

9 November, 1976

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Dr. Roles to Lord Allan: You would like to say something to the people who don't come to meetings, but who came to the Day in the Country.

A. It was just that I think a lot of you did come to 'A Day in the Country' which was organised at Rogate. It is simply to say that the surplus stuff from there is going to be sold here on the 22nd of this month from 7.30 p.m. onwards. So if anyone wants to get a bargain for Christmas, it might be worth coming to!

Dr. R. then said:

Today we'll start by giving you a simple map to help us to get a sense of direction in Meditation, because it answers so many questions we have just been asking. It is not like the space map you have been having at meetings of the three storeyed house. This is a Time map.

(With diagram on screen – see Figure 1)

This is the Causal level (small circle at centre) with the Eternal 'I', for which there is no time – no limitations of time or space; and that, as it were, is the King in the game of chess which is what the whole game is about – a game in which there is 'Everything to play for'.

On the Causal level there is time but it is very long in duration, although the whole of this circle is a 'moment' of three seconds. We breathe (when at rest) twenty times a minute, so each breath cycle lasts three seconds.

On the Subtle level (middle circle), every degree here – there are 30,000 (too many to put on that circle!) – is one of those moments. At any point on the circumference there is a radius to and from the central 'I' and each point is one of those moments 'Now' – one, two, three, is 'Now'. So that there are 30,000 impulses from the Absolute in one moment; and there are 30,000 moments in one day of 24 hours; and there are 30,000 days in one lifetime of three score years and ten.

Let us start with a day of 24 hours to get the general orientation. Days are different for everybody and different for each person. My average day starts at 7 a.m. when I wake up and come into Astronomer Royal's time – clock time. Every 30 degrees here (middle circle) is two hours: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m. etc. Sometime here (between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m.) we go to sleep: 1 a.m., 3 a.m., 5 a.m., and back we are at the beginning again at 7 a.m. And that cycle of a day repeats itself 30,000 times in an average life-time and it's damn dull from my point of view! (laughter)

You hear people complaining about two half-hours a day. Now a half-hour is $7\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, just the breadth of this pencil. My first half-hour is here: sometime between 7 and 8 a.m. and the other is somewhere between 5 and 7 p.m. there. It isn't really much in that day of 24 hours but it makes the whole difference.

You see, in every moment Now there is a line of force to and from the Centre, so at any moment one could seek for the Centre, one could remember the Atman. Well, half an hour is just about the time it takes the ordinary busy person to get a minute or two of that connection with the Centre to set him up for hours afterwards.

