

23 January 1978

### LARGE MONDAY MEETING

Dr. Roles: We welcome here this evening Mr. & Mrs. Howitt of Wellington, New Zealand, who are in charge of our group there. It is now quite sizeable and increasing in numbers. They will be here another three weeks perhaps. And it reminds one of a time in 1961 when my wife and I went out to New Zealand to start the Meditation there for the Maharishi and Nolan Howitt was in charge then. We have known him a long time and he's been three times to His Holiness, and his wife twice, and they have just come back from eight audiences there so there is a lot of bloom still on them! So we want to compare notes as to how they run their groups in New Zealand and we run ours here. We have been hearing also from Michael and Gillian Harris who are back home in Wellington.

Dr. R. (to Lord Allan) Well, there are some announcements first of all.

A. The first Mukabeleh for visitors is on Friday, 3rd February. The next Meditation meeting – Tuesday, 14th February.

Dr. R. And to that, everybody but the very newest – all meditators except the very newest – are welcome.

A. There will be a large Monday meeting on 27th February. The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be on the 16th March at 8.15 p.m. followed by a talk at 8.30 p.m. by Dame Edris Connell.

Dr. R. Is that still all right by you, Dame Ninette? (She nodded.)

A. It should be said that the Annual General Meeting, as such, is for members of the Society, but the talk that follows it is for everybody who comes to these meetings. So you will be welcome – that is, everybody, on the 16th March.

Then there is going to be a course for new turners after Easter, so if anyone else wants to learn would they let either Mr. Koren or the office know, or have the names of others who want to learn.

It has been decided to continue the scheme whereby groups send someone each week to the Working Parties whenever it is possible. It is a great help, so would groups please arrange this straight away.

Dr. R. Any questions about that side of things?

Dr. Roles then went on:

I want to say a few words about invalids. It is part of our work – it is part of our boast that we try to keep the Param-Atman in mind where any of our people with whom we have a special association are to be thought of when they are ill – seriously ill.

You will have noticed that Mrs. Hamilton-Pearson's voice is not to be heard on the front door telephone. She is in a nursing home where she is being well looked after; and anybody who knows her very well and would like to pay her a visit, would they ring the nursing home (they can get the phone number from the office) so that she can be consulted, because she is

fairly weak and about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour is probably as long as she can take, but is very glad to see visitors, of course.

Mademoiselle Costaz is in hospital at the moment. She is much improved and may be there for another few days.

We hear that Mrs. Melidis, who has had quite a big abdominal operation, is round the corner.

Finally, Jim Finch has just telephoned to say that Jennifer MacGeorge is back, I am afraid, in hospital in Ward B4 at the new Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge with pneumonia. We feel very close to her although she is many miles away, and several people have gone up to visit her who are friends. (We heard that she died two days later.)

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Next, Dr. Roles said:

There has been a request that we should now have a little of the Kirtan music which plays such an important part in the Shankaracharya's set-up and Tradition, especially in relation to Meditation. He says that the music by the small orchestra that he has trained can lift us off the ground from our inertia – can shift the molecules; and I want to play a little now and then go into Meditation in order partly that we can see whether the recording that the Howitts have just made and which has gone back to New Zealand with Ross Mitchell, who was in India with them, is better, and then we will buy it off them at a great price.

This is an old record. Then we will meditate just afterwards.

The Kirtan music

MEDITATION

Afterwards: You see, it is not a question of whether we *like* a certain kind of music or not; it isn't possible to find any music which everybody in a room this size would like. But certainly this particular music has the power to bring one into a new state of consciousness, or at least to rouse one, when other music might not.

But in another group in South Africa, with which the Toblers are closely connected, they put the Kirtan music on at the start while everybody is collecting to try and raise the atmosphere a little. We may try experiments like that here.

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Dr. Roles then began as follows:

Now we started this year, this session, with the idea of trying very hard to 'wake up' with every means in our power. We have had enough experience to know, each of us, that there are moments when we are awake, and at those moments we realise that we have been asleep ever since the last moment; and the Western System brought by Mr. Ouspensky to us and the much more ancient Eastern System of the Shankaracharya's meet on this point; they agree about the four states of consciousness, sleep at night and relative sleep during the day, in which we pass all our lives; a third state of Consciousness in which one sees what lies before

one, one sees oneSelf; sees the people one knows and the events around as they are – Mr. Ouspensky used to call it: ‘One becomes objective for oneSelf.’ Then there is a state beyond that – both the East and West agree – which is known in the East as Turiya – the fourth state, translated usually as Enlightenment; in the West it has been called ‘Cosmic Consciousness’, but there are few genuine records.

