

22 June 1981

LARGE MONDAY MEETING

On the platform: Dr. Roles, Lady Allan and Professor Guyatt

R.G. There are a few announcements. There will be a large meeting on Monday 6th July and that will be the last this term. Last Movement classes will be on the following Monday, 13th; and the Meditation Meeting on 14th.

If anyone is contemplating giving a fairly large donation to the Society, they will be interested to know that it is now possible for donations of £100 or more to be given in a form which will enable the Society to benefit from the refund of tax. So would you please contact the office for details, so as to be able to give the Society this advantage. That's if you're thinking – and I hope some of you are – of giving a larger donation.

There will be a Mukabeleh for new turners this Friday at 8pm; and a Visitors' Mukabeleh on Friday 3rd July.

Dr. R. (to Lady A.) So they are coming out are they? (On this Friday) Oh, how exciting!

R.G. Finally there is a basic rule that some people...

Dr. R. This question of the luck we've had over thirty years, as a Society, in avoiding arguments and trouble makers and all the things that other organisations seem to suffer from and that's because Mr. Ouspensky's advice on the foundation of this Society was that we have certain rules and it is everybody's business to acquaint themselves with these rules – just as it is important that everybody learns the traffic regulations. And ignorance of the law is no defence. People who are newly coming here to be initiated or to perhaps watch a Mukabeleh or to any meetings ought to be told certain basic rules which protect this house from trouble makers. We're all busy people and we don't want to be involved in arguments. We just want to know that anybody who comes here is genuine, genuinely after what we can put to them – truth. Now there is one basic rule – would you read the rest.

R.G. There is a basic rule that some people need to be reminded about in connection with introducing people here to this house. Colet House is the headquarters of a private group we refer to as The Study Society which is meant primarily for people who don't belong to any other organisation. Before any of our Associates or Members mention our very existence – what the Society studies – or any of its activities – one must ask advice from someone with more experience, telling them about this person, their background, their job, their interests, etc. This also applies to people who wish to bring friends to the Mukabeleh.

Dr. R. If one does this, it doesn't mean that the person is going to be excluded. It just means that we know something about them and we can tell how genuine they are. Have they been going from one organisation to another, sticking to nothing, or are they really determined to put into practice what they learn here? So will you make sure that anybody you want to introduce to anything here, before you mention Colet House or anything about it as a Society, will you ask somebody who has had more experience, telling them what they need to know about the person's background. Is that all clear? Neglect of this has very

occasionally – I mean there is nothing to get alarmed about – led to arguments which were unnecessary. All right? Any questions about that?

(to R.G.) Your meeting was very successful and people really contributed so we're sending it round to everybody in foreign parts as well as round here.

The paper just given out to some of you makes reference to the approach of ordinary people today because there was an article – you may have seen it in *The Telegraph* last Saturday by a journalist – explaining why he thought that belief in God was essential to human existence, and that more and more people, opinion polls showed, were coming out with the fact that they do believe that this idea of God is necessary.

Now we here know that it isn't just the words saying 'I believe in God' that is what's wanted because, if there is a God, this God wishes to have people in His creation who hear and express His will. Everybody is quite willing to say and do things in the name of God, but does God like it? The Ripper told everybody that God told him to murder women. Most extraordinary things are said and done, and even the best and most spiritually intending people with a reputation for heading spiritual organisations may mislead others because of their authority. When one remembers the words of Christ: 'Many shall say to me that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many marvellous works?" And then shall I say unto them, "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."' So the great thing is to try and get to know God and His will before setting out to tell people what God ought to think.

I think it is true that under the awful circumstances of today's life people are turning more and more towards the idea that somehow something is missing in human life which ought to be there and the Shankaracharya says that until more and more people really get this idea and put it into practice, things will continue to go badly. And we may have quite a distance to go yet, which is what Professor Schaefer said.

I wanted Lady Allan to read a passage containing one of the first stories I ever heard the Shankaracharya tell in public in an Ashram to which he was invited by the Maharishi and which was retold with a rather delicious lead-up in 1972.