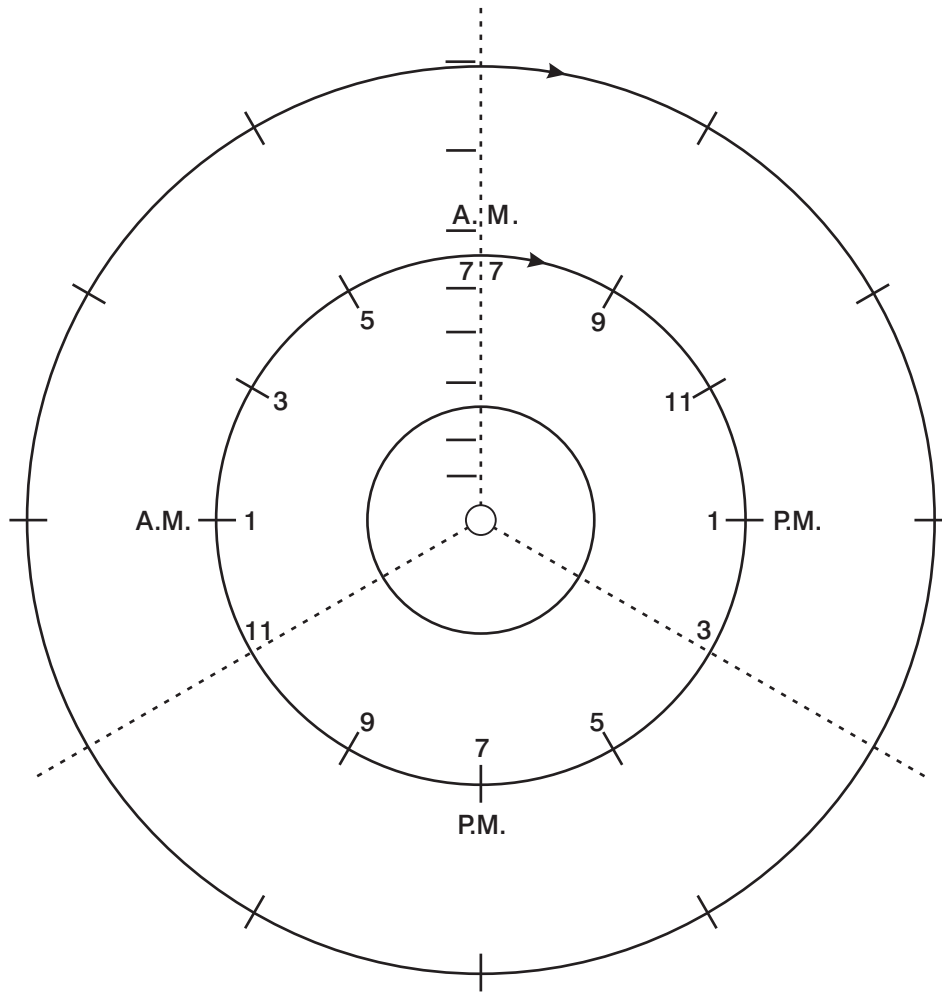


Figure 1

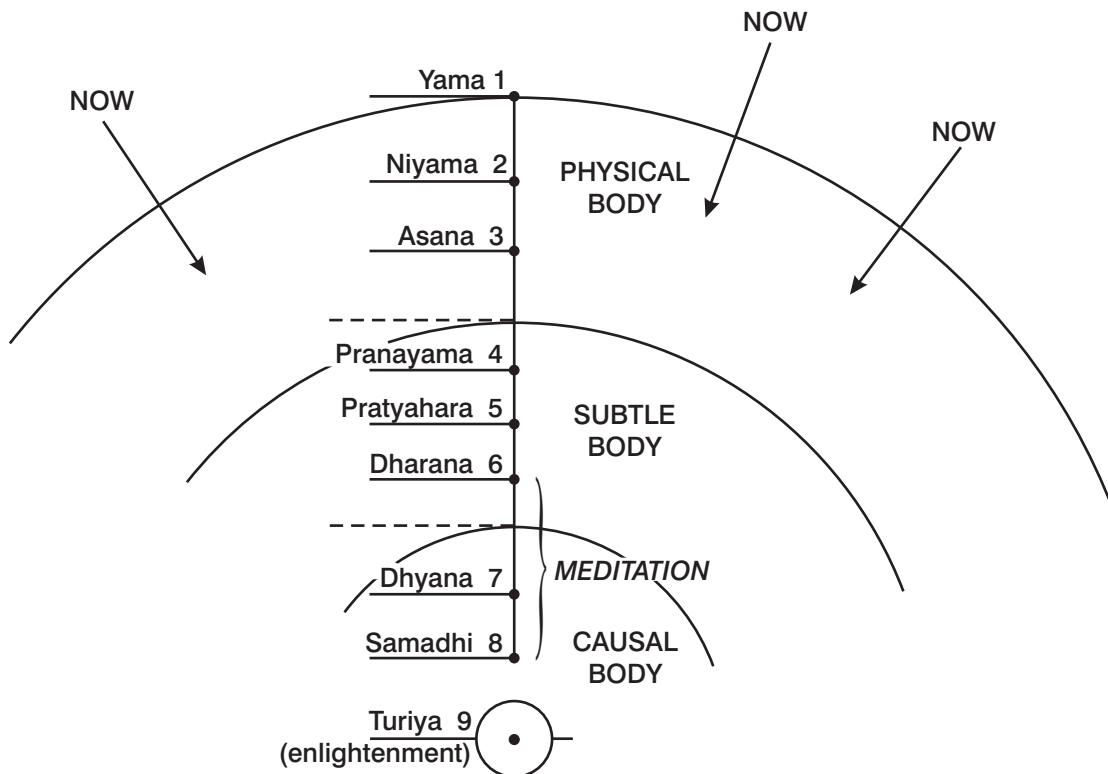


Figure 2. Classical Yoga of 8 Steps

It is rather interesting that our System of Meditation is derived from classical Yoga of Patanjali right back into the dark ages – the Eightfold steps of Yoga (see Figure 2), (which has remained the same since the 4th century BC). The first 3 steps were designed to control the external, physical life of the aspirant on the Path. The third one there is Asana, the posture that he had to adopt. He had to give up everything – all ordinary life – career, everything, be a celibate – and he had to have his life made for him by some ‘big Yogi bear’. So that was the first three steps on the physical level, and we in the Western world today have to dispense with those, since our lives are utterly different from that of the aspirant to Yoga centuries ago.

On the Subtle level (next division), there are also three steps: the 4th step is control of breathing – Pranayama; the 5th step is control of attention – one-pointed attention; and only there is the Yoga aspirant allowed to begin to meditate – only on the sixth step – Dharana – which is sitting with your eyes shut, meditating.

Then there are three steps on the Causal level (circle at the centre). This is a transcendence between the Subtle level where there is still a feeling of personal ‘I’, and still thoughts and feelings – to the Causal level where none of those exists any longer in your field of view. The 7th step is Dhyana, or ‘transcendental meditation’; the 8th is Samadhi; and the final – Enlightenment – Turiya, at the centre.

The point the Shankaracharya makes is that, when you transcend, you know nothing about anything else; you drift, in Dhyana, in and out in complete peace until you have the bliss of Samadhi, knowing nothing at the time. Then with that energy you come out and do your day’s work.

His Holiness also points out that our Meditation System very greatly shortens all that arduous procedure, yet all those eight steps which you see here are based on how we are made. There are real obstacles that have to be got over.

