

2 June 1980

**LARGE MONDAY MEETING****COLET HOUSE**

On the platform: Dr. Roles, Lady Allan and Prof. Guyatt (R.G.)

R.G. There are some announcements. There will be a Mukabeleh for visitors on Friday, 6th June; and a Meditation Meeting on Tuesday week, 10th June. We are hoping to have some more people for Initiation early in July. So please let us know without delay if you have any friends who might be ready for this.

The next large Monday Meeting will be on 23rd June.

Sometimes we are asked by visitors from abroad who come to London and want to join in our activities if we can find them accommodation. We need to enlarge and bring up-to-date our list of places available and would be glad to know if anyone can help with this. There are three different categories needed. Firstly, a room in someone's house where they could live as part of the family for a week or so, paying for expenses. Secondly, a small self-contained flat where they could look after themselves. And thirdly, a small hotel known to be relatively quiet and moderately priced. Could you please let the office know if anything is available.

Finally, we should be glad of some help, in the form of a truck or a van with a driver, in getting rid of some of the large accumulation of rubbish in the alley outside – possibly a weekend in the near future.

Dr. R. Is Derek Faires here? (No) He used to have a fleet of vans.

R.G. If it could be at a weekend, it could then be taken to a dump nearby. If anyone is able to help, could they please let Roy know.

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Dr. R. You may have seen in the *Telegraph* this morning about the death of Mrs. Hamilton-Pearson last week. We discovered from her birth certificate that she was 90; even she herself didn't know, and we thought she was younger as she was so lucid and such a great help right up to the end. The Pearsons were almost the first friends Mr. Ouspensky had when he came to England in the early 1920's and Mrs. H-P was in Paris with Madame Ouspensky and helped her to come to England. It was curious that 19 years ago when I first went to India it was the date of Dr. Hamilton-Pearson's death – in fact my wife had a little difficulty in finding me to tell me about it up in the foothills of the Himalayas – but since that time we took her in and took care of her and she of us. Anyway it was a very close and very agreeable friendship and one which does great credit to her and the System because she had been very peaceful, happy and calm latterly; and during the last two or three weeks it was as if the clock stopped every now and then, but somebody coming in and speaking to her would start it up again. She told Mrs. Little that often she wasn't sure whether she would be dead or alive when she woke. She was very calm and peaceful about it and still very full of fun. So she's all right! The cremation is on Thursday at 11.00 a.m. at Putney Vale.

I don't think there is anything else I want to add except just that in this week's paper there is a word which will be strange to you and I expect dozens of people will ring up to

know whether it is a misprint. Well *it isn't a misprint*. It's the word '*Brahmi*' used in the Gita (in several versions) meaning the '*state of Brahma*'. Brahma is the Absolute; the state of Brahma, the final stage of Turiya is called in the Gita '*Brahmi*'. So don't get too upset! It's very funny about human nature – if there is one word which somebody doesn't understand they don't pay any attention to anything else that is in the paper! (laughter) Please ask questions only about what you think you *do* understand!

We were very grateful to get a note from Edward Lawrence of the Wednesday Work Party which I've included in this week's paper, first of all about escape from this self-made prison. Mrs. Mosby said that: 'there was no need to be downcast when we saw that we were in a prison because at such moments we must be out of it already'. And that is absolutely true and today we want to say something about it remembering that we are not interested in the prison, only in escape from it. And also they are wanting to know more about a '*mini-ladder*' which was referred to in Reading 1 this term and also at the Meditation Meeting in March. I'll just mention that first, I think. (Diagram from Reading 1 on screen) This is our standard picture of the Symbol and here (the baseline) is the part referred to, which is our field of operations. We can't do much about the external world – that's looked after by learning skilled crafts and other things; and we have no immediate access to the inner emotional world which for us is a dream world. We have first to go up a ladder so as to unite the inner and the outer worlds which is the essence of Yoga – union. In every well-known and real religion it is said that the Way, meaning the Way of Self-Realization, doesn't begin on the level of ordinary life. Between the level of ordinary life and the Way there is a stairway, a ladder. Now it's the same idea, but this mini-ladder that the Shankaracharya refers to is something quite individual and quite private on the subtle level, and is one's own affair. We've all got to go up this ladder and each of us has to do it in our own way in our own sort of life. It's an inner ladder which we have to climb.

