

28 April 1980

## SMALL MONDAY MEETING

### COLET HOUSE

On the Platform: Dr. Roles, Lady Allan, Prof. Guyatt.

R.G. There are a few announcements. There will be a large meeting next week on Tuesday, 6th May and Movements will begin that evening – not Monday because of the holiday, but Tuesday. Group meetings will also start that week. On Friday, 2nd May, there will be a Mukabeleh for Guests at 8 p.m.

Miss Scrutton. Has the Thursday meeting date been altered because I understood it was this week and have let everybody know?

Dr. R. No. It has always been intended that groups start after the Large Monday Meeting.

R.G. It's optional, isn't it, if people want to start?

Dr. R. I suppose so, yes, for you've been given the preliminary Reading this afternoon which is meant to gain time! It's for people to have for a fortnight until we can get some feedback as to what people want to study this Summer Term. So we're playing for safety!

Just before we get on to that, I'd like to welcome two distinguished visitors from Northumberland: Miss Hendry whom we first met through the Cramptons didn't we? (Miss H: It was through Sybil Drew) I used to be terrified of headmistresses (laughter) ever since the headmistress of my daughter's school asked me to address the school and I had never seen so many girls of assorted ages all together in my life! I don't think she understood, or any of them understood what I talked about, but it was very pleasant – though fearful! (laughter) I'm sorry you haven't got the Movements to see this afternoon; we'll have that treat for you some other time for we'd like you very much to come again on some Monday later on. But there is something much more important which will make your long journey very worthwhile which we'll talk about shortly and we're very glad that you were able to make it for that reason. The Newcastle group is a really flourishing affair. Have you got the figures I mentioned?

Miss H. The present number of the group is 23. We had 28 but 5 have moved away.

Dr. R. And of those, how many meditate?

Miss H. 22.

Dr. R. Fine. It's all apparently quite happy. There aren't any frightful problems under James's tutelage?

Mr. Marsh. They're also attending group meetings.

Dr. R. Yes. So it's rather important to keep in mind what we are going to talk about today.

The other thing is that we have recently had this Work-In and I must say I was rather gratified to hear that lots of people came to that – really quite a record! ('30 people') It was beautifully managed as far as I heard – nobody was allowed to get bored on one thing for too

long. I think that Eddie Tobler and Clive Hicks and Simon Harbord managed it very well indeed. That cheered me up quite a lot.

And then *The Bridge* has also cheered me up quite a lot. I must congratulate the editors and the contributors. A lot of it came as a complete surprise to me and I enjoyed it very much as a 'good read'! It is a most suitable one to send to our members abroad – we have sent them notices so that they can order the number of copies they want. Nick Dewey is in New York at the moment fixing things up there.

In this Reading at the end, Part 2, I've put in the main idea behind the title *The Bridge* for the magazine when we started composing it. It was very much what was in Helen Wright's mind when the name *The Bridge* suddenly came to her as the obvious one. So here is the connection between the material and that.

I'm very glad that Anne's (Brunsdon) son-in-law contributed this remarkable article which amused me intensely.

(Pause)

All through this holiday I've been trying to come to myself in order to receive more light on a problem which has been at the centre of our affairs for the last twenty years in this House, since the coming of the Meditation. The problem really is: should we try and resuscitate the old System taught to Mr. Ouspensky, for a few of us are still around who heard it at first hand from him? Should we try to use all or part of it and what? This problem has been at the back of our minds all this twenty years and I suddenly got an answer which satisfied me so I'll try to put it shortly. It came as a result of a reading a passage from the Shankaracharya which I'm going to ask Lady Allan to read after that.

The upshot of it was that the System as we originally had it and as it was given to Mr. Ouspensky in 1915 in pre-revolutionary Russia taught us very accurately all about the prison in which we live – the stones and the bricks and the bars, the routine habits of the warders and the character of the governor – and various things which would be needed in order to escape. But it didn't teach us *how* to escape. And nobody that I know ever did escape through the System alone – only Mr. Ouspensky after much suffering and only in the last fortnight of his life! And it brought with it a lot of tragedies; so it cannot be in the original form in which it was given and which has now been published in its entirety in various books, unselected, and will make it impossible for anybody to teach that System in its original form again. You know that that System said that there three kinds of influence.

