

10 August 1976

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Lord Allan began with the announcements, which chiefly concerned turners, and said that there would be another general Meditation on Tuesday, 14th September.

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Dr. R. Well, I would like anybody who has a question to ask it here and now for, since this is holiday time, our meeting to-day is rather smaller than usual. I am sure there is a lot that people want to know, so ask anything about the Meditation, of course; we are concentrating on that. And in order to set the ball rolling we can read you something about the Meditation which you may have forgotten.

I find that on looking back at past records of conversations with the Shankaracharya that there is so much there that we have forgotten and really don't use. I would like more people to be interested in searching out these twelve volumes of largely buried treasure. Here is a sample:

Mr. Whiting. How would the Mantra be appreciated? Would it be sound or substance?

S. The whole universe is divided in two – I and the rest! This is the world of division and we live in this world of duality.

The method of meditation is to lead us from duality to Unity. This method is not the end. It is like a rope through which we can go into the well or come out. Once the necessary job is accomplished it is left behind.

The Mantra is not Unity, it only leads to Unity where the world of division has no validity. This Unity is the Absolute, known as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. Once we reach there, a miraculous alchemy takes place, and the Being is charged with energy – just as one gets a motor battery charged for further use.

If in Meditation, after sounding the Mantra, we start looking for anything, maybe a sound or substance, we in fact undo the Meditation.

When we talk of appreciation, we presuppose the duality. In deep Meditation we don't even *appreciate* the peace, Truth, Bliss or Consciousness; we in fact *become* peaceful, Truthful, Blissful and Conscious of the Self.

One must give up all such ideas as 'appreciating' anything about the Mantra. This is exactly opposite to what Meditation stands for. Start the Mantra and do nothing and follow the Mantra. The Mantra will naturally settle down into that Unity where there is no activity and no division.

Dr. R. And he goes on to say that one should not build up tension by sitting too rigidly. One should sit naturally because otherwise one does not sink into this Unity – one doesn't let it take over.

Now all our problems in connection with the Meditation come from not *giving up* during a half-hour. If we only give up a little we only receive a little. But aren't there questions about giving up all this appreciation of the Mantra as a sound, appreciation of progress or the opposite, or any kind of knowing or thinking going on. How do you manage to do this in the course of a busy life? Is there anything that could help?

Mrs. Koren. Regarding the sound of it and keeping it through a busy life. Sometimes I can sound it and it lasts; then the busyness comes in and crowds it all out; then I sound it again but really cannot follow through. I would like to know about this question of giving up?

Dr. R. We're not supposed to keep the sound through our busy life, one should give up everything except the sound during the half-hour. There is no stock answer to all this; the more people speak about their own experience, the more help they will be to others.

Myself, I have to sound the Mantra until it becomes a kind of rhythm – until, like a tune, it begins to go by itself; not just to pronounce it singly, but to sound it fairly fast so that it flows, travels round, and becomes quite automatic.

This is how we always begin with an initiation; but this gets lost every now and then; it becomes difficult to us.

But what do other people feel? When it gradually ceases to be a sound and it becomes a kind of rhythm, a pulse; and then perhaps it becomes just a presence – something indefinable which is there. It may disappear but it is still there.

It is quite an art; it is not easy to define it or lay down the law about it.

Simon Harbord. Would you recommend altering the speed of the rhythm, and alternating fast or slow?

Dr. R. There are two things you can try experiments with; one is how you start it – try experiments on starting it fast or starting it slowly, or letting it start at its own speed. The other thing is the question of how you sit to meditate. Do you sit on the floor with legs crossed? Do you sit on a chair? Whatever posture you are adopting just now, it is important that you sit symmetrically; you don't let your body sag or the head come forward.

So there are two things at the beginning with which you experiment each time it becomes difficult at the beginning of a half-hour. But once the Mantra is going, don't try doing anything to it; don't change the speed deliberately; let it find its own speed – let it come and go and stop 'Doing things to it'. It is only at the beginning before the Mantra is establishing its own rhythm that this kind of experiment is recommended.

Does that answer your question, Simon?

Q. Sometimes it gets a bit disturbed, but it always seems to follow the same pulse or heartbeat.

Dr. R. This you should discourage. There are times when Meditation has become mechanical or at the very start during initiation when it picks up any kind of rhythm that there is around – heartbeat or breathing or trains; any rhythm there is – the rhythm of thoughts most commonly.

