

14 December 1976

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

The meeting began with Lord Allan giving the announcements:

There will be a Meditation meeting on the 11th January.

Then he gave instructions to turners attending the Mevlana Festival Mukabeleh this Friday evening.

We are going to have another of these Work-ins on Sunday, 16th January, at 10 a.m. This is a splendid opportunity for people actually to do physical work together, and we hope that as many people as possible will take advantage of that opportunity. It is not just for the maintenance and cleaning of the House, but it is so that we can work together on a particular specific task. There are lists outside giving details and for names.

Then there is a new Journal printed and ready for publication. A few advance copies will be on sale at a price of £1.25 at the back of this room after this meeting; but as there are only so few, if people are coming to Colet again later in the week, would they try and hold back their enthusiasm and buy it later, so that people who won't be here again this week may have a chance to buy it.

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Dr. Roles then began as follows:

I just wanted to mention that our old friend the poet George Griffiths, has had a very serious operation and is in hospital. He has plenty of friends and is getting a lot of fruit and flowers – he doesn't need anything – but we should keep him in our hearts this Christmas; so I would like to quote a little poem (or aphorism) of his, which he sent me on my birthday just before he went into hospital. It is called 'Busy':

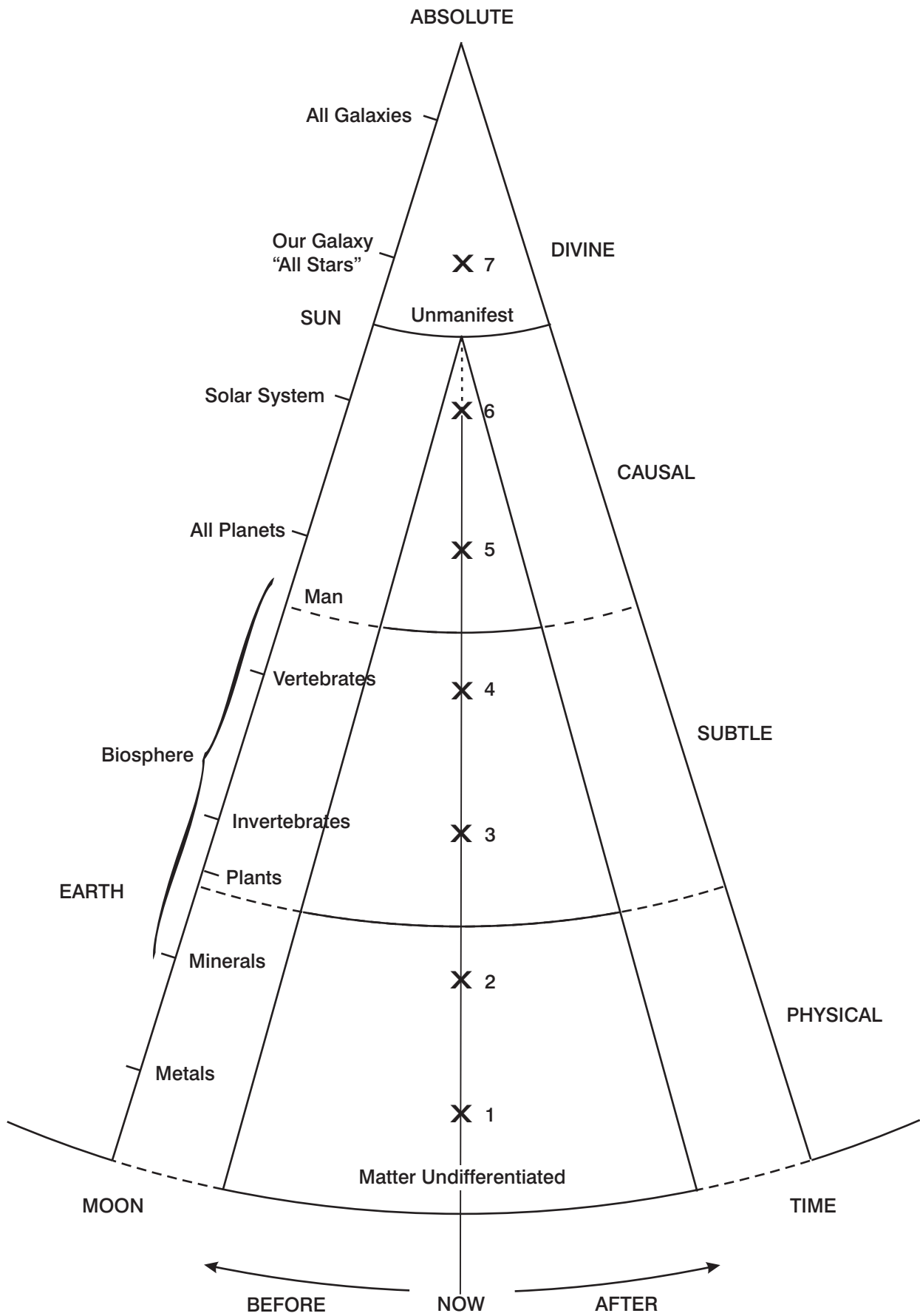
One day
A stranger knocked on my door.
'Go away' I said...
'Can't you see I'm busy?
I'm looking for the Truth.'
Somewhat puzzled, Truth turned round –
And went away.

