

6 February 1978

SMALL MONDAY MEETING**Lord Allan and Mr. Nolan Howitt**

Following the announcements:

A. Now, we have Nolan Howitt on the platform tonight. He is going back to New Zealand via New York next weekend. He is leaving on Sunday, and going to spend three days in New York with the group there; Brigit is staying on here until Wednesday, hoping to meet her husband in space or somewhere!

The Howitts have had a perfectly splendid series of interviews with the Shankaracharya, some of which you have already seen in the paper which was for last Thursday's meetings. I have been lucky enough to read reports of most of the audiences and they are very thrilling. Dr. Roles thought that while these things were fresh, things were fresh in Nolan's mind, it would be nice to have him talk to us tonight, particularly in relation to Part 2 of last week's paper. Dr. Roles thought that he would benefit best from this by sitting in the audience, so he hasn't deserted us – he is sitting in the room!

It would probably be easier, Nolan, to play you in through questions being asked, so let's have some of what we have got in the habit of calling 'feedback' about last week's meetings.

Anything particular on Part 1 to begin with? – the setting up of the Observer?

Q. There were two questions on the first part of the material from the Thursday group here: Mr. Haines asked: 'What is the relationship between the Deputy Steward and the Observer?'

A. How did you answer that?

Q. I said that as far as I could see the Deputy Steward was there to witness the disorder, for the person to become aware of the disorder in the house; but was obviously very different from the Steward and the Owner.

A. Yes, I think that was right – the Deputy Steward can see the chaos and was put there to put the chaos right; and the Steward I would link to the Observer. Has anyone else got any views on that?

Miss Bolton. We had a quotation from H.H. about the body becoming quiet, and then He said 'The Self emerges as Observer', and it goes on that in this state of quiet of mind, the Self recharges the whole. Is it that the Observer changes? Does Observer change with growth so that eventually the Self becomes the Observer? It sounds like that.

A. I think that is right – with Sattva the Observer develops, and ultimately the Observer becomes the Self. Wouldn't you agree with that, Nolan?

N.H. Yes, I agree. The space between the Observer and the thing observed disappears so that they become one. This, I find, is the key – the entry into the Universal is the loss of the space between the Observer and what is being observed. You *become* the bliss, the happiness; there is absolutely no space for anything but yourSelf.

A. I don't know that we have answered the earlier question about the relationship of the Deputy Steward and the Observer – the Deputy Steward, as his authority grows, would become the Observer? Dr. Roles says in the Reading [1978/4] after the quotation from Mr. Ouspensky:

‘These are the steps immediately ahead, and just now we have to find and establish this Deputy Steward as Observer. At least he could keep us meditating twice a day!’

Dr. Roles. [floor] We all have a commentator that keeps commentating anyway and so he just needs to be trained a little bit to do this from an objective point of view, and not just subjective – make use of what is going on.

Q. The second question from the meeting here was from Mrs. Connell who asked: ‘Is the Observer always present?’

A. I'm sure the Observer is always present, but we don't know it – we don't let him see the light of day, we keep him very restricted; and if we could only – probably by creating more Sattva – open things up so that the Observer played his full role – that would be what we are seeking. Do you agree, Nolan?

N.H. Yes. I get a bit mixed up because there seems to be that which is continually observing. So if there is any question, one simply has to ask ‘Who is asking about an Observer?’

Lady Allan. What Dr. Roles said about the commentator going on all the time, and that it could be trained to be more objective and less subjective, makes it very practical and relates at once to an experience that one can recognise.

Mrs. Fleming. I seem to come at it in a slightly different way – that we need to purify our nature, Prakriti, so that then the Buddhi would be listening to the Atman. It is like a triad – the silent hemisphere can't speak, but through Buddhi properly listening, it would be unified and a triad connected with the Atman?

A. Purifying nature is your affair, I think, Nolan!

N.H. I'm not quite sure if it is my affair yet! H.H. kept on, this visit, trying to get it through to one that the intellect was very much that which made decisions, and had to decide what was right or wrong for one. It seemed that in the Sattvic state it would make the right decisions, and when the right decision is made – in some way this clears away all the obstacles – then what one calls one's nature, which has this quality of happiness and joy, just seems to arise. It is necessary for conflict to cease. Ordinarily the decisions which are made don't seem to be made under the influence of Sattva, and so as soon as one talks to somebody and they raise an alternative, then one is not quite sure; and so one is back in conflict again.

A. Did my wife want to add something to her earlier comment?

M.A. Is making the commentator more objective letting it comment on whether one is attending to the Truth, being honest, being consistent? I wondered if this was the role of the commentator, because the Shankaracharya has so often said ‘Say what you feel, and do what you say’, and I wondered if the commentator should keep an eye on this?

