

20 January 1975

SPECIAL MEETING**COLET HOUSE**

Dr. Roles. The changes in the external shape of the Society and its various sister societies which you are here to discuss today, would have been necessary in any case because of the great numbers of people becoming connected with us in this and other countries, and also because of living conditions in Britain; but there is an additional reason which I very much want you, and later everyone, to help me to understand:

The Shankaracharya has made it clear that he has already answered almost all possible questions about this System of Knowledge and Meditation, and so it is now up to us to put them into practice in a much more systematic way. It's also required that we pass this Knowledge on to all English-speaking people who meditate in countries other than India, that is all English-speaking people who meditate and have come under our Shankaracharya's influence. That means that anybody writing in questions from New York, Mexico, or somewhere, we have to find where this question has already been answered and give him the Shankaracharya's words because they will not take anybody else's words. It's quite a business!

For the purpose of passing this knowledge on, the Shankaracharya recognises just two London-based organisations – the Schools of Economic Science, and ourselves – because he has given the leaders of these two much of his time and care. I would like you now to hear the farewell message which he gave to the Head of the School of Economic Science at his visit last January for himself and his followers. In principle, this general instruction applies equally to ourselves, but the difference between the interpretations that the two Schools put on them are so great that they use entirely different methods to achieve it. So, Allan, would you mind reading this just as it eventually reached us:

A. reads: This was January 1974:

S. Our blessings be with you, as the leader of the School, and all who have chosen to be with you. We wish you good health of the physical body, subtle body, and also of the Causal body, and with this good health of body, mind and heart you should go back to your people and convey the final message which you have received, together with the blessings to everyone connected with you, and help them to a good health of body, mind and heart so that all may receive peace and bliss. Not only that you will take care of yourself, but that you will take care of all the members of the School first of all, then the society at large, and the nation. They must all get enriched with the simplicity of the Spiritual Knowledge which we have tried to discuss. The difficulty of transmission through a different language certainly creates a formidable barrier. Even so, whatever has been passed on to you is fairly useful.

Dr R. 'Fairly useful' – a nice understatement!

(Reading continues):

In the course of these deliberations, it must be obvious that knowledge, even as a piece of information, is the initial thing, for it is only knowledge that initiates activity. If one does not know about a beautiful place, one could never have a desire to go and see it, so one must acquire the knowledge first.

The information aspect of the knowledge is only the outer or physical aspect; the deeper contents appear only when the information is put into practice. This is known as 'experience of the Knowledge' arising from the interaction of personal and Universal Being under the Light of that particular knowledge or information.

Dr R. So, note the interaction between the personal being – Allan or Roles – and the Universal, and he said knowledge of this interaction (as carried out in our activities) is the aim of all we do here. So Knowledge in action is what a School of the Fourth Way is designed for.

(Reading continues):

Only here does the real test of the validity of knowledge and the test of the sincerity of the individual, materialise. Unless the knowledge has been brought into the working of all three bodies of the individual, the particular knowledge does not become universal and, having fulfilled its purpose as information, it turns into useless matter.

One can see this from examples of so-called learned people who can speak on their subject or any subject at any time. But their life is not governed by their knowledge, which remains barren and incapable of producing peace and bliss either for them or for their people and students.

So much use of words is made these days that nothing seems to mean anything. The meaning is in the action; action is the interaction of personal and Universal Being. In this interaction is the Universal or the meaning of the word.

To realise the word is to find its meaning on a Universal level. It is harder to achieve than speaking or writing. Without having realised the meaning people start giving meanings to words, and no-one wants to lag behind, so you have many more unrealised meanings of each word! This is nothing but confusion.

When you and your people put these words into action, the cloud of confusion will be dissolved; the real meaning will shine through and understanding will descend. Meanwhile, you will have to face situations of confusion and conflict. Words and their meanings may not be clear, but no good is achieved by worrying about it. Only practice of the knowledge given would clear the way and the vision.

No one needs to bind himself to the words; what one needs is to *transcend them*. To transcend the word is to put the word into action, after which it shines with more brilliance. One must keep on transcending till the word once again becomes fully charged with full Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

With this message you should go back to your people and to your land, and from your personal practice and experience you should guide them with Knowledge and practice of the Knowledge and thus enrich the society and the nation.

Blessings for all.

Dr. R. Well, this is being recorded, so there will be a chance for you to read it if you want it.

