

3 October 1977

LARGE MONDAY MEETING

We want to thank those of you whom we haven't seen since the summer for your share in this lovely present which we got in July for our golden wedding. Some of you haven't seen it, perhaps. This beautiful casket was made by Mr. Geoffroy and, as you know, gold lasts forever, and this token of your affection will equally last forever!

We had some lovely things. We had a golden Russian rouble from the time of Catherine the Great; we had this example of mirror writing from Prof. Guyatt of the Royal College of Art; we had a marvellous big display of flowers which fitted into a beautiful big bowl by Alan Caiger-Smith given us by John Hersey; and we were given a party by the family. So we had to go to Majorca to recover! Thank you very much.

Thank you also for redecorating the room in which we give Initiations. It is beautiful, and now today we have the chair-covers made by Mrs. Winterbotham. So, altogether, we are really set up for the season!

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Now I would like to ask Lord Allan to tell us a little bit about his visit last week to New York where he met many members of the group, since many of us want news of Mr. Rabeneck and the others.

Lord Allan. Well, I took many messages from people here to their friends in New York and they were very warmly reciprocated. People like Mrs. Grazebrook – much loved in New York, Mrs. Fleming and Mrs. Drew; they are immensely glad for any of us in London to visit them, and they always afford us a warm welcome; and Mr. Rabeneck is very generous in allowing people from London to talk and give their views.

Dr. R. (to A.) You arranged so that you would see the group on Sunday before your own business started?

A. Yes. I spent the afternoon with Mr. Rabeneck and that evening they had arranged a special meeting in Don Milsom's apartment because he is, as you know, totally crippled now; and we had about twenty-four people there – Jim D'Angelo came but Georgina had to stay home with her baby.

Dr. R. And then you spent several evenings, didn't you, at the Hager's apartment?

A. Well, no, as Bill Hager had to go away, but I saw people individually. They were in very good form, and it strikes me that Mr. Rabeneck who is, of course, getting on in years has made big advances along the lines of Work; and the group are really very loyal to him, but love the contact they have with London.

[After a number of announcements about plans for this term, Dr. Roles then started on his main theme of the meeting:]

Dr. R. But now, we are engaged on something else as well, and this afternoon I want to keep our talk to Mr. Ouspensky's early teaching. For his centenary exhibition at Yale University next

year there will be a brochure, and Yale have asked for the essence of Mr. Ouspensky's teaching, and we are expected to give them material for that because we have more people who had personal experience with him then, than exist anywhere else. Quite a large issue, considering that the System he taught is a lifetime study, and how much professors at Yale can take in of it, in one article of one small book, remains to be seen!

I am consulting with our intermediary – Mr. Ouspensky's printer, Fairfax Hall, who lives quite close to us here, and we are having a succession of discussions about what the content of this booklet should be.

The idea which I am putting to him is that it should all be based on the *practice* side of his teaching which was '*Self-remembering*'; and all the reminiscences, of which crowds come back to one's mind as one recalls those days, should all be connected with what they were really for – opportunities for remembering oneSelf.

These opportunities were of the greatest possible variety. One never knew what was going to happen next – what one might be expected to do; and to remember oneSelf meant for him to act appropriately on the spur of the moment often without previous verbal instructions at all.

I mean, one might at a party have to put on a turn – what we might call today 'instant theatre'. You remember, Lucas, Geoffroy and many others here today?

There were serious moments – moments of crisis; and there were very amusing moments where one had to act appropriately. There was never a dull moment with Mr. Ouspensky and Madame Ouspensky.

Now so that you recapture the flavour, and perhaps be stimulated to recall some of your first-hand experiences with him, I want to read you short extracts from some letters which were written by a completely new person who was dragged along by the scruff of her neck to one of his first meetings in London in 1921, (which she felt to be far above her head), but who from that moment saw a great deal of him. These letters cover only the *first fortnight* of the impact on her of his System – of his teaching. But they are authentic because she remained faithful to him for twenty-six years, and in the year of his death (1947) after her long illness, I took her down to see him and say goodbye; and after he had finished speaking with her he came out and said. 'Good; first real result of all my work with people.' Before she herself died she gave me these letters to do what we liked with.