We start here (6th step) to meditate. To get the full distance we have to do something about these preliminary steps on our own. They are not dictated to us the way they were to the Yogis. Each individual has a different life. Each individual has to decide how to bring things under control to some extent in his ordinary everyday life, and in his inner life of thoughts and feelings. Certain things he must not allow himself; certain things he must encourage and find time for. So, if anybody is complaining that they are not getting continual bliss, it may be perhaps that there is something wrong with the meditation in the half-hour, or that their lives are wild and uncontrolled.

Now, what about that?

Does this give you a sense of direction? Whenever thoughts, when you sit to meditate, are taking you on their whirling circle, that is not meditating. The individual has to press on leaving everything behind – the physical body, sensations, thoughts, feelings and intentions, until he gets to the state of not knowing anything else; and there even the Mantra will desert him; he is in complete peace and silence. And when he has given up everything of his own, then he is automatically linked with the Lord of the Universe and enjoys the Universal Consciousness.

The Self on the circumference His Holiness calls the ‘Jiva’ – the ‘I’ who is pursuing this eternal recurrence of days and nights. The Atman is this same Jiva when he is on one of the lines of NOW pointing towards the King, the Param-Atman. There is only One – one King and One ‘I’ who is the same in essence as that King. This is the ‘doctrine of non-dualism’. Not ‘me and the God out there’; it is all One. This is what the individual has to bring himself to realize. The King is already ‘Realized’, but the Jiva has to become convinced of it.

With this picture before us, are there any general questions about Meditation? (As there was no reply, the question was repeated.)

Some people are interested in the idea of Eternal Recurrence, and for them there is a paper which has been duplicated. Those who are coming to groups can ask their group-takers for this paper; they will get this given fuller treatment. The ones who are interested but who do not come to group meetings, would they put their names on a list outside if they want to go into this question. It is about 50/50 – fifty per cent of people like it; fifty per cent of people do not like it, and it is not obligatory. Only it is a help in proving to oneself whether one's meditation is proceeding in the right direction.

The Jiva lives all the time in fear – fear of the future, regrets about the past. The Atman knows no fear at all; He is immortal, and this is the way we are given to distinguish between the two.

