

8 July 1975

## GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

### COLET HOUSE

Lord Allan to Dr. Roles: Shall we start with a few notices?

Dr. R. Yes, please.

A. There will be Meditation meetings here, as usual, during the summer, i.e., on the second Tuesday of each month – August 12th, September 9th and October 14th at 7.15 p.m.

Now I think there are probably some people here who don't go to other meetings which take place in this house or go to other activities, and we would like to give them the opportunity of helping to maintain this house. It is obviously very precious to everybody who uses it, but doesn't stay in its present condition without a good deal of love and attention, and this is done by those who wish to offer their thanks for what they get from it.

So during the holidays we are organising on Tuesday evenings cleaning parties starting at 7.30 p.m., and outside on the far table on the landing is a list. Therefore, those of you who want to take the opportunity (because it will help you as well as everybody else, as well as the house), should put your name on that list saying what evenings you will be able to come. We hope also to have a little reading as well.

On the same theme we are organising a sort of work-in during the fortnight beginning the 8th September and it goes on until the 31st. There will be opportunities for doing various bits of work in the evenings and also at the weekends. The chief job we are going to do during that fortnight is to redecorate the Quiet Room down below which, after all, is for our use as meditators and, therefore, anything we can do to help we ought to be glad to do.

(List for Work-in outside).

Dr. R. Coming back to the subject of Meditation, we've realised more and more acutely that meditation works in proportion to how much you connect it with something you greatly want but aren't getting any other way. The Shankaracharya assures us that whatever it is that anybody wants, the meditation would help them to get it, because it is designed to connect a person with the great Source of Energy within him which usually goes untapped.

There was a striking illustration of that last weekend. Of course, a lot of people have written in to me about that Wimbledon final; the winner – Arthur Ashe – who had decided he wanted to win that final long before, is known to be a meditator – no secret about it – and whenever they changed ends he meditated, and the television cameras couldn't keep away from it. The contrast between him – as a meditator – and his opponent was so marked that I don't think there could be a better advertisement for meditation – calm, collected, master of himself and able to bring off astonishing feats when needed. So if you want to be a tennis champion (and have the necessary skill), meditation would help you!

Now there's a difficulty about connecting the meditation with what one wants because one is so many different people in one skin wanting so many different things. We've recently been giving the meditation to the children of people in the School of Economic Science

from the age of 10 upwards. One learns how those children's minds work because on their confidential form they really open up, for they realise that they can say things that don't get to their parents and teachers. Two days ago – on Sunday – a small girl of 10 who rejoiced in the distinguished name of Donna Fitzgerald and who had an elder brother who meditates with her parents, and one younger brother, put the following on her form: in answer to the question: 'In your own words, what do you really want in life?' – She gets it all in: 'I want to live in the country and I want a sister, and I would like two black and two tabby little kittens. I want my name to be changed to Shirley Jones (laughter). And I want to be a secretary in my group; I want my hair long right down to my feet (more laughter).'

So I said to her, 'Of course, we couldn't promise all these things, though it is surprising what the meditation can produce sometimes! Only we will not let you change your nice name into something so ordinary as Shirley Jones.' However, she showed considerable reluctance about repeating the Mantra; she kept stopping; but one only had to say, 'What about those kittens', and she laughed and started again. So she's made a beginning.

Now we can laugh superiorly at her, but the chief difference I've noticed between her and myself was she had the courage to write it down (laughter) and I'd rather die!

Anyway, somebody asked that question of the Shankaracharya:

A. reads:

Q. Why, oh why is it so difficult to know what one wants? What is the longing in the heart, the sense of lack, the discontent; and upon what should we centre our minds and hearts to bring the answer or resolve the conflict?

S. One can give several examples to answer this question:

There was an incident in Ayodhya, the capital of Rama's kingdom. Rama went to cross the Saraya river, and a boatman met him but refused to take him. There is a lot of mythology attached to this passage in the *Ramayana*, and this boatman became very famous because of this passage.

