

Meeting at Warwick Gardens, March 5, 1923
Ouspensky and his pupils are present.

Gurdjieff is present with major Pinder translating for him.

Miss. Douglas: People talk of union with God and union with Christ. I often feel they do not know what they mean. How can one get away from the herd mind?

Mr. Ouspensky, after translating question to Mr. G. said: Will you repeat your example?

Miss. Douglas: I was saying...

Mr. Ouspensky: No, just repeat the example.

Miss. Douglas: Union with God.

Major Pinder (Trs). Mr. G. asks – Are you hypnotized by such phrases, and you wish to know how to get rid of that?

Miss. Douglas: I want to get rid of the herd mind. Laughter

Mr. Ouspensky: Mr. G wants to know what you laugh at.

Major Pinder (Trs). Mr. G., he thinks this is one of the best questions, and yet people laugh in derision.

INTERRUPTION

“No, not in derision; we all feel the same. (P, trs.) Actually everyone suffers from that and the cause is a very small one. The error is because you are tranquilly assured you are already a Christian.

Miss. Douglas. That would be a great mistake to think I was a Christian.

(More here, but impossible to follow voice.)

(Continuing) Take all other phrases – We hated the Germans, and now we turn the other way.

G (P): Mr. G wants to speak only of principles. Mr. G. used your word, “Christian,” because that was directly connected to the example you quoted, “Union with God.”

He wanted to explain the hypnotic influence. There is an undesirable quality in everybody and that is authority – “Looking to authority” – is the term – “Reliance on authority.” The self reliance which varies according to the individual is due to preconceived notions which are within us, and which are linked up with faith and belief. For example. You understand that reliance on authority means reliance on someone else’s authority, not on your own?

Miss Douglas: Yes.

G (P): Authority that comes into you from without is erroneous. This error acts as a lever which pulls the machine, making it work wrong, perpetuating the error, and you cannot, having these erroneous conceptions, get rid of this until you have freed yourself from relying on external authority.

Miss Douglas. Is there no self love? There are plenty of people who do not admire outside authority.

Major Pinder (Trs) Mr. G. says that why he connected your example with Christianity is that he limited himself to the nature of the example you yourself put. Relying on the authority of Christians is erroneous. He proceeds to say that Christ, his disciples, their followers in subsequent centuries and followers of other religions never said “We are Christians” but “Be Christians”. Mr. G repeats that it was never said and no utterance was ever given “We are such” but “Be such” and he reiterates and emphasis that.

Formerly two teachings went parallel, namely “Be” and “How to be”. “How to be” has been rejected and though it still exists it is never used, it does not serve as guide and all that remains is “Be” “We are” “You are”.

There were two independent programs of Christianity, one was absolutely discarded – thrown out of use – and now people take as a guide merely the other program that remained. People were always the same, just they are at present so they were formerly. It is possible that formerly they were a little more complete, but on broad lines they were just the same as they are now; all nations in all times.

PAUSE

All nations at all times have followed, talked about and taught Religions, and these religions, if you look into them deeply, have the same aim. Mr. G. says he cannot discern in any one of them any differences in their leading principles, only difference is in their superficial forms.

Formerly, all religions say “love your neighbor,” that is regarding the second program, whereas the first said “Teach and learn how to love your neighbor.” Some religions at present use both forms. The majority of people here only use the second form. If you do not take it purely as authority – an outside authority – you would not have had the quality in you which forced you on authority, but there would have been something in you which would have made you seek the missing part. You would have found “Love your neighbor,” and you would have sought to know what it meant because it is impossible to love you neighbor.

Set aside now that reliance on authority, and ask your self – is it possible – can you execute the command “Love your neighbor” and you will see it is impossible. You cannot love or hate to order. Think about it for yourself. It is possible that the teaching has gone on for thousands of years. What time. It is seen it is impossible to carry into effect such a command. It is possible that a small crowd of persons might have been found in all that great length of time to see that it is absolutely erroneous.

So if you were to examine all and look into it thoroughly and you were to decide that everyone that lived all that time, were out of their minds and at the same time you saw it is impossible to love your neighbor you would decide there must be some error somewhere. Where is the rub?

For either all people are mad or you have made mistake that it is impossible to “love.” And these two things diametrically opposed are both true – that one really can love that it is really possible to love and it is also real that you yourself cannot love. ...

PART HERE NOT CLEAR

It is only by destroying your reliance on authority that you will rid yourself of that hypnotism of which you speak, and of being hypnotized by words and texts. Does this satisfy you, Mr. Gurdjieff asks?

Miss. D: It is the group mind that talks like that, not the individual mind as for instance, in wartime men say “We must be heroes” etc. etc. and everyone repeats.

G (P) Mr. G says you must not look at other people, you must take your own example which was a good one and he restricted himself to religion and that those herds rely on some authority outside themselves. Our thralldom, our inspirations depend on ourselves and it is through them we are inspired by outside authority.

D: We imitate the men who talk like that.

G (P) They are obsessions and we must start by abolishing this hypnotism and when you get rid of this you will become free. It is authority set at the very bottom and we must search to the very roots to find them. In the same way taking the example you said showed you wanted to become free and is an instance of your own observations that you could not accept it

----- End of Talk -----

(P. D. Ouspensky Memorial collection, Yale University Sterling Library, Manuscripts and Archives, Manuscript Group 840, Series 1, Box 17, Folder dated March 1923, Paper dated March 5, 1923, Pages five and six)