One was influence 'A' arising in life itself containing all ordinary knowledge about how to earn one's bread and butter, and how to live an *outwardly* successful life. But mixed in there with the 'A' influences were influences 'B' which arose originally from Schools, were originally True Knowledge but which were mixed up with the ordinary 'A' influences. The ability to distinguish between the two was called Magnetic Centre and a few people had it, but the vast majority had not. Beyond all that, was influence 'C' which came direct from the Source, from men of higher mind, and that is the influence we have been getting through the Shankaracharya with the help of the Meditation during the last twenty years.

One of the chief objects Mr. Ouspensky had, if not *the* chief object, in founding his Society in this house was *the preservation of True Knowledge*. It was more important to him

than interesting people or disseminating ideas – the preservation of what is true and what will remain true for ever. This True Knowledge consists of ways of escaping from prison, and not just of the study of the prison. You can either learn how to break out of prison, which is a dangerous proceeding and liable to land one up in a worse situation than before; or you *can earn a remission of sentence by good conduct and have one's life sentence reduced to five, ten years*. And that is the way we choose and the way the Shankaracharya recommends. By 'good conduct' he means consistency of thought, word and deed, and remembering that one is not the doer but that Param-Atman – the 'big hand' – is arranging everything. So this resolves the conflict; because if we use what we remember of the System to escape from prison, that's fine, and indeed it's a tremendous help used in that way. If we're going to use it just to study the prison, I'm not on! And when you get to my age with only a short time before one departs from the scene, you will feel the same thing because the one thing you can take with you through physical death is the love of Truth and Consciousness. You cannot take all the other luggage, the burden of knowledge of whatever kind. And in fact other systems and our own, merely change the outside of the prison, merely change the location of the prison, and the kind of prison you're in – you might be moving from Wormwood Scrubs to Portland Bill – but it doesn't get you out of prison. And there are dozens and dozens of such partial prisons around today and nobody wants them any more! The developing side of humanity is now going for discovery of one's own. I mean all the enquiry at Oxford by Sir Alistair Hardy – and the American researchers into 'Life after Life', all these things are only accepted by people in general if they are discovered without some fictitious authority. So quite the last thing we, as a Society, want to do is set up as 'people who know,' or write books to show that we have the answers. There are enough books of that sort and the writing of such books would mean changing what is 'C' influence into 'B' and even 'A'. Is that clear? Do you feel the same? Escape from prison is the keynote. What about you, Maurice?

M. Pickering. (rpt) We spent a week talking about just this at Allahabad – liberation – and it is the single point in which I'm interested now.

Dr. R. Yes, and your own audiences have been very crucial in helping one to come to this.

(To the Meeting) I'd like you to say anything you feel like meanwhile about this question. How does it seem to you, both you who were taught the System by Mr. Ouspensky, those who heard of it through us here, and those who came to us just through the Meditation? Because we try and have this place open to all genuine seekers, whether people come for the Turning (which is a direct way of escaping from prison for people who want to do it from the physical side and through the heart and not through the head) or through the Meditation or whatever. Any remarks? Oh there is another mistress! Mrs. Gil, how do you feel about it? Do you know Miss Hendry? (no, not personally)

Mrs. G. I understand that writing books about it would be completely wrong.

Dr. R. Good. Do you see possibilities of what you've heard in helping us to escape from prison. (she nods) I thought you did! Anyone else?

Mrs. Guyatt. Dr. Roles, is self observation still regarded as the great tool it used to be?

Dr. R. Very much so. The Shankaracharya started talking about self-observation before I even mentioned that it was the keynote of Mr. Ouspensky's teaching. It's one of the places where the two systems come together. For self-observation some sort of plan is necessary. One must be observing and comparing with a certain plan, wouldn't you say?

R.G. Dr. Roles, this plan does create an attitude, doesn't it, towards oneself, your life? I've always been enormously grateful to the Work for giving me a sense of scale and also that the whole idea of 'different times' helps me to understand the idea of illusion and mirage. Big ideas tune one into the right attitude towards one's life.