(Sounds of appreciation)

Dr. R. then continued:

We are at the last meeting, at the last year, of an old era; for we celebrate our gala year next year, because 1977 is exactly thirty years – a human generation – since Mr. Ouspensky's death in 1947; and if you go back another generation – another thirty years – you come to 1917 the Russian Revolution, where he lost everything, and from which we were lucky to get him; He got away with his life.

Just to celebrate this, I would like to pick up the meeting point of the two Systems – his System and the Shankaracharya's, because we are now by way of seeing how to put them together.



(With relevant diagram on screen)

There is the Ladder; it is just an added dimension; the concentric circles represent the fourth and fifth dimensions of 'Space-Time'. This vertical extension represents a new dimension where all possibilities – new possibilities – can happen.

Starting at the Good Impulse, are the two Steps, as we said before, getting one out of the physical level – the sensory world; two Steps to get one through all the personal psychology; and two Steps (transcendental Meditation and Samadhi) through the Causal world. To reach the Seventh Step (Turiya) one needs a full measure of Grace and few people attain it.

We are, as regards Meditation, keeping entirely to this. It is a matter of giving up; to get from one Step to another, you have to give up something very precious; and our studies during the coming year will be on what to give up during half-hours.

I have been told that a great many people are rather stuck with the half-hours, just with a kind of empty repetition. Now idle repetition – parrot-like repetition – does not get one far. It is just better than not doing it.

What one needs is to be giving up something joyfully; whenever one sees anything that isn't the Mantra, or hears anything that isn't the Mantra, or thinks anything, or remembers anything, one gives it up; but one must do it joyfully.

Each individual has to find a way to do that – to connect the Meditation with joy and gladness.

We have been giving it to about sixteen children from ten upwards, and what we say to them is: 'Say this word whenever you feel happy; connect it with happiness; then when you are unhappy; it will cheer you up.' We grown-ups should do the same.

Any questions on that?

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Now I want to show you that it really is a new way of looking at our Ray of Creation which Mr. Ouspensky inherited sixty years ago; two years before that, in fact, when the System first reached Europe. For beyond the Sixth Step here – beyond the Causal level – is the Divine level, according to the Shankaracharya, and according to our System; and the Seventh Step of the Ladder corresponds to the Galaxy, our Milky Way. Beyond that are all the Galaxies, of which there are an innumerable number; and above that, and all created Beings, is the Absolute.

So that the Ray of Creation was: the Absolute; All Worlds; All Stars; our Galaxy; our Sun – the Solar System as a whole – our Sun is unmanifested there; the manifested Solar System; the Planetary world; and all this – lower end – Organic Life on Earth. Man, as he should be, is half-way between the Absolute and this lower end. Then Vertebrates, Invertebrates, Plants, which make animal life possible; Minerals, Metals. And here is the great stability, the gravity of the Earth and the Moon which keeps the whole thing in place and affects all the Biosphere – all Organic Life from a physical point of view. But we must not let the gravity of the Earth and the Moon affect us psychologically. We have to liberate ourselves from that, and those are some of the things we have to give up.

In any case, the first thing is the mind wandering off into one of these circles of time before or after – useless waste of energy – no help at all; and any moment Now this Ladder is in existence and has always been in existence.

You will find your own way, perhaps, of making this emotional and thereby helping the Meditation.

Of course we, here, have to try and develop a common language, which was what Mr. Ouspensky spent most of his life trying to do – we have to develop a common language which people today can understand and in which we can communicate.

It does not mean that the individual can't describe it to himself in his own language. For instance, we have all heard as children one account of this Ladder – Jacob's Ladder in Genesis:

Jacob left his home, you will remember, and went out into the wilderness.

A. reads from chapter 28:

He lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night because the sun was set. And he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed; and behold a ladder was set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

And behold the Lord stood above it and said: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, thy father..., and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold I am with thee everywhere thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land.