M. Fleming. Do you think that the appearance of the Observer, which gives a feeling of more strength, more confidence, also gives a different feeling of 'I'?

A. I think it is very hard to distinguish between the Observer and 'I' – what do you say to that, Nolan?

N.H. Going back to the observation which I gave which was the inner turn – obviously quite different from the outer – when one is fortunate enough, and it happens when you spend some time near the Shankaracharya, you get these times when you are meditating and the first effect I find of Sattva is that it changes both – it changes both the Observer, and it changes the sense of 'I'. The first thing I find that happens to the sense of 'I' is that it loses any encumbrances to the body, feelings and thoughts and all these things, until you reach a point where there is an 'I' that seems to have been born of our experience of everything around us – it is somehow related to that, and that is the point. You get to a stage where that point dissolves altogether, and that is what I was saying before – that is the point where there is the loss of the space between the two.

I remember H.H. saying the day I left, when I thanked him very much for all that he had done, that it was not from Him – He was only a vehicle – and He said, 'I am only giving you back what is your own, I am only reminding you of what is your own.' I have a feeling that we are far too timid in claiming what is our own – the whole universe really does belong to us but we won't claim it. We tend to want to claim much lesser things. I can only say that when I first walked in to H.H. (and I can only say this from the point of view of a colonial – it may not happen to Englishmen! I don't know about a Realized man who is an Englishman!) I feel that he must see 'Here is a fellow who has come in here who is totally identified with his body, so his 'I' is absolutely related to his body!' And He says 'Well, I've got so many sessions to try and turn him around so that he remembers who he is.' And He starts, and every now and then He will say something like He said just casually to my wife on a previous trip when he thinks you are beginning to turn, 'Who do you think you are?' And you have to think, 'Well, I am in the company of a man who is Realized, so this is a man whose 'I' is Atman.' What do I answer when he asks me who I think I am? This time He asked me about the bodies. 'Who do they say the bodies belong to?' It is this sense of being turned around which is really only a change of viewpoint, so the 'I' in you – I never seem to think of the Observer because it always seems to be there – if I bother to check on it, it is there – but I've got to bring in some sort of 'I' to check on it. Somehow He manages, in a comparatively short time, to give you the confidence at least to think from the viewpoint that you *are* the Self; and you go away feeling very confident for a little while until this feeling wears off. I don't know whether that helps at all? It really is that we are terribly timid and don't lay claim to what really and rightfully belongs to us as a Man.

Mrs. Guyatt. Do you think the Observer can start to work or to function until you are consistent?

A. I would have said yes – what do you say, Nolan?

N.H. I don't quite understand the question.

E.G. I don't see how the Observer can observe inside and out and all the inconsistencies at once, as one is – it seems unbelievable.

N.H. Sometimes you become what you are observing, as you know, and then you forget altogether, which seems to be our normal state – that there isn't an Observer. Then there seems to be this confusion of putting something between us and what we are observing – and this is what I believe H.H. calls impure ego. As that is purified, the space that we keep on trying to put between things begins to dissolve. I think it is this space between things that brings so much difficulty; and I think it happens outside as well, because the Self is found to be manifesting through everything when we are in a good state; and at other times there is this space between everything. This is my own experience.

A. Wouldn't you think that one of the purposes of the Observer is to show us what is wrong, and therefore it must be observing even the wrong things so that we can put them right? Therefore when we are being inconsistent, it ought to pull us up? Do you not see it that way? Anybody else got any different views?

Q. Doesn't it come like flashes – you suddenly see that the way you are behaving is quite contrary to the way you want to behave?

A. Yes, but I feel the Observer should have a constant view, not just a flashing view, should always see, and make it so clear that we wish to correct it.

Mrs. Connell. Hasn't it got something to do with the old-fashioned expression 'My conscience pricks me?'

N.H. One always wonders about this conscience. Because one has got so much built into one from one part of the world and then to come over here and perhaps to wonder if one is doing things right or wrong – there seems to be that sort of conscience which bothers one a lot. But when one does experience the state we were talking about it usually has the quality of everything being in tune – everything seems to be right, to be looked after. That's how I see our actions at that time. One does see that one does things that can be quite harmful to other people and those are the only actions it seems necessary to interfere with – if they carry some sort of desire to inflict hurt on another person. Most of the things that happen to one don't seem to be worth bothering about changing – they seem just part of the play and the flow of things. No doubt if one woke up more and got some sense of a bigger play, then one might step in more often and that would bring in the conscience.