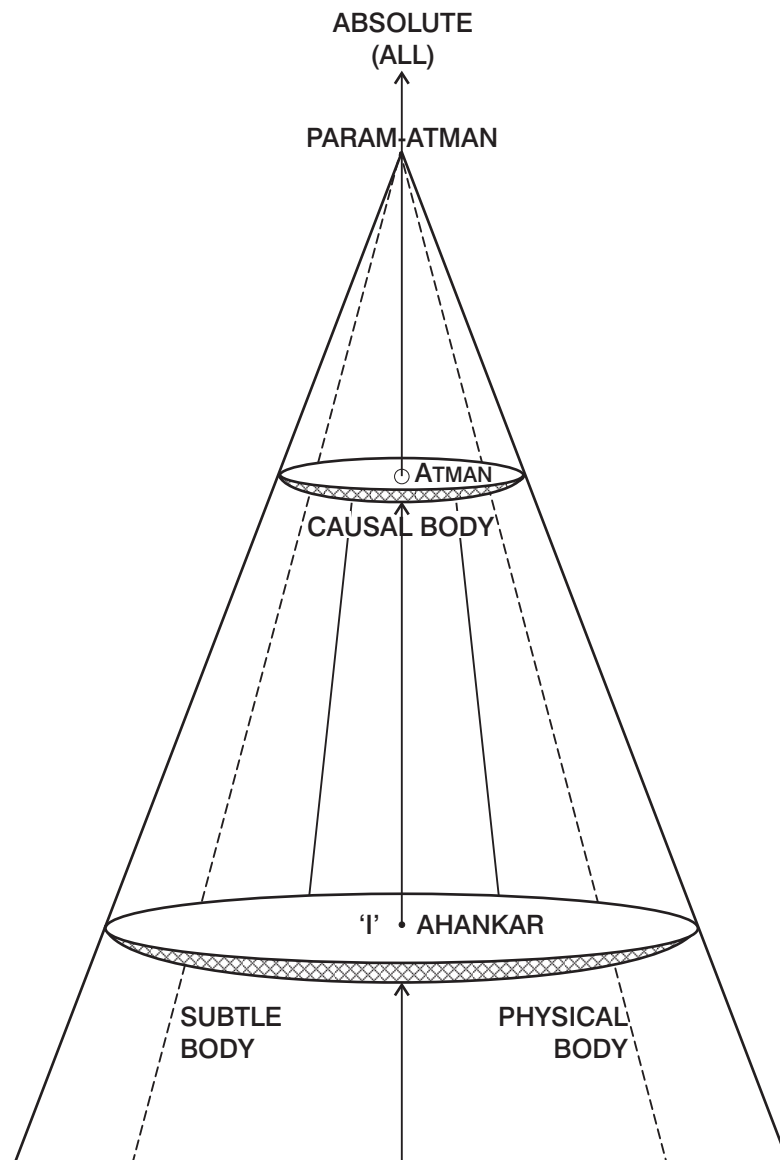
A Holy man wanted to cross that river some time ago. Suddenly he remembered the story of that boatman and Rama. He was so overwhelmed by the memory of that boatman that he said to the boatman: 'Today I will give you whatever you want.'

The boatman answered very quickly, 'Please arrange for today's meal.' This holy man laughed, and wondered why, when this boatman was offered *anything* – whatever he wanted – all he asked for was the next meal! Then, in his wonderment he realized that the poor man had no vision beyond his daily bread – if he had had further vision he would have asked. So, in fact, he can't be blamed – he cannot ask for a thing he doesn't know. And he was given what he wanted.

When a man is a child, he only wants to play with toys; when he grows up, he wants books and other things. Later, he grows tired of books and enters some other field of activity. Then he gets married, and things keep on changing from age to age and year to year. Unless a man reaches a state where he wants the real Truth – where he wants Truth, Consciousness and Bliss – but he must *want* it – he cannot have this longing unless he 'grows' on the Ladder, climbs the Ladder, and rises in level.

