

26 February 1979

LARGE MONDAY MEETING

Dr. Roles. Well, you seem to have managed to get here very successfully! And I think, don't you, that the weather is going to be slightly better but nevertheless requires care. We had two or three fractures due to slipping on ice. We're very sorry about Mrs. MacLaren and Mrs. Finch – they're both here – and indeed it was really very unpleasant getting around.

The reason for putting off all meetings last week was, if you remember, the flu epidemic. It's evident that it's now on the decline and we now know what virus it was due to. It's a virus which produces many different forms of sore throat and gastric symptoms and so on, but it has done nothing dangerous yet. I hope that none of you will succumb to it now and that there will be some Meetings on Thursday and our ordinary activities resumed. But don't take any risks about travel because the weather is still locally uncertain.

I'm told that when a group taker cancels a Meeting, people say, 'But it's quite fine *here!*' And the group taker has to remind them that it is where the Meeting is going to be held that is the important thing! So if there is any doubt, do make enquiries.

Any questions about arrangements? No material this week due to reduction of staff and also due to the fact that some of you have heard Reading 3 and others haven't so I was taking time off! But there will be a paper next week.

Any questions?

Mrs. Grazebrook. Do we know when we start again in April?

Lord Allen. I don't think we have worked it out yet. It will probably be Monday the 30th, I think.

There is one announcement: just to draw people's attention to the table at the top of the stairs where there is the Notice of the Annual General Meeting. If Members of the Society here would please take their copy and tick off their names on the lists provided, it would be a great help as it saves postage and these Notices are required by law to be in people's hands three weeks before the Annual General Meeting.

Dr. R. Well, the question arises – how do we pull the threads together and how shall we resume? Because we haven't really got into the main subject for this term... what would interest people, what would they want to know about? This, I hope to pick up from you both at this Meeting and at your small Meetings, if you come this week. What we have done – until I hear the voice of the multitude – is to try out a tape recording. I'll tell you why this particular one...

The stage is now all set for Mr. Ouspensky who laid the foundations for this Society and got us this house. Last year was the centenary of his birth and the Exhibition of his writings went very successfully at Yale, so he is going to be more and more in the picture. It's evident that selected ideas of his, which have never been developed, would be a great contribution if they could be taken further and related to ideas which we get about the practice of Meditation from the Shankaracharya. The present Earl of Northesk, whose family was

always closely associated with Mr. Ouspensky, likes recording on tape – he farms up in the Isle of Man and he feels that recording things for us keeps the association close. So we are going to play a rather good selection of his from the *New Model* on ‘Experimental Mysticism’ which seems particularly apt to what we have been studying. Let’s try it out – I’m told that it’s not awfully clear, let’s try.

What I have called ‘mathematical relations’ were continually changing round me and within me, sometimes taking the form of sounds of music, sometimes the form of a design, sometimes the form of light filling the whole of space, of a kind of visible vibration of light rays, crossing, interweaving with one another, pervading everything. In this connection there was an unmistakable feeling that through these sounds, through the design, through the light, I was learning something I had not known before. But to convey what I learned, to tell about it or put it into writing was very difficult. The difficulty of explaining was increased by the fact that words express badly, and really cannot express, the essence of the intense emotional state in which I was during these experiences.

This emotional state was perhaps the most vivid characteristic of the experiences, which I am describing. Without it there would have been nothing. Everything came through it, that is, everything was understood through it. In order to understand my experiences it must be realised that I was not at all indifferent to the sounds and the light mentioned above. I took in everything through feeling, and experienced emotions which never exist in life. The new knowledge that came to me came when I was in an exceedingly intense emotional state. My attitude towards this new knowledge was in no way indifferent; I either loved it or was horrified by it, strove towards it or was amazed by it; and it was these very emotions, with a thousand others, which gave me the possibility of understanding the nature of the new world that I came to know.

The number ‘three’ played a very important part in the world in which I found myself. In a way quite incomprehensible to our mathematics it entered into all the relations of magnitudes, created them and originated from them. All taken together, that is, the entire universe, sometimes appeared in the form of a ‘triad’, composing one whole, and looking like some great trefoil. Each part of the ‘triad’, by some inner process, was again transformed into a ‘triad’, and this process continued until all was filled with ‘triads’, which were transformed into music, or light, or designs. Once again I must say that all these descriptions express very badly what occurred, as they do not give the emotional element of joy, wonder, rapture, horror, continually changing one into the other...