So, let us hear what this rather receptive lady writer says about her first contact:

A. reads:

I spent two hours with him (she wrote), and he certainly struck me as being a wonderful person... He told me that what I had to do was to formulate any desire, and he could then begin to show me how to attain it; and on the way to attaining it I should learn much more...

I said that I really did not know what I wanted, that I fluctuated from one thing to another... wished I could be decisive – not always changing... I wanted to be different.

...

O. (commended this approach, and) went on to explain to me how nearly all people are really sleeping all the time; that they move and act as mere machinery,

and that when you start to study your so-called 'conscious' life according to his methods, presently you begin to see how this is, and why the machinery works as it does.

Having got to that point, you are able to distinguish between what is machinery and what is your individual *Essence*... the only thing in you which is unchanged by circumstances and actions... All that part of you that is machinery is motivated by what O. calls *Personality*... always subject to change... essentially fluctuating – kaleidoscopic... So, your personality is a mere cloak, clothes that you wear and carry about with you. Essence is You – yourSelf, your individuality. This made me see why I fluctuated and changed so much about everything and could never be decisive...

...

I suppose this is what 'knowing oneSelf' is, really, knowing the difference in oneself between personality, which is controlled by circumstances, and Essence, which need not be.

It appears that one of the ways to begin is to capture and increase one's moments of real Consciousness. To do that, the first step is to try to do what O. calls 'remembering yourSelf'. That is, while you are walking down the street to remember all the time that it is You who are walking; while you are reading a book, try to remember that it is You reading this book, and at the same time continue to read and take in what you are reading.

He says that we sometimes get a taste of this sensation when we go to a quite new place abroad. Suddenly you feel, 'This is I in this place!' Mostly we never feel this; we are seldom aware of ourSelves while doing something. We dream through everything and this is an attempt not to dream for a few seconds at a time, to awake.

Gradually, he says, in this way you increase your moments of Self-consciousness until you can be doing several things at once and yet be aware of yourSelf.

(*Nine Letters*, Rosamund Bland. Stourton Press, Cape Town, 1952)

Dr. R. Now we learnt afterwards that that is not the most important thing, for we are not supposed to juggle with doing a whole lot of things at once. But in later talks with her I found that what Mr. O. really meant was, 'you can acquire the ability to remember yourSelf and act rightly at important moments. For instance: moments of crisis which would otherwise overwhelm one'. Also as she mentions later in these letters:

You begin to see what is in front of you – a tree for instance – instead of just labelling it and dismissing it; or even not noticing it at all.

Dr. R. Her description reminds one of these cuttings which people kindly send me called 'Love at first Sight' by a lady who, in middle life, suddenly got her sight owing to an operation – two operations – having never seen before; and she was amazed at how green the grass was, and how little attention people paid to what they saw. She was upset at the way we take it all for granted!

But this new vision which comes from the practice of Self-remembering – is like the vision an artist has of a world which ordinary people don't see.

Well then, I would like to know whether this is the picture you have of what we mean by Self-remembering, and whether you have got any questions. Because I would like to revive this early Ouspensky and this early teaching before it got all complicated and clouded over.

Miss Scrutton. The first thing which struck me forcibly when I first heard Mr. Ouspensky was his saying that we are all asleep. This seemed to me, then, a new and revolutionary concept.

Dr. R. Yes, and anybody who has this vivid memory, I would like them to jot it down and send in to me. Then we will have a good lot for Yale to pick and choose from – what they will put in. You remember the journalist (Rom Landau) who came to his meetings and wrote *God is My Adventure* called the article about Ouspensky ‘The war against sleep’.

