

2 October 1978

LARGE MONDAY MEETING

Lord Allan read the announcements and then went on to give the new times and meeting places of the various groups for this term.

Dr. R. Some people have felt that we were getting too 'set' over the small meetings and that a change was necessary. Richard Guyatt and those with him have arranged something different as a start. Don't regard the new arrangements as permanent, but I'd like you to give them a good trial, just as they are without wanting to alter details. Very often a change in the kind of meeting introduces a new outlook, new discoveries, a new kind of thought. Another reason for it is that we very much want to bring people on so that we find out who has a flair for taking meetings; you can't tell until you try people out. It doesn't go just by seniority, but some people are good at it and some aren't – they have other ways of helping. (to Lord Allan) Have you anything to add?

A. Well, we felt that Colet House itself has such an influence that we should gather the London meetings under this roof.

Dr. R. And especially appropriate in Mr. Ouspensky's Centenary year, to have as many people as possible using his house.

A. And so for that reason, the meetings that were held in London, Richmond and Twickenham – all those groups will come here on Thursday evenings. We will have four large groups here. The list of those groups is on the magnetic board at the back and the new meeting of Prof. and Mrs. Guyatt will now be held at Mrs. Little's flat at 59 Riverview Gardens, Barnes at 8.30. That is immediately the other side (south) of Hammersmith Bridge on the left. Yes, the Highgate group come here and the names are on the board. The groups are slightly split up in order for people to see new faces.

Dr. R. Except that we want to keep the two new groups the same for this term. They are doing so well and we don't want them to lose it.

A. So Dr. Connell's group will continue to meet here as before but in Dr. Roles's room rather than the Blue Room.

Mrs. Moore's Thursday afternoon group will go on and Miss Snewin's Friday lunchtime group will also go on but please note that there will be no meeting on Friday 13th – not because of superstition but because Miss Snewin will not be there! (laughter).

If anyone who is now listed in the four large groups can't get here on Thursday evening, please will they let us know. On the other hand if there are people who are not listed on the board and would like to come here, again would they let us know.

Final details – the timing. Mr. Skillman's group will meet at 8 p.m. this week in the Refectory and subsequently it will probably be at 7.30 p.m. because for half of this term, Mr. Skillman's group is going to act as the Working party and then another of the four groups will take it on for the rest of term. The other three meetings will start 8.15... Mrs. Garten's group in the Blue Room, Mr. Fleming's in the East Studio and Mr. de Lotbinières in the West

Studio. It is very important that you have a look at the board just to see where you are going to be!

Dr. R. I want to draw your attention to a book which has been signed by its authors and presented to the Society – William Anderson and Clive Hicks' book on *Cathedrals of Great Britain and Ireland*. Not only have they got the most lovely illustrations – Hicks has always been a photographer and a lot of illustrations in colour are marvellous; but also the writing is most illuminating and entertaining. There is enough architectural detail, but is isn't heavy to read. He obviously knows his stuff and William Anderson's writing is amusing and entertaining. In fact, I couldn't put it down. It is in the Library to be looked at – not taken away yet! We saw some of the pictures when they addressed the Society at one Annual General Meeting, but they have taken a lot since for this book. Do I get a free hand now? (A. you do!) (laughter)

What we want to study this term is exploratory. It's not dogmatic. I haven't got my own ideas crystallised on it. It's an attempt to answer certain questions which have always been rather vital to me and which are being asked today. One American best-seller, for instance asks questions like: 'Whence comes this authoritative voice that is heard sometimes by the individual and how can we get more of it?'

In Reading 1 this week we put this as a very important part of Mr. Ouspensky's teaching which he called 'conscience – the emotional realization of truth' and which he described as a 'positive emotion'; and he said that in the ordinary way conscience is present in everybody but asleep and it needs shaking; but if somebody wakes up to this positive emotion for a few minutes, they express themselves in the same way always. Conscience always says the same thing, but it has many different applications. Its applications are legion, and different for each person, different for each day in application, but not in origin or meaning. It is an innate sense in everybody of '*what is right and what is wrong at this moment for me*', it *doesn't* mean legislating for other people. So some of Mr. Ouspensky's words on this subject are quoted and then you will perhaps be asking, as I have been asking for months now, as to why this word has no equivalent that I can find in any Indian teaching, or even the idea which this word is supposed to express. Though the whole of the Shankaracharya's example and teaching, for instance, is based on the emotional realization of truth, yet he comes about it in a different way.

