

30 June 1980

SMALL MONDAY MEETING**COLET HOUSE**

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

Dr. R. (to Mr. & Mrs. Evans from New York) You're looking very well and wide awake considering that it was about 6 this morning (your time) when you arrived. I expect you'd rather we did what we do at small Monday meetings – that we don't put on an act!

R.G. This is the last small Monday meeting this term. There is no meeting next Monday; and the following one which is a large one on July 14th is the last of the term. Reading 6 which is given out today is to last for the rest of the term.

Next term's dates are – have been on the screen. They're back again! Also at the end of September there is going to be a week of maintenance and decorating work here in the house with working evenings during the week and in the daytime at weekends. That's between the 14th and 21st September. There will be an opportunity for volunteers to put their names down for this later on, but you might give out the dates at your meetings, so as to give fair warning to people.

Finally, would the Saturday night caretakers please see the list on the hall table downstairs showing when Roy will be on holiday. We hope they will be good enough to fill in for a night or two each.

Dr. R. I'd like just to mention how very happy the new turners' Mukabeleh was last Friday. There were eight new turners including two children. We expected that the children would be very different from the adults, but no, they were every bit as good; so it was really eight new turners, children or grown ups. There were ten musicians so we had live music throughout and the Koran at the end and the Na'at were done without any tape. Altogether there were about 50 people watching, I think, and about half a dozen or a dozen turning with the new ones. You once saw a turning practice here, didn't you (to Mr. E.)? Did you turn in New York? No. But I remember your being with us when we were having a Mukabeleh. (He nods) So it was a great occasion for them and it is quite definitely a going concern. The great advantage of the turning is that there is nothing between you and your action, because if thoughts get in or you start dreaming, you're sunk. So it is something we very much want to keep going in the spirit of the faithful Tekke, Istanbul, and the Sheikh and his mother there with Resuhi Bey.

Now why I mentioned that, was that we have felt recently the need to be much more honest with ourselves. We have gone in for a lot of talking and thinking about consciousness, about meditation, and I thought it was time – lots of us thought it was time – to check up and see if we were talking about the same things when we use the word consciousness and whether we were actually silent during meditation and at those moments during the day when naturally provision is made in the human organism for a gap in the curtain which ordinarily comes between us and the Divine, when it is possible to do something about Self-Realization. So we started doing again an exercise which Mr. Ouspensky used to give us

to do *to prove that thinking is not the same as consciousness*. In fact, it is the enemy of consciousness. And to prove that we cannot be conscious at will, we cannot remember ourSelves at will for more than a very short time.

(to C & N Evans) Now it so happens that at the meeting when we first came across each other in New York, I tried that experiment. Maureen Allan will read how we put it on that occasion at the Steinway Hall in 1971.

Dr. R. (reading) W.H. Auden poem (written we believe in Brooklyn where the Evanses live)

Sharp and silent in the
Clear October lighting
Of a Sunday morning
The great city lies;
And I at a window
Looking over water...

Lady A (reading) As an example of '*a moment of truth*,' Dr. Roles said:

'I'd like you to join me in a small experiment which we used to do with Mr. Ouspensky to prove that we seldom remember ourSelves. So now, I'll ask you just to sit still for two or three minutes trying to hold the feeling 'I so-and-so am here now'... the *feeling*, not necessarily the thought or the words. Just see how you get on and tell me after.'

Then they had three minutes' silence and when asked:

'Did anybody really do that?' The only comeback from the room was: 'Mostly I was aware of the idea of taking credit for having done the exercise,' which was followed by a lot of laughter. Having concluded that such a casual approach is ineffectual, it was easy to introduce the system of meditation which the people had come to hear about.

Dr. R. Well shortly we will be hearing what happened at the meetings last week when they tried this; but for now I'd like to try it again. Remember that it's only to prove something – it's not a *method* of Self-Realization. It's to prove that *you can't do it that way*. Later we will have some meditation – proper meditation – and you'll see, I'm sure, how very different the real thing is. So now let us just do that, with your eyes open or shut, as you like. Just try and hold the feeling 'I so-and-so am here now' – the feeling.

