass it. They can take it that this is done *consciously* for a certain purpose – just for that – or they can be hurt and difficulties will arise which will impede their progress.

His Holiness also told this story of Brahma, who in his capacity of Teacher had two disciples, Indra and Virochana.

At first Brahma taught them that this body is Brahma, and Virochana thought, 'Of course that is so,' and went off and nourished the body and established a system based on Body. But Indra had a doubt. He said to himself, 'Well, this body will die after some time, so how could it be Brahma?' – and he went back and put the question. The Teacher said, 'All right, I will give you the answer, but you must stay here thirty years and follow the discipline.' After the thirty years he was told that the 'Mind is Brahma,' so Indra tried that, but again he had a doubt and went back, saying, 'It doesn't seem to be that Mind can be Brahma, because when we are asleep the Mind disappears from us.' 'Quite right,' said the Teacher: 'thirty more years of discipline,' and at the end of that he said, 'The Life Principle is Brahma.' But this didn't satisfy Indra so he had to do another thirty years. This time he was told, 'Intelligence is Brahma,' but he was again dissatisfied. So then Brahma said to him, 'If you want the real answer you must stay eleven years more, making one hundred and one in all.' So then because of this discipline which he underwent for one hundred and one years, his mind was so sharp, his devotion so intense and his body so pure that he was able to get the Full Realization of the final answer given by Brahma, who told him, '*Brahma is that which everybody knows and which nobody knows.*' And by saying this Indra realized himSelf and Brahma also.

When you first hear that, you feel he got mighty little as a result of one hundred and one years, but if you think about that saying in the light of your experiences, particularly in the meditation, you will see that that sentence really explains everything. 'The discipline,' he said, 'purifies the disciple; if somebody comes to a hasty conclusion, if he thinks that by a few words he has reached the Realization of Truth, he is a fool and will get nowhere. But another person who penetrates deeply and by careful testing, will be on the right path. The worthwhile Realization is a slow deep way, but the right way. For the problem consists not only in *getting it*, but in *holding it*; something you get quickly you don't hold.'

Well, now, this strange arbitrariness seems to be shared by nearly all the greatest Systems which we must believe belong to the Inner Circle. The Zen Masters were, of course, adept at making things difficult for their pupils:

Manriya was asked to explain the sound of one hand and concentrated on that for months. 'You aren't working hard enough,' the Master told him. 'You are too attached to food, wealth, too many things, and that sound; and it would be better if *you* died. That would solve the problem.'

The next time Manriya appeared he was again asked what he had to show regarding the sound of one hand. Manriya at once fell over as if he were dead.

'You are dead all right,' observed the Master, 'but how about that sound?'
 'I haven't solved that yet,' replied Manriya looking up.
 'Dead men don't speak,' said the Master, 'get out!'

Then if we come to look at the Highest Way, at many of the parables in the Gospels – the labourers in the vineyard, each of whom received the stipulated penny no matter what hours he had worked... the man without a wedding garment who had been pulled in from the highways and byways; the 'Unjust Steward', the 'Unjust Judge' – you ask again: 'Why this arbitrariness? Why this injustice?' Are there any answers to that question? Try and put them as shortly as you can; I am sure you have all thought of it.

Q. What is just for one man is not just for another?

Dr. R. One answer; but there are many more. What are they? You are quite right; there is no *universal* standard of justice. If we looked for a universal standard in this ordinary life, we would not find it:

The rain it raineth every day
 Upon the just and unjust fella;
 But more upon the just because
 The unjust has the just's umbrella!

There is no universal standard of justice in ordinary life. What other answers to this question?

Q. We don't really know what justice is?

Dr. R. 'We don't know what justice is.' Still this is not the telling answer!

Q. They get what they need?

Dr. R. 'They get what they need' and not what they want! This kind of justice has to be given by a Realized man with X-ray eyes. He has to know just what a person really needs! Well, what does that connect with? – Take that answer a step further.

Q. Surely there is no injustice; there is only the result of action?

Dr. R. There is a lot of truth in that.

Q. Isn't it that the nearer one gets to the end, the nearer one gets to the final goal; and the nearer one gets the more arbitrariness there must be?

