

SUMMER PROGRAMME

1. Being what we are

Briefly, I found that I had become the object of my search. ... I suddenly realised the meaning of the old expression "Thou art That" – that for which you have been looking all your life. Following that, it has been a question of reaching it again and again and of retaining it by constant practice. (Dr F C Roles)

Either: use the mini-ladder as described in our last paper of the term as the basis of practice during the holidays;

Or: Use Rupert Spira's simple and direct method of Self-remembering which he calls 'abiding as the presence of awareness' (abiding as the Real Self), as described in detail in the audio at our end of term meeting. Here is a very brief summary:

If you ask yourself the question 'Am I aware of my feet', the mind goes to your feet to find the answer. If you ask 'Am I aware of the sound of the traffic', the mind goes to the sound outside to find the answer. But if you simply ask yourself the question 'Am I Aware', the mind has nowhere to go – it takes you to the brink and then collapses. (What you really are is beyond the scope of the mind.) Just relax into that vast, peaceful, empty, knowing space of awareness and remain there, *as that*. If you find that thought has taken you away, simply repeat the process.

It's not intended to be practised for specific periods as formal meditation, although it can also be used that way. As Dr Roles says (and Rupert says just the same), it's something we can practise **all the time**, whenever we remember. At first we might manage to abide in that placeless place for only 1-2% of the day, then 5%, then 10%. At that point we will have fallen in love with 'being what we are' and then all else is taken care of – it becomes automatic. Why not make this your aim for the holidays?

2. Knowledge and Understanding – overcoming resistance

One of the constantly recurring obstacles on the Fourth Way, in which Knowledge is always passed on by question and answer, is our mental inertia as shown by our extreme reluctance to give up what we thought we understood yesterday, in order to understand better to-day. (Dr F C Roles)

The main obstacle that prevents us understanding the true nature of our own being is the resistance created by existing beliefs. Some of these come from our early education, some are common in our culture and many come from the spiritual traditions we have explored – in some cases over several decades. For example: we believe the universe consists largely of conglomerations of inert matter floating around in space; we believe it takes many years of mantra meditation or some other spiritual practice to become fully realised; we believe that understanding happens through the mind; we believe we can get rid of ego; we believe that we are separate from the universe; we believe we are not capable of attaining full realisation in this life-time; or we believe we know it all, and if we meditate regularly and just continue to behave in a spiritual way, enlightenment will strike.

All of these beliefs – and indeed, *all* beliefs – are a barrier to understanding our true nature and to the love and peace and happiness that goes with it. What is needed is *not* the adoption of a new set of beliefs – that would be worse than useless – but simply complete openness and non-resistance to allow the deep inexpressible understanding that is hidden within each of us, to come to the surface.

It is up to each of us individually to uncover and shine a light on the specific beliefs that are holding us back. We will look at these in more detail next term. But as a starting point, here are some suggestions for holiday reading which might help to highlight and dissolve some of those beliefs. (But take care not to replace those existing beliefs with anything new! The idea is simply to see that there are other possibilities that are equally, if not more likely.) Choose whichever you think will be most useful in that regard:

1. *A Very Short Introduction to Nothing*, by Frank Close, ISBN 978-0199225866. This is pure, mainstream science – nothing spiritual in it. It is clearly explained and aimed at non-scientists. Excellent for anyone who believes in a material universe. If you come across a passage that you find hard to understand, this will highlight the resistance arising from your pre-existing beliefs. Just look closely to see what it is in your belief-system that is being challenged.
2. *Making up the Mind: How the Brain Creates our Mental World* by Chris Frith, ISBN 978-1405160223. More mainstream science – nothing spiritual, nothing difficult to understand. Essential reading for showing us that our perceptions of the world and of other people are almost entirely pure imagination, created within our own minds.
3. *A New Model of the Universe* by PD Ouspensky. There are various editions – ISBN 978-1850630012 is one possibility. Just the chapter on the Fourth Dimension. Good for anyone who is convinced that ‘time’ is a fundamental property of the universe rather than a useful concept to help us deal with the limitations of our mental apparatus, and for anyone who believes that the world is really as we perceive it to be.
4. *Standing as Awareness – The Direct Path* by Greg Goode, ISBN 978-0956309150. Excellent for anyone who believes Self-realisation is difficult, takes a long time or is unattainable.
5. *The Direct Path – a User Guide* by Greg Goode, ISBN 978-1908664020. Similar to the above, but focusing almost entirely on simple experiments to help you explore what you really are and what the world really is.
6. *The Psychology of Man’s Possible Evolution* by PD Ouspensky. There are various editions – ISBN 978-0394719436 is one possibility. Essential reading for anyone who is not familiar with Mr Ouspensky’s basic psychological teaching, or has difficulty with it. He tackles many of our fixed and untrue beliefs about ourselves head on. (Make a note of anything you find hard to understand or to see within your own experience, so that we can explore this next term.)