

4 June 1969

## MEDITATION MEETING

**Dr. Roles.** To start with I would like to say that, in the ordinary way, we can get into trouble by setting our sights too high, and we fall flat on our faces quite often, but in relation to the Meditation we have to set our sights at the highest possible and be content with nothing less than that. That is not to say we expect results, but with an undemanding love for the Creator – the highest entity in the Universe, which we all have within us, we must be content with nothing less, but remain undemanding.

This is a repeat of last week's meeting. I wanted as many people as possible who meditate to hear those parts of a number of letters we have been receiving from the Shankaracharya since the 15th March which could help us with the meditation. The difficulty is that we have a new translator, and one has to try and digest this and put it into practice before one can get his idiom.

In his first letter of the 15th March in reply to questions about 'I' which I wrote him, he speaks of the Natural 'I' that each of us has by which we can distinguish 'me', 'my individuality', 'I am in things'. This Natural 'I' in everybody is indispensable. If one loses one's confidence in one's individuality one feels very lost.

But there is also the *false I*. Natural 'I' longs to be united with the Creator; the false 'I' wants to occupy His place. In the Shankaracharya's words:

The false 'I' identifies itself with the physical body or the senses or the mind. The Natural 'I' detaches itself from the above and goes higher to identify itself with the Atman and with nothing else.

When you sit to meditate, you find at once that false 'I' cannot meditate; it just cannot do it. One has first to come out of everything which is personal, to leave it all behind and to seek something... which seems not oneself at all. One thinks of it as 'inspiration' from somewhere else. In fact, that is the only thing one should call 'I'. That is the gist of the first answer.

The next part of the answer in this letter is about *consciousness*. In Sanskrit there are two different words, whereas in English there is only one word for two different things! There is 'Pure Consciousness', which we spell with a capital C – the Pure Consciousness which permeates the Universe and ourselves; but of which we are unaware; and then there is the fluctuating reflection of this consciousness which we call 'our consciousness' – the do's and don'ts which go on behind our foreheads, and sometimes very little of it is there at all! It is changing all the time, and is not reliable. That is called Chitta in Sanskrit, whereas Pure Consciousness is Chit – Sat-Chit-Ananda, the three qualities of the Absolute.

Any questions about that so far? There are different ways of expressing the same thing – the feeling of 'I' – Consciousness.

So when we sit to meditate we should have one thing in our hearts, that is a love for Consciousness, for Real 'I', for one's Self, and nothing else at all except the rhythm of the Mantra. As quickly as possible we set the Mantra running. It must run, it must be moving, and we have to leave it to each person as to how they do this. I don't know how to describe it; we cannot have courses in setting the Mantra running! It is the same principle as if you want to remember

something, you repeat it again and again until it runs in your head. It is no good sitting and slogging it out word for word! You set it running.

Now his next letter deals with the three different stages or aspects of the meditation. The first is *Dharana* – one-pointed attention, and this can be practised any time. It is what you learn to use for very tricky work in the ordinary way. There are certain things that cannot be done without one-pointed attention. Some people are better at it than others, and it is a thing you have to cultivate by patience and practice, and in meditation it applies to one-pointed attention on the rhythm of the Mantra. It doesn't matter how bad a state you are in; it doesn't matter what the combination of the Gunas is, you just take yourself as you are; you sit and shut your eyes and you practise this one-pointed attention. Now, is that clear? That is one aspect of the meditation – *Dharana*.

Quite often there is not much more than that, but sometimes if you are attentive to the rhythm, it is only a short time before something else begins. You begin to get a feeling of pleasure, of freedom, and a feeling of the nearness of something, and then you may enter this second stage which is called *Dhyana*, and he defined it like this:

This second stage resides in Sattva. This different kind of energy from the ordinary excitement or depression begins to collect or to be released, and you begin to float in this energy, which is intermittently ebbing and flowing, and for this *Dhyana* the presence of Joy is needed.

The other can go on whether there is Joy or not, but for this lovely second stage where you abandon effort, will, and all that, you just float.

If you notice that you have been dreaming and that the rhythm is not there, you bring yourself gently back to the memory of the One whose Name you are repeating. Then, as you know, the rhythm can disappear – the sound of it goes first, then the pulsation goes, and you are simply aware that there is something going on – aware, yet not aware. And his letter goes on to say:

We often hold ourselves up at this point; we retain our feeling of duality; we think, 'I am enjoying this', and only when one gives that up does one enter *Samadhi* where there is only One, and no other – One without a second.