(Record, 22 January 1974)

Dr. R. contd: So the first thing is to know what one wants, and that depends on knowing *who* is wanting. The ordinary 'I' changes all the time – on the ordinary flat level of everyday life, repeating itself, day after day, week after week, month after month the physical and the psychological or subtle activities go on. The only 'I' a man like that knows is his ego which is changing all the time, and wants different things at different times, different days of the week and so on. Its life lies on this flat circle (see Figure, below).



He has to rise above this flat surface to know who he really is and what he wants. That is why the whole of this method of Self-realization, with the aid of the meditation, depends on bringing the Central Consciousness to mind. To do that one has to go through an Initiation ceremony, which is supposed to raise one a little bit above the flat surface so that one gets a glimpse of further possibilities. Every time one meditates – the two half-hours a day – one is supposed to dedicate to one thing only and that is the Central Consciousness. Gradually one realizes the eternal presence of the Atman on the Causal level – the luminous body – which is there all the time. The only thing that the Atman wants is to be One with the Lord of the Universe – the Param-Atman – and that is Self-realization.

Some people find that carrying a picture of this kind (the one on screen) helps them to distinguish during meditation or at other times, what is just running round the circle (denoting subtle and physical levels) of thoughts, actions and words, and what is the Realization of one's true potential by devoting oneself to the Consciousness alone.

Now with this picture in view we could read a very short passage from the Shankaracharya:

A. reads:

S. 'The Param-Atman alone is unchanging; it always remains the same. But this Param-Atman is also manifesting through all these different forms, which we directly encounter and derive Knowledge through them. It is quite possible, therefore, that our concept of Param-Atman would keep on changing as the Knowledge, and the level of the individual, would be changing all the time. One does wonder (since one's concept is changing), what really is happening. In fact, there is nothing wrong in all this; one's concepts must keep on evolving, and the Knowledge and concept of Param-Atman will continue to become subtler and subtler; *but within this ever-changing concept about this unchanging Absolute, there is one thing which never needs to be changed – that is the faith in the Param-Atman.*

(*ibid*)

Dr. R. contd: Well, are there any questions relevant to this: 'Who is meditating?' 'Who is wanting the meditation to get the permanent thing in one's life?' It's very important to form the right picture; then everything about the meditation goes right.

Mrs. Henry: I haven't got a question, but I would like to say that I had no idea what I wanted when I was young until I first saw Mr. Ouspensky, and I felt then that I wished I could be like that – so sure where I wanted to go.

Dr. R. Yes, that is a very wise remark because the chief function of any teacher is to bring out from a person a knowledge of what they really want – who they really are. It was Plato's Socrates who said that a teacher is really a midwife – to bring to birth the knowledge of the soul the individual already has. But it is important to try and hitch one's wagon on to the most fully experienced teacher one can find and, if possible, a teacher who is part of a great Tradition which has gone on for as long as human history. There we are very lucky and that we have.

Now supposing we bring ourselves each day to ask ourselves the questions: 'Who am I?' and 'What do I want?', I think we shall find certain things which aid the meditation, and one of the things the Shankaracharya uses a great deal is music. He not only has his trained choir and little orchestra at the Ashram; he invites professional singers and dramatic players and musicians to give shows which we have quite often enjoyed when we are out there; and he has said that music plays a very important part in Self-realization because it gets people off the ground, 'it shifts their molecules', changes their chemistry.

The difficulty is that we are so individual – what kind of music helps one person seems poison to another; but there are two ways in which we could bring music more into our lives as a help to the meditation and for no other reason. One is to find objective music if one can – music which is usually anonymous because it is a product of School. Our Dervish Turning

music, the music of the Mukabeleh is a good example (although we do in fact know who composed that music as it is today) for we have found on many guest nights that it produces the 'waking-up' effect on anybody who comes. We will give you a sample of that kind of music just before the end of this meeting.