Now the means to waking up into this third state, which is not under our control is by attaining control over *attention*. Attention is the means to waking up; and in any sort of System which has to do with realizing man’s possibilities, it is always some aspect of attention which is used – in the Dervish Turning, in the Meditation, Movements to Music, Yoga, and so on.

But we are very far from understanding what Attention means – what it should be – and we have to get rid of a whole lot of past ideas about it. It must be connected with Self-remembering – with remembering that we have a Divine Self inside us; and you could say that true Attention means doing honour to this Divine Self.

Now we have to come at this gradually. We all have built-in ideas about it, and we do not get any marks for knowing things about it; but we get the marks by discovering a way to have Attention and this is what we want to aim for. I have found the impact of this idea on the two newest groups very stimulating indeed, and I would like Lord Allan to read a few of the most important questions to try to answer them shortly ‘off the cuff’ but they will have at their meeting next Thursday all the questions answered.

So we will start with Dr. Connell’s, and I hope that a number of members of these new groups are here tonight.

(With A. reading questions):

Brigit Hall. I would like to venture on this idea: the smallest world is the physical, and is manifest from one person to another through the dominant hemisphere which can’t communicate the greater things so easily.

Dr. R. Now I would like her to keep that. That is quite true and I would like her not to embroider it, but to see if she can go on observing this and bring her observations to the group.

Dr. Beckett. During childhood at home and at school one is constantly taught again and again that one *is* one’s behaviour: ‘a naughty boy, a good boy’ according to what one has done.

Dr. R. Is Dr. Beckett here? (Yes.) Well, it is difficult for me to picture you as a ‘naughty boy’! But I know what you mean, and it is true that one’s attention is shown by one’s behaviour.

Nothing is manifested, remember, except physically. One can have the highest of good intentions, but if one doesn’t manifest them physically, they don’t exist. So you keep that idea, and when you are trying to be a good boy, this is a very good way to do it!

Brigit Hall. One wonders if we are the only creatures conscious of our own existence? For example: Is a tree conscious of being a tree?

Dr. R. We must take this as an entirely *human* possibility; only this species which is fully equipped with a complete nervous system. We don’t know of course, but we are pretty

certain that a tree is not conscious in the sense we are talking about – conscious of its own existence. So it is human beings, unlike any sub-human species, who *can* be Conscious of their existence.

Tony Anholt. There is also the idea that humanity, as a whole, has collective consciousness?

Dr. R. Is Anholt here? (Yes.) Now, Tony, you have got to realise that is one of the biggest fallacies that exist, and it is very widespread. Humanity, as a whole, has only the *collective possibility* of Consciousness. This is very far from having collective consciousness. In fact, you can see by the behaviour of many branches of humanity that they are definitely not Conscious. There can be no Conscious evil, for instance; that is impossible, and anything which is sub-conscious is not Conscious. So we must get rid of any idea that there *is* any collective Consciousness for humanity; and even that there is ‘collective evolution’ laid on for everybody.

There are growing points in humanity which show themselves from time to time in different civilisations; and there may now be a big change in progress for humanity, as when Cro-Magnon Man (the people who did the cave paintings) took over, and Neanderthal Man died out. Our civilisation may be in for something of that sort. But humanity is not going to be so easily destroyed as some people think. Humanity will go on, and the growing point is being prepared now, probably, as the older civilisation gradually destroys itself.

Anything you want to say about that? (No reply.)

Questions continued:

Mark Tyou. Would you equate the third state of consciousness with what the psychologists commonly term ‘a peak experience’?

Dr. R. Well, everyone is using that term to describe anything out-of-the-ordinary and I would not trust it all that much. But what I think is that if it is a genuine experience of the third state of Consciousness, of which there are quite a number now on record, then it must be seen by us as something of the nature of a real ‘peak experience’. We can put it like that.

Any questions on that?

We have all had glimpses of the third state. Let there be no mistake about it; for we wouldn’t be here if we hadn’t. And it will feel different for different people in different circumstances. It is difficult to invent any other collective name.

There’s a lot of imagination about descriptions of so-called ‘peak experiences’; people imagine themselves levitating and flying through the air, passing through doors, and all sorts of things! But the genuine one is a state where one suddenly sees oneSelf as one really is and all one’s surroundings at that moment. Because the world is not what we imagine it to be; it is not what it appears to be; and it is this illusion which is part of the state of relative sleep, and the escape from this illusion and seeing the real thing is waking up into the third state.

Dr. R. (to A.) Shall we go on with the New Groups?

A. Tony Anholt again:

Dr. Roles used the phrase: ‘Our instinctive sense of the Divine’. Can it be there without our ever being conscious of it?