This is just a refresher course. We all know the taste of it, but we underrate ourselves; even that *Samadhi* is not far away.

Mr. Bray. It is not easy sometimes when one gets this feeling of enjoyment to give it up. Can you say something about that?

Dr. R. Not easy. I will tell you what he says about it; it has an Indian name – *Rasa-Asvada*. But he says:

Instead of starting to enjoy the flavour of Self from a distance, one had better charge straight into it. If you have got something pleasant in your mouth, it is better not to hold it too long on your tongue instead of swallowing it. If we wish to enjoy a bathe in a stream, we had better plunge straight in instead of keeping out of it or taking out the water in buckets and pouring it over ourselves.

I think we know more of this than we suspect; we know – have experienced – something of *Samadhi*. It has to be experienced when nothing else at all is going on; you cannot go into

Samadhi and be doing anything else. In peace and quiet one has just the taste of moments when there is nothing of the ordinary 'you' there, just Unity, nothing more. It is a very happy feeling, but immediately the thought comes, 'I am in Samadhi', or 'I want something from this Samadhi', it is lost, and he told a story in relation to that:

There was a saint who went to give a king instruction in Samadhi and they did a deal. In return for this instruction in Samadhi, the saint was permitted to ask for any gift he named, and as he had seen a beautiful black horse in the king's stables, he stipulated that if he taught the king Samadhi he would get this black horse. So he went into Samadhi and they buried him and he lay dormant for six or seven years. By that time there was a new king who set about rebuilding at the place where the man was buried. When they dug him up he found that the new king knew nothing of the bargain and now there was no black horse, which had died in the interval! Naturally he was bitterly disappointed. So we are advised strongly not to carry with us into Samadhi any bargain or pact or desire!

After all these years don't let us underrate the possibilities which now lie before us if we don't get identified with the little difficulties and our own shortcomings and all the rest of it. If one feels one's shortcomings, one must turn away from them at once – altogether, and turn towards the Creator, otherwise one gets caught in this sticky juice which is the origin of the Sanskrit word for identification or attachment. It is the gum or juice which exudes from a tree, and one's mind gets caught up in it. It can be pleasant or unpleasant, but it is the opposite of waking up, the opposite of Samadhi. It is a kind of perverted love; identification is 'demanding love' – you want something so very much that you feel you cannot do without it.

In this third letter he is speaking about the different states of mind which make meditation difficult. *One is dispersion of the mind* – the mind under the influence of excitement begins to race from one thing to another; and the other is the *sticky attachment to something* which attracts or repels you, which is identification. The third is when one is *holding the taste on your tongue without swallowing; stopping to enjoy the thing personally*.

That is the gist of what matters in this letter. There have been two letters since last week, and I would like to hear any questions you have; but shall we meditate first and see if we cannot leave everything behind and try and just have love in our hearts and attend to the rhythm of the Mantra?

#### MEDITATION

Well, it is the petty little things that get in the way – the very small trivial things; they keep building up if we let them. But we can be perfectly confident that the Absolute Being is there deep within us, although the surface ripples obscure this fact. If the meditation has once brought us to that source we become united with this great number of people in the world who have had that realization, and it will be all right in the end when we really need it. I think we can be perfectly confident about this, however silly we are in the meanwhile. Don't attend to or believe in the silliness! Any questions now?

Mrs. Simpson. Sometimes in meditation the God within and God the Creator seem separate and that spoils it?

Dr. R. Well, you have got on to this high point of Hindu philosophy about the two birds in one

tree – the one bird eats the fruits of the tree and doesn't realise that he need not do it, and that he is of the same substance as the wonderful bird who is not involved with anything. Once you realise that, then you are happy and free from the limitations of your own nature.

Mrs. S. It is only sometimes it happens. Sometimes it is all right, but it seems to spoil the meditation when it comes up.

Dr. R. There is no room for any thought of any sort, so that has to go as well as all the others.

Mr. Grazebrook. Silence comes because one is repeating the Mantra, but the longing doesn't come often.