Then you certainly have to change the rhythm if it does that; either make it faster or slower so that it gets free from those artificially imposed rhythms, because the Mantra has to find its own rhythm and be free to keep changing as it travels. That is the only time (if it gets tied up with some physical rhythm or mental rhythm) that you change the speed.

Q. (a woman). I find that if the Mantra gets tied up with the breathing, I just go on and persevere till eventually it doesn't get tied up. I forget about the breathing.

Dr. R. That is right, don't focus your attention on the breathing; but focus your attention always on the rhythm of the Mantra. But it does help to quicken it slightly, or slow it slightly; then you forget the breathing quicker.

Q. I get a bit confused about this question of rhythm, because when the Mantra goes on its own and establishes its own rhythm then it works best. But sometimes it is necessary to change the rhythm and alter it.

Dr. R. Why do you find it necessary to change it?

Q. It inevitably becomes lost in some body rhythm.

Dr. R. Oh, I see – Yes. So what was the question?

Q. Well, it was to have advice about this, because I can get drawn out of the depths of Meditation by making this change.

Dr. R. I don't think there is really a difficulty here; but thinking about it, it becomes a problem.

If you are in the depths of Meditation, you can't be getting tied up with other physical rhythms. If you are really in Meditation (deep), there is nothing to be drawn out of. Then you are quiet, peaceful, and that is the great aim – to reach a place which is completely silent and where nothing is going on at all – where there is no notice of the breathing; no notice of the heartbeat; no notice of thoughts or anything. It is just being delightfully peaceful and relaxed – more like that.

If you have in view the aim to come from diversity, noise and mental activity to peace and silence, I don't think there is any problem.

Dr. R. to Mr. Lucas. What do you think, Lucas?

Mr. Lucas. I don't think it is a real problem; if it goes easily, there is nothing to worry about.

Dr. R. Yes. But I want to make sure that we do not establish a kind of 'code' of meditating; everybody is very different. Some people are disturbed by bodily changes – things going on. Other people are not. For instance, being an intellectual, I don't know I have got a body half the time! My trouble is all with turning thoughts. Everybody is very different. The great thing is out of the corner of your eye to see what the trouble is and to go away from it.

(to A.) You are not troubled with thoughts the way I am, are you?

A. No. (laughter) Absolutely right!

Dr. R. Are you troubled with feelings?

A. Well, only with imagination. Plenty of imagination.

Dr. R. So, each person has their own nature and there is no Universal prescription from some Universal doctor!

Lady Allan. I wonder, perhaps, if a bit of the tension isn't going into Meditation thinking that one is going to enjoy the peace for a long time, continually so. I find that in my case it is much more up and down and in and out; and as far as I am concerned, if I get just a drop of real peace that is most rewarding.

Dr. R. Yes, and the Shankaracharya would agree with you that you can't expect more than a few

moments of real peace, and we ought not to expect even that. But we do get moments of peace nearly every half-hour and we should be happy to get them. We shouldn't fight to get more.

Lady Allan. The few moments are very potent.

Dr. R. Yes, very potent indeed.

But it is very good to go on practising giving up – giving up all egotistical points of view. It is not 'my' meditation; it is not 'my' Mantra; it is not me, me, me. You give all that up; you are joining in the Universal operations of the Param-Atman, and joining the army of Meditators there are in the world today.

Mr. Melidis. I would like to know the secret of doing this, because I, myself, cannot do it, and it just seems to happen according to the atmosphere around me.

Dr. R. It is partly that, Melidis, but it is partly what one does during the rest of the day. Is one in a state of perpetual motion? Is one's mind turning, turning about things, or is one more quiet and relaxed? Some weeks one is more quiet and relaxed; at other times one is so busy that it takes one longer to get this moment or two during the half-hour.

It all really stems from the fact that, all through the day apart from the half-hour, we misuse our minds.

This part of our mind (here, behind the forehead) which we know as 'my mind' is *not an organ of thought*; it should be like a screen – like a cinema screen where all the impressions coming through one's senses appear on the screen. One simply selects.

But we all the time use it as an organ of thought; it is meant to be for reflection. We even distort the word 'reflection'. Instead of being like a screen or mirror, we call reflection *thinking about* something – as in the common remark: 'On reflection I have decided so and so.'

But if we can find the right use of our mind, it is possible to go through the day – busy or not busy – with this part of the mind quite clear and simply seeing what lies before one.

The Meditation is our way in for that. Once one has started meditating and one has got some energy, one should then just try to reflect during the day what is around. If one does that, then difficulties during the half-hour fade out – they disappear.