Dr. R. Yes, that is the big idea – that we all of us are born with an instinctive sense of the Divine whether we know it or not; and right back among primitive people and in all phases of humanity, there has been this instinctive sense; it has kept coming up in different cultures. The whole idea is to recognise this and capitalise on it.

Don't you find that?

Children before the age of two, you have to see it in their eyes. It is those who have the precious idea that they come from a higher Consciousness and gradually fall asleep during physical life; and go back to this higher Consciousness again at the end.

Then there are the speech centres, Brigit Hall, which get going by the age of three or four when the dominant hemisphere takes over and puts the lid on the whole thing. Have yours begun to show they are children?

Dr. R. ended thus:

That is all we can deal with from Dr. Connell's group, but aren't they good questions?

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Now here are some more from the Guyatts.

A. (reads) This is Martin Redfern:

Would not Conscious moments produce their own energy?

Dr. R. Yes, assuredly. They do it at first by the release of energy. We have a lot of tremendous stores of energy within us – all kinds and degrees of energy; and they need release. And a Conscious moment is when one releases the more powerful parts of our endowment – later we may need to manufacture some more energy, but that is enough to start with.

A. Then there were two very vivid experiences which resulted from that question.

Dr. R. I would like to hear those.

Diana Mahony. When potholing, which presented a frightening challenge, the fear was so intense that I simply had to come to terms with it, and suddenly it went. This left a most amazing feeling of freedom, this was all in the moment, and on return one had an emotional feeling about the value of light.

Dr. R. Yes, that gives a very vivid picture; and certainly, coming to terms with some strong fear and winning the battle, produces this feeling of light and liberation.

A. And Joe Skeaping had a similar one. He said:

It was like this for me, too; after a great fear of flying, I experienced the ground as never before.

Dr. R. laughs, and said:

I am glad he experienced the ground like that! So that is probably why people do all sorts of daring things for example like skiing. It used to be said that if one showed half the daring in the field of psychology that one shows in breaking one's limbs skiing, one would reach the goal quite quickly! It probably is this desire to wake up – a desire for liberation from things like fear.

Martin Redfern. When one wakes up, is one not above good and bad eventually?



Dr. R. You see: What is good? What is bad? We have no way of telling, no way of telling, no way of establishing. What is good for one person at one time is bad for other people at other times. It is all subjective. You can't speak of a general good or bad in our state. But what you begin to do is to see that for me at this particular moment this is better than that; or that would be definitely bad; I must not do that. But you mustn't then go to your neighbour and say: 'You do so-and-so and don't do that.' This is where we make so many enemies and make so many mistakes.

Any questions about that?

Only God; and even God doesn't lay down the law about what is good and what is bad. Even the Absolute in command of the Universe. He makes the Laws and everyone is free to do what he likes and take the consequences.

Ingrid Benning. Is it that one only sees the differences because one does not see the whole?

Dr. R. We shall need to know a bit more both about Ingrid Benning and about what she is meaning when she says that.

A. I think it is in general in relation to sleep.

Dr. R. Yes. Of course she is right, and all the differences of opinion, the disagreements, and so on occur because people do not see the whole thing; they only see one little bit from their own point of view.

Ingrid Benning. It is because we are not whole that we see the differences.

Dr. R. And yet, when we are whole, we have to see the differences between things that are ordinarily taken as alike. So there is a catch to this question, and I think whoever knows Ingrid Benning better will have to have a little talk with her about it.

A. I think it was her who asked the supplementary question then.

Dr. R. Oh, it was? (to Ingrid Benning) Do you see what I mean? It is rather a sweeping generalisation, Miss Benning.

A. Then Rosemary David:

Would it help to try and change habits? Are there any exercises or tasks which could be given?

Dr. R. It's all really about freeing ourselves from habits. It is habits that keep one asleep. But, in this Tradition of ours, we come about it in a rather gentle way; by trying to do attentive actions, bad actions gradually fade out. So, we don't turn round and make a fight with our habits. I have been trying to stop smoking for thirty years! One aims for a definite objective; one sees what behaviour is compatible with that, and then everything which gets in the way gradually dissolves.

This is the Shankaracharya's method, wouldn't you say, Howitt? (He agreed.) We had a bad upbringing; we used to smite each other's bad habits; I've got the scars on me still! And it didn't do any good.

A. Well, that is the lot.

Dr. R. That is a sample of these very refreshing questions, and I hope they ask some more this Thursday and we'll profit by that.

Mr. Hodge. I am in a way worried that trying to practise the Meditation twice a day is a habit?

Dr. R. (laughing). I didn't say anything more than that if we are going to have habits, we should have good habits and not bad habits. This capacity of habit formation is a very valuable part of the machine. It is the mechanism whereby if you learn something it becomes automatic.