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Then Dr. Roles continued:

Now it is important not to regard this practical work we did with Mr. Ouspensky and Madame as portentous or pompous; it meant behaving *suitably for the given circumstances*. And, as I said, these could be many and varied – adventures with him in Paris and Montmartre; in London and at various country houses in England; shopping with him on New York’s Fifth Avenue; taking meetings with him or for him in New York, sitting with him in his study in New Jersey or at the studio in NYC – all that.

But also some very amusing adventures. I recall one quite soon after I began to sit with him:

The kitchen in their farmhouse at Gaddesden (in Kent) was sacred to Madame, and of course kept scrupulously clean. But also Mr. Ouspensky had a great liking for animals of all sorts, and they seemed to like him! One evening three of us, including Dr. Hamilton Pearson, were sitting at a late supper in the kitchen, when his friend, the ram, walked in for his usual refreshment – a little vodka, perhaps and a little Sakushka – and just then footsteps were heard coming from Madame’s room. So the ram and I were bundled into the pantry while Dr. Pearson and Mr. Ouspensky dealt with the matter with appropriate dignity.

After the all-clear, we were let out; the ram finished his supper; we put him to bed, and cleaned up his hoof-marks. (laughter)

All sorts of things might happen – really amusing.

So, Self-remembering is a practical thing for living with in the present moment!

(to A.) There was some question at your Meditation meeting at to how it related to Self-realization?

Self-realization is a life programme – your life should be devoted to Self-realization. But how you do it is through remembering yourSelf whenever you can – in the Shankaracharya’s terminology, remembering Param-Atman. It’s a long process. Personally, I can’t do enough of it!

Many, many mistakes have been made since he [P.D.O] began to teach. It is very important that we should really understand.

The Shankaracharya also used the expression ‘Self-remembering’ in one of the earliest talks when I heard him speaking in public, with the Maharishi translating, and many times since. He said. ‘We cannot begin with this because it is too complicated to explain to beginners.’ Because the real explanation involves the whole subject of human life and death – what Mr. Ouspensky called ‘Eternal recurrence’.

But, practically, you don’t think about any of that; you just ‘come to yourSelf’ and

remember to walk, to sit, to speak or to act in a manner worthy of the Divine Self which is present all the time.

Well, come on; remember yourSelf and ask something!

Mr. Basil Griffiths. Yesterday, I picked up the fourth edition of the *New Model* – I had previously read the first – which was 1934 – but had not, previously, read the Preface by Mr. Ouspensky to the *Second Edition*. This I found most enlightening even after all these years of study.

Dr. R. Yes; very important for any of us to read and understand after all these years. But what we want now is *first-hand experiences which have never appeared in print*, and also to practise what he meant by Self-remembering.

All sorts of things have appeared in print, mostly after his death and often against his wishes, and Yale have all that already for this centenary exhibition next year. But what we want is to describe the practice which is going to take us to full Self-realization before we die.

Now last term, when we mentioned this, we also studied (at the New Groups anyway) two other cardinal elements of his original teaching, and this lady goes on to describe these two things:

A. then reads:

At a meeting O. said everybody ‘identifies’ all the time and we have to *try not to identify*’ if we wish to become more Conscious, because this identifying is a very mechanical thing and keeps us asleep...

It seems to me that it is losing oneself in things. He said that in Russian there was a better word for it, which means really ‘flowing into’ or ‘merging into’. We do this with everything we do or feel or think. He gave the example of ‘cat with a piece of meat’. While the cat has the meat, it is all in this meat, practically you can say the *cat is the meat*; nothing else can exist for it until the meat is eaten...

He said this ‘identifying’ which we do every minute, takes all our energy, and because of this we have no energy for Self-remembering and being awake.

(*ibid*)

Dr. R. Now that rings a bell! Doesn’t it explain much more clearly what he meant by ‘identifying’ which is the equivalent of H.H’s word ‘Kashaya’?

Are there still some questions – about the cause of the pseudo-sleep we exist in all the time, when we are not physically asleep in bed at night?

Q. You said earlier that Self-remembering was really the same thing as remembering the Param-Atman all the time. I wonder whether the difficulty I was caused over this was simply a play of words, because in my experience the Param-Atman was on a wide level – external – and Self-remembering was more internal and on a narrower front.

