

13 July 1976

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

After Lord Allan had given the announcements, Dr. Roles began by saying:

The 4th of July is a date well-known not only because of Independence Thanksgiving Day in the United States, but also because it is the day pupils from all over India come to pay their grateful respects to the Shankaracharya!

For the last three years I have sent a Greetings telegram from all of us. This year something more is being done: Messages also from New York and from New Zealand who have also subscribed to a donation of about 2,000 rupees to his Sanskrit school at the Ashram in Allahabad.

My own cable was to Benares – to our interpreter, Jaiswal whose house is close to the Ashram there and this is the answer:

(A. reads): Jaiswal says that he immediately conveyed your gracious message to His Holiness and he responded with great appreciation, and has asked me to convey his blessing to you.

He is planning to stay in new Delhi during this monsoon season, and will have the ceremony of Guru Purnima there on the 11th July.

Dr. R. Obviously for different cities, it has to be a movable feast; the Allahabad one is usually the 4th July, this one in Benares is the 6th, and the new Delhi one a little later, and there maybe others in cities where he happens to be during this month. The ceremony is a most picturesque one which was laid on for us last September; so many come to Benares that it can go on for twelve hours with His Holiness presiding all the time.

Anyway, I hope you will agree that we owe him about everything we have and this is only a very small way of thanking him. The real 'thank you', as he so often says, is whether anybody realizes his possibilities, and whether we do the Meditation well.

In terms of that, I want to introduce you to some new aspects of Meditation in relation to Self-realization. This is for all of us, but especially for those who only meditate and don't come to anything else in this House; because it is very important that they should realise that Meditation is not a 'hit-or-miss' process according to what one happens to feel like, but is intended to enable as many people as possible to get something permanent. For that one has to be systematic about receiving help – asking for help – regularly, and that 'systematic process' is the Third Step of the Ladder of Self-realization.

Have you heard me so far?

The First Step, you will remember is the recognition that those *good impulses* that all of us here have had so often right back into childhood – 'intimations of immortality' we might call them – come from oneSelf within.

Then for all of you there has come a time when you felt that you must 'do something about' these impulses, you realised how fleeting and evanescent they are; perhaps you feared they might be going to fade out; so you came to the Second Step of the Ladder which was

the *Resolution* that brought you here to get the Meditation and (in some cases) the True Knowledge that goes with it.

People may have quite a long search; they try this and that, but the lucky ones usually have some friend connected with something real and that is a very big short-cut. Most of us are in this situation, that we are trying to meditate which is part of the Third Step. It is called *Sadhana* (this Third Step) for which there is no English equivalent, so there is always great difficulty in understanding what it means. We have asked the Shankaracharya several times; and on one occasion when we got very tired of the habit our translator has of always calling it by his English equivalent 'discipline' (according to his own ideas about 'discipline') one of us put the question this way:

Q. The Third Step of the Ladder – *Sadhana* – is difficult to understand in English because there is no equivalent. Recently the meaning has been made clearer by hearing examples of *different kinds of Sadhana for different types of people*. Would your Holiness enlarge our understanding of *this*?

S. The word *Sadhana* is derived from *Sadh*, which means to 'help to realize,' and in the process of Self-realization whatever helps to hold the person to prevent him falling down or going lower is known as *Sadhana*. The act of a teacher – a real Guru – is to help people from falling down.

The whole of nature is falling down, or running down like a battery which frequently needs recharging. So, along with nature, people are like batteries who keep running down and need recharging.

A teacher, with his Conscious Knowledge and Conscious action, comes to help people, to hold them together or give them a systematic way of life to follow so as to keep on growing and Realizing themselves and their possibilities.

The word *Sadhana* – the Third Step of the Ladder – therefore has different meanings including *to help, to hold and to realize* – all those three meanings.

(Record, 21 September 1968)

Dr. R. Now, are there any questions? (As there was no response, Dr. R. went on):

We would very much like the people to whom we have given our heart's blood by trying to give the initiation as well as we possibly can (with teams of people helping with everything) – we would very much like all those to whom we give it to make a success of it. We don't like people carelessly drifting off and then saying it is no good.

So if there are any people who would like to know about this Third Step – people who don't come here regularly, or go to groups or anything – we would like questions from them particularly. There is no stigma attached to this; it is everybody's choice what they do – it is a question for us of how to help, how to sustain them. (to the room): You look rather like boys at school who are being addressed by the headmaster and told they will have to stay in instead of playing games. It isn't really like that!

Mrs Reid. It seems as if there is a flow in two directions about this? Is that right?

Dr. R. I don't quite see in which two directions. What are you exactly meaning?