Mr. Kedros has given us a tape of a talk given by the Hellenic Society about a great saint in the Greek Orthodox Church – Palamas. (I don't know if you have been given it back yet, Kedros? We have made a copy of it and very much want to use it privately. So do what you feel is right about the Hellenic Society from which you got it.) But the subject (which has been the topic of controversy ever since Adam) is whether the individual can get or hear the Divine Voice for guidance, and if so, how can he get it? How best can he get it? The Divine Voice is a very high thing. And for people like us, we must begin from where we are. The way one uses conscience (the way Mr. Ouspensky used it) begins when it tells the individual simple things about himself and people he knows. It says things like 'fair play' or 'do as you would be done by'. I was amazed when at one of the first meetings where I heard the Shankaracharya speak in public in 1961 he said exactly the same thing. For instance:

A good general code would be to do nothing to anybody else that you would not like done to you. If, for instance, you are asked to expose somebody else's sins in public, stop and think for a moment, how you would like your own sins exposed in public.

(Record, 1 June 1961)

So let's begin from our actual experience and forget any theoretical knowledge we may have heard – any indoctrination we have been through and come back to what we have always felt that this word stood for. The word has been terribly dragged down. It's the sort of thing that happens with language all the time. I don't know if you saw or heard on the media last week about a similar thing, a funny story which appeared in a schoolboy's essay about *music*. The essay said, 'Johann Sebastian Bach had two wives and twenty children and kept a spinster (for Spanish speaking Mexicans 'Spinster' = unmarried woman he meant 'spinet' = musical instrument like harpsichord) in the attic to practise on!' (laughter) And that's the sort of way people talk about conscience. In my own life story for years I suffered from a bad conscience all the time, made worse by the fear of punishment; so I was quite prepared to believe Madame Ouspensky when she said, 'You have no conscience. You have only a fear of being found out.' (laughter)

But, all *that* and Mr. Ouspensky's thought and example were before the coming of the meditation and the guidance of the Tradition of the Shankaracharya which is non-dualistic. Conscience too often brings in the idea of dualism and in that way and in the negative way it is ordinarily taken, it's a very dangerous thing. A wrong idea about it has given rise to a great deal of insanity. It was written about in the 1930's by distinguished people (chiefly of the French School of Psychiatry who followed Bergson) who said that the 'troubled conscience' was a cause of insanity. In other words, sensitive people who found they couldn't live up to their inner promptings and couldn't bring them into line with what they were being taught, or how people were looking at things in the set in which they moved, could have a breakdown.

But the coming of the meditation and its non-dualistic teaching does away with all that risk. If we start from where we are, use no violence and take conscience (*real* conscience which is always true) as beginning at the first step on the Ladder of Self-realization which the Shankaracharya began by teaching us; we find that the whole Ladder is about the development of what Mr. Ouspensky called 'conscience', but the first step is how the ordinary person feels it – 'the good impulse'. If one attends to that and distinguishes it from all the other impulses of which we get hundreds during the day – urges, pulls – if we distinguish the pull that comes from the highest source within us and pay attention to it and interest ourselves in it, then in that way we can go up this Ladder of Self-realization. Has this thought occurred to anybody? This good impulse which all of us here know has two aspects which are brought out in the first New York lecture I gave in October 1971 and which I called 'Glimpses of Truth'. I quoted from a questionnaire which we had sent round to all the people who had started meditation at that time. The first aspect I called 'seeing into one's own nature' and the quotation (from a London school teacher) was:

As the noises, voices and pictures of daytime fade, frequently a presence pervades my whole being – another presence pervades my whole being. At first it came only in flashes, but latterly for longer. It is a presence strangely familiar,

tranquil, undaunted and all-embracing always leaving the same influence for a better way of living, always good, always positive, coming sometimes in flashes.

(The second aspect I called the 'Expansion of Consciousness', but we'll leave that just now.)

Anything anybody wants to say? We all know that, don't we? How to get more?
How to get it when it is really needed?

Mr. Eastop. From what you have just said, it sounds as if the emotional realization of truth could link with the Atman although there is no Indian word for it.