Any questions about that?

(Mr. Alan Caiger-Smith was also on the platform and repeated the question)

Mr. Hodge. Can you tell us the difference between looking inwards and stilling our mind?

Dr. R. You are asked not to still your mind, for it only fights back; it doesn't like it. You cannot force the mind, so you simply look inwards towards this Unity of the Self and the peace and silence. That, in itself, will still your mind because you have to keep coming away from turning thoughts, and keep to the rhythm of the Mantra – Now – instead.

So, Hodge, don't try and still your mind; just try to look towards your Real Self – coming away from all the outer sensory world, all the world of personal psychology. It is a *state* more than a location.

You get it probably in the third and fourth Selam in the Mukabeleh. That is a marvelous way of getting it.

Mr. Hodge. There are so many different things going on in one's head that one tends to get very confused.

Dr. R. Yes; the secret of success in Turning and in Meditation alike is to give your head a rest. So, you simply leave it all behind – let all the mental activity drop off and keep to the rhythm of the Mantra which should take you through until you transcend.

Dr. R. then switched the light off and said:

Well, I said we would finish with the diagram at a quarter to eight and get on to something else. It is now not quite a quarter to, so if anybody wants to ask one more question?

Mr. C. S. (on the platform) Yes, may I?

When we first heard about the Meditation, we were told that anybody could do this; you don't have to turn yourself into a different chap; you begin as you are now. (Dr. R. Yes.) If you want to, you can do it.

Mr. Caiger-Smith continued: I found this picture very interesting and I haven't heard before the description of the 8 steps. The meaning of it seems to me to be that if you once get some help from the Centre – some different Energy – instead of trying to contrive your life to fit

something you are not very sure about, you get some Energy back from meditating, and if you use it intelligently, you get a full life.

Dr. R. Good; that's very clear. In asking for help from your Divine Self, you try to listen and do what it says. Then you don't have to contrive anything; you don't have to change anything deliberately in your ordinary life, except perhaps to read something which gives you Sattva or cultivate the company of people who do the same thing. (Yes) There are few rules and regulations.

It is useful to know this, because there are a lot of ignorant fools who will impose some artificial 'discipline' on the ordinary citizen about what he should eat and what he should drink and how much sleep he should have; how many wives he is allowed; must he be celibate, and so on. People are so very different, and customs and climates differ in different countries, and all this 'discipline' is done with 'formatory centre'; it is all done with the mechanical part of the mind, which knows nothing about the physical or the spiritual *differences* between people.

In their wisdom the Shankaracharyas say that you should go inward and ask the All-Knowing Self what you as an individual should do.

Any other questions?

(after a short pause) All right. That map we showed on the screen is meant to be a bit of a relief, and not just another intellectual puzzle.

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Next, Dr. Roles asked:

Are there any questions about Meditation realising that none of us really knows much about it. There would be no disgrace in asking almost anything!

Somebody described here last time how she got on all right for twenty minutes, but then the thoughts started wildly. Is she here? (No?) I was longing to find out if the advice given had worked.

We decided that it was a question of posture. If you try and sit in a very fixed position, you are bound to get tensions, and the tensions build up, and after about twenty minutes the thoughts start wildly; you get restless and inclined to stop. So, although we sit symmetrically, we try to feel as relaxed and natural as possible.

Do any checkers remember seeing that lady? (no reply).

Any other questions? – practical, now.

Q. In relation to what you said about ignorant fools telling you what is good for you, does it help to keep the ordinary physical body as fit as you can? Is that a help actually to meditate?

Dr. R. Well, I think a lot of people are helped by that; there is a lot of truth in it that, if you keep the physical body healthy, it doesn't bother you too much. Physical fitness is bound to be good unless it becomes a 'cult'.

But, it isn't true about everybody. My American mother used to get up at about noon and start with a cocktail, and goodness knows what happened the rest of the day. Latterly she never walked more than twenty yards if she could help it, and yet she did rather well – enjoyed life and lived to a ripe old age. So, we can't even prescribe physical exercise for *everybody!*

There must be a very individual freedom about this meditation – a way of getting to know yourself and your requirements; but there are three points at which you need help (pointing to one of the radial lines of Now on the screen).