But I will continue the description of successful experiments. Many times, perhaps always, I had the feeling that when I passed the second threshold I came into contact with myself, with the self which was always within me, which always saw me and always told me something that I could not understand and could not even hear in ordinary states of consciousness.

Why can I not understand?

I answered: merely because in the ordinary state thousands of voices sound at once creating what we call our ‘consciousness’, our thoughts, our feelings, our moods, our imagination. These voices drown the sound of that inner voice. My experiments added nothing to the ordinary ‘consciousness’: they *reduced* it, yet by reducing it they intensified it to an incomprehensible degree. What did they actually do? They compelled the other voices of the ordinary consciousness to keep silence, put them to

sleep, or made them inaudible. Then I began to hear the other voice, which came as it were from above, from a certain point *above my head*. I understood then that the whole problem and the whole object consisted in being able to hear this voice *constantly*, in being in constant communication with it. The being to whom this voice belonged knew everything, understood everything and above all was free from thousands of small and distracting 'personal' thoughts and moods. He could take everything calmly, could take everything objectively, as it was in reality. And at the same time *this was I*.

... Once when I was in the state into which my experiments brought me, I asked myself: 'What is the world?'

Immediately I saw a semblance of some big flower, like a rose or a lotus, the petals of which were continually unfolding from the middle, growing, increasing in size, reaching the outside of the flower and then in some way again returning to the middle and starting again at the beginning. Words in no way express it. In this flower there was an incredible quantity of light, movement, colour, music, emotion, agitation, knowledge, intelligence, mathematics, and continuous unceasing growth. And while I was looking at this flower *someone* seemed to explain to me that this was the 'World' or 'Brahma' in its clearest aspect and in the nearest possible approximation to what it is in reality – 'If the approximation were made still nearer, it would be Brahman himself, as he is,' said the voice.

Dr. R. You could hear some of that? It might start some discussion because, for instance, just that last passage about the flower – this is the full symbol of the Enneagram; an expanding contracting flower, full of colour and movement. Mr. Ouspensky hadn't seen that symbol when he gave that lecture. It was only later when he got to know the symbol that he allowed this passage to stay in *A New Model of the Universe*, but this was the result of his own experiments and researches. Maybe some of you have seen the symbol in this way. We try of course to see it in movement, but it would require the whole of St Paul's playgrounds, before it was built on, to express the symbol as a whole, so we have in our Movement classes to show just little parts of it.

Any questions about that? That's why we keep returning to this symbol and trying to see more and more in it.

Q. In order to lead the happiest kind of life what sort of things does one want to have and what sort of things does one want to get rid of?

Dr. R. There are two aspects. One is the life inside yourself, your psychological life; and then there is the life you have to lead, you can't change, the external life into which you were born, all your upbringing with which it's all connected, people with whom you are related; most of the external life cannot be changed. It is said that no matter what the life is, if one leads one's *own* life and does one's *own* job in the most enlightened way one can, that is the physical expression of happiness. But happiness really comes from within one and here there is much room for improvement possible. We live mostly in a cellar divorced from all kinds of possibilities which we somehow know to exist but can't get hold of, and to which the Meditation and other special techniques open the way for us. Are you thinking mainly in terms of the life outside e.g. whether you live in Switzerland or the Sahara?

Q. Thinking of the life inside.

Dr. R. For instance, are you ever really happy where everything outside is against you being happy? Anybody can be happy if things are going beautifully. Are you ever happy in spite of conditions? Not happy enough anyway, shall we say? And yet happiness is not just selfishness. Happiness is the food on which your Divine Self lives – the natural food of the Atman – joy. So to get the full possibilities of life one needs to give this Divine Self as much happiness as one can. He is dependent upon *you* for any happiness he gets from your life.

Any other remarks?

Mr. Kindersley. In that description, Mr. Ouspensky used the word ‘experiment’ and I wondered if attitudes had changed and we no longer think of making experiments on ourselves or whether that is still a useful way of thinking of one’s work on oneself – as an experiment?

