

9 March 1976

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Dr. Roles: Now this meeting is about Meditation only, and in the course of the meeting I want to read extracts from the last series of audiences that three of our people have just returned from with the Shankaracharya. I want to make two points especially about the meditation: the first is that all knowledge is absolutely useless in the meditation except the Knowledge of the nature of the Self – the individual Self and the Universal Self. This is what the Shankaracharya refers to as True Knowledge. This Knowledge is very important because the more you know of this Divine Nature which is in all of us, the more you are bound to develop a kind of respect, faith and love; (the word in Sanskrit is Shraddha) for this Being. This is the whole essence of life, but it is also the secret of any success we can get in meditation.

Meditation is entirely devoted to getting to the silence where you directly realize that you are this Self and nobody else – that is the first point. The second point is that there is only one kind of energy which is valuable in meditation. You know that there are two sorts of energy – active or positive; passive or negative; which cancel each other out. These are everywhere in evidence in the Universe and in ourselves – a conflict between two opposites, and resolvable only by the recognition of a third kind of force which is different from either of them. It is almost impossible to define this third kind of force to which ordinarily we are quite blind; we cannot define it or limit it intellectually. But we develop a sort of taste like a tea-taster or a wine-taster by which we can distinguish this kind of energy – even a drop of it. We become rather like a dog who smells aniseed on the wheel of a car and will follow it to the end of the world!

We follow this taste or scent of Sattva, which is so lovely and lights everything up.

There is a small passage from what His Holiness has just said in answer to a question from M.E.P. (Is Pickering here? – No.)

A. reads:

S. I would like to emphasise this point: the little Sattva you have got is much more important for you than all the drawbacks, difficulties and troubles you see in the world.

Iron is a cheap metal and gold is a precious metal. There may be a lot of iron lying about, but a little gold has more worth to it than all the iron. That little piece of gold, say an ornament, you keep in a beautiful case. You don't worry about the iron at all.

Dr. R. So with this Sattva we acquire the power of drawing into ourselves from the world around us, from the atmosphere – from all the activities of people, from the niceness we see in ordinary people; from anything by which man seems to reflect the Divine – his Divine origin – or by some of the wonderful things in organic life and creation.

We also derive it from the writings of Enlightened people – the Upanishads, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Christian Gospels; and in really enlightened writings we derive it from the words of a man who has realized all his possibilities.

We can also derive it from places like this House, which are devoted to work which we

believe is for the Param-Atman; just as the Ashram where we have audiences with the Shankaracharya is full of this energy.

I would like now to get some of this from the room. There is some already, but a little more of it.

The first question which was asked by the leader of our group in Auckland was:

A. reads:

Q. In Auckland, we seem to have a difficulty in meditation in that, for some of the people, much of the joy of meditation has gone for the time being. It has become mechanical. These people are anxious to return to the joy of meditation so that the work can proceed. Can His Holiness help in this respect?

S. It seems that the source of love has become blocked; only the external actions are going on.

Dr. R. We know that, don't we, even here in London?

Q. Is there some way we can free this flow?

S. Increase the quality of love for the Atman. Stop attaching so much importance to the external aspects of one's life. These external features, or practice, have increased, and they are causing an obstruction; while the internal love – that is, the love for the Truth, has decreased.

Before you sit down to meditate, you should have some sort of holy, sacred music, so that the mental attitude becomes more purified. If you sit down with a dispersed mind, then the mind starts running this way and that very easily. You should first collect the mind which has become dispersed. There is power in sound – the Mantra, sacred songs – all have the power of collecting the mind. In the beginning, or in the middle – whenever you feel the difficulty, just follow this method. In this way, the mind will be able to recollect itself just as a magnet attracts small filings of iron, similarly sound has got the power of attracting thoughts.

(Record, 18 January 1976)

Dr. R. The Shankaracharya uses music a great deal in his Ashram. We also use music of a special quality in the Dervish Turning in the Mukabeleh and in our Movements to Music; and I am going to ask Miss Palmer to play just a little bit of music and then we will go straight into Meditation to see if what he says is true:

A short piece of Movements music, then:

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Dr. R. afterwards:

It is up to anybody to have in their own homes the kind of music that appeals to them and experiment; it's better than just sitting and battling with thoughts.

Are there any questions now about meditation?

It's very individual, so there is very little we need to know about meditation in general. The best progress is made when the individual (if he is unsatisfied) asks somebody he trusts about the meditation; rather than laying down rules and regulations.

(Pause)

But are there any questions?

Well, maybe there will be; but the sure proof as to whether the meditation is going the way we want it, lies in our actions. There is no manifestation of anything on the causal and subtle levels; only on the physical level – the physical level of our actions in the world around – what we set out to do, and our ability to do it. If we have an increase of this Sattva, our actions will be better; and if we have as much Sattva as the Shankaracharya has, it will be obvious to everybody; it's a way people might be attracted to the meditation.

Are there any questions about that?

We choose to do actions in a Sattvic way as we would do them if there was a noble guest looking on all the time; and indeed there is.

Any questions?

There is a bit about this in that same first audience.