But, for now, why don't we each of us try and find some music that we really like. We needn't worry about what it is; it may be different for each person; but if one finds that some music or some air in a passage of music does things to one and the meditation goes easily, one can make more and more of this. I'm just going to put on now some music which is familiar to most of you; it's from the slow movement of one of Mozart's piano concertos – the one in D minor – simply because I've played it so often myself – taken it to India on a tape and played it for a bit – and it has that effect on me. To be honest I don't expect it to have an effect on anybody else; to some it will be hackneyed; to others it will be appalling; some don't like Western music, or Western classical music. Some don't like Mozart or piano concertos, and some don't like the key of D minor!

However, to me it describes the play of the Gunas in the composer's mind and the sudden appearance of Sattva Guna in the middle of all the turmoil:

(The recording was then played, followed by Meditation)

Dr. R. afterwards: We should now, perhaps examine the question: 'What can help the Meditation?' All of us in the room have had it going very well sometimes, but we've also all known times when it does not go well. What can help? You might try and develop something for yourselves – those who are keen on the subject of music. You might try and improve your picture of what the Meditation is for – for the giving up of everything but the Central Consciousness; you might try keeping the Supreme Consciousness in your memory all the time – dedicating your actions, thoughts, and words to It whenever you remember.

What other things could help? Take the half-hours themselves – like posture. Are there any questions?

You remember that all the people who check are meant to connect the meditator with what he wants, and that as everybody is different it is no good giving routine instructions.

Q. (a woman) It helps me to do it at regular times.

Dr. R. Regular times for yourself – not some fixed time of day for everybody, but some time before the beginning of your day's work or activity, and some time soon after it finishes. Then it's a great help. But don't let us feel that there is a fixed time when everybody must be meditating.

Q. (same) I have had previous instructions that the best times to do it were at sunrise and sunset. But I don't now do that.

Dr. R. No that was six thousand years ago and the sun rises and sets at different times in India from here. But in order to get it established, one has to make this twice-daily rhythm sometime. It starts as an exercise, but after a while it comes to stay so that it is always there inside rising to the surface when one needs it.

Any other questions about the technique or improvement of the half-hour?



Q. (a man, as repeated): Sometimes he feels from tension round the throat that he is trying to say the Mantra too hard.

Dr. R. One can go further than that; you shouldn't be saying it – not vocalising it at all!

Q. (second part of question): What is the difference between saying it and listening to it?

Dr. R. All the difference in the world! It's a property of the mind that what you want comes into your mind; so what you have to do is to want the Mantra to repeat – want the rhythm to come. Just wanting it but not saying it; and once your attention (when you sit and shut your eyes) is maximal on wanting the Mantra to repeat and travel it will happen. It is difficult to explain in words. Don't pronounce it because that introduces all sorts of tensions of lips, tongue, vocal cords, and so on. You must talk with somebody about how to do that. There are many detailed ways of doing it.

Q. Not actually vocalising, but giving attention to it?

Dr. R. Yes. Then when it is going, listening to it, but not altering it in any way. The rhythm has to find a way. I've often said that it's like a little iron filing that we introduce which is attracted to the big magnet, which is the Pure Consciousness.

This, like all Mantras, is one of the Names of the Absolute and it has a special relationship, so it will find the way for you because you and I don't know how to get to the silence where the Consciousness manifests.

Are there any other questions?

Q. (same woman as before): Sometimes I start the Mantra by vocalising, and realising that it is mechanical I let it go. Then it seems to disappear – one disappears into oblivion.

Dr. R. That's fine; there's nothing to worry about.

Q. contd. Is this really oblivion or is it an indication that the Mantra is working? Because I am left with a sense of peace?

Dr. R. It's an indication that the Mantra is working. If it were sleep, it would have bad effects – you would be muzzy and wouldn't wake up on time; all sorts of things which clearly distinguish what you mean by 'oblivion' – the loss of one's ego and all activity, and not just lazy sleep. It's very clear and you know the difference yourself.

One thing with you, you think too much – 'such men are dangerous!' Stop thinking about the meditation and just go for a dip!

Any other questions?