EXERCISE

Well that's exactly two minutes. Do you subscribe to Mr. Ouspensky's statement as a result of doing that, that the limit of our consciousness of one thing, oneself, is less than those two minutes? One wasn't conscious all the time; it varied and fluctuated; but it was a different thing from thinking, wasn't it? After this week, what have you got to say about it? Skillman, you've written about it; and others have written in; and a great many haven't got really the right idea at all about what the exercise is for. For instance, the two new groups, although the idea was repeated four times about what they should do, they none of them could do it and it didn't mean anything. What have people to say?

(Pause)

I referred to you, Michael Skillman, and you said that in Reading 5 we were told to keep all other thoughts away – well that's what Mr. Ouspensky instructed us to do long before we got the meditation in which we are told *never to put any bondage on the mind*, never to try and control or restrict the mind. What we are trying to do is to keep the *false personality*, which is commenting all the time, that false I, you hear as the voice going on during that two minutes, which you don't ordinarily notice although it's there all the time. We want to keep that false I from keeping the mind in slavery, in prison. The mind is beautiful, it's fine, it's got everything it needs, it has to escape from that prison of false I and serve the Master, the eternal, the Divine Self instead.

You ask, Michael, if this deliberate stopping of thoughts is useful outside meditation, but not during meditation? It seems that any control of thoughts must be achieved by stealth to avoid conflict. But through failure to achieve this, one is often still only pretending to meditate. It is perfectly easy as long as you are alive to the risk and don't believe what this 'I' is telling you.

Many people at the meetings found that there was a use to which we could put something like this – not trying for two minutes, that's too long. But you know at the Movement classes we give a *stop exercise* and we're told to stop not only all external movements, but to stop everything inside, all internal movements. And that this internal one could be used by people for themselves in any situation. You are noticing, for instance, during meditation that your thoughts are turning and you say to yourself, 'Quick, stop!' Or driving a car, you find that you are not attending to driving, the thoughts are turning, say to yourself STOP! You can't keep it going for long but just simply stopping will bring you to yourSelf and sometimes produce incalculably good results. (to Lady A) You've found that, haven't you?

Lady A. I said that in fact the only way I could repeat a question exactly was to empty myself and *stop*, while people are asking the question. And it feels full of energy – that sort of emptying.

Dr. R. The Shankaracharya has used this often at our audiences because the translator Jaiswal has to remember often a two minutes' speech in Hindi and give a two minutes' answer in English, as well as remembering the question and nearly always he agrees with the tape recording we've made. When he asked the Shankaracharya what to do in order to achieve that, the Shankaracharya said: 'Empty yourself, empty yourself and listen.' Isn't that so? (Lady A. Yes, yes) So we can empty ourselves in that way, but not do the whole two minutes. Does anybody confirm that?

Pen Scrutton. When one is trying to do that, it seems to connect up with what we were told earlier about the gaps.

Dr. R. Yes. I don't know if that has been studied in New York? Moments during the day when nature has provided a possibility of a gap in the curtain that separates us ordinarily from the Divine Self and we have been referring to them as 'gaps'. It is said that many more of these occur than we ever imagine or ever notice. But if we could only notice them, that at such a moment you could get much further towards Self-Realization all in one, even reaching Samadhi and Turiya. So Pen Scrutton is saying that emptying yourself by saying 'stop'

internally is a way of connecting up with being able to notice these gaps when they occur and to know what to do when they do happen.

Miss S. Yes, and a feeling of this special Samadhi presents itself.

Dr. R. Well you've been at it a long time! But can we expect anybody just beginning, really to get as far as the 8th step of Yoga in immediate presentation? Maybe it becomes possible with time.

Simon Harbord. It feels as if that's what we have been trying to do in the processing in the Mukabeleh.

Dr. R. Yes, yes, in the processing – three times round the world led by the Sheikh. The first time represents what you get in books second or third hand and gradually you come to being yourself as one with the world don't you?

S.H. 'Living with the Reality,' I think.

Dr. R. I'm glad about that. I feel that that is legitimate both according to the tradition of the turning and certainly the idea of how *we* can use some of the ceremonial of the Mukabeleh.

Mrs. Simpson. I've found that the more one can do this brings an order to life – to one's ordinary life.

