

11 November 1975

## GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Dr. R. I want to approach the question of meditation today in rather a new way because in preparing myself for this meeting I suddenly saw that its success depends on correcting our ideas about 'Consciousness'. Our troubles have been almost entirely due to the complexity of the Indian language and the difficulties our interpreters (who don't understand what Consciousness is) have had in finding the equivalent English words. In reality both our Russian Instructor P. D. Ouspensky and the Shankaracharya have been teaching us exactly the same thing.

So we may start with the fact that 40 years ago, Mr. Ouspensky gave a series of six 'Psychological Lectures' to which we were asked to bring our friends, quite a number of whom are in this room now. At those lectures the subject was 'Consciousness', and four states of Consciousness possible for man were clearly defined:

1) Deep Sleep at night. 2) The daytime state which people call 'clear consciousness' but which he called 'waking sleep' or Relative Consciousness. 3) Self-Consciousness; and 4) what he then called 'Objective Consciousness' but which we had better call Universal or Cosmic Consciousness to avoid the confusion arising from defining the words 'subjective' and 'objective' today.

He stressed two points. First that most people pass their lives in the first two states only, but imagine that they already possess the two higher states so do not want to know more about them. Secondly that one must totally emerge from the lower state before we can experience the next one. For example we only come into the daytime state when we realise we have been asleep; in just the same way we cannot experience more than occasional glimpses of the third state without realising that all our ordinary life is a form of sleep from which it is necessary to awake. In the fourth state people can know the world as it is, and strangely there are more first-hand descriptions of it in Western literature than there are of the third state of self-consciousness. Of the fourth state Ouspensky collected many examples in Chapter 22 of his first book *Tertium Organum*.

Perhaps the most striking example is that of the German mystic Jakob Boehme (by trade an illiterate shoemaker) the first of whose three major illuminations was chronicled by his biographer as occurring in the year 1600 when he was 25:

Sitting one day in his room his eyes fell upon a burnished pewter dish, which reflected the sunshine with such marvellous splendour that he fell into an inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could look into the principles and deepest foundation of things. Believing that it was only a fancy, he went out upon the green in order to banish it from his mind. But even here he remarked that he gazed into the heart of things, the very herbs and grass, and that actual nature harmonised with what he had inwardly seen.

This example confirms Ouspensky's third contention that:

In most cases in ordinary language, the word 'consciousness' is used as an equivalent to the word 'intelligence' (in the sense of mind activity) or as an alternative for it. In reality consciousness is a particular kind of awareness of man, awareness of himself (as a whole)

and of who and where he is at the moment. Only the man himself can know whether he is 'conscious' at the given moment or not. But opinions of modern psychological schools differ on the question of consciousness. Some recognise that man is conscious in at least part of his function; others deny any kind of consciousness in man, deny even the usefulness or the necessity for the term 'consciousness'. I will analyse none of these opinions because, from the point of view of the system about which I speak, they are all wrong.

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The Shankaracharya also defines the same four states of consciousness if one can penetrate the veil of language. He adds two transitional states, the 'dream state' between one and two, and 'Samadhi' between three and four; and in addition he describes various abnormal states of consciousness – unconsciousness (or coma whether from head injury or disease); hypnotism and trance states; drug-induced states etc. We in this Society bypass all these completely for they are in the province of professional psychiatrists and mental health organisations.

'In meditation' he said when I first met him, 'We come out of what we *are not*, in order to realise what we are.' He constantly maintains that the third state ('Self-Consciousness') is only to be attained by regularly *giving up* first the ordinary daytime consciousness and then all the dreams and memories of the sleep state, and only then will we begin to experience the inward ecstasy (Samadhi) that Boehme described. This he calls 'Realization of the Individual Self or Atman'. After regular daily practice of two half-hours of meditation over a considerable time, he says that the individual self comes to realize that it is of the same nature as the universal consciousness (Param-Atman); which means that we can 'Go out upon the green' like Boehme, still preserving this expansion of consciousness which in the East is called *Turiya* or 'enlightenment' (literally the 'Fourth').

The aim of human life according to both the Shankaracharya and Ouspensky is to attain command over the four states of consciousness. The fully Realized man can go to sleep in bed when he wants to, he can carry on his business in the ordinary waking state and yet he is never far from the two higher states which he can turn on 'at will.' I have myself seen the Shankaracharya do this under the very varied circumstances of our acquaintance over fourteen years.