Dr. R. No. I don't think the longing is very good or necessary; the energy of Sattva is more likely to come as thanks for goods received. I mean, it is better to be thankful to be silent, to be out of it all. Gratitude brings grace. I don't think you need have any 'longing' – it might be identification which would get in the way!

Mrs. Konstam. Does the kind of attention which you describe in the story of the arrow-maker have to do with the kind of attention in the first stage, or is that something different?

Dr. R. It is an exact description of that Dharana. You remember that this wanderer – Dattatreya – had twenty-four teachers, and he went everywhere learning from any situation or natural object that he saw. One of his teachers was this arrow-maker who continued to pay not the slightest attention to the noisy, happy wedding procession which was going by. Dattatreya went up and asked him, 'Did you not notice that there was a wedding?' And he said, 'No, I did not notice; I was pointing the tip of the arrow and I had no attention for anything else.' And we are advised to acquire the capacity for that same one-pointed attention in ordinary things, by doing something that we love doing, but with attention – sculpture or something like that. You do something you love doing and try doing it with one-pointed attention. You practise on things you enjoy doing, and then when you come to attend to the rhythm of the Mantra you will find it much easier; it is the same thing.

That is right, Allan, isn't it?

Mr. A. Yes, I think so. He was not absolutely clear on that in his talk, he has often mentioned to me the need for 'expansion' which I find most valuable.

Dr. R. Well, in that conversation when you were there, he said that the story of the arrow-maker referred to attention in the ordinary way, but it could be applied to attention in the meditation. Did he not imply that? We will look it up.

Any other questions?

One thing that might remind us what it is all about: I have been hearing people try to place the Mantra anatomically. They say, 'It is going *down* deep,' 'It is going *up* high,' or 'The Mantra is in my head, or in my heart, or in my boots!' One is not concerned with *place* at all. It can be up or down, sideways – anywhere. What is important is going from *movement* to *non-movement*. The surface of the sea is full of moving ripples and the surface of the mind is moving all the time. The meditation is taking you from that movement to the depth of the sea where there is no movement. *That* is the important thing. All clear there? Do you want to ask about that?

Mr. Bray. Sometimes thoughts come in just like clouds – almost involuntarily they come in.

Dr. R. Very often! But the trick about that is that one must not let the rhythm of the Mantra go with the rhythm of the thoughts, just as you must not let it go with the rhythm of the breathing. You change its rhythm slightly in order to free it. Never sit with the rhythm of the Mantra going with the rhythm of the thoughts.

Mr. B. Very good to be reminded of the rhythm of the Mantra after some time.

Dr. R. Recently he has made it clear to us that there must be a rhythm; the Mantra must be running, and it is wasted effort to sit and say the word.

Mr. B. I hope they understand that in New York. There was one question Mr. Nilson asked, ‘How to prevent the meditation becoming mechanical?’ You have given many answers to that question.

Dr. R. One has in one way or another to keep the Aim in view beforehand or at any time – how important it is that the meditation should take you to the source and how that is the whole meaning of life and makes everything else possible.

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Now let us see if there is something apropos in this last letter, dated 27th May. It is the answer to some questions we put from the School of Meditation, to whom I am supposed to hand on the answers. The first question was:

His Holiness said to us, ‘your job is to provide the rest and quiet and make them give up.’ Would you say more and give us further instructions?

S. The restfulness is the very nature of the Atman; it is real, Eternal. All unrest is unreal, transitory. The apparent state of unrest is created by our treating the disturbing element in the external world as if it belonged to us. When we see a play in the theatre, we are not moved by those disturbing influences because we know that they are not part of us; they do not belong to us; they belong to the people on the stage. Similarly, the Reality is that all that is happening around us is a play, a drama, and that the Atman is merely a spectator. A knowledge of this Reality always dispels the feeling of unrest, just as the knowledge that it is a rubber snake would not frighten one who knows that it is rubber.

It is one of the most difficult things for us in the West to realise that we are not to get involved with all the disturbances around us. The first thing we try to do is to get involved, plunge into it all. You can act wisely and well, and perhaps find a solution, as long as you are not involved. It doesn’t mean that you are indifferent or anything like that. He goes on:

So as restfulness is inherent in the nature of the Atman, the apparent state of unrest today is a passing phase and will die down, and would die down if it were not for our endless association with this or that. Hence it is this association with the unrest which has to be given up.