It was sheer luck that we happened to hear about it because one of our translators went to the big festival where he was speaking in public and he just described it very shortly and our translator sent us the translation and that's all we've heard about it since. So you *can't* hear any more about it and in any case it wouldn't be a good thing because hearing things about it is no good at all. You have to explore it yourself. Our own discoveries are much more valuable and interesting than anybody else's, especially from the past. Here is this ladder and we already know quite enough about it to begin practising it.

It's a ladder by which you *transcend duality*, for one thing, and as you go along it all sorts of things come up in your memory from previous moments of consciousness. Here is one which came up in my memory just before I came here today. It's from the Epistle of St James.

Lady Allan (reading)

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and reproacheth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man – *dipsychos* – is unstable in all his ways.

Dr. R. That exactly describes what we do when we go along this ladder. I never before came

across the word ‘dipsycho’s which is ‘duality of mind;’ for it doesn’t occur anywhere in the Gospels, though it is used twice in this Epistle of St. James’ – double-minded. And so we become single-minded in the course of this ladder. The other beauty of this ladder is that it is perfectly safe. Various doctrines there are and if you launch yourself into them, you may end up in any old place. But the first step here – pointing to (a) – starts by *making sure that what you are doing at the moment* (if you’re doing something) is done with attention and appropriateness and beauty – as beautifully as possible, because the Atman is looking on all the time. You start by cultivation of attention to what you are doing, where you are, and who you are, at any given moment when you’re doing something; and when you aren’t doing anything, you’re just aware of yourself and the position that you’re sitting in and are quiet and still, because *increasing stillness* of mind is the other characteristic of this ladder.

Now are there any discoveries you’ve been making, anything you want to ask about or tell us about? It’s a way from good actions in the sense of attentive actions, doing nothing too little and nothing too much, getting rid of all I, all I-ishness, all the feeling of being separate and ending up with no thoughts of self at all; and then you will enter the Kingdom of Heaven where the emotional centre will be working nearer its full speed. Any remarks?

Stephen Wood. Is this the same ladder that is described in *The Crest Jewel*?

Dr. R. No, it’s a close look at one step on that ladder (between 3 and 4). It’s a mini-ladder and it was described to crowds of ordinary people, just a perfectly ordinary approach to fulfilling your possibilities – people without any special preparation at all. But it’s also a way of preparing people to go further up the big Ladder which is the one referred to in *The Crest Jewel* and the one described by our Shankaracharya. It is between the 3rd and 4th steps of his Ladder. It is very important we should really begin to do this more intensely. Quite a lot of people do it and find it useful, but we don’t do it enough.

Joe Skeaping. Dr. Roles, is this ladder the thing that is occasionally let down in front of you when things go wrong and if you step on to it there is an opportunity there? But if you don’t put your weight on it, it’s lifted up again out of your way until there is another tragedy when it’s put down again in front of you.

Dr. R. I think that’s a rather good description, don’t you! (laughter) But you’ve got to know about it and you’ve got to cultivate it and practise it yourself for nobody else is going to let it down for you when you need it! You have to keep practising it every day because otherwise you might step down and the ladder isn’t there!

Lady A. The way you described it sounded rather encouraging because it meant that any time you gave attention to the job in hand, you already had your foot on the ladder.

Dr. R. Yes, and that’s the beautifully safe part of it! It’s a way of avoiding involuntary actions in a state of sleep, the dream-state which is where all the danger comes – stepping out across the road without looking, jay-walking.

Dr. Cox. It does look from the shape of the ladder that one end is held by attention and the other end by meditation so that the ladder is held in this way and so it would seem that during the day, this desire both to attend and to meditate holds the ladder in place. Is that right?

Dr. R. Perhaps for you; but I don't think it's right to be too specific. It is certainly dependent on doing some regular inner work and meditation is the simplest and most effective that we know. Let's leave it for individual enterprise to discover about the details, but it is to avoid duality. And goodness me, duality is the thing to avoid! It really is! For instance, we were down at Glyndebourne watching Mozart's opera *Die Entführung*. Michael Fleming was there too, and I came back very 'monte' and we got to bed about 2 and the next morning I had to write this paper. I wrote a superb paper (laughter) I was really very pleased with it; but in the course of yesterday as I sobered down, doubts began to creep in which my wife supported nobly (laughter) and I realized that it was all *wrong*. So that this morning I had to rewrite it at great inconvenience to our Twickenham brigade. Wives were enlisted for typing and transport; the headmaster called fruitlessly at the house, and a Queen's trumpet player came round on his wife's new bicycle – it was all terribly inconvenient! (laughter) But we have to obey those instructions from within. What wouldn't I give to avoid this switch of personality! I want to make us all use this, really start using it. Mark, (Ty)ou it would be more worthwhile than all the bright thoughts you ever thought. (laughter)

Mrs. Guyatt. (rpt) Isn't it rather strange that it starts with action? It seems to start with the outer hemisphere.