Another very fundamental point of agreement between them is one that is missed by all contemporary psychological schools, namely that a man's relationship to space and time and memory varies with his state of consciousness. Those who read Mr. Ouspensky's books, (especially *Tertium Organum*, *A New Model of the Universe* and *Strange life of Ivan Osokin*) will be well aware of his attitude; and they may want to be reminded of the story the Shankaracharya uses to emphasise this point. It comes from the epic of the *Ramayana* in which Rama is depicted as the ideal man with full command over consciousness; and he had a brother named Lakshman who was also fully realized except in respect of his Knowledge:

Once while returning from a bathe in the Sarayee river, Lakshman requested Rama to show him what Maya is because Rama was always talking about it and ordinary men appeared to be overwhelmed by it. Rama didn't answer at the time; he kept quiet, but later on when Lakshman had forgotten his question he asked him to dive and pick up his signet ring which had fallen into the river, he said, while bathing. So Lakshman dived into the river to retrieve it.

As he hit the water, his consciousness changed altogether, and under water he completely forgot the world he had just left. He saw an altogether different

world there – more beautiful than this one he had come out of. A young girl stood there telling him that she had no one to look after her, and asked Lakshman to take her under his protection and to marry her. Lakshman cheerfully agreed and lived with her a whole lifetime and had children and grandchildren. Finally he grew old, fell sick and died and (as the custom was) his sons submerged his body into the river.

At that touch of the cold water he came back to his former state of consciousness, and as he raised his head above the water he found himself again in this ordinary world with Rama standing on the bank in front of him. Lakshman, completely out of his wits, told Rama what he had seen under water and how he had spent a whole lifetime underneath.

Rama said, 'You've been only under the water for about two minutes of earthly time. All you have seen was all that Maya you had wanted to know about, so now you know!'

A few moments on one level, a whole lifetime at another. This is how time and distance change with consciousness – time and space.

Dr. R. (went on): This story can be said to describe the transition between any of these big changes of consciousness; that is, he could have been in the daytime state and gone to sleep and had a dream. The dream would take only two minutes, but it would seem like a whole lifetime. That we've all experienced and know about.

The other inference is that if you get into the third state of consciousness, you hit the water, and all that you previously felt in the daytime life is just a dream, from which you emerge to find that only, perhaps, two minutes have passed. Rama all the time standing there represents Cosmic Consciousness – seeing that those worlds which Lakshman experienced were illusory limitations of the Real World.

How about that?

Mr. Weigall. Would there be reality in what and how we take the circumstances of the dream, and not in the circumstances of it?

Dr. R. You are quite right; there is nothing insubstantial or non-existent about the world in which we live; it's the view of it that we take that is Maya – illusion. The tables and chairs of our ordinary life are perfectly real, but the view we take of events and their relation to us is illusion.

Q. One of the implications of that story is that none of the decisions taken in that illusory period – that lifetime under the river had any consequences apart from the two minutes in that particular place?

Dr. R. Yes it is definitely a rather valuable inference from the story to realise that in the daytime state, too, we make a lot of good resolutions and how long do we keep them? We voice a lot of views, which are proved wrong in a couple of days, and man who lives only in two states of consciousness does a lot of wishful thinking and propounds many short-lived theories and none of it amounts to much more than a puff of smoke!

Same Q. Does it even amount to a puff of smoke? Does anything that we are doing amount to anything at all?

Dr. R. Oh, yes, because some things are useful for Self-realization and some are not – some get in the way; and the key to success for the individual as it is for the Biosphere is *selection* – those he selects are what he wishes to have with him always, and others he is thankful to discard. So the power of selection aided by the power of memory is greatly improved by meditation. Meditation gives a stabilising balance to one's life, so that one can choose what one wants clearly when one emerges from two half-hours a day.

Same Q. The only consequences of any decision made during the period under the water was possibly to die sooner, therefore to emerge sooner from unreality?

Dr. R. No, no, no! A lot of the things we do in the dream world (under water) have more vigorous consequences than that! Say we marry someone – perhaps on impulse – and that goes on having major consequences for a long time to come! All sorts of actions done in sleep have consequences; therefore, it's very important to establish the meditation and knowledge of the Real World so that one stops sowing the seeds of prickly plants that will come up later.

Mr. Eadie. The thing that I notice most about the results of meditation is more Self-awareness – more awareness of the things about me.

Dr. R. A heightened sensory perception?

Mr. Eadie. When I enter the picture, it is Self-remembering as well.