Take driving a car: the learner driver has to have desperate attention the whole time, but the instructor, or experienced driver, his attention is remarkably free. I mean, he only attends to the salient things. He must not lose his attention driving a car, but he only attends to what matters. He takes in the whole scene, and it is a great relief as many people in this room well know when they take the 'L' off, and pass their test.

It is the same with learning any physical skill. It's a valuable mechanism which saves infinite time and energy and does all the stuff that the mind should not be bothered with. We have got a lot to learn about attention to movements.

Anything more.

Mr. Wood (as repeated by A.) I am not sure if I have got Mr. Wood's question, but he wants to refer back to last term – the discussion about the drama. When it was said that there are two types of roles to learn – the Conscious role and the mechanical role.

It seemed to him when trying to be Conscious that there was a conflict between the two roles; and, in fact, this could be useful if the conflict itself helps to wake us up.

Dr. R. Well, I would agree with that, wouldn't you?

A. Yes.

Dr. R. I think there is a conflict; and we are all the time in a drama; and a lot of us are called upon, without our volition, to play a certain role which is not of our choosing.

On the other hand, our Tradition represents a possibility of learning to play a Conscious role in a Consciously produced drama; and there is, as you know, a conflict, and this struggle of Yes and No (as it used to be called) does wake one up.

Mr. Wood. Is it possible eventually to bring the two together?

Dr. R. Yes, for the householder this is very important. For somebody on the way of the monk who goes and lives a special life in a monastery, then there is only one thing, an externally produced conflict.

The householder has to play a Conscious role within his ordinary life roles, of which there are a number – family and business; quite a number. 'Each man in his life plays many parts' as was said in *As You Like It*. But the great thing is to look at the Conscious drama and one's role in that in a quite different way from all the others. And have a special relationship with one's fellow actors.

Our roles change in relation to this: in one life one man is teacher; in another life he is learner. We play different roles. Sometimes we play the villain; sometimes the hero, or the heroine, and so on. In Conscious roles everything is very fluid; it is never repetitive. Mechanical roles tend to go on and on and on, and get more and more boring all the time.

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Dr. Roles. (in conclusion:)

Now I would like for the last two or three minutes to give you a little evidence of the fact that this idea of Attention is the meeting ground of both the Western System and the Eastern System.

When I first had sessions with the Shankaracharya in private it was agreed that I put to him just the fundamental ideas of our Western System to see if he would agree and what he would say. At one point I put the idea of Attention and I gave a brief synopsis of what we had been taught by Mr. Ouspensky and had tried to practice about Attention in the West.

There is not time to read the synopsis I gave, but you can hear it later if you like, but I would like you just to hear his reply:

A. reads:

The Shankaracharya said:

Attention is the source of success. Success depends on Attention. He gives efficiency as the other side of Attention.

We can combine both these words in one and see them. Then Attention and efficiency are the same thing.

Then he describes that only men high on the Ladder have this – the Realized man having the greatest attention, he can do anything in the world, but will have complete Attention. Even if he is in Turiya or in Samadhi he will have complete Attention at his disposal.

The ordinary man has no attention – floating attention: one moment here, next moment there; neither here nor there. Their attention is always diverted from one point to another, which gives him no results. Without Attention, he says, nothing can be done. It is a very, very important factor in the life of any aspirant or discipline.

Dr. R. I would repeat that, when I first caught a sight of the Shankaracharya, I knew that he had complete Attention. And in all the different series of actions one has seen him – surrounded by crowds, in a small boat in the swirling Ganges, and in private, he has always had complete Attention.

That makes it very important to keep the thread of connection with him. I never met anybody else with it. If I had met somebody closer at hand, I wouldn't have had to go to India.

Dr. R. (to A.) In that same conversation he makes another point in answer to a remark.

A. reads:

Dr. Roles said:

R. Attention directed by Will is one thing; but cannot attention be aroused by emotion, yet caught and held by the object so a man becomes a prisoner.

S. The two kinds of attention – the attention given, and the attention caught – can be related to the difference between the Attention of the Realized man and of the disciple. The disciple has to attend to the words of the Realized man but the Realized man must hold the attention of the discipline. However forceful the words of the Realized man may be, if the disciple is not attending they will have no effect.



So the important thing is for the attention to be given. That is the prime factor in understanding anything. Anybody who wants to learn anything must attend. The other force may be there, but it is powerless if the student or disciple does not give attention.

(Record, 15 October 1962)

Dr. R. That was very similar to what we learnt by example (largely) from Mr. Ouspensky, and also by precept; and in order not to complicate things any further, I think that now – it being just after half-past seven – we ought to get up and go and have supper!

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