Dr. R. Yes, but this is how all sorts of things start, like learning to swim or drive a car. You start in and you learn how it goes, etcetera – very practical.

R.G. Wasn't it said that you can approach Sattva through Rajas?

Dr. R. Yes. All activity must have Rajas. The Gunas are in everything and any activity must have a proportion of Rajas guna. So it's this that does the damage when you have attention over, when you are not employing all your attention, which is most of the time. A very interesting thing is connected with this. For instance, in the Bible somewhere it says: 'Whatsoever thy hand giveth thee to do, do it with all thy might.' Well that's not good advice at all. I'm sorry. Because just think of the chaos there'd be if we did everything with all our might. (laughter) It must be a wrong translation somehow. (laughter) You do anything with the *appropriate amount of energy*, just enough energy to do it rightly. You can tell this is happening a lot of the time. For instance, we unlock a door that we're used to unlocking and we don't think about it, just turn the key. But if the lock sticks, if the key sticks, needs oil as our garage frequently does, you have to put much more attention on to it and usually the attention is able to cope. So the degree of attention which is appropriate to the given set of actions is very important. And that's where this ladder begins. It's what we learn to do in the Movements, where we're learning to use all the different centres. Whereas we ordinarily do everything from here. It's the opening up of new territory.

Mrs. Brunson. So often when I start this, there's a little devil comes up and says, 'Now I'm doing this with attention!' (laughter) It's the duality, the stupid thing that happens all the time.

Dr. R. The point of your remark is of course that this is one way in which duality shows itself. The aim is to get the finer part operating all through every part of your being without any

ego entering – ‘O my Lord, my whole being is yourself’ as the prayer says. Do not attend to any of this commentary that’s going on (does anybody notice the commentator, a sort of journalist reporting everything that’s going on all the time?) It’s all right if that gets into the background, but we can do without it and we should do without it! But it is a source of trouble if it comes to the front of your attention.

You wrote, Mrs. Fleming, a very good letter (part of which we will now read) about the prison and about the laws of nature and how to look at it from the Shankaracharya’s point of view.

Lady A (reading)

The subject which interested me a lot and over a considerable time is natural laws. Man-made laws seem to put more and more fetters round one, making the prison even more secure. I’m often aware of a sense of peace and relief when in touch with nature in gardens, countryside, sky, river, birds, one is happy and busy Manas ceases its domination. His Holiness put it so beautifully when he said. ‘You are not those thoughts which are turning, turning. You are not those changing feelings, etc. Well then, what are you? You’ll find when you come out from what you are not, that the ripple on the water is whispering to you, ‘I am that’; the birds in the trees are singing to you, ‘I am that’; etc.’ This leads me on to the thrilling thing that the Self is free and one can be in touch.

Dr. R. Now that is the beneficent side of the new relation with nature that we get through Self-Realization, through going up this ladder. But don’t forget that there are two sides to ‘Nature’ which are described in every ancient religion. Nature is the consort of the Lord in some branches of religion in India. She is Shakti, the wife of Shiva. Her *job is to keep individuals in organic life in prison so that they will serve her purposes and not their own* – there are many fables describing this like Circe in the *Odyssey*. But being a good mother (after all she is our mother earth!) she has made provision for a few of her special children to escape from prison if they want it enough. It wouldn’t do at all if *all* organic life escaped from prison – she’d have nothing left; natural evolution would stop!

It’s said that Nature is like a magician who kept sheep and the sheep kept running away. So he had to hypnotise them and he persuaded them that they weren’t sheep at all; that they were lions or eagles or even men. And then they never wanted to run away. And so mankind is kept in a state of hypnosis, in a psychological prison, so as not to want to escape.