But these two organisations have two quite different ways of learning to apply the instructions, and those ways depend on the interpretation of the Indian word used for 'systematic practice' – Sadhana. It's always been interpreted by one School as a 'discipline' to be imposed by the head of the School on all the other people – men, women and children – who want to belong to that School.

But the word 'Sadhana' does not mean necessarily 'discipline imposed from without'; it [also]

means 'systematic practice' whereby each person can find what is necessary in the way of discipline which he can then impose on himself. This is the way, I am sure, that Mr. Ouspensky would have us conduct this School; and one reason for this reorganisation is that all of us should learn – first of all you, and gradually more and more people – how to apply this 'systematic practice' to oneself, before giving advice or imposing any discipline on the people who come to you.

Any questions about the difference between these two interpretations? (As no questions were raised, Dr R. contd.):

From all that we've learnt these forty years, there seems to be an area of mind where several different mechanical constructions of human nature meet; and it seems to need a triple – a three-pronged – attack. On the one hand, there is moving centre in all its manifestations: its nature is to be perpetually in movement, and its manifestations are shown in what used to be called the 'mechanical parts of the different centres' – formatory thinking, talking, turning thoughts, involuntary and negative emotions, involuntary actions, imagination, and so on. This is going on the whole time, and is the mechanical nature of each person which it is not possible really to approach directly by any system of exercises. One can change the features of this mechanical set-up by this exercise or that, but one can't deal with the other two aspects of this tripod, one of which is the *feeling of 'I'* under the influence of this movement.

For example, we have a splendid traditional way of uniting the heart with control of movement in the Dervish Turning. What could be more marvellous – both in its intent and in its ritual – if it were not for the fact that it does not guarantee the control of the personal ego. It's quite possible that some will be true dervishes – obtain command over their ego – so that it becomes Universal and not personal; but I can't say I have seen enough of it yet! Certainly it was altogether true of the Sheik, the Celebi Effendi in Istanbul.

The third side of this tripod is the training of one's personal being – Roles or Allan, the 'personal servant' of the Self – to put the interests of the Universal or even of the School as a whole above one's personal interests in thought, word and deed. So there's plenty to do! And even though we are not having 'discipline' imposed on us, it's a fascinating thing to try and see if we can discover, each of us, how to do this in the setting of his or her life; and we want these changes in our organisation to make this more efficient and more general.

Peter Eadie. Am I to understand that we are more or less on our own again now, or is there still a link with the Shankaracharya?

Dr. R. Oh no! We have been assured that this link is permanent whether or not there is an outward, a physical action as by journeys to India. After all, a dervish can be under the influence of Mevlana without going to Istanbul!

We, however, have put in to go (four of us) next October, and of course there are letters; what he wants at present is to see more results of his teaching from us in practice.

Now this 'systematic practice' is not an *extra burden* at all; it's the very opposite – it's a shedding of the burden which has come upon the mind in the last century or two of Western civilisation, where the mind is showing signs of breaking down under the strain. So it's nothing but a relief; there's going to be no additional load put on our people! We just want the organising side to be as efficient and easy as possible by sharing the labour of it among more people, with more emphasis on the inward link between the School and its origin.

It might refresh you if we now read something to show from the Shankaracharya what I mean. It was in answer to a question Lord Allan asked him at our last visit. You've heard it, now hear it again:

He asked: If during the day the main cloud appears to be plain forgetfulness, can His Holiness recommend any technique or method whereby the aspirant can keep the Self or the Guru in mind throughout the day?

The answer was:

S. During the working day one is involved in Rajas because one has to keep on being active, and it is in the nature of Rajas that you can be forgiven for forgetting your longing for the Self. It is, and it should be, a natural phenomenon. But, if it is natural to forget, it is also natural to remember; so, when one knows that one has forgotten, one should remind oneself of whatever one has forgotten, and try to place this forgetful state between two moments of remembrance.

If the darkness, which symbolises forgetfulness, is contained between two lights, then it is very easy to cross the darkness without any help from outside, because there is a light behind and a light in front.

So, if there are two periods of remembrance, then one would see that the forgetfulness between them has no force of its own; it has lost its force, and whatever has to prevail in the individual, would be made available just by remembering again.

There is a small creature called a mongoose, whose nature it is to fight snakes. Whenever they meet, they certainly have a fight, and when the snake venom enters the body of the mongoose through a sting from the snake, the mongoose runs away from the fight and goes to smell a certain type of herb which has the power to neutralise the venom of the snake.

Refreshed by the herb, he returns to the fight, and can do this again and again, and this process can go on until the fight is finally finished.