Dr. R. And these ideas are so essential for present day thought. They are missed by a lot of the leading thinkers of the day because Einstein, for instance, discussed Relativity of Space but he never really discussed Relativity of Time; and Mr. Ouspensky said that Einstein knew only four dimensions – the first dimension of Time. And the same with the principle of scale. It's what's mostly needed to make something real and permanent out of all the discoveries that have been made in this century. Yes, you're right!

AC-S. I go along absolutely with what you've said, but at the same time I shall never, I think, cease to remember the most tremendous gratitude for the first meetings I came to when I was in the Tower of Babel of Cambridge. I came to meetings in London given by Mrs. Mayor and the theme was the spiral diagram and the theme of the caterpillar and the chrysalis and the butterfly, and how one should wake up – but first one had to die to wake up. This, may be, was not liberating one from prison but it was certainly letting one out on parole! (laughter)

Dr. R. Yes, I remember you and Simon Young coming from King's College having been shooting at the Dean with catapults in that 'Tower of Babel'. You seem a little different now!

Lady A. Dr. Roles, this is the feeling you gave me that there are two ways of looking at it. One is a trap where you use knowledge for mental exercise and the other is to remember why you need it at all because the [knowledge of the] prison is merely in order to leave it.

Dr. R. Yes, you're right; and the further great realization is that *the prison itself is fictitious*. It's what is called in the Shankaracharya's system illusion or Maya. The only real thing is Atman or the Param-Atman or the Absolute; it depends on the scale, the same reality but on different scales. Everything else (the 'laws of nature') is all part of the show and should be treated like a show to test the individual and lead to Self-Discovery which is Liberation.

Mr. Anderson. I was interested in what you said about preservation. When you said that, I remembered Mr. Ouspensky's psychological description of the meaning of the ark – the story of the Ark.

Dr. R. Yes. During the war we were frequently described among ourselves as an 'Ark' at Lyne and here we have all kinds of pairs of animals who are better off now than they would have been. (laughter)

Mr. A. (rpt.) Do we only preserve the System by recreating it? And do we recreate it through experience?

Dr. R. Yes. One time with the Shankaracharya I suddenly found myself asking a question that

I had never thought of before and I had the idea he put it into my head. I asked, 'How do we become connected with the fountain of knowledge?' If you go by somebody else's version from the past of some system of knowledge, you go back into something fixed and stale. If you connect yourself with the fountain of knowledge, everything comes fresh all the time. You can adapt to whatever situation, whatever country you're in; everything is fresh. And this is what is meant by escape from prison and connection with the source of knowledge (the Param-Atman) through a fully Realized man. Well, now, at this point I would like Lady Allan to read the passage which woke me up last week.

Lady A. When you've explained the word, we'll put it in.

R. Perhaps it would refresh us to hear again the Shankaracharya's explanation of the riddle called Narada's Riddle.

S. The idea is taken from one reference in the Gita where at the beginning of Chapter 13 Lord Krishna speaks of the Kshetra, the pleasure ground of the body, and the Kshetrajna or Owner. (Here is that reference in the Gita carefully translated to avoid the usual confusion. Chapter 13, v. 1.):

Arjuna asked, 'My Lord who is God and what is nature? What is matter and what is Self or Spirit? What is it that they call wisdom and what is it that is worth knowing?'

Lord Krishna replied, 'O Arjuna, the body of man is the playground (or Kshetra) of the Self and what wise men call the Self is that which observes and is conscious of the interaction of matter. I am the omniscient Self, the Kshetrajna, that abides in the playground of matter. Knowledge of both the material world and that Self is wisdom.'

And the Shankaracharya continued:

Kshetra is the field or playground and Kshetrajna is the Creator and possessor of the field.

Dr. R. So in the future we will refer to those two by the English equivalents of 'the field as the body' and the 'owner of the body'.

Lady A. (reading)

It can be taken on the individual scale, the individual or Jiva-Atman as *owner* and the three bodies and everything contained in them as the *field*; or on the world scale, the *field* of the cosmos as one single body and the Creator and Owner of the whole universe being the Absolute or Brahma. To know the field is not very important unless one knows the Owner, the Master. So in the riddle, Narada is saying that if you have known the Owner of the field, then all the knowledge of the field or the world becomes futile. And if you know the Owner, it all becomes unnecessary. If you are learning the True Knowledge, your aim should be the Atman and the Param-Atman or Absolute. In this case he is simply stating that any system or discipline *by itself* is useless. Although without that system nothing can be understood (for then you cannot know the Owner) yet you should never believe that a system by itself is the end of everything.