Dr. R. That is a very valid remark. Actually you get to realise that they are exactly the same thing, and the reason is that they are both approached inwardly, not outside ourselves. Later, if you remember yourSelf (or the Param-Atman) you see a different world in front of you; then it becomes externalised. But they are both to be reached inwardly by Meditation and other ways.

The reason why it is much safer to think in terms of something big and universal like Param-Atman is because there are so many doubts as to what is your real Self. We keep calling the wrong thing ‘I’.

But about Param-Atman – the Self of the Universe, the Self that lives in the hearts of all – there can be no doubt; and it is a way of substituting for the wrong self the real Self.

This obstacle is easier seen, though, in connection with people: and this lady goes on:

A. reads:

The other thing he said that we do most of the time is *'inner considering'* which is identifying or slavishly losing ourSelves in people. I mean that 'inner considering' is worrying about what other people think and feel about you, and letting it colour all your thoughts and actions so that finally you cannot call yourself free in any way. If you are not worrying about it, you are trying to 'put on an act' so that you are pretending to appear what you are not.

Dr. R. In other words, it is the difference between our behaviour when any one of us is alone with nobody looking on, and when we are in company and somebody is looking on. A great difference between just being oneSelf – natural, and inner considering; and then the opposite of inner considering which is a form of Self-remembering and is called external considering.

A. (continues with reading):

On the other hand, what he calls 'external considering' is remembering the other person as being just as important as oneself. It includes 'being considerate' in the ordinary sense but it demands more, it demands 'Self-remembering' and being awake; and it means being kind and doing things for people without expecting any return.

Dr. R. I think you did get that idea about external considering last term when you discussed it. Any questions now? (as no response, Dr. Roles contd.)

It is a question of being kind. It is not just trying to do goodishness like the story in the *Mathnawi* one always remembers:

A man had taken a thorn out of a bear's paw, and this bear was eternally grateful and followed the man about – devoted love.

But one day a fly settled on the man's forehead while he was asleep. The bear took a great stone and killed the fly with disastrous results to his benefactor.

This is trying to do good without Self-remembering, without external considering. (to Mrs. Gil) Are you agreeing with that? (She nods)

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Dr. Roles went on:

So you see how fresh it seemed to come from that time in 1921 – 56 years ago and twelve years before I myself ever met Mr. Ouspensky.

How can we recapture that?

(to A.) Only through what you were talking about – the two things, *Knowledge and experience*. The knowledge we are giving you, but the experience must be your own.

(pause)

Miss Scrutton. When I realise that Param-Atman knows all that is going on within me, I sometimes feel guilty, and I regard that as a terrible form of considering.

Dr. R. I think we have now learnt to include everything as part of the Param-Atman – all that,

good or bad – everything that goes on is all part of some great Whole. And, Miss Scrutton, we should avoid a lot of the sense of guilt – His Holiness says it is utterly unnecessary and that it gets in the way – even if we have to say, ‘Well, it wasn’t me doing it. Just some silly thing, part of the laws of Nature performing.’

Really it is a matter of cultivating the habit of taking the I-ishness out of everything, good and bad, ‘withdrawing your mind from favourable or unfavourable alike’ and putting it on Param-Atman.

Any more questions?

Q. (a woman) Is Self-remembering keeping the mind on something else? Then it works.

Dr. R. It means, keeping the mind free instead of being captivated.

Q. (same) Yes, keeping the mind on something else.

Dr. R. No, keep your mind on what you are doing now this moment. It is rather like this – keeping the mind free enables more moments of Self-remembering to come. It uncovers your real Self and allows you to hear His Voice; whereas the usual layers of thought block it out completely. So, trying to lift the mind above what is burdening it – like the past or the future, especially any regret, enables you to have more moments of Self-remembering and lets them last longer. They come unexpectedly. You cannot say, ‘I am going to remember mySelf at 6 o’clock on Thursday’. (to Q. You can’t say that? No.)