Dr. R. That's the main point – you have put your finger right on it! The reason why it has such devastating effects in the ordinary way is that the individual who feels it begins at once to talk and think about *his own shortcomings*. Though it's meant to take the ego down a peg; he is in fact wallowing in his own ego and his sense of sin and all the rest of it. Whereas in the way the Shankaracharya uses it, the 'good impulse' which comes from the Atman – the Divine Self in everybody – should centre your attention on the source, upon the marvellous nature of this Divine Self and you should give up all thoughts of what you call 'I' which isn't really you at all – just various servants of yours which arrogate to themselves the name of 'I'. So you have put your finger on it Eastop. Do you want to say anything more? (No) But that's how you feel? (Yes) And our whole training with the Shankaracharya is at once in the split second you get this good impulse, stop thinking of yourself altogether and in order to do that, you have to have the idea and dwell on it all day at other times that your own Self lives in the hearts of all. (Keeping the Universal Atman in mind). It's not a private concern which sets you *against* the world but it is something that puts you *in touch* with the whole world.

Any other good remarks like that?

Miss Newington. You have often said that in order to be kind to other people, we have to learn to be kind to ourselves. Does this connect with what you have been saying?

Dr. R. It's very much connected because even though we are quite kind to other people we are very hard on ourselves, Cicely, and you know that. So one should be kind to oneself, if one thinks of oneself at all.

Miss Cassini. It seems with this good impulse if you don't do something about it straight away, it fades away or you put it aside and forget about it.

Dr. R. Well, I question the word 'do'. What has to happen is that it prompts you to put your feeling of 'I' on one side. If you do that and return to the source of that Voice, it tells you in principle something, but it leaves you to find how to apply it. If it comes while you are crossing the street, you can't do anything except cross the street with attention. It brings you into a state of attention to what you are doing but you should reflect on it afterwards, which is the second step on the Ladder and find out how to apply this and with that double interest in it, it will grow, and come more often and last longer.

Mr. Hodge. Is memory connected to this good impulse?

Dr. R. Yes, but not too much. Mr. Ouspensky used to call conscience 'memory of what you promised yourself'. He was speaking of 'Real I' which we call the Atman. You promised over

and over again with good intentions something which you haven't carried out, but you mustn't dwell on your personal memory of failing and setbacks, or you lose it at once because the Divine Self knows all that. It knows Mr. Hodge very well indeed for it has to live with him. It takes evading action if you go on about yourself – it's not what he enjoys at all! But if you try and enquire into His nature, what he wants, then he is able to help, to take a hand in your life. So don't be too much tied to memories of mistakes because you tie yourself to that mistake by going on about it. Remember 'I am always facing a Noble Guest'.

R.H. When you have very high moments either during meditation or turning, you should try and remember those moments?

Dr. R. You don't have to try. All former states of consciousness related to that moment come back spontaneously. How did the Shankaracharya put it – he says, 'Love of the Atman and True Knowledge are two sides of one and the same thing, and they rise to the surface whenever the Antahkarana (the soul) concentrates.' They come spontaneously; give up *trying*; just put yourself in the hands of the source of this impulse.

R.H. I have noticed they do just suddenly appear in the mind without pushing or forcing.

Dr. R. Good. Both O and H.H. agree that people who have experienced the full conscience always say the same thing. In the *Mathnawi* the classic example that Mevlana gives is the man who arrives late for the time of ritual prayer and sees the congregation emerging from the Mosque and he says 'Aah!' and somebody who is standing close by says. 'That "Aah" is worth all the ritual prayers of the congregation you missed.' (laughter)

There is also a thing, Sean, called the 'artistic conscience' which is quite valid and true. A creative artist by the discipline and the requirements of his art knows when he has made a wrong cut with a chisel or before he has made it and he knows, like Cezanne describes, about the true relationships of what he is painting; and anything which brings his own bright ideas, showing off, ego, he has to put on one side. Although Rembrandt didn't talk about it as far as we know, it shows in everything, particularly his self-portraits where he tried to express the truth. For some people what is called the artistic conscience, if it's genuine, and for poets too, comes from the same source and that's probably why Mr. Ouspensky used to say that Self-remembering was the 'same triad as artistic creation'. So I hope your exhibition is taking notice of that. (Crampton says 'I hope so.')

Mrs. Hathaway. You have made us aware of the crucial importance of being in a state of attention at the time of our passing from this life into the next. If the time of passing is one of pain and violence, how can one be like the elephant who offered the flower at the last moment?

Dr. R. Curiously enough, conscience when it is speaking with full strength is very like the accounts people give in that book, *Life After Life*, when resuscitated after clinical death – it's very like the way the Being of Light speaks. It speaks kindly but with a gentle reminder and it seems, though without words, to ask probing questions designed to educate you. If long before physical death you listen to it enough – every day and all the time – you need have no fear of death whether from violence or any other cause because it means coming to that Being of Light with nothing in between.