If one is leading a very busy life, there is always a minute or two between one job and the next when one can do that. Practise pulling the attention away from turning thoughts, perpetual commentary, any unnecessary mental activity – and just reflect.

Mr. Torikien. It is really what happens between the two half-hours that counts and the quality of our Meditation shows in what happens between those half-hours.

Dr. R. Yes, exactly, I could not agree more, because if your Meditation is difficult one day it is because of what has been going on all the time in between the morning and the evening session – particularly any sort of negative thinking about anybody or anything. This negative thinking is one of the chief barriers between oneself and the Divine Atman. One should simply see what goes on in the Drama – see, but not get involved, neither approving nor disapproving,

Mr. Torikien. Is it a question of attitude?

Dr. R. Yes, cultivating an attitude of being an impartial observer of life.

Mark Hersey. Could you explain why it is necessary to control the Mantra at all? Surely one should just try and establish it and then come back to it? That is really all one need do?

Dr. R. That is really what I am trying to say – don't try and control it. Since people were saying that it got tied up with breathing or something, it is recommended that you set the rhythm free to evolve of itself.

Mark Hersey. Even if it were to get tied up with breathing, for instance, surely one doesn't stop to notice, and then it would not automatically get tied up?

Dr. R. Well, that is very helpful. What people do is to switch their attention from the Mantra to the breathing, or to the thoughts, or to something that is not the Mantra, so the less said and thought about it the better. I quite agree.

Q. Referring back to talks which you have given before about the active and passive hemispheres; you have said that the Meditation began in the active hemisphere and then passed into the passive hemisphere, and that is where Meditation took place. Could you just say a bit more about this?

Dr. R. Knowledge of this duality of our nature is being increasingly repaying. But at a Meditation meeting, I have come to think that talking about the two hemispheres only leads to division in oneself, and it is far better to be *one person* meditating, and not to analyse as to which hemisphere is doing what. It sometimes starts on one side in the speech centres; it varies; but the great thing to realise is that the Meditation is to promote Unity.

For some people it has been a great help to realise that they are never really meditating because there is always this wordy activity going on. Then, once they have seen that, then they can get away from all that, and discover that the quiet part does the rest for one.

But we'd better stop analysing; if there are conversations (words) going on then it is not Meditation. We have a duality of nature, but the whole idea of the Meditation is for Unity as in that quotation we just read.

Q. Does it help to bring these two together to have some kind of dedication to the time or act of Meditation?

Dr. R. It varies with different people. For instance, it helps some people to dedicate this half-hour to the Divine Self. Sometimes it helps to dedicate a certain time in the day; eventually everything should be dedicated to the Atman. But till then, each half-hour should be taken quite fresh as if there had been none before and maybe none after – quite fresh as a way of coming to oneSelf and the peace and the quiet and the happiness of it. Anybody is at liberty to find their own way to do this. It will work one way one week and a different way the next week.

Mrs. Gould. There seems in the beginning of Meditation a feeling of giving up, of casting off and relaxing one's muscles and the things around one; and then one is just left with the Meditation?

Dr. R. Yes; it is rather the way Allan and I were talking just before we came up here; that there are times when one, as it were, gets taken up in a lovely Energy which makes everything easier; and you are not aware of giving up anything or of doing anything. You are just caught up; and as much as you relinquish what your mind is ordinarily occupied with, the more easily and quickly you will be caught up by this wonderful Energy which is there all the time.

A. Do you think perhaps that the real subtlety of Mrs. Gould's question is whether one is left with the Meditation only, because her question shows that she is there as well.

Dr. R. Exactly; it is you, Mrs. Gould, as being separate from the Meditation. The meditator, the rhythm of the Mantra, and the Object of Meditation – the Divine Self – must all become One.

Even this prayer that the Provost of King's College, Cambridge mentioned in a broadcast the other day contains the duality. I don't know if you heard it? It was given at the evening service last Wednesday in which he referred to the 'familiar presence of the Self' (he used those words). And his personal prayer was:

Let me know what Thou woud'st have me know;
let me be what Thou would'st have me be; and
let me do what Thou would'st have me do.

And this is quite useful for getting free of the ego; but it still contains the duality. One has to realize that one *is* the Divine Self; it is not 'myself and the headmaster' or some duality like that. One has to realize one's riches; one has to realize the power that one really has but seldom discovers. So even in that prayer which you can use with profit for a time, there is duality; and that duality should not appear during a half-hour.

Mrs. Cardew. Sometimes people seem to think that in that Unity they disappear and they are afraid of this idea of disappearing. But there is no need for that fear, is there?