Lady A. The Shankaracharya said:

If one could keep to this state of a silent, impartial observer, staying in the present, and acting as the occasion demands, things pass. Wise men once discussed this question of deriving Ananda or Joy out of all the multifarious aspects of the world. And the discussion led to the conclusion that one shouldn't entangle oneself with either side, physical or subtle, but should simply observe; because the Absolute is in everything and this Creation is a most efficient mechanical organism which is functioning by the wish of the Absolute, so that one should always see the Absolute behind all those passing phases. Now one of the listeners at this discussion went away and on the road he saw an elephant coming along. He remembered that the Absolute was in everything so he thought, 'The Absolute is in the elephant so surely it won't harm me'. The man on the elephant's back kept shouting at him to get out of the way. But the man on the road took no notice and the elephant took him up and threw him on one side. He went back to the wise men to say he had been misinformed. He thought the elephant was the Absolute and he himself was the Absolute, and the Absolute would not harm the Absolute in any way; but He did!

Then he was told, 'You didn't realise that the driver was also the Absolute, and because you didn't obey the Absolute when he shouted to you, you were punished. You in fact selected one of the two. Do not select. Do not show prejudice. Do not make impertinent preferences. Then everything will be clear and one will easily find one's way without hindrance.

(Record, 3 October 1972)

Dr. R. The point of this story passed me by until just the other day. It is that the man who came away from this conference with the three words which contain everything – 'God is everywhere' – disobeyed the mahout on the elephant's back who told him to get out of the way, and this is our trouble because we don't get ourselves, our personal point of view, out of the way. Before quoting God or speaking for God, one must entirely get one's own personal slant out of it. So what we have to say to ourselves here is 'Get out of the way!' and that's why the rules of this Society are made to help each person get themselves out of the way. And then this can be a united body of people, as you said last Monday, because it is only the individual personality that makes a Society fall apart.

Now, is all that clear? Let's follow that up, because we've got some way to go about what exactly to get out of the way. It's fairly easy to recognise in somebody else, to see somebody else's personality getting in the way, and you quarrel with them at once, of course! (laughter) But can one see one's own personality getting in the way? (pause) All right, we'll have an amnesty and you can speak... (laughter)

Mrs. Gould. Is this what's meant by giving up, Dr. Roles?

Dr. R. Yes, this is really the crux of what we have to give up. We don't have to give up sugar in Lent or anything like that. We have to give up our personal view of things and put instead something objective and real which can be the silent impartial observer of what goes on within you and of what goes on in the world outside, thereby uniting the two halves of the mind; the silent impartial observer being, what's called in the story, the Overseer.

S. Harbord. Really connecting with what you were saying before this, Dr. Roles, but also connected with giving up, I heard a Methodist minister on the Overseas Service on Sunday quoting Brother Lawrence's little book, which I'm sure you know and which is all about giving up, and I thought it was rather interesting to hear that from a Methodist.

Dr. R. Very good, if Simon Harbord from the moment of hearing that began seriously to give up Simon Harbord, then it would be really useful and worth mentioning. (laughter)

Tony Anholt, it is really what the actor has to do, hasn't he, to be true to the part he is enacting? (Very much so, yes) One has to realise that this whole life is a drama and that one is learning to play one's role, and the whole idea of the Absolute is a Being which is above description or definition Who made the laws which govern nature; and nature is the manifestation of those laws, and we all play a part in the drama of nature in one way or another. And if we can play it in this way, getting rid of one's own personal point of view... Is there anything you want to say about that?

T.A. Following your analogy of the actor, since we are all different, one presumes that the Absolute would be manifested slightly differently through each of us.