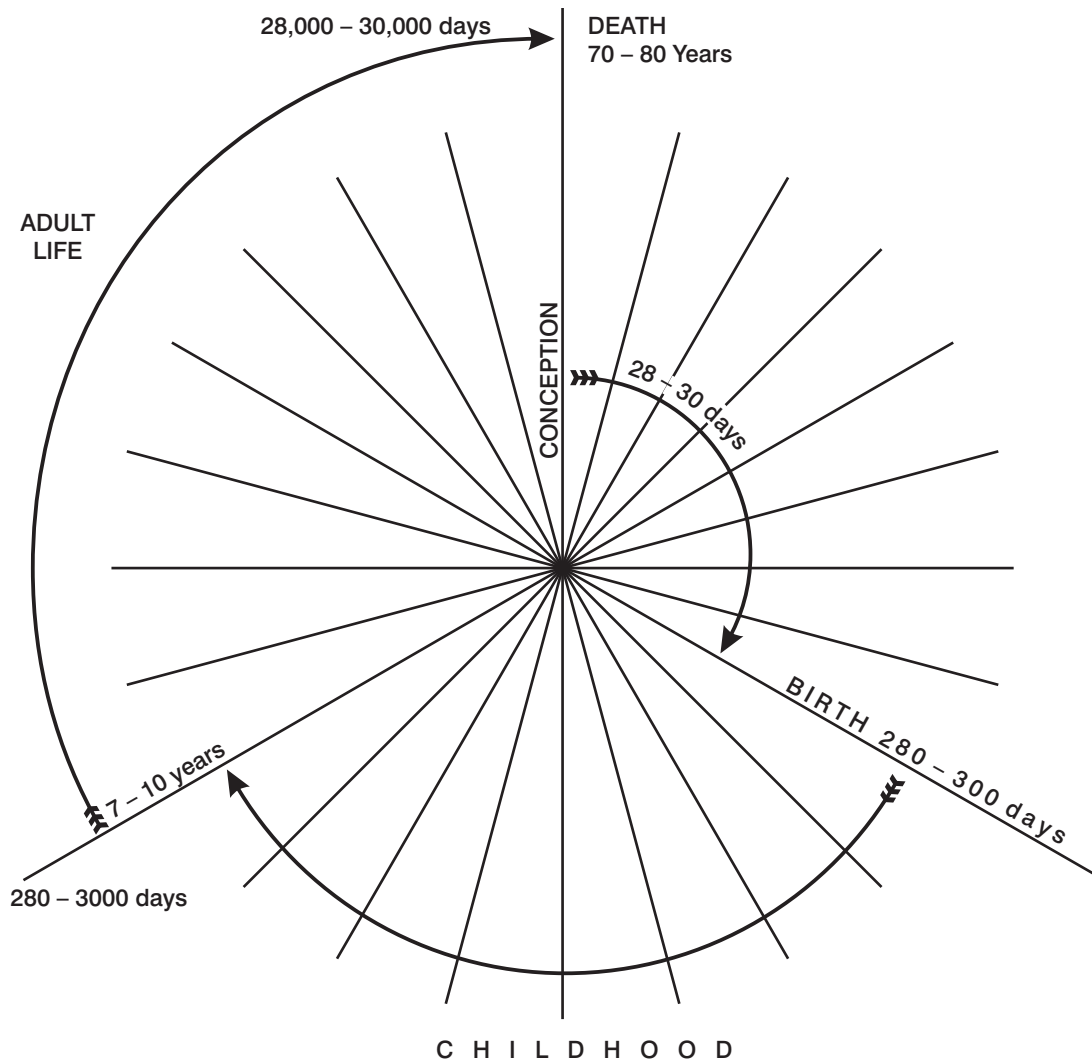
Forgetting is very much like the poison which is being put in by the snake – the Rajas – into our Nature (Prakriti). One needn't get worried about it; one simply needs to go to get the help of the herb. By remembering the Guru and the Self all this will be easy, and forgetting will have no lasting effect.

Dr. R. went on:

That's what these activities that go on here (and the weekly meetings if there are people who want them) should be doing. They should constitute the 'herb', so that any of us, like the mongoose, can go and have a sniff at it when we've got too full of Rajas!