Dr. R. The final goal is, of course, indefinable, and under no system of laws; the nearer we get the more conflicts there will be with the laws as we know them. Our System of thought, our idea of law is quite different; yet this is still not the answer I want; and if I were a Zen Master I would threaten to cut one of you in half unless somebody got it!

Q. Luck is a subtle preparation?

Dr. R. It is not luck.

Q. If we got what we wanted, then what we thought to be an injustice would seem to us to be just; and at that point there would be no need to go on?

Dr. R. Several of these answers are getting very warm. Think in terms of what we are trying to get at the end of all this.

The full and final step in the development of man is to reach what we call in the System *'Real I'*, his *true Self*, the *Divine* in each person. Now, before we start climbing up there, we are almost entirely in the power of what is called 'False I'. This term is used equally in the Tradition from which the Meditation came and in our own System, and in the same sense. Before we start climbing everything is mixed, of course, the false and the True; but we are dominated by 'False I' – the main characteristic of which is that it sees everything as *separate*, and particularly oneself as separate from everybody else, with one's own rights. And climbing the various steps of the Ladder of Ascent consists in getting rid of layer upon layer of 'False I', so that gradually its place is taken by the influence of 'Real I'. Now this can happen in the best regulated families and best regulated organisations. 'The higher up the mountain, the greener grows the grass'; the more we get on, the more the temptation, and 'False I' comes in to take us back. Therefore the salutary discipline with its apparent arbitrariness is to stop 'False I' from growing; to let the man see it, let the man beware of it; and you can only produce the real effect that way when it comes unexpectedly. If a person is prepared for it he puts up a defence and beats it off; it must be unexpected, as 'arbitrary' as possible.

Now, after all this long preamble I am leading up to the Meditation, because the meditation shows us exactly that. It is the quickest and simplest possible method of going from the false to the *True*. I believe that all the difficulties that are experienced are in some way the fruits of 'False I'. 'False I' cannot meditate, it does not want to meditate and tries to trip you up if you start to meditate. It changes its colour, changes its methods all the time; and that, in my opinion, is the one reason why the results of the meditation in a School are so much more lasting, so much more convincing than they are in the outside world, where none of this corrective help is provided. I would like you from your own experiences to think of the difficulties which have arisen in your meditation from time to time and see if they might not have some root and origin in that part of you which does not love the Truth. Do you think there is something in that? I notice about myself that if I imagine I am busy on very important things, I sit and pretend to meditate; then it connects up with all sorts of mechanical rhythms in the body – heartbeat, forms and habits, which take an awful lot of getting out of; just because one is pretending to meditate and not doing it!

Q. A really bad meditation would be one in which you tend to get negative and critical of yourself because of mechanical thoughts, and that is worse than the mechanical things themselves?

Dr. R. And it is 'False I' that gets negative. You see, *Essence* – the part of us which is *Real* and *can grow* – it is natural for the Essence to wish to return to that from which it came. It is a longing which is deep in every person. If there were only Essence, then the meditation would be absolutely simple, with nothing in the way. But a great deal of *Personality* is *false*, and the mantra has to dip through all this false part before it can get to that which is hungry for it.

Are there any questions you have been saving up to ask about the meditation, because we now have an opportunity to answer your questions or send them to the Head of the Tradition? We will also give you some of his answers to questions previously asked, and so on.

Q. Could it be asked who it is that actually meditates?

Dr. R. We consist of many different 'I's; each desire, each habitual trend of thought is a change of 'I', and they each write cheques in our name and incur expenses on our account.

Now we have thousands of different selves each in charge for short periods; but from quite early on the particular group of 'I's which forms Magnetic Centre is the one that we can trust. It is looking, looking – it is dissatisfied with the state of the house; and when it comes near to something which may be a true way of getting the house cleaned up, it is this group of 'I's who get interested and keep us at it. Can you recognise the fact that a number of different interests (we call them desires, frustrations) have collected together and made you welcome this method when it came your way? *That is who is meditating.*

Then there are lots of other 'I's who don't want to have anything to do with it at all. I dare say you can put names to them; and there are a host of other 'I's – mostly in the lower storey – who are quite indifferent, have never heard of it! All that last lot were personified in the *Magic Flute* in the character of Pappageno. But before we can see all these differences, it is 'False I' that has to be put out of the picture, because 'False I' convinces us that what we want, what we are proud of is what matters, and that everything is right in the world!