Can you persuade yourself of the truth of that?

Mrs. Fleming. I think it is wonderful, because my chief difficulty is with moving thoughts and a very active mind, and I realise that ‘what understands’ is behind all that. I realised this after sitting quietly, and that Understanding and Knowledge come from somewhere quiet.

Dr. R. I think each of us has to reason with ourselves and find a way to put this to ourselves, such as: 'Why do I get so steamed up about something which doesn't belong to me?' or 'I would meet that situation better if I did not get caught up in it.' In the meditation, in the half-hour, this is very important because I don't think it is any good shutting your eyes and trying to have a battle to meditate! When you find your mind is caught up in something, it is worth taking a stroll or reading something to let this drop off you, and then you will do the meditation quite naturally. He does advise letting the activity evaporate for a while before the evening half-hour. Any questions about that?

Miss Skeaping. I had a very interesting experience some time ago when I was just going to be involved in a difficult conversation – planning something I was doing. I tried to think 'I must not get involved', and I repeated the Mantra a few times. It gave me an extraordinary feeling that real Attention was a form of prayer.

Dr. R. (after repeating the observation): Certainly, if the Mantra can be used in that way, one can suddenly get the energy for detachment that one would get from prayer.

Miss S. I felt it was coming from somewhere else. The detachment did remain for the necessary period.

Dr. R. Any other questions? The letter continues:

Unrest is merely a creation of extraneous things that would cease to exist if these things were not there. In that sense we may say that rest is not substantial, is not a substance in itself. Movement of the mind and form superimpose a substance, names and forms. These are merely temporary phases like clouds hiding the sun. If we join ourselves with them, we also begin to move and tremble with them, otherwise no.

Mr. Melville. Sometimes after meditation, if I am seriously worried about something, I begin to see what 'Thy Will be done' could really mean.

Dr. R. And when you come to see that, remember it is still duality. 'Thy' implies some outside individual, but if you are speaking of your own Self when you say 'Thy Will be done', then there is no dichotomy. So if in some very troubled situations which we have to go through in life, we realise that the Atman, the true Creator, is your true Self who knows much better than you what is good for you and what the solution is, then you cease to feel involved in it in the same way.

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There are two or three more questions by the School of Meditation which he answered in this letter:

Q. Is it attachment to the form and substance which has to be given up?

S. Only partly. More precisely your fluctuating consciousness must give up the physical world, and the Atman must give up your fluctuating consciousness. This is what is meant by complete freedom.

[The Creator could rescue us from this fluctuating consciousness.]

Q. How do we make people give up?

S. When the notion of giving up in oneself becomes firm and strong, we simultaneously and automatically pass into a state of rest which was already there. Just as there are waves on the surface of the ocean though its depths are always calm, similarly the superficial mind is subject to forms of unrest owing to its changes with the physical world; whereas the deeper Atman is always still. We do not make people give up, but by giving up ourselves, we dissolve their movement, their unrest.

Q. Is rest essential food for mind?

S. Yes, rest and Joy are the natural food for the Atman. Underneath they are always there, but under the stimuli of the false external world, a surface unrest is created. The giving up of this delusion in our thoughts and beliefs is what goes by the name of rest and Joy.

[N.B. It is important to note that giving up a thing is always within our powers, whereas acquiring a thing is not always so. We can always give up.]

Any more questions?

Mrs. Farley. Is the meditation just an individual thing, or can perhaps one think of it as a group and that as we meditate we could create higher energy which could affect things beyond ourselves? Couldn't that balance the clouds of unrest slightly?

Dr. R. Yes, in one sense the meditation is entirely an individual thing. Probably each of us in this room does it a little differently from anybody else. Soon after the start it becomes its own guide. But when I first met the Shankaracharya, when I was saying goodbye, he said: 'Goodbye, and in meditation we shall be meeting.' And in a group of people like ourselves, when 'two or three are gathered together' there is Consciousness 'in the midst of them'. In fact, there is a connection on the Subtle and Causal levels between everybody who is meditating. A group of people in harmony seem able to help each other out of some temporary difficulty with the meditation.

I always meditate much better with you, and if I am in some difficulty over it, I just call a meditation meeting!

I think that is probably all we can take in now. I am sorry about the Sanskrit names, but there are a lot more here!

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