One is at the beginning when you are initiated and for a few weeks after. The other is here (pointing to diagram) about transcending; it is difficult to know whether it is true or not true; so you ask somebody more experienced till you begin to get regular help from the Atman at the centre who knows your needs far better than anyone else.

Then at the end, the final step, to Turiya, one does need help – this time from the Teacher. One has to become like the Guru himself – the fully Realised man.

On the whole, I think we do perhaps too much checking – too much manipulating of people's meditation. Everybody's meditation is different.

On the other hand, it easily goes by default. One does need the company of other meditators – including some more experienced person, and a boost – at least once a month.

Mr. C. S. You say everybody's meditation is different and I think that is probably true when we all start as our own individual selves. But it does follow a path which is not subjective – not different, doesn't it? So, in a way it all starts differently and becomes one road?

Dr. R. Yes, the overall pattern is the same, but results come in a different order. That I've experienced with different people; but you are saying that the experiences have to be in the end the same for all of us. (Yes)

But in a fairly big organisation like this, with many meditators we are bound to find kindred spirits who lead the same kind of life, have the same difficulties, and the same experiences as oneself. Those are the ones to try and find and cultivate.

(to Mr. Michael Fleming): Would there be anything in your view that needs to be said when you were initiating, or with people you see at that point, before we read something from the Shankaracharya?

M.F. Not that I can think of immediately. No epidemic at the present time.

Dr. R. Remember, meditation is bound to have its ups and downs for everyone. One priceless bit of advice that I got in a letter from the Shankaracharya was:

S. At any moment, even if it is the last moment you have to live, you should abandon all worry about the past or future and make a good use of that moment in a dignified manner. Each moment of life, he said, should be lived with radiance, energy and sound ideas. A lot of our troubles – this despondency and feeling of self-insufficiency, come over us. Abandon that at once. They are nothing to do with me, mySelf, the unlimited Atman. It is to do with some of one's faculties that one is misusing – our bad habits, chiefly the mind.

Dr. R. contd: So will you promise to do that by the next meeting?

Mrs. Simpson. Do you think some people need help in relaxing? I know that meditation brings its own relaxation, but some people relax more easily than others.

Dr. R. How would you do that, Mrs. Simpson – have a drink or what? Of course any way we can get ourselves and people in your group (for instance) to relax more would be beneficial, whether they are meditators or not. But if they are would-be meditators, then it is very important.

M. F. One of the things which does happen – it is quite a common thing – is that after a time people's meditation comes to a dry patch. Then, instead of meditating from the heart, they try to meditate with the head and, of course, it goes wrong. Could you say something about this?

Dr. R. It means that one has run out of this special energy of Sattva, this lovely energy which always has a 'waking-up feeling'. But it is rather volatile and evanescent and you can't expect it to last very long at a time.

When one gets caught up in the activity of life one wastes a lot of that precious energy. So the thing is not to fight to get more, but to relax – as Mrs. Simpson said – and save energy until you get enough. At any moment on that circle of the 'Day', you can save a drop of energy if you accomplish nothing else (and 30,000 drops would fill a tank!). And again cultivate reading things with Sattva, and friendship with people who help you to have it; and remember, if you run dry, you will be wet again quite soon! On the physical level even in the fierce drought we had recently, when the Minister said that only if it rained every day until Christmas, would the country recover! But it has been raining quite a bit already and our roof has been leaking! (laughter)

In the same way this spiritual aridity, which has been known ever since the early Christian Fathers called it 'accidie' – spiritual drought – has been a well known thing which has to happen; and if we don't waste any more by getting depressed, it soon comes right.

Dr. R. to Mr. C. S. What were you going to say?

C. S. Do you think that one of the things that brings that about is the feeling that one knows what meditation is, what it ought to be and what it is going to be like? Actually, one doesn't know! If one is really still, one goes into something one does not know each time. Somehow, the fight to repeat in the same way always seems to go wrong.