Q. Could you explain what are some of the physical changes which take place in the meditation?

Dr. R. I could, but I don't want to particularly because the less attention we pay to physical changes the better; and if one describes some physical change then everybody will be having it! But it is on the chemical level – the chemistry of the body gradually changes, because what makes the chemistry of the individual what it is ordinarily, are the habitual trends of thought and feeling which are going on all the time. If these are stilled for a little everything changes – the breathing changes, it becomes more efficient; it washes out the acids from the muscles... gets rid of all that; the organism becomes nearer neutrality and everything works more efficiently. I think it is safe to say that because you won't be able to follow that up!

Q. (something like) I understand about pretending to meditate? But when things go well, how can one be sure that it is not 'False I' who thinks he is meditating well?

Dr. R. I feel it is almost more dangerous *not* to think you are meditating well! If it encourages you to go on with the meditation, to do what you can, seize the opportunity, enjoy it, it doesn't matter very much thinking you are meditating well. Anything that keeps you at it happily we will allow!

About all this *habitual thinking*: You know we don't realise (as Mr. Ouspensky used to say), how much just by ordinary mechanical psychology we destroy *memory* of our possibilities. By 'putting a spoke' in the mechanics of our ordinary psychology, memory is gradually recovered, and that memory is one of the most important things we can have. If we only *remembered to do a certain thing at a certain moment* we would get much further. We really *know* what we can get. For instance, memory can be a wonderful guide during the half-

hours of meditation; it should be its own guide – that certain things produce such-and-such an effect, that you are allowing a certain thing to happen, a sloppier position, a trend of thought. If your memory were sharper, it would stop you from doing it again; but it is blunted by all the stuff going on – the results of mechanicalness during the rest of the day and night.

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Then followed the Shankaracharya's answers to questions about the meditation.

Dr. R. (After a question referring to 'external noises' and His Holiness's comment that 'noises inside are usually far more upsetting'):

How many of you have heard the story of the donkey? I won't repeat it, but the point was we must recognise that all this inner noise we have collected in life after life and year after year in this life, that all this will go on. We must not notice it when we sit and close our eyes, we must notice only the Mantra. If we don't notice all this noise, it will gradually evaporate – disappear. Come away from it; develop a '*couldn't care less*' attitude; once you begin to fight with it, to notice it, to oppose it, you are lost!

Any questions on that?

Q. I think this questioner said 'he was rather attracted to the noise.'

Dr. R. Oh, yes, we are very attracted to it! We always want to see what it is and where it comes from! If we realise that the least little bit of attention is dangerous and we won't be able to get back without a struggle, we won't be so attracted.

Q. Is it 'doing' to drown it with the mantra?

Dr. R. Sometimes it is rather good to let the mantra enlarge, to let the mantra become loud – loud enough to fill one's mind. Nothing must be forced, no struggle; but if it seems to want to do that you can encourage it. It will only be for a minute or two, for a few seconds; it will soon go softer and fade. But it is 'doing' whenever we *think* we can do the mantras work for it; we must be sensitive to what *it* wants to do, what should *feel right for it*.

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(After another of the Shankaracharya's answers Dr. R. added):

And I have advised people when they sit down to shut their eyes, to get their *full attention* on to the mantra for as long as they can do it – one minute; not to think, 'I have got half-an-hour!' But to bring their full attention generally on to the mantra; half-a-minute, then one minute, then for two minutes. This is how the Stairway down to this quiet place is built by the mantra; and once that stairway is built, whenever you shut your eyes the mantra will take you down it.

Q. Why is the meditation for half-an-hour?

Dr. R. The result of previous researches. What would you like it to be? It is very interesting. Try for a quarter-of-an-hour, try for an hour; and then see if you don't want to go round the world like the Maharishi and say, 'You must have half-an-hour!'