Now the secret lies in developing this inherent interest in the existence in all of us of the Divine Self. As I have promised you before, we might at these big Monday meetings, reconstruct something of the System that we were given forty years ago, and I want to introduce a description of the life of individual man – his body. That is developed on the basis of the Law of Octaves, but centres in the idea of the origin of life, which is ordinarily forgotten very early on. I've put it here rather quickly and roughly: (with diagram on screen):

Starting at the beginning, let us suppose that there is a Centre of Energy with radii rays going in all directions, and this is the one permanent and unchangeable Reality in the life of everybody. But once the mind identifies with the passing scene and Time and change enter, the transitory and the temporary take the place of the Unchanging Reality.



Note: During embryonic life every 3° of circumference is equal to one week; so 12° is one lunar month of 28 days. During childhood a year would be roughly 15° , and this is the usual time-measure after a baby is born; and, when the time scale changes into adult life, each 15° will be about a decade.

Time is a fictitious thing; it's a recognition of change – one of the parameters by which we describe change. We have a very peculiar conception of Time and a very peculiar conception of our life – of the physical body. The Conscious being takes a body as a suit of clothes, and discards it when it is worn out.

I've divided the circle of one's life from conception to death into monthly cycles, because the periodicity of the Moon governs all the factors connected with human birth and death, and reproduction. So all these lines – these time intervals – are drawn in lunar cycles. The length of a lunar cycle varies within certain strict limits in different people and in different circumstances. From 28 to 31 days is the average, but the most common rhythm in our life is the 28-day cycle.

The actual period of revolution of the moon round the earth has been changing ever since the earliest corals showed that the moon has been gradually getting bigger and further away. The present period of the moon is 29.5 days, so it would be accurate enough to take a lunar month as 30 days.

Well, starting at 0, in 10 lunar months we are born, i.e., 280 – 300 days; commonly 280. Time is continually running down like an accumulator; and the energy of the body is continually running down. This is shown by the only measurements that have ever been made from the first month of embryonic life up to death, namely measurements of length or height.

The cell – the fertilised ovum – divides and divides and divides the first day, the first two days, the first three days, and within a week it has become a many-celled organism, and in a month the initial length is 8 millimetres. From that date it doubles itself six times in length, and has reached over 500 millimetres at birth. It doubles itself again at the age of four years and never again after that, reaching a maximum length or height – 6ft. or so – round about fourteen, varying in different countries.

So the body is like an accumulator of energy, or a hot body, cooling down from the moment of conception until death.

At 280 days – 10 months – we are born; at 100 months we begin to emerge from childhood at about the age of eight; and at 28,000 or 30,000 days – a good ripe old age of 70 – 80 years – we die on the average.

We can follow all this up with the greatest accuracy and learn much of interest. Much is known about the development of different systems and organs in embryonic life, and about the development of different parts of the mind during childhood. But just for now I want to relate everything that happens in man's life to this central Source of Energy. This reminds me of the 139th Psalm which we have so often quoted: '...My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts...'

This gives me the feeling that, in fact the only Reality and the only important thing in life is our 'return to the Source', and our connection with this fundamental Source of Energy – 'I am Consciousness and Happiness'.

Any questions about that?

Gary Richardson. Does what you say apply to the physical body only; and what about the subtle and causal?

Dr. R. Just now I am talking only about the space-time scale of the physical body – the time of the physical body based on the lunar rhythm of 28 days and ending at 28,000 days.

The subtle body has a totally different time-scale, as I have shown in a previous diagram. We measure its activities in seconds, minutes, hours, up to a day; and finally the causal body is not in time at all by our ordinary reckoning. It's a place where unrealised possibilities exist, only realised on the subtle, and only manifested on the physical plane. None of your thoughts or feelings, Richardson, are manifested unless they are heard, shown, or seen on the physical plane; so the subtle is a transitional world between the physical and the causal.

Mrs. MacOwan. Why does time seem to go much more slowly when one is a child?

Dr. R. Well, to a rapidly moving body outside things go slowly. Why do other cars around and behind seem to go very slow when you are driving over 70?

Anyway, there are many reasons for this. It does vary greatly in different individuals, and these subjective sensations of passing time – like time going slowly on a long railway journey, or very fast when a lot is happening – these are all really subjective and just our response to change.

But I am speaking about something which is part of the Laws of Nature.

We think that a man is an haphazard sort of article – a result of accident! Yet, as you can see, the pattern of his physical life is laid down exactly; you can be as exact as you like about the laws of growth. For instance, growth depends on a certain chemical in the anterior lobe of the

pituitary body and, while that is working normally, the growth in height of a given individual is kept within very rigid bounds. If one sort of cell in the pituitary body increases, you get gigantism – you become a giant, out of the ordinary limits of size. On the other hand, if the growth hormone is diminished or absent, your growth is very much delayed and you get forms of dwarfism. Everything is neurochemically governed.