Dr. R. Yes, I am so glad you said that. We have got a fixed idea of what a good meditation is, and we are often mistaken in feeling we are in a period of drought, because our half-hours happen to be different.

But meditation works in all the different rooms of the house: it sometimes works in the basement, sometimes in the kitchen; sometimes it works in the front hall; but it very rarely works in the living room where you feel a dramatic and emotional result. So I think your reminder is very timely that we have a fixed idea of what meditation ought to be.

Also, we always do it in the same sort of way: we sit in the same kind of position and we start the rhythm at the same speed. Why not change something? Why not sit in quite a different position? Start it differently; give it a chance.

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Dr. R. then went on: Well, let us have something from the Shankaracharya instead of from me!

We will now have a little reading, and then we will have a little music leading into perhaps 10 minutes of meditation.

(With A.C.S. reading):

Q. (from Lady Allan to H.H.) Yesterday, coming into His Holiness' presence, I felt suddenly like a child with warmth all round. His Holiness has said that one should approach the meditation as if going to meet one's dearest. This answer keeps returning

to me again and again, both during the day and at the start of meditation. It shows me that usually I have the *idea* of loving my dearest, and not yet the real love. Can His Holiness take this answer further, as I feel that it is the key to progress?

S. There are two aspects of the same thing – the Prem and the Premaspad – the lover and the Beloved. The two are also known as Atman and Param-Atman. Atman is the one who is loving, and Param-Atman is the one who is loved.

They both come together in the Antahkarana. (Dr. R. That is the Causal ‘inner organ’ felt between the heart and the throat). They are already there. Although the same thing, in the Antahkarana they are seen as two aspects because of other things involved. Premaspad – the idea that one should try to feel that one is going to meet one’s dearest – can be seen from other examples:

When one works in some office or business premises, after having done one’s day’s work one rushes home. There again, one has to do so many things – the relationship with the children, the mother or father or son, and everything else to be met there. So, leaving the office, one doesn’t simply leave work. To be completely free from work one takes to another level of work which is a little closer to one’s heart.

Having done this, then one sees that one tries to find a quieter time to enjoy with one’s husband. This time, in relation to meeting the family, is a little closer to the Self.

Having done this, one will see that even this is not enough. Then one would like to be completely alone, and nature will force one to go to sleep, where one automatically meets the Self to recharge oneself and gain all the energy necessary for the next day. This is the natural cycle towards Self.

Dr. R. How did that appeal to you? Do you find that?

S. then went on:

Now, when the question of progress on the Spiritual level comes, we like to repeat the same cycle but in different way. This is the way of the Meditation. So it is suggested that when we are about to meditate, we collect the body and put it into a comfortable position so that it will keep us going for the required time of meditation without hindrance. We close the eyes, to put out the external world; we put out all sound coming to us, so that we sever all relationship with the external world.

Then we come to the breath and the moving thoughts which keep on visiting us; and we keep on trying to dissociate ourselves from these dear thoughts (which visit us very closely) with the help of the Mantra.

Then we find a few moments of complete quiet when, by practice we may transcend all these things; just as we went into deep sleep, so we go into Samadhi. In Samadhi, in fact, we don’t do anything but we *become* the Absolute. There the Atman and the Param-Atman are the same – the lover and the Beloved are just the same.

(Record, 22 September 1975)

Dr. R. Now Womersley will you play something?

He played the ‘Women’s Round’ followed by:

MEDITATION

after which he played the ‘Slow Second Obligatory’.

Dr. R. afterwards:

It is a quarter past eight. There is just one thing more, and that is to know whether you want a meeting on December 14th. There are children's holidays, preparation for Christmas, and many other things; so let us have a show of hands for those people who would like a meeting on December 14th, otherwise it will be January 11th.

After a show of hands, Dr. R. remarked: 'The Ayes have it'; all right, we will be here.

Now just for interest's sake, that question about physical exercise. Hands up those people who find that physical fitness improves the psychology and Self-realisation. (After a show of hands): Just about 50/50. Take a look for yourselves! (to A.C.S.): Thank you very much.

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