Mrs. Reid. You were talking about the role of the Teacher whose help we need; but there is also a flow from us to the Teacher.

Dr. R. Yes, you are right; there *is* a two-way flow in that sense; *he* gets benefit from promising

meditators; and *we* get benefit, in return, from him. This attitude of a 'two-way flow' is the most promising one of all, because you are doing it with a sense of gratitude to him as the representative of your own Divine Self – no demands.

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Dr. R. contd:

Well, until questions begin to surge up I would just like to branch off for a moment. For some years now we have been trying an experiment with children of ten – the children of people in the School of Economic Science – with His Holiness's encouragement. The age of ten is, in fact, not arbitrary; it is rather a magical age. It is only said that we should not give it before ten; of course, children vary greatly in mental age or 'grown-upness'. We do not give it before the chronological age of ten, and it is strange that around that age they seem to take it without any difficulty; and even though they may not apparently get anything, His Holiness says that it leaves an effect for later. That we have confirmed.

They come for all sorts of reasons – usually brothers, sisters, parents are meditating and they come out of curiosity. The things they put on their forms are, as usual, very amusing. On Sunday we had quite a number of children: some just put conventional things on their form: one girl put 'I want something that everybody is calling Realization'. The next one put quite simply: 'I want to become a mother'. The third one, who was a boy, put in very correct School of Economic Science script: 'I want to be a priest'; then, in his own writing he put, 'but I must have a horse'. (laughter)

Anyway, it is working out in a very interesting way, because in these families, the elder ones are now meditating, or supposed to be, and then as each one comes along at ten, then they have probably some effect on the younger ones who are coming along after.

It is all entirely voluntary, and the parents are asked not to snoop – not to probe and see if they are doing it, or anything like that, it is left to them entirely; but when I give it, I suggest to them that they let their parents know from time to time how it is going and if there any difficulties.

It could be that some people in the Study Society might like to think about that in the future. But it must only be with the kind of child who is always asking: 'What are you doing at Colet?' – or asking those fundamental questions which parents find difficult to answer, and to which education seems at present to give no solution.

All right; that is a digression. Are there any questions about these Three Steps of the Ladder? Particularly:

What is needed by all of us to support us – to sustain us when our batteries run down?

Q. Is connecting what you said about a Third Step with a 'System' or method such as is referred to by Mr. Ouspensky; and is the result of the search for such a method the Meditation as we know it today?

Dr. R. Well, it is not only a technique, but in the way Mr. Ouspensky used the word, it means a System of Knowledge which is a Whole – not fragmentary knowledge, but some knowledge which contains everything in plan into which you dip for particular purposes.

This is how the Shankaracharya uses it in relation to the knowledge which is needed to

take the Meditation the whole distance through the various steps – one-pointed Meditation, transcendental Meditation – Samadhi and Turiya. It can take you the whole way.

For that, one needs a systematic body of Knowledge and a systematic way of going about acquiring it.

A. I think I caught the second half of that question which Fleming (who had repeated the first part) didn't. I think it was really:

Would you describe the method, and how is it different from any other method of Self realization?

Dr. R. Ah. Yes.

The best description I have already written down for this meeting; and I want to give it a little later after we have meditated together. But briefly, whereas there are many things called meditation, we are only interested in the kind of Meditation which goes from noise and movement to stillness. That is the first thing. Because the way we are taught to go about it is that we repeat a certain sound which has an affinity with the Self or Atman in each person always and everywhere, and that this Self or Atman – this Divine Self – only manifests itself in silence, whenever the sound has disappeared. Therefore we are interested in the Meditation as a means of coming to the realisation of the immediate presence of God – of the Self. In a nutshell, that is the way one looks at this kind of Meditation.

Other teachers round the world are giving variations of this same kind of Meditation but in different ways to different kinds of people. The way we are asked to give it by the Shankaracharya is rather private, as an individual relationship whereby you admit an individual to a great Tradition which has gone on for six thousand years and is based on the Meditation; and we adapt the technique and the guidance to each individual. We do not have any mass 'baptism' or 'christenings,' or anything; we keep it individual. Everybody is different; everybody has a different nature, has different needs and gets results in a different order.

Do go on asking questions because one learns so much from them.

Martin Robinson. I would like to become more receptive to the Third Step, but I find it very difficult unless I am on holiday otherwise I cannot give enough time to it.

Dr. R. No, I do not think it is entirely that, Martin; for if you did two minutes of perfect Meditation it would hold you up the whole day and the night after. It is a question of really feeling *where* it is supposed to get you and *how important* it is, so that if in the course of a busy day you feel – 'Now I can Meditate for two minutes,' you can go straight through to the silence; and I am going to ask Lord Allan in a minute (when we have had some more questions) to read you what is the real point of this Third Step, which I think will increase your feeling about it.