Dr. R. The experiments he mentioned are very much in key with the experiments that people try at the present time, though I’m not at liberty to tell you what they were. But here now in our Society the situation is quite different. The public lecture from which that quotation was taken, was given at a time when he didn’t have the knowledge and when he didn’t have any method like the Meditation and so everything for him was an exploration – an experiment. He devised a whole series of experiments for himself. Things are quite different now. It’s past the experimental stage. Now one can get advice about any particular problem relating to Self-realization. He didn’t have access to any of that.

In relation to those experiments you notice he uses the terms ‘first threshold’ and ‘second threshold’. That is particularly interesting; it was another of his discoveries, which foresaw not only the Western system which he later learned but also the way the Meditation takes you and what the Shankaracharya says about it. The first threshold is on the subtle level of our psychology – it’s a matter of ‘waking up’ so that one suddenly sees things in more light and in relation to the fact that one has a Self, which doesn’t change. The first threshold is related to Self-remembering. The second threshold, which he mentions, is related to what was known as the ‘second conscious impulse’ which is the conquest of negative emotions and their transformation into positive. This, as you heard him say, is achieved by putting to sleep many of those I’s which speak for us all the time and confuse us. By quietening all those, as the Meditation is supposed to do, we enhance the Real thing in us. So it is another of those discoveries of his which open the way for us now. Don’t you agree with that, Crampton? That the use of the words – first and second threshold is particularly interesting?

Mr. C. The whole of the first passage is absolutely startling in its freshness.

Dr. R. Yes, we can look at it so differently nowadays.

Then there is his insistence on ‘*threeness*’ which permeated all his experiments. Now why is that? We know that in many leading teachings – in Christianity, in our system, in Shankaracharya’s system – the idea of threeness is fundamental. But why should a man who had not heard any of that, but who got through, past this second threshold, into a different world of consciousness, why should he see everything in terms of threeness? He wasn’t put up to it in any way. It’s an interesting question. Anybody got an answer?

Mr. C. An old uncle of mine had the same experience and he said it was because it *was* so.
(laughter)

Dr. R. Yes, quite. It *is* so; and not only your uncle but St Patrick of Ireland and many others have arrived at the same point – a threeness in a oneness. One little reason for it maybe that in everything, in every group of experimental results there are always two extremes and a mean in between. In firing many shots at a target, there will be a few bulls-eyes or those very close to the bull, there will be a few ‘outers’ and there will be the mass of shots in between. And it is from the middle, round the mean, that future development and new things become possible. At either extreme, as in a balance when one side or the other is down, nothing much can happen. Anyway it’s said to be a universal law throughout the Universe that three forces are necessary in the genesis of any event; and that man is blind to the third force just as he is blind to the fourth dimension. He has to have his eyes opened to see it. Let’s develop that as a subject.

Mr. J. Skeaping. Are we going to hear this term something about the six ways in which these three forces can combine?

Dr. R. I hope so, yes, I do. So that’s the famous Joe Skeaping! I’ve at last laid eyes on him! (laughter) You’ve been asking most interesting questions at the New Group; it must be in the family blood.

Yes. There are two Cosmic Laws according to our Western system and the Shankaracharya’s Indian system. One is the Law of Octaves or the law of Seven by which everything happens. Everything repeats according to a certain pattern and the Law of Octaves is an expression by which this repetition can be described. In order to influence events, understanding of the Law of Three Forces is necessary because you have to know where additional impulses are possible. The whole thing is to know about the nature of these three forces, their relationship to each other and the points at which one or another can be applied. Have you got nearer a specific question about what you really want to know?

Mr. S. I’m intrigued; I’ve read a lot of books and I’m intrigued by the fact that if one talks about, say, life and inert matter, there is something in the middle – form – and the different order in which they can relate. Does that make any sense?

Dr. R. Inert matter and life and form? Yes it’s quite a good example.

Mr. S. There is the example of a house being burned down and the building of the house. It’s an exciting idea.

Dr. R. That was one example which Mr. Ouspensky used to introduce when he was describing combinations of three forces and how different combinations produced entirely different results. For instance, all the work that went into the assembly of materials, the skill, the knowledge, the labour force required, for the building of a house; the conversion, as it were, of inert material into something which had a life of its own in relation to man – that’s one combination of forces. On the other hand, you might have a tin of kerosene in the house and put a match to it and with that one match, the house could go up in flames – and that’s another combination of the forces. The trouble is that people very often want to produce something and use the wrong triad and put a match to it instead, like the Shah of Persia, for instance.