(Dr. Roles then put further parts of Narada's Riddle):

There is a Kingdom where reigns the one and only King. There is a well whence there is no return. There is a woman who assumes many forms and there is one who is the husband of the woman...

And the Shankaracharya answered:

It is important to have rather a full knowledge of the scriptures; otherwise it is difficult to get to the central point of such language in which the ideas are presented as riddles. Just as the Christian Bible contains parables or stories clothed in such a way as to contain spiritual knowledge in their fabric, the questions which Narada puts are: Do you know the Kingdom where there is only One? And so on. The answer to all those is the same. There is only one Lord, the King of all. This Lord has a wife (Maya) who keeps assuming multifarious forms. The well, which he described, is ignorance – ignorance of that King as the Self. Falling into this well, there is no getting out unless you are graced with the presence of a fully Realized man Sthita-Prajna. Narada mentions the nine doors and other things.

Dr. R. You've got a copy, Dr. Connell, of the full passage, haven't you?

Dr. C. Yes, from the Srimad Bhagavatam.

The Shankaracharya continued:

The study of such stories from the scripture is part of the progress of knowledge, knowledge of the Truth. *It is one of the recognized proofs of the existence of a knowledge which is always true.* If individuals study such stories and find that they help, then there is nothing to worry about.

Dr. R. So this put me on to the idea that you could use that Western System to study your prison or you could use it to escape from prison. And that is what Narada is really saying... By getting to know the Self, Self-observation, Self-discovery, you escape from the prison of duality. 'Lord thou art my way of escape' – as the Upanishad puts it.

All I can say is that Mr. Ouspensky would have gladly given his right hand for that explanation when he travelled fruitlessly through India in 1914. This idea of 'escape from duality' was what he was searching for all through. We're lucky – we've had that help and I'm not going to give up, for any temptation at all, this one aim of escaping. The Self which we have to discover is right here. It's so much closer than we think, that once we know that this exists and go for it, one gets frequent unrecognised bonuses right from the start.

Mrs. Reed. Dr. Roles, I think Mr. Ouspensky said that before we could make the System work there would be a lot of inner argument and he said this would have to be destroyed. I'm thinking that the Meditation is really melting that inner argument.

Dr. R. Yes, the Meditation coupled with this idea of remembering Param-Atman all the time and substituting the Absolute for the personal at every point. And that takes quite a long time too!

Lady A. This brings what Professor Guyatt was talking about, the different time-scale because the prison keeps coming back to the time scale of the physical body, while if you substitute the Param-Atman or the Absolute it takes away this very limited scale, which I find I keep sinking into.

Dr. R. Yes; on the other hand it's the present moment which is all one has for actually escaping from prison. Put it off and the future has become lost in the past and one remains in prison.

Anne Brunson sent me rather a nice Easter card depicting in beautiful colours a caterpillar discovering that, as he emerges from the chrysalis, he is still the same caterpillar only a little bit hairier! (laughter) And I do so hope that we've got further than to recognise that we are really butterflies and not caterpillars only. If any of you still feel you aren't, then you should do something about it!

Miss Newington. There is something which has kept coming back to me over the years which I've never really quite understood although much of what you have said tonight, and other people, probably means just the same thing. I've heard that Mr. Ouspensky used to say some people, their whole emphasis is to get out of the cold; and others, their whole emphasis is to find warmth. Is there a difference?

Dr. R. Yes. It's preferred, in the Shankaracharya's system, to go for the warmth – to leave the cold and go for the warmth. Light a fire. In our old System, we liked very much staying in the cold and we discussed how cold it was (laughter) for everybody and how one person was colder than another! (laughter) This was the main subject of conversation at Lyne. (laughter) And there was a virtue in being cold. There was a virtue in suffering; for if you were too gay and happy, you couldn't be remembering yourSelf! (laughter) There is no virtue in being cold and staying cold.

Well, that's probably enough for today. Shall we meditate for a few minutes, coming in out of the cold, by doing just exactly what we were told; sitting in a symmetrical position; starting the repetition of the mantra; and then allowing it to remove all inner movement from us, even itself.

## MEDITATION

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