But let us have some more questions.

Q. How important is it to have a regular check?

Dr. R. That is different for different people and at different times for the same person. What is important is that you should go at once and ask somebody if there is anything that leads

you to suppose that you are not getting what you might be getting. If you have got into some sort of habit – we all do this temporarily – do not be ashamed of it, and do not take it hard that you are not meditating properly at the moment; but go and ask somebody at once. It is checking *'by request'* that is so important.

The other thing is, will you trust us enough to let us round you up even if you think you are doing superbly and yet show signs of ego? That is a great step forward if you do not resent it; then we will help.

Q. It was said that the meaning of the Third Step was to help – to support – to Self-realize. Does this mean that if you introduce somebody else to the Meditation that you have yourself reached the Third Step?

Dr. R. I am not saying that starting off on this Third Step that you are going to be able to support somebody else. I am saying that you are in a position to get support to go up Seven Steps yourself.

Nevertheless, a lot of people find that they take a good step forward if they introduce a friend who profits by this Meditation; it gives one a lift. Also, if they elect to help in one way or another the giving and maintaining of the Meditation these things help.

(Silence)

Dr. R. to the room: Come along, come along, come along; you know quite well that you know nothing; that I know nothing, and nobody knows anything. Why not confess there's something you need to know!

Q. At the moment I feel rather reluctant to meditate because I fear that in the course of meditation I may be forced to give up things that I feel are quite important to me.

Dr. R. Give them up for half an hour!

Q. asked if she would have to give them up altogether?

Dr. R. Oh no; you won't be asked anything like that. Since I first met him in 1961 – fifteen years ago – the Shankaracharya has never asked me to give up anything of my day-to-day external life. All you will ever be asked to give up is some of the self-centred attitude you have towards it. 'That I am the doer of all this; that I am being very successful, or I am being a failure'. You are worrying about the future or going back into the past; you are full of unnecessary thoughts and self-analysis which cast a burden on your mind. That is all you will ever have to give up, even when you are high on the Ladder.

You are expressing a very common little voice which, last Monday, we ascribed to what is commonly called the devil (self-produced) so pay no attention to it!

Mark Hersey. One of the great things about Meditation is that it requires no belief at all; but that it requires a right attitude, and if you keep on meditating, you get that attitude.

Dr. R. Yes, you are right; we keep out all belief or self-hypnosis; and we try to give the meditation without any 'suggestion', or putting ideas into people as to what might happen. So, as you say, the right attitude is just to keep on meditating as well as you can without constructing theories or beliefs about it.

In Meditation you are 'giving up' (on the subtle level during half an hour) all those things which are preventing you feeling the presence of God; you are just shedding them.

Q. (who went on for some time) You said some time ago that we should seek help if we feel we are not getting all the things we think we should from the Meditation. I find that while meditating I very often have a mental fall, but I manage to return to the Mantra.

A. That is as far as I got.

Dr. R. May I stop you there, Mr. Hussein. It is this; that you are a 'thinky' sort of person; and you are going on thinking with your dominant hemisphere the whole time, whether you are sitting up in front or sitting right at the back. It is this habit which gives you that 'fall' during meditation.

If you could divest yourself of this 'thinkery', you would not need this from other people. The other hemisphere would take you through to the silence and the Realization.

(Then, after a very long dissertation from the Questioner)

Dr. R. May I ask you to put that question into *one sentence* for me? Just put all that into one sentence, *now*.

Q. said that he would like time to consider it.

Dr. R. That just means you want to go on thinking! It won't help.

After a short pause, Dr. R. continued:

What we want is to recapture that lovely energy of Sattva, which is destroyed by thinking, so we can Meditate together. As it is now nearly eight o'clock, we should get on with that quickly. This quotation could bring it:

We had the main point of this Third Step at one meeting some time ago – in 1967 – and it started with this question of mine:

A. reads:

R. Could it be said that a man's Buddhi (that is the higher part of his Mind) sets the general direction of a man's life – what he goes for? And will it follow that when you say that 'A man's last desire sets the pattern for his next life,' is this due to how his Buddhi is pointing at that time?

The Shankaracharya said:

S. What you say is true, but changes in direction keep occurring; and all through life in changing climates, circumstances, and likes and dislikes, some ideas get built in. He might like several things, but one of them is most dear to him; and at the last moment this dearest thing stays with him and sets a sort of new pattern for his next life.

Q. Is this last desire intentional or accidental?

S. The last desire is the climax of all our strivings and beliefs. If one has undergone a systematic life with Sadhana and has managed to live enough of this life in a Conscious state, then such a man will have a desire of Conscious origin; whereas others just accidentally have any one of these many desires – it doesn't matter which, because they all originate in ignorance.