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There was rather a good picture given to us by a Swami who was used by the Shankaracharya to answer our questions in his presence. He told this simile in quite a different context, but in the context of meditation it's really very efficient:

On the mast of a ship a bird happened to be sitting as the ship left the port and was going out to sea. (That bird is the ego.) First the bird was confident that it could fly back any time to its own place but, by evening, she was thinking that her children would be crying for her and she made an attempt to fly home from

the ship which was far out at sea. When she couldn't find her way, she returned to the mast and again and again later she flew to the south, to the north, to the east and to the west but, in the end, she realized that there was nothing she could do. So she once more returned to the mast and sat quietly.

Now she became confident again in another way – not that 'I can do' ('I can meditate'), but that 'I must go where the mast of the ship (which is the Absolute through the rhythm of the Mantra) is taking me.'

(Record, 8 October 1972)

Dr. R. So long as you let your mind tell you you are an individual responsible for doing everything and separate from the Creator, you will continue to think that you can 'go it alone'! So take that in a matter of seconds in the half-hour and you will see that is a picture of one's mind flying off this way, that way, back to the mast, and at last losing the thought that one can do anything – that it is one's meditation – 'I am the meditator' – all that has to go. It is not your meditation. You are not the meditator; it is a little matter between the iron filing and the big magnet.

Any other questions? (As no questions were asked, Dr. R. contd.)

There is something which the Shankaracharya wants us to keep reiterating. This is to the leader of our New Zealand group:

I will give you some very important hints about meditation. There are a few fundamental principles which need to be observed in order to derive benefit.

Posture is most important; I was invited to the Ashram of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, to have a look at a number of people who had come from various countries and were training there. I saw that they were lying there in different postures. All were in wrong postures one way or another. There was not a single person who was sitting correctly.

The important thing is that you sit in your chair with the spine absolutely correct; you should not sit on an easy chair in a reclining position. If you keep the body in any position other than with the spine straight for a length of time it may create disease and make the person lose faith in this technique of meditation. Losing faith, he will be disillusioned and go away. These are the two very serious points: the risk of disease and of losing faith.

(Record, 21 September 1974)

### **Comment**

The places where disease of the spine tends to happen are at the back of the neck especially the prominent vertebra, which is the 7th cervical vertebra – owing to the head coming forward if one drops asleep when one is supposed to be meditating. One must never allow one's head to get out of true; it should sit square on one's shoulders and not be twisted sidewise or bent forward or back.

The other chief place is down in the small of the back – the curvature – the lumbar spine and the end of the vertebral column. That's because one allows one's body to sag, so the spinal column becomes rounded. Both of those are avoided by his advice to have an erect back and the body symmetrical but not rigid. We have to learn to sit like that without building up tension.

(Reading continues)

The method is corrected like this: you should sit for half-an-hour in the morning but be sure it is in the correct posture on a chair, one that will keep your spine vertical. Then begin to pronounce the mantra with the lips shut as lightly as you can.

Sound the mantra as loudly as you can inside with maximum effort. Then decreasing the effort gradually, till the mantra finally merges into the heart. This process should not take you more than five minutes. Then complete the rest of the meditation, but if the mind gets disturbed again, repeat the above process once more.

Repeat the mantra and decrease the effort gradually. This in the end becomes almost effortless. The pronouncing of the mantra becomes almost completely effortless. It should settle down into a condition where no effort is being made.

Dr. R. It should be a complete rest.

Well, each of us has to learn how to carry those two things out – it's very important.

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Now as time is getting on (it's after 8 o'clock) I would like to try the other kind of music.  
(to: Richard Womersley) Would you come and play?

It is one of the pieces of music to which we do our 'Movements' and years ago we played it to the whole School of Economic Science at Friends' House, Euston, and a number of them still today come and mention having heard it and 'could they hear it again?' It has a general effect and, of course, if you do the exercise – it's called the 'Women's prayer' – it could have a great effect indeed if they recall it to themselves before meditating. We will meditate afterwards:

Movements music for *The Women's Prayer*.

#### MEDITATION

Dr. R. concluded:

Though some of us will meet on the 12th August I do hope you all get a chance of a really good holiday.

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