You do certain things which you are told to do persistently without expecting any reward, and then these moments come. And they get stronger and stronger until you love them so much that you don’t do a lot of the silly things you used to do.

Dr. R. then continued: This is apropos of what she said; this is the last quotation we will have. She is writing to a friend hoping it will interest him:

A. reads:

I wonder if I have managed to convey anything of it all by this. One thing that he said struck me particularly. It was apropos of helping other people and my attempts to shake you out of your inertia.

He said. ‘You cannot help other people who are sleeping; you can only make them uncomfortable in their sleep. No one can wake another. Waking must come from within each one, and first there must be a strong desire to awake. If there is no desire to awake; if they are comfortable in their sleep, then I have nothing to say to such people. I can only offer something to those who are dissatisfied with their state, who wake at moments, and have a real desire to wake altogether, but who do not know how to get out of their sleep.’

Dr. R. That says something to you, doesn’t it? The idea of a School is that we shake each other by the shoulder. Somebody usually is awake. Then he goes to sleep, and somebody else wakes up. It is especially evident in a married couple.

And lastly, just to prove that it had a good effect this early teaching of Mr. Ouspensky. After forty-eight hours she writes this:

A. reads:

Today I have worked hard, played tennis for nearly three hours and written you this letter. It isn't a bad performance for someone who only forty-eight hours ago was prostrate with three weeks' headache, and who had begun to feel that she had reached the end of everything in life. My sudden increase of energy and clearness of head and vision is quite remarkable, and I have an idea that Ouspensky has already done something for me.

Dr. R. (to Mrs. Fleming) You too have lost your headache, haven't you?

(pause)

Dr. R. then went on:

So all Teachings say the same thing, but in a different language and with a different approach.

I would like to read what came to us through the Shankaracharya on this subject in reply to a question of my wife's at our last audience with him and at our last set of meetings. It explains why he uses the Universal, the Param-Atman – the relationship between the Param-Atman and the Atman.

A. reads:

That relationship is always present. There is never a moment when this relationship is not working. But, as you said previously (Dr. R. In relation to a question that I put) we forget this relationship. This happens because we get involved with other things and we do not remember the real Doer. But the relationship is always there. We should not feel that, even in our ignorance, or by not remembering the Atman, the relationship would be dissolved.

It becomes alive only when the Consciousness comes into action, which means when one Consciously remembers the Param-Atman. Then it gets activated.

For example: electricity is made available through wires and connections; but the force or energy of the electricity will be made available only when the switches are turned on. So we have to turn on the switches to get united with the Energy which is now made available.

We know that we forget it. To help this forgetfulness one has somehow to convince one's mind and come to a decision – a decision which will not be altered by any other force later on. A decision of this type that all our actions are done because of the inspiration by the Absolute, and is done only for the Absolute, and it is being done by the forces made available by the Absolute.

Now, if one comes to this sort of decision, then one will see that the remembrance becomes much more frequent.

(Record, 22 September 1975)

Dr. R. So it should be much easier this way than it was for Mr. Ouspensky and those he was trying to teach – no Meditation – no special instructions.

Shall we drop off the other things which make us forget for two or three minutes.

MEDITATION

Afterwards;

Dr. R. Claude, I am going to take this (the golden present) down to my room for safety this time; I can't be parted from it!

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He then said:

I said the Truth was always the same, and Lady Allan has found this passage in what is called the *Jerusalem Bible* from St. James' Epistle (1:19–25):

Be quick to listen, but be slow to speak, and slow to rouse your temper.

God's righteousness is never served by man's anger. So do away with all the impurities and bad habits still left in you.

Accept and submit to the Word which is implanted in you and can save your souls.

But you must do what the Word tells you and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves. To listen to the Word and not obey is like looking at your own features in a mirror and then, after a quick look, going off and immediately forgetting what you looked like.

But the man who looks steadily at the perfect law of freedom, makes that his habit – not listening and then forgetting, but actively putting it into practice – will be happy in all that he does.

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