(Record, 4 November 1967)

Dr. R. You can either trust to luck, and then your last desire before death will be a haphazard one – just any futile thing might come up.

As a doctor I have often sat with people when they were dying and I have known the difference between the ones who only get at that important moment little haphazard things, and the ones who you know are at the supreme height of their longing for God or the Self.

There is a time before death when everything is stripped away from you and where something in you reviews the whole of your life. At such a moment if you have got a permanent aim within – for instance, a longing for the Supreme Being and not of anything petty like oneself, then this will make a vast amount of difference. Of that I am sure.

Mr. Ouspensky, for instance, orientated the whole of the last month of his life toward getting into that kind of state, and I sat with him the whole night as he was dying, and saw him win through.

So now, this is the point, Martin, you can try to think about fairly regularly with a view to valuing – honouring – the impulse to meditate whenever you can; it causes a permanent change in you at the Third Step. Before that, nothing is permanent.

Now, should we meditate?

MEDITATION

(As it was so hot we opened the french windows and there was much noise from the traffic.)

Dr. R. said afterwards:

Outer noises don't matter much, do they? The inner noise is the difficult thing – this eternal 'I' going on.

I remember when three or four of us went out with the Maharishi to Switzerland – to the top of the Simplon pass, and stayed in the hotel up there (the Simplon Kulm isn't it, Eddie?). One morning we went up quite a long way to just below a glacier and we were sitting on the alp meditating when it became apparent that somebody was driving a herd of cows through us. But we stuck to it and afterwards we said 'Was there something, Maharishi? Did something, happen?

And all he said was: 'How should we know? We didn't open our eyes!'

Peter Eadie. Is the Third Step connected with attention?

Dr. R. Everything is connected with attention, Peter. In the course of that Third Step you are training yourself to be able to switch on one-pointed attention whenever necessary.

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Dr. R. then went on:

There is still something I know you would like to hear, though time is getting on; it is quarter-past eight, but this is not very long.

(To Allan): There was rather an historic meeting that same year with the Shankaracharya when you and I and Whiting (the head of the recently-founded School of Meditation in London) met all together with the Shankaracharya. It was the first time all three of us were together there.

At that meeting Whiting led off with this question:

W. When one starts to Meditate, one starts with a sound, but gradually there is less and less sound to the Mantra rhythm. It has however a substance. One can turn to that substance, go into the substance, become the substance. Would you comment on this?

Dr. R. The Shankaracharya (referring to the threefold word Sat-Chit-Ananda – Absolute, Consciousness, Bliss – which contains the goal of life and of Meditation in a nutshell) said:

S. We have known the word Sat to mean: That which Is. Whatever Is has existence, and that existence is the ‘substance’ you refer to. But this substance is of two types: one is the immobile motionless-existence; and the other is the mobile existence-motion. The immobile and mobile forms of existence are known as Purusha and Prakriti – that is, the Absolute and the Creation. If one experiences any sort of movement in Meditation – any sort of sensation, any sort of intake or output, one is still in the world of Nature or Prakriti.

Meditation is a process designed to take one from movement to non-movement – stability. As long as there is any appreciation of sensation – sight, sound, smell, muscle sense etc., then one is still separated from the immobile Purusha – the Absolute. But that substance is always present and in Meditation each of us can become One with that substance.

(Record, 2 November 1967)

Dr. R. to Q. And that really answers your question – ‘Could one say what this form of Meditation is for?’

Dr. R. contd: Just my own comment on that: This idea of ‘existence without motion’ is strange to us in the West. There are two sides of man’s nature: Knowledge and Being – what he *knows* and what he *is*.

All the branches of science seek knowledge; to this end they study Nature in motion. Newton formulated the Laws of Motion; he also had the idea of ‘eternal fluxion’ which gave rise to the calculus.

Meditation is not for Knowledge; it is for Being. It restores the balance between what one knows and what one is, so that one then experiences those flashes of Understanding which we enjoy so much and which lead to advancement of mankind in many spheres.

The Japanese Zen teachers use a word for ‘existence without motion’ which can only be translated as the *‘isness’* of anything. Prof. Abraham Maslow tried to introduce this idea into Western psychology without much success; he sent us a reprint of that paper.

But each of us has his or her external existence – ‘isness’. Each of us *is* the Absolute – the Purusha – in this sense.

So do remember that if ever there is any motion – movement – in the mind or the body during Meditation, then one is still not really Meditating.

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Dr. R. concluded:

Well, have a very happy holiday, and we will meet again, for those who are still around here, in a month’s time; the second Tuesday will be 10th August.