Have you got it? So it’s not all that easy to escape from this prison. It’s made much easier now for us because we have all the cards in our hands and we realize that this prison is of our own creation; the creation of any individual in organic life, his own habits and that he can free himself from it if he only knows of its existence and if he only knows that he can escape from it. So there are these two aspects of nature and I think you should go ahead with your viewpoint as a painter.

While we’re on the subject of painters – John Hersey, you were asking about the Symbol and this is one way of seeing it and being able to use it, which I’ll write to you about – if that’s all right? (Yes) But it’s a great thing for artists, painters, sculptors, musicians, composers; not so necessary for ordinary men in the street, jacks of all trades.

(To actor Tony Anholt.) Have you anything to say about that? You know the sort of actor who has a one-type part and you always hire him when you want a particular thing done. But you don't want to be that sort, do you?

Mr. A. Not if I can help it, no! (laughter)

Dr. R. Anything you would like to say about this idea of gradually bringing in more and more of your capacity, of what you do on stage or in private life? It's a wonderful way and also very good for a stage career. (Pause)

R.G. Dr. Roles, why did you say it was of particular importance to the artist and not to the jack of all trades?

Dr. R. (aside) You, Richard, remember perfectly well that Mr. Ouspensky always maintained that artistic creation was the highest human activity – same triad as 'Self-creation and Self-remembering'.

Miss Scrutton. Can everybody hear this fascinating conversation? (laughter)

Dr. R. He was asking why I singled out the creative artist and not the jack of all trades, from the ordinary sort of person like myself.

Lady A. Perhaps we're lucky, Dr. Roles, because instead of having to pour it all out on art, we can pour it out on the creation of Self-Realization! (laughter)

Mrs. Hall. Dr. Roles, is that what you might call the beginning of psychological thinking, rather than logical?

Dr. R. Yes, very much so! You refer to Mr. Ouspensky's preface to the *New Model* (2nd edition) about four levels of thought? (She nods)

Mrs. H. The prison walls get further and further away, don't they? I was meaning that from a defective form of thinking, the prison walls are tremendously close. One hasn't a hope in hell of seeing out of them. But as one gets into logical thinking, prison walls are a little further away – once can see just a little bit more. And even more with psychological thinking – is this right? – one can see further.

Dr. R. Yes, and penetrate right through the prison walls as many prisoners have said. Your subtle level is not hemmed in by prison walls. And many of the greatest works have been written under those conditions – I remember Helen Wright made a collection of works written in prison. For the prison itself is part of human illusion:

Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.

Pickering, have you anything to say about all this? It came up also at your last audience in a different form. But don't you think that for ordinary people today where they have not had special preparation, a special form of living, it gives quite a good start to the fulfillment of possibilities?

Mr. P. Yes, I was just cogitating on the fact that Bunyan had a point when he describes Christian in the 'slough of despond when hope had deserted him...'

Dr. R. Yes, there's a lot to be got from *Pilgrim's Progress*. I think that this kind of 'mini-ladder approach' is a good one today. What do you think, Dr. Dale Beckett?

Dr. D.B. That's very true. I think that it is a false kindness to spoon-feed people with dogma and doctrine. It's far better to give the facts so that one can form one's own judgment for oneself.

Dr. R. Thank you, yes. The other thing I wanted to ask you was how many of the people who are having to be incarcerated in mental institutions need ever have got there if they could have understood the idea of the prison?

Dr. D.B. That's a very interesting question and one which I've been thinking about quite a bit. I have occasionally come across a person who perhaps isn't mentally ill in the usual meaning of the term, but nevertheless has difficulty in dealing with reality and it's really difficult to distinguish this.

Dr. R. Do you agree, Cox, perhaps that at an early stage there is a very interesting phase where there is an either-or for a person, whether they go on a line which will eventually take them into a loony bin or if they are told by some knowledgeable person how to take the other route? For instance, somebody consulted you when in a jam only a week or two ago. And you saw her once and now she has got the most marvellous job! She's in this room now.

(Laughter as he and the patient got the allusion)

Dr. Cox. I think we've all got somewhere inside us an element of doubt which is that nature hasn't quite conned us completely and we've all got that little door and if you can open it or someone can put a hand to release that doubt, then we can be let out of prison.

Dr. R. Hooray! Well, let's do it! (laughter)

So now, for the last five minutes, we should stop fooling around (laughter) and meditate.

## MEDITATION

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