A. That is very interesting, but of course the state you are referring to is not one in which many of us live for long. A great deal of the time, we are, regrettably, not in that state. We identify ourselves with the drama on the screen instead of remembering that we are in fact the screen itself with the drama being played on it. I think possibly the Observer comes up then to remind one, and at the same time is probably connected with conscience. 'I am not awake'. Do you call that conscience or what? 'I do not know what I am doing, or where I am.'

Mrs. Koren. Is it too simple to say that one is trying to observe the presence of the Divine?

N.H. The other New Zealander who was with us explained to H.H. that one phrase which had meant a great deal to him was to hold the Param-Atman in mind. He said he had tried to do this for months on end, and it took about three months to manage it. After a lot of trying, he managed to achieve it for a few days and this helped him a lot, but of course he found that he couldn't get back to it again. H.H.'s answer was not to bother – just to say it once in the morning and that's enough! He said not to go round trying all day to say it and bring it to mind. That led on to the man who leads the School in Auckland – he had got himself into a dilemma where he felt on the one hand that his people were worrying about things in the world, and on the other seeking Self-realization – there seemed to be tremendous conflict. He wanted to know if H.H. could help relieve these people of the conflict. H.H.'s answer was very simple: 'Yes. When you meditate, meditate wholeheartedly, and do nothing else; and when you go to work, do your work wholeheartedly and nothing else! That will get rid of the conflict.' When you do meditate properly and it bites deep, the effect seems to come from the other way. When you are at work, suddenly it comes up from the heart, or it makes itself felt; and you can get on with your job without having your mind on something else. He seemed to make this very clear.

A. I would have said also to Mrs. Koren that the Observer's job is not so much to observe the Divine Will, but to check whether we are acting in accordance with the Divine Will. To see whether, as my wife said, we are being consistent or not.

M.A. Mr. Howitt has just reminded me of something else that H.H. said in that line – if you love your husband, you don't go round all day saying to yourself, 'I love my husband, I love my husband, I love my husband...' It is just there, and you get on with what you have to do, and don't feel you have got to keep remembering him all day!

A. It helps if you tell him that! (laughter)

N.H. You will be able to read it!

MEDITATION

A. Anything you would particularly like to tell us about your discoveries this time, Nolan?

N.H. I was only thinking (while I was supposed to be meditating!) that one of the things we were talking about in the first part which confused me a bit was the idea of an Observer doing anything. It's so new to me that that I wasn't able to think in this way at all. It might be interesting to mention how I understand it, purely from what I've had from the audiences and from H.H. It is simply this – that the 'I' which is present now is part of the mind called Ahankar and that is there all the time, until such time as it is purified in us through the growth of Sattva. But behind that is the great I or Universal I which is called Aham – which was once described beautifully by H.H. as the form of the formless Atman. It seems that when the individual I is dissolved, then there is the Great I that is always there; and neither of these I's can I get the sense of being any different from the Observer. This is what confused me. I remember at one audience, H.H. told my wife that one of our great troubles is that the I which is equated with the Owner is always interfering with the Manager which is the Intellect. He went on to explain that we won't let the Intellect do its job – we are

always stepping in and interfering. He said that the servants in the man which are rather similar to the servants in that lovely story last week – Manas, Chitta and so on – are supposed to be put in order by the Intellect and that is its job. It seems to me that that is Deputy Steward; and then with the growth of Sattva and the Intellect purified, it is able to receive the pure knowledge of the Self and take over the whole show and run it properly which seemed to me to be the Steward. This is my understanding of it, but it may at least be something for you to look at.

Miss Bolton. It conveys to me the picture of a teacher absent from a class and they all start creating a great din, etc. The teacher returns and doesn't do anything but stand at the door – every one of those little I's knows exactly what it ought to be doing and crawls back to its work. Our I's really do know what they ought to be doing.

N.H. Yes; but I think that until such time as we are in that delightful situation where the light comes from within, you have wonderful people like Dr. Roles and Lord Allan to pass on the knowledge in an external form; and they therefore must be ordering these servants for you from the Intellect because you have got to receive it through the senses until this other wonderful state comes. Every now and then one realises how lucky we are to have people with this knowledge that can in fact re-order all our disordered parts. I think it is as it says – the gardener in the kitchen, etc. – certainly inside it feels like that very often.

Returning to the actual visit itself, I really didn't feel that I wanted to get a lot of intellectual knowledge this time, for after all, there are many good books – Vedantic or any other kind – and you would probably do H.H. a service by reading it up and not going all that distance just to have him tell you what you could have read anyway.