Dr. R. Oh absolutely! In fact, it seems clear that the Absolute wishes for variety of manifestation. Nature is lavish – rhododendron blossoms, roses, every possible manifestation; and in human beings this is so also, and one doesn't make impertinent preferences. One accepts the whole thing as part of the big drama. Even in the little tiny drama of one's own domestic life, anybody who has looked after somebody very near death knows quite well that it is essential to leave oneself out, to transcend oneself. All human beings go through natural Samadhi at death or near death and are very sensitive, when they have come so near death that they have lost everything and there is nothing in the way. For someone sitting with them, it's very important to have attention like the arrow-maker because they don't like being disturbed out of this Samadhi, even though they appear to be asleep, to all intents and purposes. So everybody goes through this and those who have looked after sick relations, parents and so on, when they are near death know how sensitive they are to unspoken words, if a person has that degree of attention in their presence. A lot of people have written to me in the past, things about this. I met it, of course, very much with Mr. Ouspensky, sitting up with him all through his last night and other times. And one has met it as a doctor in many other cases. And now one is meeting it, and very near, and it still seems possible that recovery can take place. But the whole idea of death to someone like that is of profound unimportance, irrelevant. One is reminded of Mr. Ouspensky saying, 'Death is nothing.' And that is my wife's attitude at the moment. She is not interested. She is interested only in resurrection and whether a resurrection takes place in this old body, which is just a dress to be discarded, or whether it takes place in some other body in some new existence, is indifferent to her. She leaves it to God who knows better. But it is fascinating to see that if one is saying the Mantra with someone like her that they are responding, their breathing changes, everything is quite different. And then they come round into the ordinary workaday state of consciousness and all the troubles and pain and discomfort come back. So one learns at first-hand what it means to give up one's personal thoughts in important moments. It's a marvellous thing for which one is truly grateful and we have all got to come to this and so there is a great chance to try to carry out what is said in this story – to get oneself out of the way at important moments. Is that at all clear?

So to believe in God is one thing, but there are many levels of Being between empty words and the real thing.

Mr. Hodge. You mentioned 'express the will of God' and in this story 'selecting' came in. I'm wondering if that had anything to do with the silent hemisphere?

Dr. R. The silent hemisphere knows all this instinctively and emotionally. It's only this busy outward hemisphere that dominates our daytime life in which there is some doubt about the existence of God. To the silent hemisphere in a pure state when there is nothing selfish or negative, it is a self-evident fact. It is perfectly clear and no questions.

Mrs. Guyatt. Dr. Roles, is it only one's own personality that reacts and notices the personality of other people?

Dr. R. No, one can have an objective point of view. I think the Shankaracharya observes far better than anybody else I know what personality is doing in his presence. But he doesn't

react automatically by liking or disliking. There was an awful trouble-maker once at his audiences. All he said was that this man was brought up by being given wrong advice – and now we must get him right. So it's non-reaction – silent impartial observer.

Miss Cassini. Dr. Roles, this only seems to be possible when one has Sattva because when one is feeling Sattvic, one doesn't react at all and just does an appropriate thing.

Dr. R. Absolutely and the real secret in action is to realise that it's only the forces of nature which act and to cultivate what for you is Sattva. Sattva is often felt as sympathy. You know we have a sympathetic nervous system and that was rightly named. Emotional centre, when purified and protected from opposing influences has natural sympathy, and when you have plenty of Sattva, it's very clear and easy. The difficulty is to release more from one's store when one needs it.

T. Anholt. From what you've said, Dr. Roles, it seems that the apparent problem of choice disappears when the two hemispheres merge because the silent hemisphere acts through the dominant hemisphere and not the dominant hemisphere choosing for itself.

Dr. R. The problem of choice doesn't entirely disappear. It disappears about judgments of other people, but the problem of choice as to what one will allow oneself to do remains and is very important. And the Buddhi is the discriminating mind which says, 'All right you may want to do so and so, but is it good for you?' So the individual has to decide.

T.A. If the silent hemisphere instinctively knows, if it's fully merged with the dominant hemisphere, would one not function appropriately without having to make a decision?

Dr. R. The silent hemisphere in most people is like a child. It doesn't know the ways of the world, the ways of the wicked world. It is easily taken in and it needs the wisdom of the other to guide it, you see. So it has got to grow up and essence in most people is like a child of six or seven. Any more questions? I think this is an interesting subject and very apropos today. Look at the state of Europe, for instance, or the Near East or whatever. Look how much human personality is interfering with the beautiful order of nature everywhere and yet this is part of the plan. We mustn't object to it. It's there. When man was given free will, this was a calculated risk. And now we have to go through this difficult period but using it for understanding the nature of the Absolute. Then there will be nothing lost. Any more questions?