(to Dr. Peter Fenwick): You would agree that these patterns are not just accidental, wouldn't you? I mean, there are laws which are there to be learnt and understood?

Dr. F. Yes, very definitely.

Tom Fleming. Some people live to 100 years of age, perhaps. Is it possible to know that somebody is going to live that long from his early days – from conception even?

Dr. R. You mustn't forget that accidents come in. It would be rather like fortune telling, because you don't know what diseases are going to assail them – what wear and tear they are going to go through. But it is possible to infer that a nice quiet lady (who leads a sheltered life and who doesn't think very much) is going to live a very long time! (laughter)

Tom Fleming. I understand how the law of accident can apply to those people who die before their allotted span; but I don't understand how it happens when they go over it?

Dr. R. There is considerable variation among individuals in the rate at which they live (the metabolic rate, it's called), dependent on their oxygen intake governed by their endocrine glands.

Just now there is much interest, and a lot of experiments are in progress, on the subject of the different rates at which people live. They've had volunteer students at the California Institute of Technology, and elsewhere in the States, monitored in a special room where they are allowed to do what they like, but their metabolism is being studied.

People live at very different rates; some have a twenty-two or twenty-three-hour day; and some a twenty-seven-hour day, This mounts up when it comes to a life-time, and you get somebody like Mozart who lived at twice the speed! Have you heard that letter he wrote about his work – how he composed both by night and by day? He died at about half the average time-span, at thirty-six.

He wrote 'to a certain Baron':

When I am, as it were, completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer – say, travelling in a carriage, or walking after a good meal, or during the night when I cannot sleep; it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence and how these ideas come, I know not; nor can I force them. Most ideas that please me I retain in memory, and am accustomed, as I have been told, to hum them to myself. If I continue in this way, it soon occurs to me how I may turn this or that morsel to account, so as to make a good dish of it, that is to say, agreeable to the rules of counterpoint, to the peculiarities of the various instruments, etc.

All this fills my soul, and, provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodised and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were, all at once. What a delight this is I cannot tell! All this inventing, this producing, takes place in a lively dream.

(Dr. R. On the subtle level).

Still, the actual hearing of the 'tout ensemble' is, after all, the best. What has been thus produced I do not easily forget, and this is perhaps the best gift I have my Divine Maker to thank for.

When I proceed to write down my ideas, I take out of my bag of memory, if I may use that phrase, what has been previously collected into it in the way I have mentioned. For this reason the committing to paper is done quickly enough, for everything is, as I said before, already finished, and it rarely differs on paper from what it was in my imagination. At this occupation I can, therefore, suffer myself to be disturbed for whatever may be going on around me. I write, and even talk, but only of fowls and geese, and of the children – Gretel or Barkel, or some such matter. But why my productions take from my hand that particular form and style that makes them Mozartish, and different from the works of other composers, is probably owing to the same cause which renders my nose so large or so aquiline; or in short, makes it Mozart's, and different from those of other people. For I really do not study or aim at any originality.

(Sitwell's *Mozart*, p.151).

Then Dr. R. contd:

So the greatest blessing is knowledge expressed in creative action in your own particular field. Mozart left between six and seven hundred listed works in a short lifetime of thirty-six years!

Mr. Geoffroy. Does Self-realization have a physical aspect necessarily?

Dr. R. The important thing, of course, is the Causal body – the unrealized possibilities – because we only realize very few of the potentialities we could have.

The next most important is the subtle – the world of mind. But the physical body manifests the repercussions of all these things in a much slower time, perhaps even much later. On the subtle level things happen almost instantaneously; one can go round the world in thought, or one can go to Badrinath, in two minutes! But the physical body takes a long, long time for things to be realized, and we mustn't get into the way of regarding Self-realization as a matter of physical time taking years and years and years! It could happen this evening; it could happen tomorrow!

(to Mr. G.). I don't know if that answers your question?

Mr. G. I was thinking of the saying, 'that you could have Consciousness without function', and vice-versa?

Dr. R. Yes, the Absolute – the Light at the Centre – has no function at all; it is Consciousness without function. It is not involved in any of the things in creation. So, the nearer we come to the Atman, the more Consciousness; then we have choice whether we function or not – whether we express that Consciousness in action.

Well, shall we put it into non-action for two or three minutes?

MEDITATION

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