One felt, rather, and it was coming through the material, that there was more to learn in a practical way – that it is up to us to put something into practice and see if we can find the real essence of the work. When we have a good moment, we are very pleased; but we forget that it is what we do in the hard times – when things aren't going so well – that seems to be the area where the real progress takes place. And so one felt that at least this time, one would try to practise Meditation and see if one could learn something more that way. One got a tremendous lot in trying to do that and one is very grateful because it could never have happened if Dr. Roles had not given the OK for me to go. My feeling now is that I have to go back and see if I can't, as He told me to do, at least lead these people to put something into practice to find these things for themselves.

Mrs. Brunsdon. How do you suggest putting this into practice?

N.H. In the third session I asked H.H. this. I said that in the second audience He had said that it is possible to lead people to this experience – could He help me with this? He said yes, you can – when they are meditating, teach them to sit up straight, not rigidly, but straight, so that they are breathing properly – you can't breathe with your head down. And I found this to be so. I once belonged to an organisation who expected one's back to be like a ruler! And then I asked him about the role of the Intellect in meditation and He said that the Intellect makes the decision that you sit down and do it. Intellect takes you to the door and then says: 'Go on – you go in.' It stays outside; so that part of the mind that deals with outer things sees

that its job is to make the decision. And that is important because if you don't sit down regularly and do it, you won't learn to meditate. It's not my place to talk about the mechanics of meditation here, because you have experts and I'm just a beginner on that side, but that's what he said – just to sit down and start the Mantra.

Mrs. Fleming. Did H.H. stress understanding of giving up, at all?

N.H. He opened my eyes to an entirely new concept of the householder. He brought in the idea that as well as being a householder, you can be a householder with an intellectual bias, or with an emotional bias, or with an active bias. We asked him which one of these ways is particularly related to giving up and surrendering – the intellectual, the emotional or the active. Then the translator turned with a big twinkle in his eye and said that this was a question he wanted an answer to, because he had made it very clear that he was on the way of Bhakti. And H.H. said that one must surrender and give up in each of the ways – they all require surrender. Then He went on to say that an intellectual person considers that there is nothing except God, but the emotional person considers that everything is God – this, He said, was the difference for the Householder in the two ways. He made it very clear that surrender is necessary, but this doesn't mean you go round trying to give things up. In my experience there comes a point in Meditation when you are given up – it's like Grace coming from above. It must have been something that you got up to in previous lives because it doesn't seem to be anything I've done in this life! One sits down and starts the Mantra and follows it, and sometimes it takes one straight into this area where everything is given up for you and there is this incredible gratitude that this should take place. So surrender is very important, He said, in the three ways.

H.H. told a lovely story about a lawyer friend of the translator who wanted to take the Meditation, but who was very concerned that he would have to give things up. When he was taken to see H.H. he said, 'I want this meditation very much, but does it mean I have to change my life and give up all sorts of things, and so on?' And H.H. said 'No, not at all. You can keep all the evils and all the sins that you've had up until now, but you mustn't have any new ones from now on!'

I thought this was a tremendous weight off the shoulders of a householder, because when you get to a certain age, it's very difficult to think of new sins anyway! Then H.H. finished with another little story. He said that when burglars get into your house, the first thing you do is to lock the doors so you don't let any more burglars in; and then you can deal with the ones who are inside already! I thought that might be some comfort to householders – that now you have the Meditation, you mustn't have any new sins!

A. Thank you very much, Nolan – it has been very stimulating to have you with us. You told us earlier about the Harrises being safely home.

N.H. Yes, they are just up the street and seem to be thriving and have passed on their best wishes to so many of you that now seems a good opportunity to say so. We left them on rather a poor note as on our final evening, my wife and I beat them at snooker! I have asked them to look after Meditation for New Zealand as I feel they are the right people for this and they have a completely free hand.

A. I'm sure you will take all good messages back to them.

N.H. I must say I would sooner have faced the Shankaracharyas of the North, South, East and West than be in this place tonight. But I am very grateful to have been able to say a few words and to let you know that we in New Zealand are also trying to practise the same things you are. It may be some consolation to know that when you are in bed asleep, on the other side of the globe there are people meditating and putting this work into practice – which makes it a sort of 24-hour operation. I was fortunate enough to sit in on the initiations that Lord Allan took yesterday; and I don't know why, but it seemed quite astonishing to hear the same ceremony being repeated as one has done it in isolation for so long. I haven't had a check to see if I have been doing it right for 15 years, so I was pleased to find that it was almost identical – even the Sanskrit words sounded the same!

A. Thank you; and I hope it won't be long before you are back with us again. Have a good trip to New York.

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