Mrs. Simpson. Does doubt come from the dominant hemisphere and should we disregard it?

Dr. R. Yes, I think 'Thomas called Didymus' dithered between yes and no. Doubt shows itself when one begins to think. Don't you think so Mrs. Simpson? Because when one has sympathy and Sattva in quantity, one doesn't have any doubts. (No) More!

S. Cassini. Dr. Roles, do we really only have choice when we are conscious? Because until we are conscious, we can't really have choice, can we?

Dr. R. Oh yes, you can be trained like a puppy to have choice (laughter) and our system of education very much determines the kind of choice we make. But we go on choosing in the same way till kingdom come unless we have the advice of a wise man, a fully Realized man,

to show us what is still better than the choice we would ordinarily make. More people to ask questions of the day... (pause)

You remember the story of the man who sat under the Tamarind tree. Here is a colour photograph of a Tamarind tree. It's nothing to do with the tamarisks that hold our beaches together, Maurice (Pickering). The tamarind tree is a lovely tree full of fruit and flowers and the leaves are so many, millions and millions of them, that when Narada came back to the Mahatma and gave the message the Absolute had sent 'that as many leaves as there are on this tamarind tree, that will be the number of years before the Absolute meets you'; and the Mahatma went into an ecstasy. Narada couldn't understand why. And the Mahatma said, 'I have the assurance of the Absolute who will never let me down that he will meet me and that's good enough for me.' And at that moment, the Absolute who created the machinery or chemistry of nature by which evolution goes in a very slow process (over millions and millions of years) descended at once and embraced the Mahatma. I'm very grateful to Judy Brittain for sending us this picture.

Miss Mary Skeaping. Dr. Roles, it seems to me that this present time could be a very fruitful one for this constant necessity of awareness that you have a choice. It's constantly changing. It isn't there for long.

Dr. R. Yes. And think of all the years we wasted in the Victorian age, the British Raj, and the Edwardian era and all the rest of it and now we are in the very seat of opportunity. More.

Your question, Anne Garten – where is she? – directly arises. Let Prof. Guyatt read that.

R.G. Anne Garten writes to Dr. Roles:

This evening we were asked what we need in order to achieve unity. I think we need words and stories from His Holiness to lift us above our small ego and help us to see and feel things on a much larger scale. The Readings we have had this term have done just that. Perhaps the more we can rise above our small separate selves, the more unified we can become as a body of people.

Dr. R. It does arise, doesn't it? That to be unified, we have to get rid of the dominance of each person's personality. And of course there are different approaches. People are all very different; no two people are alike. And that is what H.H. calls a Satsang – a gathering of people on a spiritual quest – that everybody is different and some can go by emotion – emotional realization of truth; some have to think things out and find words for them; and some get there by dedicated action, like for instance a nurse can be dedicated to her job and have a selfless attitude. There are all these different ways and that's the beauty of being a Society of people of such very different natures.

Let's now meditate for a few minutes, five minutes, say, and let one's personal feeling drop away.

MEDITATION

I think that part of the new discoveries that Western civilisation has to make is just to get into circulation the relevant parts of what has been discovered in the latter half of this century about man, his structure. You wouldn't believe how ancient the knowledge is, if any,

that's being taught in school about the nature of man. Everything is there... All that's necessary to know, all about the two hemispheres, all about the arousal of consciousness, the alerting system, all these things are not included at all. We're still teaching in our educational system a hundred-years-old so-called knowledge, a hundred-years-old ignorance. So part of what Prof Schaefer is promising us is that we shall know a few new facts, not go on with this same old thing.

R.G. And change our attitude?

Dr. R. Yes, accordingly. Knowing the facts could actually change our attitude. Just rereading the Gospels, for instance, the Gospel of St. John or the Shankaracharya's sayings in the light of the inward looking hemisphere under the influence of Sattva completely transforms their whole meaning. ...

[Final questions... How to look at things in a better way, a more universal way.]