Dr. R. Chiefly it's important to us at the present time especially because there is genuine dissatisfaction round the world, and particularly in the circles related to the Advaita non-dualism tradition from which our meditation comes, to check on what is happening to the meditation because, in this country at any rate, the most awful things are being done in the name of meditation. Even the Maharishi, whose followers are performing their antics, has repudiated them. We're told on good authority that he is so sick of what they are doing that he has turned his back on them. But this is only second-hand but it was told you, Dr. Fenwick (he nods) and we are sympathetic because the Maharishi wanted *us* to do that job when he came to this house and started us all meditating. But we felt that it is just what would happen – that when it is given to the world, you get all sorts and conditions of people misusing it. Maharishi is now much nearer the centre of the meditation, much nearer the Shankaracharya helping him in many ways, than he was at that time. I'm sorry that he is having all this trouble. But about this check, we're entirely in favour of it. We are wanting to check ourselves first before we 'reform the world' and see that we don't bring any discredit on our Shankaracharya who has taken such a lot of time and trouble explaining all the difficulties and telling us how to avoid them.

These difficulties we notice so much in a bad week when meditation is not going very well are part of the calculated risk which was taken by the people who devised our system of meditation with Guru Deva during World War II. The Yogis are saying now (we're told at first-hand from India) that it was a wrong system because people don't go through the initial preparation that the Yogi has to go through when the 6th step is reached and they are given the initiation to meditation and they only have two more steps to take. In particular, the step before (Dharana) is a step where they have to achieve one-pointed attention; and the Yogis are saying that if you haven't achieved one-pointed attention, how can you meditate with a

mantra? And they have a certain amount of justice on their side. It was a calculated risk and we've been told what to do about it by our guide.

The West will not take it that way – the Yogi is a full-time devotee – the classical Yogi. He was probably started in childhood when his parents gave him to the Yoga system before he could make a choice. He had no name or career. He was celibate and there was a tremendous lot of fighting and difficulty and superstition all ending up with what one sees now at religious festivals in India, for which one has no ambition whatsoever! At least, I haven't! So in order that Western people leading the life of Western civilization should be able to profit from the discipline of a modified form of meditation, we have been given something which is very effective and has profited a great many people. But *not having done Dharana, one-pointed attention, our mind is apt to interest itself in a great many things during a half hour*. And if the false personality is uppermost in any half hour or in any given week, it becomes very difficult to do the meditation sincerely, getting the real peace that one should get every half hour for two or three minutes at least. I don't know if you have found that, Carl, have you in New York? It goes up and down – some weeks are good, some half hours are good. But in general we nearly all have a feeling of frustration – it is so lovely when it goes right; if only we could do it more and better. Would you say?

C.E. Absolutely.

Dr. R. So this exercise of saying STOP to yourself, emptying yourself, is a way of seeing when you are not meditating, although you may have thought you were. We'll discuss more about the meditation tomorrow week at the Meditation Meeting at which I hope you'll assist us. (to Carl Evans) You're having to go before Sunday week aren't you? (On Friday) So the only big meeting you'll attend is tomorrow week. (yes) But there are three lots of initiations for new people that we very much want you to assist in. We intend to learn much from you and hope you'll learn something from us as well. They are next Wednesday evening, next Sunday morning and the following Wednesday evening. So you arrange with the initiators as to how much you want to do, whether you want to do them or not do them and so on.

Mr. Evans. Dr. Roles, one of the things I've found about meditation is that meditation came to me, as it did to most of us, when we were already formed – our lives had been completely formed. And the meditation had to cut through the entire formation to uncover the centre. In my life this has been a steady process and it is not surprising that in this cutting process it runs into areas that are very hard and then the meditation will go very hard, with difficulty.

Dr. R. Very *hard*, yes. H.H. uses the words 'soft and hard' in terms of the heart. If the heart is hard, we are hard. It's a question of *melting the heart*, in order to be soft. In other words to do it from love of the Atman, love of the Divine Self, and not from the book of detailed rules. Can you go on from there with what you were going to say?

Mr. E. That the process, even though it seems to us that the meditation is difficult, continues and the cutting is done.

Dr. R. You're absolutely right to remind us of that. We are told that we must never stop. We must always turn towards the meditation, towards the mantra rhythm, towards the whole

idea of the system of meditation, because there are many times when it can be working underground, in the cellar, or in the bathroom, somewhere out of sight in our house, and it only sometimes works in the drawing room or the hall where it is visible and appreciated. It's always doing *some* good as long as you are genuinely aware of something to do with the mantra or the rhythm. It starts physically but very soon all its physical characteristics disappear and it becomes a throb or a pulse or even just something which is going on, something intangible. So the advantage the mantra has over anything else – mantra meditation – is that it is always doing good because these mantras are specially chosen.

