

12 October 1976

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

After the preliminary announcements, Dr. Roles began as follows:

(to Professor Martin): Do you think you could come and sit up near me? I never seem to see you. Come just up here, because we are going to try and get at something rather fundamental that we are missing out on, and I hope it gets back to the campus and New York city.

I don't think that any of us realise that this simple system of Meditation takes you through three quite different worlds – utterly different; takes us away from the *common world* which we all share – the world of physical appearances – into another world which is wholly and absolutely different – the *subtle world*. There is nothing of that world which exists in the world studied by Physics. There is a full account of the difference between those worlds in the paper which has been given out to meeting-takers this evening. The Meditation is meant to take us through both those worlds into a world more different still – so different that, during the meditation, you don't recognise it, you know nothing. You have left behind all of the familiar world, you travel through unfamiliar country, and you arrive in *no-man's land*, God's land, in fact!

Now this is very important, because we all of us have formed ideas from the common view of the world about what we ought to be getting in Meditation. That is our chief handicap. At that time – during a half-hour – one should put aside all ideas of what we want, or what we ought to be getting, or what we aren't getting, or anything like that which is simply a barrier.

Now I will start with two questions which I was grateful to have handed in. They are questions which any of us may ask from time to time, but I am reading them because of a sentence in the writer's letter which is much more revealing – an 'off-the-record' one. The questions were:

One feels the meditation should be motivated by love.

Dr. R. Certainly.

But in practice one's best meditation seems to come after a strong personal desire – say, to escape from one's own mechanicalness, or to achieve a good state for a particular purpose, etc.

Dr. R. And that is fine as a trigger at the beginning to get one going with some sort of intensity of love or emotion; but, as the questioner says, this seems to prevent one going deeper.

Certainly, start that way with a strong personal desire, but drop it after the first five minutes at the most. Come fully on to the Mantra and bring your attention back to it, back and back, and let it do whatever it likes without interference because, from the common life point of view, we have absolutely no idea of what it ought to be doing or what it could do. Just try to feel love toward the Self whose name you are pronouncing.

Any questions on that? This is the beginning; I hope it has come as a great shock to all

of us! – That we are putting ourselves in a prison as regards meditation by having foregone conclusions about it – what a good meditation is and what it is not.

I hope our checkers realise that they cannot lay down the law for anybody else.

Any questions? – Even militant questions!

Michael MacOwan. (not repeated because rather lengthy): There was something I realised... when you first meditated, I said to myself: It is so wonderful to have something which one doesn't have to understand.

Dr. R. Yes that's true and helpful, Michael, and you know all about it; but this meeting is chiefly for questions from new people. You and I were talking about it only yesterday. And we don't want the old hands to mould new people's meditation. It should be lovely and fresh – uncontaminated.

Dr. R. continued: (Then the second written question)

Sometimes the Mantra disappears very quickly and one is left in a peaceful state which somehow gets disturbed by starting the Mantra up again, and the effort to do this feels very heavy.

Dr. R. Yes, I accept that; sometimes it is like that – the rhythm does disappear but, if it disappears *leaving you in a peaceful state* that's fine. Let it go, and only restart it when the peace is disturbed and the longing for the peace comes back to you.

Really, it is an illusion that it has stopped, because if there is peace, then the Mantra is going on underneath, only seeming to disappear because it has gone below the threshold of your consciousness.

Now, this excellent meditator who has meditated for quite a long time, puts this revealing sentence in the covering letter of those questions:

I would very much like to help in this field of checking and helping with the Meditation; but I must tell you that I am not at all a good meditator, never having gone very deep.

Dr. R. contd:

Now we know the writer of this letter very well and that she always undervalues herself. Here she is forming a judgment that she is not a good meditator and she uses this expression which has got into the vocabulary about 'going very deep'. 'Deep' means going from noisiness to silence; it does not mean going down two flights of stairs into the coal-cellar. Some people still think it means that; or that it is like the hold of a ship, and you batten down the hatches, and there you are in a dark hole. That isn't deepness.