But to start on a more fundamental way of looking at the Law of Three Forces, Mr. Ouspensky did a lot of research about it and came to the conclusion that only if you could

find the first and second forces – action and reaction – could you see where, in some cases, a third force entered and something new happened; and in other cases the two opposing forces just cancelled each other out. So he asked us to be sure to mention, when we were asking questions about the Law of Three Forces, the particular triad we were talking about, and if possible the two opposing Forces which were involved in this triad.

Mr. S. Are you saying that it's not a good thing to generalise about this subject?

Dr. R. It's not a good thing to generalise. His complaint about the Indian system was that they tended to generalise too much. In other words, they speak of Three Gunas – the active which is called Rajas, its opposite Tamas – reaction – and a third force Sattva which unites the two and produces a sensation of light or clarity. When you read descriptions of the three Gunas, Rajas is always red, Tamas is always black and Sattva is always light. Now that, in the hands of an expert like the Shankaracharya, used in relation to Self-realization only and in relation to Meditation, that is marvellous and says all you really need. But when it is written up in books and you have endless tomes discussing the three Gunas in general the result is really very unappetising and indigestible. So don't generalise. Try and take a very clear example. For instance, when I first met Mr. Ouspensky I was very fresh from Cambridge and he asked whether I could think of an example. I had just been listening to Sir Gowland Hopkins who had discovered vitamins and he allowed that as a good example: there is ordinary food of three kinds, there is one's ability to digest this food but unless some third element (which is not the same as either of the other two) is present, growth and many other functions of the human organism are not possible. And it was through this that Hopkins discovered vitamins. So first find two forces opposing and then try to find what brings them together suddenly, in perhaps rather exceptional cases. Will that keep you going for a bit, Joe? (Yes, I think so.) (laughter)

Miss Blum. (repeat) When the three Gunas are in balance, where is consciousness?

Dr. R. The Shankaracharya says that when the three Gunas are in balance it will be the end of the universe! He has advised us not to speak about it! (laughter) All the movement of life in the world, progress and regress, is due to the essentially *unbalanced* relationship of the three. So what was it you really meant in relation to real life?

Miss Blum. (repeat) About consciousness in relation to the Gunas.

Dr. R. (to A.) Where does consciousness come in relation to the Gunas? It's a big question; but start nearer home: Where does consciousness come in relation to Miss Blum? This is the question. A certain combination will result in your being momentarily awake – more conscious. So try and find what that combination is, what leads to it, what gets in the way.

Miss B. (repeat) With action and reaction, in order to overcome this some element of Sattva has to come in to save the situation, not sufficient to prevent one saying or doing something wrong, but some inner element must come into it.

Dr. R. I shouldn't use the word consciousness in this connection. When discussing the two forces of action and reaction, talk about this third force which feels like some new impulse. We're talking about the mechanics of things, you see, and this third force of Sattva is what

unites the two opposing forces in a particular instance. You are introducing an unknown thing when you introduce the word consciousness into an already unknown question. That's all I can say just now.

Mr. Hodge. When Mr. Ouspensky spoke of the inner voice, he said it came from a certain part in his head. Could you say something about this part?

Dr. R. I'm very glad you reminded me of that because I meant to comment on it. When one used to talk with Mr. Ouspensky, he would often ask, 'Where do you feel your I? If you have already come into a state of Self-remembering, where do you feel it?' We used to mention various places – in the heart and so on. For him, it was always *above his head*. In this passage it wasn't a certain place *in* his head where he felt this voice; it was above his head. And this corresponds to what happens if you remember the Param-Atman enough and get a moment of special relationship with the Param-Atman. It's above your head and it contains everything – other things besides yourself. You feel your own Jiva-Atman, your own individual 'I' very often in the heart. Does that interest you, Ray?

Mr. H. I always thought it came from outside but I could never understand why.

Dr. R. The individual I, the Atman, comes from inside and is felt inside; when this becomes universal, it also comes from inside but is felt *outside* and is felt to contain very much of the world besides yourself.

Mr. H. The phrase 'much of the world besides yourself' sounds very much like it.

Dr. R. You've no doubt felt that when turning in a Mukabeleh.

Mrs. Garten. I should like to hear more about unity, Dr. Roles. Unity within oneself and unity with the Param-Atman.