Now instead of going on talking, I'd like to meditate myself – so could we do it properly for a short time.

MEDITATION

Well it's a relief and it's lovely and one would like to go on doing it but I think it's rather a lot to ask, if you've been on a long journey. I would just like to say that the first thing to do if you come to yourself during one of the gaps during the day or during meditation is *to be aware of your physical body*. If you're meditating feel that you've got a straight back and are sitting symmetrically. If you're doing the other things, just feel what you are doing and how you're doing it. Is it being done economically and artistically, appropriately, or in the common, slipshod, mechanical manner? And if you attend to what you're doing any moment when you come to yourself, you can't go far wrong. Then you may get help from the Atman within who will make it possible for you to reach Samadhi in as short a time as that. To reach Samadhi you have to have *both* hemispheres, both sides of your nature, brought to unity. And no will that we possess can do that. It has to be done from above and a moment of Samadhi or Turiya has to come by Grace from the Almighty.

R.G. Dr. Roles, could you say something about the practice of attention in one's ordinary life? We spoke about that at our meeting and I don't think very satisfactorily really.

Dr. R. What is the problem about attention? It is such a wide field.

R.G. Really the difficulty of keeping attention on what one is doing. One is always drifting away but does try to keep attention, that sort of thing.

Dr. R. Let's start with the moments when you have got to have all your attention there and there are such moments (yes, there are.) The trouble comes not from those moments when you *have* to keep attention as in turning, or in many occasions in life, especially when we're in a difficult situation. The trouble comes when we have attention over, as we have on most occasions. Most of the things we do only need a small part of our attention. How does the sculptor get over that? When you're sculpting and there are different stages of course of it, there are times when you have to have your attention fully engaged, aren't there? (Mr. Crampton: Yes) What do you do with your attention at other times?

S.C. All sorts of things. (laughter)

Dr. R. Yes; you have to devise your own way and no general recipe is any good, is it. You were going to say...

S.C. Only that the exercise last week at the Monday meeting seemed very familiar and I realised that one does it a lot more than one thinks.

Dr. R. When we're doing work of importance?

S.C. No, just when we're working. Just all the time, every day.

Dr. R. The artists here would testify, Hersey, I should think that the best ideas come from silence, should you?

J.H. Certainly.

Dr. R. And that it requires all your attention to get that best idea into the best expression.

J.H. It's hard not to lose the best idea in the activity of doing it.

Lady A. Dr. Roles, I've found one interesting thing and that is that it was much more difficult to practise the exercise in abstract – just suddenly sit and be still for three minutes, than it is when you are doing it for some purpose, like I'm trying to listen to repeat. Then in fact it is easier. I mean I feel the necessity to do it and it's easier when there is a reason. Just sort of in isolation, it's much more difficult.

Dr. R. Oh that's it! You're right. I think we should stop talking about it at meetings, lay off. Just remind ourselves perhaps that there *is* such an exercise and use it in any way we like ourselves for special purposes in action, and not think and talk about it for it becomes so difficult and so complicated. O.K. We have had a week at it and that's enough.

Dr. Fenwick, have you anything to add to this?

P.F. I wanted to ask a question which follows on from Prof. Guyatt's. To ask you again about the attention that the arrow-maker had and the difference between that and when you lose yourself in the task.

Dr. R. The arrow-maker story is a story to illustrate Dharana – one-pointed attention, the 5th step of Yoga. The arrow-maker at the time when he had to turn the point of the arrow (which is the crucial thing) didn't hear or see anything that went on, even the wedding procession going by. He was wholly engaged on pointing his arrow. It was mentioned to us that this is different from the one-pointed attention in meditation because it concerns something *outside ourselves*, something one is doing outside oneself. Whereas in meditation, one needs attention on the internal rhythm of the mantra or on the Being that you are doing it for. That's one thing. Now where do we go from there in your question?

R.G. I'd like to follow Fenwick's lead now. He was asking what is the difference between the one-pointed attention and losing yourself in an ordinary task.

P.F.. No, not that. Does the arrow-maker remember himSelf at that point?

Dr. R. No, he doesn't you see. It is meant to illustrate Dharana, not Self-Remembering.

R.G. Is he lost in the arrow pointing?