Miss Burdett. Is it perhaps up to us to 'sing unto the Lord a new song'?

Dr. R. Yes, but more than quote – to learn how to sing a new song and sing it good and loud.

Mrs. Ellis. I think, Dr. Roles, that all this is quite natural and our rightful inheritance.

Dr. R. Absolutely, yes. And I'm glad Cambridge are getting around to this. (laughter) Perhaps not the University yet! But it starts, as someone said, with natural Samadhi, the fact that nature has provided the mechanics by which whenever one changes from one job to another, or whenever the mind is not actively engaged on one thing, there is a chance of increasing the span of the moment 'Now' between the two motivations. This is provided and by constant practice one can increase the span. But do we do it? Even now we know! (We forget.)

Mrs. Koren. Would you say, Dr. Roles, that *that*, with meditation, is the main thing which helps us to get out of the way?

Dr. R. It's different for different people, but I think we wouldn't have got far without meditation and the teaching around it from the Shankaracharya. There are other methods; and here we use other methods as well. But whatever one does it should be with the idea of looking at things from the point of view of the Param-Atman, of the Divine Self, and not from one's personal point of view.

Do we think of giving to the Atman, this helpless child within us, the heir to the Kingdom, a feeling of pleasure? He has come into the world to find the secret of happiness. How much of our time do we spend giving him tastes of happiness?

Mrs. Brunson. Dr. Roles, is it possible to think of what is the personality of the world, what is the essence of the world? The conflict in the world seems very like conflicts in ourselves.

Dr. R. Yes, quite possible and it's only one way of expanding one's outlook – that there is a Cosmic Soul and a Cosmic Spirit and a Cosmic Buddhi and a Cosmic Manas. And the idea of the chariot and the horses and the charioteer and the Owner applies both on the large scale to the huge universal Cosmos, as it does to the individual, a very small chariot and little baby chariots for babies, as H.H. says. (laughter)

Lady A. Dr. Roles, the picture that H.H. has given us and you reminded us of earlier in terms of seeing things from the other way up, of seeing the physical as the smallest and the subtle as bigger and the Causal larger still and the Atman covering the whole... if only one could hold to that.

Dr. R. Yes, and the Ladder which you (Prof. Guyatt) gave to your new group last week says that at a given point midway along, one has to do the upside-down. What was outer becomes inner and the inner becomes dominant. It's very probable that this may be going to have to occur for humanity because up until now it has been thought that the West is like a blind man who doesn't know where he is going, is very shortsighted; and the East is like a lame man who sees the truth and cannot move. It looks rather as if the boot was going to be on the other foot before long. That the West is the one that is going to see clearly, only he won't know what to do about it. Things change all the time. One must be alive to changing points of view.

Lady A. And getting out of the way would be greatly helped if one had this upside-down point of view. The thing that's in the way is mostly concerned with the physical.

Dr. R. You can't be turned upside-down while there is still any personal dominance.

Lady A. You were talking about your personal drama and I experienced at the time when Bobby died – my first reaction was that the body is nothing. I absolutely knew it then, but I don't retain that.

Dr. R. No, it isn't quite like that. I have discovered just lately. The Absolute needs bodies to manifest Himself, needs nature and all the different creations in, for instance, organic life, just to take a small scale, for any manifestation to occur. It's possible to have good thoughts that nobody knows about, so it has to be a physical manifestation. And I'm learning this greatly from my wife because you have to have some attention on the physical scale at moments like this, and not just have good thoughts or give sermons. And she is a very practical person! And one has to watch one's step. It's marvellous training.

Well about this new thing, I'd like to end with a rather favourite poem of mine at the beginning of the century, I think, because it speaks of the sort of situation that the world is in at the moment – preparing perhaps for the millennium AD 2000:

The black rooks call across the sky.
The black-robed scholar priests go by,
About the grass pale children lie.

All sorrowful and cloistered things,
As if this sunshine were the Spring's,
Desire the ecstasy of wings;

And even my soul, long used to grope
Within its self-entangled scope,
Dreams of the opening wings of – Hope.

(‘Villa Pamphili’, Arthur Symons)

* * *