There was a prayer which hereditary princes, heirs to the throne of Siam, used to have sewn in so that they always referred to it, mentioned in the book of the film, *Anna and the King of Siam*: ‘Help me to remember my own nothingness and Thy infinite greatness that all the questions of my life should be answered and my Mind continually instructed in the path to Nippan (Nirvana)’.

But that’s not dualism; by putting ego out, you at once recognise the bigger thing, the ‘True I’.

Now let’s be quiet for a few minutes and not think of ourselves – what bad meditators we are and all that!

MEDITATION

(With Figure 1 on screen)

Some people find that a simple diagram holds things in their memory, but others don’t – don’t worry. You can only understand anything well in relation to two laws underlying all the Laws of

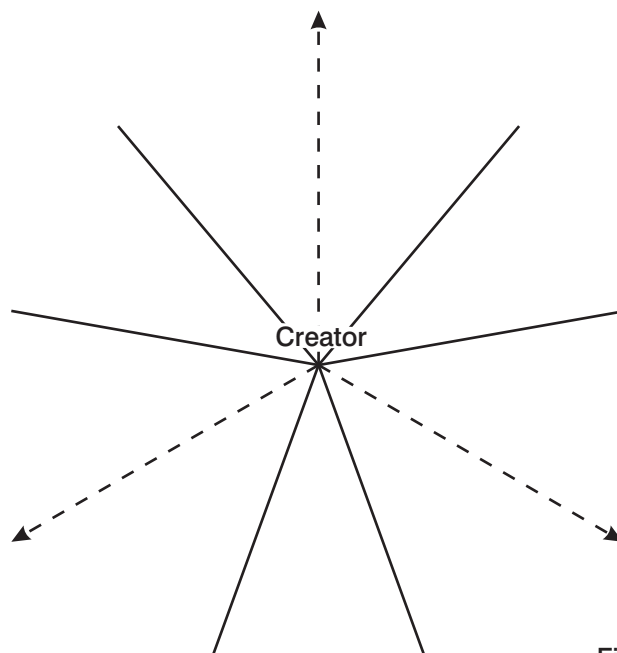


Figure 1. Radii Rays

Nature: the Law of Octaves and the Law of Three Forces about which both the Shankaracharya and Mr. Ouspensky agree. If one realises that without the artificial concept of Time or Space, the Divine Self is eternally present and emitting rays – radii rays (Figure 1) – all through the universe and in every person, one attaches importance to this source of every good thing. When you introduce the idea of time, knowing that time is a circle (Figure 2 overlaid upon Figure 1) and everything comes into being, exists for a time, and then dissolves again. In the case of commonly used units of time like a day, it is very true. So you can take this diagram as representing a day and you start at 7 a.m. and end up at 7 a.m. and in the course of that day thousands of impulses are reaching one. Supposing we say that the Atman, the individual Self, is hidden away, starting at Step 1 anybody can get a good impulse. Those radii rays are moments of ‘Now’. Minutes, days, weeks, months, lifetimes go in a circle. The ladder is an expanding spiral, done day after day. So it’s difficult to feel the good impulse when it only gets as far as this – Step 1.