Dr. R. It's certainly part of it; you can, if you want to, be more aware of the sensory world about you, use it for heightened perception. That was what so attracted Aldous Huxley!

But heightened sensory perception is only part of it. If you don't particularly want that, there are other things you can be aware of which are independent of the senses.

Mr. Eadie. Is this bringing one nearer to the third state of consciousness because that is how I think of it?

Dr. R. It's one good result, yes, but there are many other results. One of those is to understand someone else, like one's wife or one's children, or one's friends; it is to put oneself in their shoes, and not to look at everything always from Peter Eadie's point of view!

Mr. Eadie. It works because one comes into the moment.

Dr. R. Yes, and that is another thing. We tire ourselves out in this ordinary state of consciousness carrying the burden of the past which is over and done with, or the future which will never happen as we expect. To rest the mind – the delicate part which makes man different from animals; we rest it so that it can tackle everything fresh and with energy.

Meditation is a wonderful way of laying aside the burden that is artificially imposed on the mind.

What about meditating? It is so much easier to go on talking for a long time, I find, than it is actually to take one step up the ladder of self-consciousness.

About twelve minutes' MEDITATION

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Dr. R then went on: There are various implications of that story and though it is experienced by everybody every twenty four hours, we mustn't forget that there are two types of people – those who know and those who don't know. For those who don't know, it is largely a matter of chance – they have to take what comes. If you *know*, you gradually acquire the power of choice which is of immense value all through life and which culminates in the moment of death when you can choose the kind of life you will lead when this body dies.

Another consequence which is very important is that when I first heard that story I said to the Shankaracharya: 'What a relief that the two worlds that Lakshman saw – the dream world and the ordinary daytime world – are both illusory! He said: 'I am glad you found it a relief, but don't forget that the seer of the two worlds is real!' In other words, the Atman – what one really is – is real and never changes, although He may pass through dreams and dream-like events. That's another consequence.

Many of us in this room have for some time had plenty of experience of the third state of consciousness for short periods, and some have had experiences of the fourth state. Those are apt to be a little frightening because such a concept as a Creator of the Universe is overwhelming! One thinks of all the earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes and other cosmic events – exploding stars, and so on – it is a little frightening to think that one might come into the orbit of such a Consciousness! But here is rather a comforting statement we heard once.

A lion can be seen in different moods. Sometimes he roars to frighten other animals and attacks fiercely. Also, he can be seen loving and licking his cubs. Though the cubs experience both the loving and the fierce moods yet they are never frightened because, after all, the lion is their father.

(Record, 22 January 1970)

One's got to be on trusting and loving terms with that Consciousness whose nature we share and then wonderful things happen.

He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

(Psalm 91 & Matthew 4: 6)

One is never alone and is never afraid. Only one must set one's aim and valuation above the two lowest states of consciousness in which we ordinarily live; and meditation is a means of getting there. You hear a lot of people complaining about small things – small inconveniences, uncomfortable chairs, noises, headaches and things like that.

(to Lady Allan): And don't you realise when you meditate what a lovely quiet place London is compared with India? We should put on a tape of one of our meditations with the Shankaracharya at his Ashram so you hear all the background noise there. We are very lucky here! (Yes)

Dr. R. (then continued): It might be good to conclude by asking Lady Allan to read the beginning of his answer to one of my wife's questions when we were out there recently.

Lady Allan reads:

Mrs. Roles said: His Holiness said yesterday that each has its place and is empowered with a certain limited force. Is it through meditation that we can learn what that role is and how to play it in the best possible way?

S. As has been said before, whatever situation we find ourselves in today is itself the outcome of the energy available to us for the work in which we are engaged.

The establishment of the practice of meditation is to escape from this situation of the limited force. This system has been given to us so that we can transcend from the natural laws. The natural law is that all the force must dissipate slowly, until it has done its job and the thing is finished.

(Dr. R. Like a battery running down)

This is the natural course, but this natural course can be broken and for *that* meditation has been prescribed. When one goes into meditation one reaches to the Source of energy and one gathers back what one has spent during the day or during the year. It only depends on the purity of meditation as to how much extra energy one will have regained, either to replenish and renew the lost energy, or get something extra to be able to do more and better work.

Dr. R. I think that sums it up: we take it naturally; we let the natural laws operate; we try to keep the memory that we are children of the Creator.

Well, it's a quarter past eight. Any last questions, or would you like to leave it like that?

(As there was silence, the meeting then concluded.)

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