And Jacob awoke out of his sleep and said. Surely, the Lord *is* in this place and I knew it not.

Dr. R. And that is our trouble, 'The Lord is in this place, and in me; and I know it not.' And Self-realization is knowing it; all anybody can do is to encourage and remind people of this fact, which is innate in all living creatures.

Well, you may like that language or you may not.

The poets said it; and I think William Blake's famous poem – *The Sunflower* – is describing exactly what I am trying to describe here:

Oh, sunflower, weary of time
That countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done
Where the youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves and aspire
Where my sunflower wishes to go.

This 'Sunflower' is in every human being, and probably in other beings as well – like sunflowers! There is always something turning towards the Sun. It works, too, because yesterday when Mrs. Mellett was typing this for us, someone rang her up in deep dejection, saying: 'Please say something to cheer me up.' So she read this poem and it did the trick!

And we also have to keep awake because we never know when a moment will come when we may be able to cheer somebody up!

I think each individual has to try to see if at other times than Meditation they can make

the idea of the perpetual presence of the Creator in perpetual accessibility – and of the eternal existence of a Ladder of Seven Steps. Then the meditation will sail along much better than if it is too pedestrian!

Any questions about that?

Mr. Weigall. It is a much harder and much more difficult thing to look after what goes on between meditation than what actually happens in meditation. Meditation seems to depend so much on what has been happening between meditations.

Dr. R. Yes, undoubtedly; if you have been able to have some memory of who you really are in between half-hours, then when you sit down there is not all that lag to take up; it will start straight away.

Go ahead, and find ways of doing that. You and I have both retired more or less, and we ought to be able to find plenty of opportunities for that.

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Dr. R. went on:

There have been some questions handed in by a sister of Maria Dobrée who lives in Australia. Well, I can't answer them! (Dr. R. laughs).

The first one is:

Can you give me a short definition of the Divine Self?

Dr. R. The Divine Self is precisely what is indefinable and could not ever be defined. Because by trying to define or describe anything, you put a limitation, so that it is no longer Divine. There is no such thing and don't try it.

Your other questions were all about the thoughts, they are rather 'thinky' sorts of questions, Mrs. Comunello; and I should give them up. We would all have to think very hard about these problems you mention.

I think the only thing is: will I have chance of seeing her and have a talk? But bypass all those thoughts; it is nothing to do with meditation. All those questions – forget them.

Any other questions?

Q. When you were going over the diagram, you linked the Seventh level with the Galaxies.

Dr. R. It was not I but Mr. Ouspensky's teacher who did that.

Q. Could we hear a little more about this?

Dr. R. Certainly you can have the original description; but you have to hear the full Truth from the Absolute Himself; no-one less than that is any good!

I can tell you something about the first two or three steps; but you have to discover the higher ones for yourself. We start by trying to understand about the Four Bodies (see diagram). Lord Allan will now read you, if you like, the Shankaracharya's first description to us of the Four Bodies which he calls – physical, subtle, Causal and Divine. It was the first of many talks with him on this subject.

A. reads:

This is in October, 1962:

Dr. R. had asked: If the Shankaracharya would agree with our System that immortality depends upon four bodies, not one?

S. Yes; the first is the physical body of flesh and bones. The second is the subtle body which makes it all move. The third is the Causal body where the Atman – the Self – lives. And the fourth body – the Divine body – is where everything lives.

The first body is the machine by which everything gets done. It gets its orders from the second body and must obey it; but it can do nothing of its own – nothing more than that.

The body that makes it move, like the power that runs a machine, is the second body, which contains the apparatus for collecting impressions and converting them into sensations; the organs of action; the systems of circulation; two elements of mind – Manas and Buddhi; and two elements of consciousness – Ahankar and Chitta.

Dr. R. So nineteen mechanisms are described by his Tradition, and we can modify that as we like, or fill it in from current knowledge. Nevertheless, it is not realised fully the difference between the two worlds (physical and subtle) both of which are necessary before the machine can do anything at all.

S. contd: The third – the Causal body – remains the same from birth to death. This is the body of the Atman where – just as we have our own study or boudoir to which we retire after activity – so the Atman goes to His own room for rest.

Dr. R. The Atman has to be thought of as moving, sometimes, along this line of Now (on diagram), and when resting it stays in the inner organ or Antahkarana in the Causal body to have a rest. When there, it can be felt in the heart if approached in a humble way.

S. And the Divine body, or the body of the Absolute, is where all the Atmans take rest.

Dr. R. It is said that the ordinary man in the street – the ordinary householder – can complete and crystallise those three bodies; and he could even begin to experience the Divine body sometimes. But to be fully One with the Divine is something which is rare in the history of humanity, being seen in perfection only in great incarnations of God – Orpheus, Krishna, Jesus Christ, who incarnate to help mankind at difficult periods. That is all I can say about it.