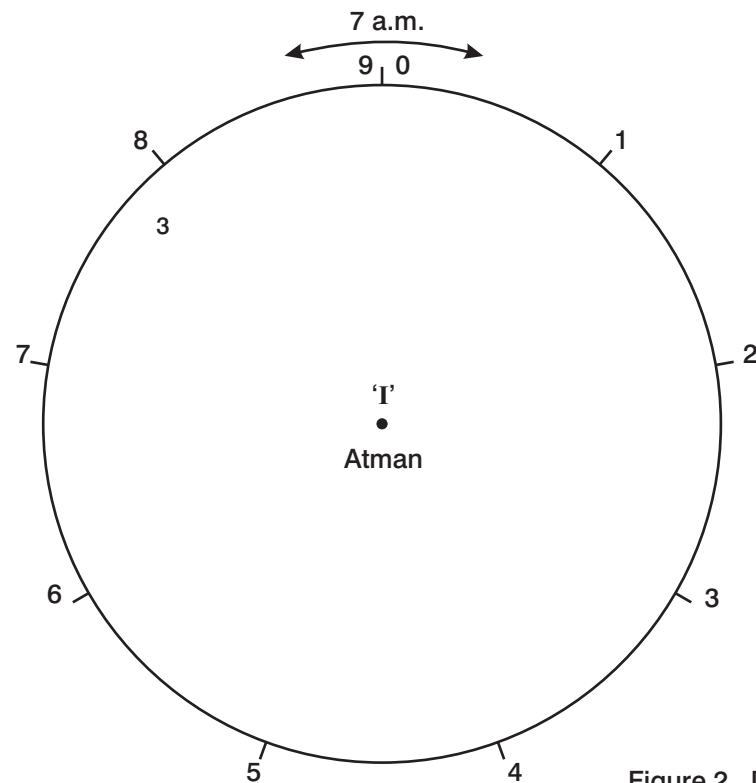


Figure 2. Day after Day

But then, if you pay attention to it, you get to Step 2 and you go a little further. Now there is a lot of misconception about Step 2. It doesn't mean that we come to a resolution once and for all at that early stage – that's at a higher stage. It seems that this good impulse sets up a *right enquiry*, an investigation, in the person's mind. So Step 2 is the start of an enquiry which is what we are doing now. That enquiry, if it is intense enough, nearly always brings some manifest result. For instance, some friend of yours who meditates may introduce you to the meditation. You may read something which leads you on like a treasure hunt; and this interval here is where some influence from outside helps you to go on with the development of conscience. You notice that these divisions correspond to the inward and outward looking part of us. The good impulse arises from within but by investigation and good thinking the outward hemisphere which normally pays no attention and knows nothing about conscience except what it hears which is always connected with general morality, different in different places, gets interested and the two take you on a bit. In the same way, when you begin to meditate, let's say, and let it penetrate deeply into you, you will rise refreshed at the end of the half hour and try to see how to bring this into your day. So Step 3 (one pointed attention) is Inner Awakening to the idea of conscience and its importance. Step 4 is to try to bring your thoughts and relations with other people into line. If you do that, then there is an accumulation of Sattva guna. This is Tamas, sleep; this is Rajas where you take action and action enters the search for conscience; Sattva (increasing on Step 4) brings you to a direct emotional experience of conscience from the source – powerful guidance. After that you reach the Causal level where everything is one, so there isn't that division. Step 5 is Detachment – '*detached insight*' is the literal translation of the Sanskrit word – where you begin to see yourself and other things as they are. You don't just see the pictures you carry through being told about it in your head. When you see somebody, you don't say, 'It's only old so and so'. You begin to see him as he is (as one does on the skin with the Turners around

you). That builds up so that when it reaches the fullest and purest state of emotion, you get Step 6 which is Samadhi where you know nothing else – there is no dualism, there is just the joy of union. You may not know anything about that until you come out of it, but in a Realized person there is still a further step, the seventh step, which is shown as Turiya – full enlightenment – where you can be living, doing your duties in your special kind of life and feel the inspiration at the same time, so that everything you do is guided by conscience. That's full Realization. This is the material world where we live and have to start. This is our own private inner, subtle or psychological world, and this is the Causal world which the meditation is meant to reach. The Initiation ceremony is supposed to plant the Mantra on the Causal level. But that only lasts a short time. Sattva is very evanescent. At most it will last three hours, but rarely more than a few moments. And everything has to be done again the next day. So you wake again at 7 in the morning but if you lived yesterday a little bit better, today will be better and tomorrow will be better still. Don't let's think that because we have had a moment, a peak experience, that we are better than other people and that we are safe for keeps. On the contrary the higher you rise, the more it hurts when you fall! It takes a long time to begin to see our days in that sort of way, but you see why the Ladder of Self-realization is a process which goes on day after day; and we don't look for a final struggle any more than though we have to wash every day we never think of the final bath! (laughter) The bath to end all baths! (laughter)

Ramakrishna had a further caution. He said that he didn't much like to go along with people who talked about *becoming* God. He said, "Take sugar. I like sugar, I long for sugar, I need sugar, I feel very bad if I can't get any sugar, but I don't *become* sugar. I have no wish to become sugar and it drags down the idea of God if you go about saying, 'I am God; listen to what I say.' So let's keep lighthearted about it and let's approach this term in a spirit of search going back to the days before education or indoctrination to what we really felt as children came from something higher than ourselves.

Any discoveries anybody makes would be very valuable for me and others. So good luck and let's enjoy it.

* * *