Half-an-hour is enough to look after the day, and the second half-hour is enough to look

after the night. If you have two or three spells of going deep – having the peace and the quiet – it is enough. In that there is no alteration from what we were all told at the beginning by the Maharishi. There is no benefit in longer meditation; fortitude lies in the moment – minutes spent in the quiet place.

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Q. Could you explain why I felt resentment at the Hindu terms?

Dr. R. We had that out when I first met you! We will have it out again, but not now; some ‘False I’s’ are very English! And another thing, I have never met such intensely religious people before, such staunch Christians as people pretend to be when they are trying to get out of doing the meditation! But the Kingdom of Heaven is the same in all languages and in all religions; and the intensity of the desire to reach it overcomes any such difficulties. It will overcome that resentment, provided we don’t rub it in too much!

Q. Sometimes the consonant of the mantra changes?

Dr. R. These mechanical changes are happening very often. One sometimes catches oneself in a sleepy state that one is repeating a very profane word instead! One must watch it, because the actual three sounds of this mantra are very important; it must not degenerate.

INTERVAL

PART 2

Talk about Objective Music as a help to the Meditation, and examples played on the taperecorder.

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Dr. R. I want just for a few minutes to get on to another subject: It is still important and urgent to try to bring as many people as possible to the Meditation. We have now got a very good organisation – the School of Meditation; it is all set. Many people are trained in checking, and so on; we have nice houses to give it in; everything there except the people! We get twenty a week, perhaps with great efforts, but surely it would be possible now to bring many more people? You, I gather in this hall, all came through the recommendation of somebody – your friends, practically everybody; and friends are the influence that counts, or even just somebody – the people with whom you have contact for short periods. One is very diffident still about mentioning this; one should not be too diffident! If everybody brought another ten people, that would be 9,000 people; we could cope with them; and nothing helps one’s own meditation so much as helping other people.

I dare say there are many unexplored ways of bringing people to this idea – of the necessity for it; and I wanted to read to you one or two answers given by the Shankaracharya to the question of ‘How could we speak to people without preparation?’:

(Quotation from Part 2 of 62/65 ‘True Religion’ from ‘Everybody in the world...’
down to ‘We must go in, physically and mentally also.’)

(afterwards):

Dr. R. We might perhaps translate the Eastern form of those remarks into some approach of our own among the people we know. We ought to be able to touch most people on one of those chords. What do you think about it?

(to Mr. Voorhoeve) How would it do for Johannesburg?

Mr. Voorhoeve. Yes, I think that one about rest!

Dr. R. (To Mr. Howitt) 'They want rest in New Zealand too?' He nods.

We need to come through our meditation into a clearer idea of the necessities of the situation, and what to say and to whom to say it. The School of Meditation is ready and waiting! Any remarks on that?

Q. People are quite interested, and then they don't want it for themselves.

Dr. R. That is a very valid remark – that one can be speaking about this, they are interested, and then nothing happens.

It is partly because of our lack of conviction that nothing further happens – a spark of inspiration perhaps, some powerful influence exerted at that moment. Any other comment?

Q. I find that the leaflet published by the School has produced reaction.

Dr. R. Yes, there is reaction of course when you try things. I have never heard anybody say anything nasty about the advertisements; even the Maharishi admired them!

Q. Appropriate to this reaction; I think most of us here were trapped into the meditation!

Dr. R. Are you sorry about it?

Q. Before we came to the School of Economic Science, if anyone had mentioned an Indian formula to me I would have shied off it. Do you think this way of the Sly Man entitles us to trap people into getting what they want?

Dr. R. Undoubtedly; this is where Sly Man comes in. You were trapped into peace and happiness that you didn't want at all! Let us devise suitable traps! As far as I can see, some counter-action is wanted so as to make people not run it down at sight. Perhaps if we told them there was something they could come to and really run it down, that would be a trap! But if one could convince oneself of the necessity of this method of meditation, that the need for it is inherent in human nature – that the need for it, the existence of it, is further back than history goes – I believe we would find ways of being convincing.

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