Sometimes 'going deep' means to rise to a lovely state of joy and happiness, so this expression merely means going from outside to inside, and going from noise to stillness.

Is that all right?

Well, I hope that meditator puts this little notice up on her dressing table: 'I am, after all, just as good a meditator as anybody else.'

Dr. R. then asked: Are there any questions on that?

(quite a long pause)

Next, Lady Allan (who was on the platform with Dr. Roles) said:

In relation to starting the Mantra again when your peace is disturbed, I remember my husband using some example of the Shankaracharya's, which he interpreted by saying, that it was like a fish maintaining its place in a stream; that it appeared to lie very still, but if it needed movement it didn't necessarily move a lot, it just gave one swish and settled down again.

Dr. R. Yes, it is rather like that; one is a fish, as it were, keeping its place in a stream. But the great thing is to start by dropping all the ordinary world – all the conversations that go on in one's head; all the incoming tugs and urges which are sometimes mistranslated as 'desires'; we don't really feel them as desires, but mostly as urges or duties to be performed. We come away from all that, and visual pictures, sensory world – all that is in the common world – world 1.

Then you come into a dream world – world 2, and that dream world goes on all the time – night and day. But during meditation, you come through all that into a 'nothingness', and without knowing it you sometimes pass through Samadhi, which is the end point of meditation in Yoga. You don't know about it until you come out; then you think: 'How marvellous, I was like that. It is gone now, but I *was* like that!'

It is more like that kind of thing, because the benefits in one's life are very real even though you may not feel them in the half-hour.

Dr. R. to M.A. Is that roughly how you took what was said at our last audience?

M.A. Yes, I remember whenever my husband talked about expansion in the half-hour, or certain great thoughts or ideas, the Shankaracharya said:

That shows you have not gone the whole way, which is the stillness in which you know nothing.

Dr. R. So when people check others it is recommended that we start meditating with them; then the checker opens his eyes after a little and just sees what is going on. He is not really cheating; it is observation just to see if the meditation is going well.

Mr. Torikien. Two states can happen in meditation: one is, if you fall asleep and wake up, you know that you have been asleep. But another state is where you have not been conscious, or you appear to have been somewhere that you don't know the experience of; but you know when you 'come to' again, that it was quite different from ordinary sleep.

Dr. R. Falling physically asleep, of course, is not meditating. But what is difficult is to distinguish this state of nothingness that we have been talking about and which the Shankaracharya keeps referring to, from physical sleep; and the difference lies in the fact that you somehow retain an alertness. Even though you don't know anything, you are alert; and when you come to, you are clear and fresh and full of energy, or at any rate in the clear. Whereas if you have been to sleep physically, then you are muzzy; you find your mind is rather tired because it has gone off into some dream or another, and it has been just as active in its own way, Torikien, as your daytime state. So your mind has not been rested when it has been dreaming in a state of physical sleep.

Mr. Torikien. I gave these two examples, but there is a difference; you appear in both cases to wake up, but in one you know you have woken up from merely physical sleep; and in the other you know you wake up fresh from what is not sleep, but mental rest.

Dr. R. then said:

But if you set your sights on something very big before you meditate, dedicating this half-hour to your Divine Self, you won't be worried by little difficulties. In choosing descriptions of the Causal level, the great thing is to listen to the words of somebody who has been *the whole way more than once, and who can express himself very well*. Here is a man writing in Rome sixteen centuries ago – a very famous man, Plotinus, who wrote the *Enneads*; and near the beginning of that vast work he wrote in 205 AD.

Let us depart from hence, and fly to our father's delightful land. But by what leading stars shall we direct our flight, and by what means avoid the magic power of Circe, and the detaining charms of Calypso? For thus the fable of Ulysses obscurely signifies, which feigns him abiding in unwilling exile, though pleasant spectacles were continually presented to his sight; and everything was promised to invite his stay which can delight the senses, and captivate the heart. But our true country, like that of Ulysses, is from whence we came; and where our father lives. But where is the ship to be found, by which we can accomplish our flight? For our feet are unequal to the task, since they only take us from one part of the earth to another. May we not each of us say?