Dr. R. In the papers recently we have been describing the nature, Prakriti, which is ever-changing both in the world and in the individual owing to the ever-changing relationship of the three Gunas. But in the *Bhagavad Gita* and in the Shankaracharya's teaching we are told to go *beyond the nature and the changing Gunas*, to transcend them in order to reach the unity. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 14, Shri Krishna says: 'He who realizes that it is only the Gunas that act and remains calm and detached will unite with my Being. And he who loves me and only me with unflinching devotion will rise above the Gunas and be at one, be unified with me.' Unity means to become the Divine Self, become the Lord of Creation – the Purush or Lord. It's a thing impossible to describe so why this silly ass tries to describe it, I don't know! But nevertheless one has to try to transcend all the changes, leaving them behind as for instance in Meditation. Not stopping, going on with the idea of having nothing of your own, nothing that you are hanging on to. And then when you reach that emptiness, then that emptiness becomes a fullness and that is the Unity. (to Lady A) You could put that a bit better.

Lady A. I thought that was superb! (laughter)

Mr. Tyou. We have heard that if opposing forces are acting against each other there is no result. But in the recording we just heard from Experimental Mysticism, it seemed as if Mr.

Ouspensky was deliberately setting up opposing forces and achieved a result through this. Is this a way to reach the Self?

Dr. R. Exactly! Mr. Ouspensky himself was the third force – the experimenter, the observer. But it needs to be in a particular context. Can you give me an example of what you mean? For instance, he was trying to overcome his inertia by means of these experiments and trying to leave behind all the other voices that he usually lived with.

Mr. T. Certain experiments in mysticism that one has read about in various parts of the world seem to imply that one sets up a state of activity and also a state of passivity at the same time and something happens in between the two states.

Dr. R. Yes; and it's very interesting in relation to a favourite current way of trying to do this, namely the use of drugs. Most of the so-called 'tranquillising' drugs quieten parts of the nervous system and rouse other parts. The individual differs in his reaction to such drugs and he has to be very careful. But the problem with Marijuana or any of the milder drugs is to get the right dose that will quieten things you don't want and rouse what you do want. The trouble is that with every dose of drug, your reactions change which makes it a mighty problematical way of experimenting, so we don't advise it.

Mr. T. Can one also do this by working on oneself in a mental or an emotional manner in order to induce this state?

Dr. R. One certainly can; it underlies all the things we are being told to do now by the Shankaracharya. For instance, we are told of three obstacles which we must get rid of if we want our psychological life to be purified and ready for awakening. The first is sheer bloody-mindedness; in other words, deliberately wanting to do what you know inside yourself is not going to help, is not right, he calls that Mala or dirt; cantankerousness, willfulness; that is the first obstacle. The second is dispersion of the mind which is free to wander from one association to another without any discrimination – that's called Vikshepa. And the third is the tendency of the emotional part of the mind when it's roused to become stuck to something, just as a fly gets stuck to flypaper; he can't get away from it. People are fascinated by street accidents, something takes hold of your mind and you can't free yourself. We all have favourite identifications of that sort. So you find out Mr. Tyou's favourite identifications; they will vary from time to time; then you will see what that third obstacle is. Well, all that corresponds with the knowledge that Mr. Ouspensky was talking about and if you try and tackle those, you will be answering your own question. On Thursday you can start a discussion on the subject!

Lady Allan. Dr. Roles, one feels listening to that recording that Mr. Ouspensky had an enormous framework of research and knowledge and attitude and being before he embarked on this. Therefore the results had meaning which he conveyed to us – because of this background. So often any experiments I would feel I might make would not be related in the same way.

Dr. R. Oh no, you have a much better chance than he had! If you look in the brochure (when we get our next 200 copies from Yale) you will see a picture near the beginning of a very serious little boy who already knew what life was like. You're right, he had a lot of

background! And opposite this picture is a discussion he had much later with Dr. Maurice Nicoll about how from a very early age he realised that life was a hoax! So what one's past has contributed will never be lost and will have a bearing on how easy you find it today. For all of us are finding it infinitely easier now than Mr. Ouspensky found it just after the declaration of World War I when all his expertise and width of vision was needed to pioneer what we are now enjoying. He should save us a lot of time and give us a lot of short cuts.

It's now half-past and I think, time to close. We might try and get Robin Northesk to do some more recordings. I think it came out rather well.

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