Dr. R. Well, if he is *only* a mere arrow-maker and not a Realized arrow-maker, yes he *has* disappeared and that's it – he's finished! But if he is a Realized man making arrows, he will

devote all his attention to the pointing of the arrow but he will retain his Self-Remembering. (yes, yes, thank you very much) The answer really to Dr. Fenwick's question is that the Shankaracharya said, 'Let people do miracles as a result of meditation. Let them walk on the water or levitate into the air. It doesn't interest anybody.' But what's important is: Does the teacher, instructor in meditation, know of the three things which interfere with attention when we lose ourselves, when we go to sleep? Three properties of the human mind which we have to learn to achieve if we want to have attention whenever we need it – full attention. And those three properties are all you need teach, he keeps saying. The first is *dispersion of attention, Vikshepa*. The mind under the influence of false personality just runs from one thing to another and skates over the surface of things. The Maharishi used to say that it 'skims the surface of the pond and never goes deep'. It is interesting that one can only do it for the length of time that one can hold one's breath for – *two minutes*. Because the two are connected. One's attention only remains the same for the period of one breath because the rhythm of respiration alters the blood supply and rhythms of the brain. So two minutes – a cosmic measure of the time not only for stopping thoughts but also for breathing – and that's why the Yogis pay particular attention to breathing. That's the first thing – Vikshepa. And that is our main curse, I think, here. I mean what is causing all the trouble now and why we did this exercise to show it. The second is the *attachment*. Do you remember what the word is? I can never remember these words. (Mrs. R: Kashaya) Kashaya, yes Kashaya, which was the word used for the sticky juice from a gum tree. Insects walking over this sticky juice get caught; and the human mind full of this sticky juice of identification gets caught by this and that and the other and cannot extricate itself, just as a fly can't get off flypaper. Identification – inner attachment. It's nearly always misunderstood in the East (as well as the West) and taken to mean non-attachment to external things. I mean, not being attached to one's wife, not being attached to one's children, not being attached to one's house or one's money, which are the staple necessities in the life of any householder. It is an internal thing, coming from within and having to be resisted within. Losing one's attention in a world of one's own, in one's train of thoughts. Endless stories of the Shankaracharya's illustrate this.

One for instance was about a man who went to a saint and asked to be in his service. And the saint trained him in what he had to do and after a week or two, he gave him the day off. So he went into the town and in the town he got excited by all that was going on. There was a wedding procession amongst much else. After the procession, he went to sleep by a well and during his sleep he had a dream – that he was that bridegroom and he was greatly enjoying his wedding night in his dream, when his new wife said, 'Move over in bed a bit would you' and he moved over and fell into the well! (laughter) And he had to explain to the crowds that gathered why he fell into the well in broad daylight! (laughter)

This is an example of loss of attention through 'identification'.

The Third obstacle is doing something, simply because you're told not to. Doing the opposite of what you're told to do. We notice this very much all round the place. It is asserting one's liberty as a citizen, human rights and all the rest of it. Really it's sheer bloody-mindedness (laughter) and it was called more politely by Mr. Ouspensky 'self-will' or wilfulness. So if we know what those three things feel like in ourselves and if in our groups

we struggle to see them whenever they turn up, and know how to dodge them that will greatly assist the effects of meditation and will greatly assist the power of control over attention.

Mrs. Fleming. It rang a bell for me, Dr. Roles, when you said with attention you become aware of your body. Because, for me, this is what I do understand – when you have attention, you *know* that you're sitting on a chair, or you're painting or whatever.

Dr. R. Yes and I think you could learn much more from the lady sitting next to you, Dame Ninette, than you could from me on that. Wouldn't you say that is the pride of dancing?

Dame N. Yes, very much. Attention to the body as a whole and really having a mental picture of yourself.

Dr. R. But in the course of a ballet, when you're not actually dancing, does the ballet dancer lose attention?

Dame N. I should think most of them do, yes.

Dr. R. I remember having a talk with that great dancer you sent me – Helpman, Robert Helpman. And he said: 'This is exactly what I must not do – to stop being the character when I've stopped dancing. I have to go on being that character, that is keeping my attention where it is all the way through.' (even when he was an ugly sister in Cinderella!) (laughter)

Anyway we'll have to get you to tell us a bit more about that. We've neglected this first-rate source of information!

Well it's getting to half-past seven and I think we had better stop. Just remember that meditation as prescribed by the holy non-dualistic Advaita tradition is a real thing and far more valuable than anything anybody else could invent. We must not confuse it with any little exercises we may have used from time to time.

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