What ships have I, what sailors to convey,
What oars to cut the long laborious way?

But it is in vain that we prepare horses to draw, or ships to transport us to our native land. On the contrary, neglecting all these, as unequal to the task, and excluding them entirely from our view, having now closed the corporeal eye, we must stir up, and assume a purer eye within, which all men possess, but which is alone used by a few. What is it then this inward eye beholds? Indeed, suddenly raised to intellectual vision, it cannot perceive an object exceeding bright. The same must therefore be first accustomed to contemplate fair studies, and then beautiful works; not such as arise from the operations of art, but such as are the offspring of worthy men: and next to this it is necessary to view the soul which is the parent of this lovely race. But you will ask, after what manner is this beauty of a worthy soul to be perceived? It is thus. Recall your thoughts inward, and if, while contemplating yourself, you do not perceive yourself beautiful, imitate the sculptor; who, when he desires a beautiful statue, cuts away what is superfluous, smoothes and polishes what is rough, and never desists until he has given it all the beauty his art is able to effect. In this manner must you proceed, by lopping what is luxuriant, directing what is oblique, and, by purgation, illustrating what is obscure; and thus continue to polish and beautify your statue, until the divine splendour of Virtue shines upon you, and Wisdom, seated in pure and holy majesty, rises to your view.

(from *An Essay on the Beautiful*)

Dr. R. concluded:

I would like to meditate now with the idea of returning there from whence we have come – returning to the Fatherland where the Father is.

MEDITATION

Afterwards:

I hope you didn't find it difficult to distinguish these moments of complete peace we get as being quite different from physical sleep?

I would like you now to hear the rather precise instructions which the Shankaracharya gave to the head of the School of Meditation in London. Some of us have heard this, but not very lately, and others haven't heard it at all.

M.A. reads:

Mr. Whiting. His Holiness has spoken of meditation itself as Yoga; practise of Meditation as Dharana and the repetition of the Mantra as Japa. Could he say more about it?

S. This is a journey of the individual Consciousness, Vyashti into the Universal Consciousness, Samashti, the Absolute.

One starts the Mantra and repeats the Mantra and initiates this at the level of the individual – the Vyashti. Then this repetition of the Mantra is leading on to the bare thread of meditation which is Dharana.

This movement is aimed at only one thing, and that is to cut out or diminish the activity – the Rajas involved in life. Although it is known as the '*practice* of meditation', yet this '*practice*' is leading towards the end of all activity. Slowly and gradually this march towards non-activity takes place, and one reaches the realm of union (Yoga) which is stillness or Unity. This is the experience of Self as Universal; here there is no duality, and there remains no *place* to move on to; and there is no *time* to change to, for He is the place, the time, and also the substance. In that profound silence, stillness, or Yoga, all movements stop and there is only 'One without a second,' and that is Atman Himself, the Observer.

Dr. R. And as He alone can know Himself, the individual knows nothing otherwise.

S. contd. This does not mean that all relationships and agitations would have disappeared from our inner universe; for it only indicates that there is no initiation of any agitation from the Self.

We know that there are different states of consciousness but this particular state which we are considering does not come under any of those.

This particular state which we are considering is unique and does not come under any one of the five states of consciousness. When one comes away from that state, then one feels joyful, just as when one goes to see some great man and returns with indescribable joy and enthusiasm, feeling that everything seems good, beautiful and pleasant. That state of Yoga is devoid of all agitation, desire, need, ignorance and is profoundly still without any hankering, fully satisfied and complete in all respects.

Dr. R. This next part helps greatly because it is easily held by the mind.