This diagram is not in *time* at all – not that you have to wait thirty years to get here, and another thirty to get there; it is all Now; and any moment Now one gets as far as one can – throwing off, throwing off. It is a question of lightening one's heart; then the sun would rise.

You go inwards in meditation to the moment Now, and as much as you can lighten your heart, your consciousness (Chitta) will ascend like a feather when it has got rid of the dampness, as one of the *Philokalia* writers said.

Any other questions?

Mrs. Henry. When you first met with the Shankaracharya, how did you recognise that he was – to use Mr. Ouspensky's expression – 'a man of Higher Mind or from the Inner Circle'?

Dr. R. Well, I had no preconceived opinions about him; the Maharishi mentioned one day (while seventy of us Westerners were at his Ashram where the Ganges emerges from the mountains)

that he had invited the head of his Tradition to come for a visit of three days. So we decorated the place, and then we went out to the gate and we heard the noise and saw that there was a crowd collecting around. I wasn't expecting anything; but in that moment I saw that he was *'remembering himSelf'*, – I recognised in him the description we have been given of this: that such a man would be protecting his consciousness like a candle that he is sheltering from the wind. People were hanging garlands round his neck; they were kissing his feet; they were jostling and shoving; but he was remembering himSelf. That was what convinced me. I knew for certain – 'This is it. This is what Mr. Ouspensky told us to look for.'

Then, that evening he addressed us all, and I was amazed by the speed at which he replied to any question, often with a story which seemed perfectly to match the question.

You know, Mrs. Henry, that it is not much good having a big collection of stories (you have made a collection of his stories); but the point of them is their aptness to the given situation. That makes all the difference; his stories were so timely and they came so spontaneously in answer to any question which the Maharishi was translating of course.

Then an evening or two later it was the full moon and we were all sitting on the sandy shore of the Ganges; there were a lot of Indians there with the Shankaracharya on his throne with his attendants around; with somebody lighting little wicks; and the Europeans in front; and the Maharishi again translating, when I suddenly heard him saying – using those words, Self-remembering, which I had never heard from anybody but Mr. Ouspensky. He said, 'The whole trouble is we do not remember ourSelves.' I nearly jumped out of my skin!

So that was the beginning of the thing, and just before leaving for home I had a taste of Samadhi and went and asked him if I could communicate with him in future. I had got the Maharishi's permission. He said:

'This meeting is very important; you must by all means keep in touch.' So all this has followed over the last fifteen years.

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We have just had a directive in which we have been put right a bit. I had been trying to get answers to the question which is roughly: 'Where do I go from here?' for more than a year and nothing had come back.

Then last week I suddenly got an answer.

It was to the effect that there are three obstacles – always three obstacles to knowing the existence of the Absolute in oneself, and of the Teacher's help which is going on all the time; and those three obstacles we will be discussing during next term to find our own ways of conquering them.

He said the worst one (the one that we are all suffering from more than any other) is the 'dispersion of the mind' – *Vikshepa*: the mind is always running off into the past or the future (one of these circles of the diagram) and that puts an intolerable burden on us and gets in the way of any Grace we could be receiving. That was the general effect of the message – that this was the area we should work in.

(to A.): You have often drawn my attention to the dispersion of my mind; it hops about from one idea to another. This directive is largely addressed to me! (to the room) I need your help; that's all about it!

Dr. R. then said:

So if there aren't any more intellectual questions, what would you like?

I thought we would have some music; this time I have chosen something you have heard before, but now for a special reason.

About AD 1600 when Venice was at the height of her power as Queen of the Adriatic, Claudio Monteverdi wrote a madrigal to remind people at home of where their true treasure lay. 'O blind, blind people' he said, 'what is the good of going abroad to distant countries, trading, amassing riches, which are all perishable. Your real riches lie here at home.'

So, when we have heard this madrigal, we will go into meditation.

The Monteverdi Madrigal

MEDITATION

(Longer than usual, we have never known so many people sit so quietly for so long!)

Dr. R. afterwards: It is a quarter past eight.

Have confidence anyway. For this branch of the Work during these sixty years has come through a Revolution, two World wars, and many other crises; and it is built for continuity.

The Shankaracharya's Tradition has lasted twenty five centuries, and the Mantra has lasted at least six thousand years!

A very Happy Christmas to anyone I won't be seeing on Friday at the Mevlana Festival Mukabeleh.

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