Dr. R. I'm glad you have mentioned this fear. No, one does not disappear. Ordinarily one does not exist; one is simply a bundle of thoughts and feelings, of flesh and bones.

In Meditation, when you find yourSelf, you begin to exist; in Meditation 'we begin to Be what we are'. There could be no fear however much you 'become what you are' that you will disappear. That doubt comes from our mental machinery that doesn't like the idea of itself being displaced – this ego. It puts in thoughts like that.

But actually, many people have had the experience that when they transcend, losing all feeling of 'I', they suddenly begin to feel 'I exist'. It is a lovely feeling, a part of the happiness that Meditation brings.

Supposing we try that now, and then I would like to read you another bit from the Shankaracharya.

MEDITATION

(Since it was very hot we opened the french windows, and so had to put up with the noise of the traffic)

Afterwards:

Dr. R. I suddenly realised at the end of this ten minutes that I had a complete cessation of the usual inner noise, which is so much more difficult to get away from than the outer noise.

Meditation, of course, is for waking up; but we misunderstand the idea of waking up. Physical sleep is one thing, and spiritual awakening is another thing, and this passage we will now read brings out the difference. I think people try and keep very alert sometimes during Meditation; spiritual awakening is not like that. I had asked H.H. the question: 'What does it feel like to wake up?'

A. reads:

S. There are two different types of world. One is the physical world, and according to the laws of this world we go to sleep in Tamas, dream in Rajas and wake up in Sattva to do our daily work.

Being awake physically, means only our bodies are awake and are being governed by the laws of the physical world. Then we have another world which we may call the Spiritual world. Here again we have three states of our being.

To be only physically awake means sleep in the Spiritual world. This is the state in which most of humanity live. The dream state of the Spiritual world is more like the subjective world of individuals where knowledge plays its part, but it is not the True Knowledge. It is also the state of creativity for artists and for discovery. The awakened state means being alive to the Eternal Laws which encompass the human race in Eternity. This is the real wakeful state. There is a shloka in the *Bhagavad Gita* which says:

That which is the night of all beings, for the disciplined man is the time of waking. When other beings are waking, then it is night for the sage who sees.

Those who are really awake, they see both the worlds in proper perspective. For such men, all the activities of the world for possession and pride are futile, for physical laws have no influence on such people.

There are other aspects also. Just as when on the physical plane one sees the non-reality of the dreaming state, so does one see the non-reality of the physical world when one is really awake.

Thirdly, a man on the physical plane never forgets even in his dreams that he is a man and not a beast; so the really awakened man, having known the Atman, he never forgets, even in the physical plane, that he is the Atman and nothing less than that.

(Record, 31 October 1967)

Dr. R. You will see from this that this System of Meditation is designed to bring Consciousness to a big part of one's nature which only operates ordinarily in physical sleep; so we know nothing about it at all. We only know that we have been asleep and are still the same person when we wake up.

We derive little profit ordinarily from this essential part of our being – the Causal world, but Meditation brings the Light of Consciousness into it.

I feel that a lot of people are muddled about Meditation being a means of waking up. When you are 'being awake' in the daytime in the physical world, you are that much more alert and that much more capable of attention and success generally. That is all right. But actually, in the half-hour, you leave the physical world altogether and you let the rhythm of the Mantra take you to another part of you altogether – a strange, undiscovered country.

I think it does help to have big conceptions now and then – find things to read and what

His Holiness calls good company for the mind – good food for the mind. Sometimes the Meditation runs down for a week or two because everything has been very banal and the mind is tired of being fed on parched grass.

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Now it is after quarter past eight; so if there is a last question it could be admitted; but it doesn't matter if there isn't one.

Q. (a woman). How long does it take to be able to pay attention? Or how long do we expect to be able to pay attention?

Dr. R. It depends entirely on the energy at one's disposal – what kind of energy. With Sattva, you can attend and take in and retain indefinitely. With Rajas you may be able to attend sharply for a few moments and then it all fades; and in Tamas you cannot attend at all. So if you cultivate the right kind of energy in all the different ways we have of storing and of releasing it, then you can attend whenever you want to and you retain everything in your memory as long as you want to. So it is a question of energy.

When the mind is fresh it will do whatever you ask of it, and a lot more besides! But when it is tired and jaded and short of energy then all these problems arise and it is difficult to keep attention. Is that all right by you? (Yes.)

Well, have a happy holiday. For some people a holiday is a good time for getting peaceful and quiet; it is not such a good time for the mother of a family! But do what you can in this coming month.

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