S. The Japa (repetition of God's name) is of many types; it can be loud, mild, or even silent; it can be fast or slow as it is repetitive and involves time and rhythm. One takes a Mantra and repeats it over and over again or allows it to be repeated. The state of Yoga, although it means Unity of the Self with the Universal, only needs dropping off all unrest or activity. Activity is the product of desire and ambition, so Yoga means dropping off all desires. These desires are obstacles in the way of the ever-present Unity of the Self and the Absolute.

The practice of meditation by itself is not an isolated act; it is a journey from the start of the Mantra to the end of all agitation. This is the bridge over which one needs to throw one's belongings, desires, intentions and activities, while walking towards the other end. At one end of the bridge is the start of this practice, and at the other is the stillness, the immobility. The practice of meditation between these two points is to pick up the Mantra, start the repetition and with its help allow everything – even the Mantra – to disappear. Japa itself (the act of repetition) has no meaning, although a Mantra repeated and sounded would naturally create its Sattvic effect, yet just this is not enough.

(Record, 9 November 1973)

Dr. R. He is saying that repeating a Mantra by itself has no driving force; it may benefit the mind by resting it from agitated thoughts but the rest of what he said about the throwing of the luggage overboard as one goes from activity to non-activity; and the feeling of the merging with the Universal Self, *that* provides the potent motive force.

Now is there anything anybody wants to know? He says that we must use our full endowment, for the human mind, when rested and working as it should work is the most marvellous combination of different powers and functions. It has far greater capacities than one can possibly imagine. When it is working rightly it will come up with *anything you want when you want it*; and only if we use our endowment reasonably fully do we deserve this rest in two half-hours a day. The cycle of rest and useful work is essential in Self-realization. Even if one did more than half-an-hour, it wouldn't do any good; normal activity is just as necessary.

Any questions?

Q. I am confused between the two different things; one of actively repeating the Mantra, and one of passively listening to it. I was told originally that I must start by actively repeating it like spinning the top, but that I was not meditating properly until I had given up spinning it and was passively listening to it.

Dr. R. A very reasonable question. There is no universal law about this. At the beginning we usually find that people have to repeat it 'like spinning a top' until it sticks. But there is no rule that this would have to continue! Sometimes it will start on its own at a different speed. It will vary all the time; and you are quite right; the main thing we have to get away from is the idea: 'I am doing this; I have to keep spinning this top; I am meditating.' Get rid of *that*, and let the Mantra take you where it wants to in the way it wants.

All right? (Q. nods)

Q. You mentioned 'using your endowment'. If you do not use your full endowment during the day, or waste your endowment during your day between the meditation, does this mean that your meditation will also not go well?

Dr. R. The best (in general I mean week in, week out) is that you should have a normal degree of activity and pay full attention to what you are doing when you are doing it; then during two half-hours pay full attention only to meditating.

But, remember that none of us get anywhere near 'using one's whole endowment'. H.H. has said that even the great incarnations of God (Krishna, Christ) who have changed the

history of mankind on rare occasions, have never used the *full* endowment of the human mind which exists as a seedbed in every normal human being. We just have to do a little good work; we can rest on Sundays and even do a forty-hour week! So leading a useful and productive life, helps rather than hinders the half-hours.

Mr. Hussein. I find from time to time that the Mantra is in time with my breathing. Is this to be avoided, and if so, why and how?

Dr. R. I think you should see me as you have been trying to. See me about this point. It is not desirable; it is a bad habit; it will get in your way. It is not desirable because the breathing looks after itself being chemically geared to the needs of the whole body; and the Mantra has to establish its own rhythm, speed, loudness, everything without having anything imposed on it. It must be free; free to go here and there and find the way for you to this stillness.

Mr. Hussein. The problem is to choose the rhythm of the breathing.

Dr. R. There isn't any problem Hussein; come and see me and we will meditate together. There is no problem at all, but if one talks about it, it becomes a huge problem, so I will say 'Yes' next time you ask for an appointment! (laughter)

They are good, these practical questions; please ask more.

Remember to question and test what anybody else says, unless he has been the whole way and back several times and you are quite certain about it.

Q. Can you tell me the significance of why one is told to meditate in a light room rather than a dark, lightened room – a room with the light on (rather than a dark room)?

Dr. R. Who told you that? I never heard that before!

Q. (same) Is that not so?

Dr. R. I was never told that. Sometimes the Maharishi drew all the blinds down; sometimes he just dimmed the light. There was no recommendation either from him or the Shankaracharya about turning the light *on*.

That is true, isn't it, Lucas? You never heard that we had to have brighter illumination externally?

Mr. Lucas. He seemed to like to have the blinds drawn.

Dr. R. Mostly, yes; but I have sat with him up in the glaring sun below a glacier – in blazing sunshine. We didn't have any blinds to draw then! People should experiment and find what suits them. In poor homes in India there's no artificial light, so people tend to meditate at dawn and dusk.

M.A. I suppose a dark room for some people is a bit conducive to sleep. That might be the only reason!

Dr. R. Or it might be a reason *against* drawing the blinds?

Q. Is it absolutely necessary to have one's eye shut?

Dr. R. Yes. It really is; even half-shutting them and looking through your eyelids at the view (laughter) isn't considered good!

Q. (another) Why is it necessary to have your eyes shut?

Dr. R. We talked about coming out of the ordinary world into a totally new and different world, and this ordinary sensory world is dominated by incoming impressions very much through the eyes (but also through all the other senses); and our flickering vision keeps us fixed within a very narrow range of consciousness. For this physical, sensory, world is very small compared with the enormous subtle world. So we shut our eyes and do our best to cut out bodily sensations; we choose a quiet place; put our body in a reasonably comfortable position, symmetrically, so that it doesn't obtrude on our attention, and then forget about it and pass to the subtle world altogether. Noticing any bodily sensations pulls one's attention back to the common world.

Mrs. Comunello. Is it very important to do an actual half-hour? I very often find that after twenty minutes there is so much disturbance that I simply cannot get back to the Mantra. Is it very important to go on after the twenty minutes for the full half-hour?

Dr. R. We often get asked this. I hate using the word 'must', but the whole System of this Meditation is based on the rhythm of two half-hours a day, and a half-hour, we have found, is a very sensible piece of time – just about enough. But we don't want to use the word 'must' or imprison somebody, so I ask you: Why is there such a disturbance after twenty minutes? Why is it? What is it? Where does it come from? – the mind? – the body?

Mrs. Comunello. The mind. I can't get back afterwards.

Dr. R. I think instead of coming from noise to silence, you are going from silence to noise.

(Mrs. Comunello's next comment was drowned in laughter.)

Dr. R. Well, we *must* get to the root of it as soon as we can. Come and meditate with somebody. I suppose the external situation at home where you try to meditate is all right? There is nothing wrong – nobody in the kitchen stamping about?

Mrs. Comunello agreed the external situation was all right.

Dr. R. So it *is* inside you? I would love to know what it is!

M.A. I sometimes find if I have only allowed myself the minimum time and have made up my mind beforehand that I am going to go off like a rocket the moment the half-hour is over because I have imaginary things I must do, then that upsets the last part of a half-hour.

Dr. R. Well, yes. And there is another thing: very often the Shankaracharya has such a lot on his shoulders that he can only do two minutes; but he has acquired the art of getting the whole way in two minutes. So if you have found that some devil gets into you after twenty minutes, why not go through to the peace in five, ten, fifteen minutes? Get there first! Cheat him! Cheat the devil!

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Dr. R. then said:

Well, it is getting on for dinner time.

Shall we do a last two minutes – just enjoying it and not worrying about the devil or anything else!

Further short Meditation.

(Dr. R. to M.A.). As I came out of meditation I suddenly met up with an answer to her question.

(to Mrs. Comunello) It could have to do with your bodily posture. Try radically changing the position – either sitting on the floor, or sitting in a different kind of chair at the end of twenty minutes (or just before) but don't give up. Go on for the half-hour, but in a new posture. Then report progress.

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