A. reads:

Q. How can we know for sure which actions lead to purification of the heart so that liberation may be attained through Self-realization? Are those activities which are merely refined leading towards reward on a higher plane only?

S. That action which gives us joy in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end – that action is Sattvic. This kind of action would be such that we would not need to hide it from anyone, and we shall never repent of it. Such an action is good in worldly terms as well as in spiritual fields. We don't approve of devoting ourselves to meditation only, and by doing this adopting an escapist attitude from worldly activities. It can create the misunderstanding that meditation makes a man lazy.

Dr. R. There are various cartoons about it as you have probably seen in the popular press – wives coming in and telling husbands who are meditating that such-and-such ought to be done! It's quite a joke at the moment that meditators are lazy people. We must dissociate ourselves from that!

A. continues:

S. Meditation gives us energy; it makes us able to do worldly duties more efficiently; what an ordinary person can do in ten hours, through meditation we can do in half the time.

Dr. R. Try that!

S. went on: So we must express this attitude to people who think that meditation is for lazy people and is not meant for active people.

Q. Is meditation one of the main causes of the purification of the heart? Does meditation itself purify the heart, or does one have to use physical actions as well?

S. Actions also. Those actions which we need not hide from anybody, they are necessary. Actions relating to your family, or your country – those actions which are devoid of narrowness which we need not hide from anybody – actions related to those who are very special to us, who are near to us, and who are connected to us.

Dr. R. So, actions devoid of narrowness – not done in a state of identification where one is in a very small world indeed, and not aware of what is going on. And he mentions actions connected with people for whom we have great feeling or responsibility; actions connected with our country – bigger things of that sort.

Any questions about that?

I think it is high time in England today that a little bit more of that is in evidence; it might get us through with the pound falling!

(Pause)

Dr. R. went on:

Well, you seem to know all about this; but surely you don't all agree with it, do you?

Peter Stebbing. How do you suggest that our thoughts become more Sattvic?

Dr. R. That's our big difficulty, isn't it? Why are our thoughts such a trouble? Nowadays, one's mind is very sceptical, isn't it? It can't believe there's any good around at all; that there's any spiritual life at all, or that there is a God in Heaven! Do you think it's because our minds are so sceptical, Peter?

Peter Stebbing. I've been thinking around this lately, and I have come to the conclusion that if you can get rid of negative thoughts and leave nothing in the mind, then you get the peace and the quiet.

Dr. R. Well, that is clear and definite. But how to get rid of them? Don't you have to dodge them? If you try fighting a negative thought, it develops ten arms and becomes stronger and stronger. Isn't it a question of dodging them, and not making a frontal assault on the mind or trying to compel the mind to think about this, and not to think about that?

So the way suggested is that for any thought about oneself as the agent doing things or as the 'centre of the world', one substitutes the idea of a Self which is altogether above this petty little self. The name given to this Self of the whole creation is 'Param-Atman', which means the extension of one's true Self (the Atman) which is of the same nature as the Creator of the Universe. It is a huge idea, so it's impossible to make it limited and petty or narrow. One cultivates this habit by saying a sentence to oneself – first thing in the morning, last thing at night, or whenever one's mind is free. It gradually becomes more emotional and more attractive to the mind – raising it above petty, negative things. This is very efficacious.

I think we could go back to another question by Channing Pearce of Auckland in this recent report, referring to this method which we have been using and recommending since before 1972; for many people round the world and many people here have testified to its efficacy.

A. reads (from 7th Audience, 28 January 1976):

J.C.P. His Holiness has shown us great riches of Knowledge, but even greater riches of happiness and love which he has shown us to be available, though we had forgotten them. To help us and those in our groups, would His Holiness approve of this practical plan of action:

First, offer every action to Param-Atman i.e., to hold the memory of Param-Atman as a husband holds the memory of his wife?

S. We should be greatly enriched by doing what is meant by 'offering all actions to Param-Atman'.

Dr. R. repeated:

Offering all actions to the Param-Atman. Let's make no mistake about this. He, at other times, has said that you can't offer shoddy, careless actions to the Param-Atman; it's incompatible. But if you try to offer all actions to the Param-Atman (who is looking on all the time) one avoids the worst kind of idle action or words quite naturally. Anyway, he says, 'offer all actions'.

A. Then His Holiness continued:

Here is an instance from real life: There was a boy who had lost both his parents. He was very poor and wanted to join a school to study. To do this he needed money for school fees and stationery, but he had no money to buy them. All this caused him considerable worry.

By chance, he met a Mahatma and he expressed his difficulties to that man. The Mahatma gave him some advice. He told him to write a letter to the Param-Atman. 'Write,' he said, a letter like this: 'Oh, my Father, the Absolute Param-Atman, please help me. I am very poor, my parents are dead; I have no money to pay school fees or buy books to continue my studies.'

'How shall I post it?' he asked. 'Address it to the Param-Atman,' the Mahatma told him. He did as he was told – writing the letter, and addressing it simply to the Param-Atman. He then put it in the letter box. The box was cleared, taken to the Post Office where the sorter said, 'Where is this place at which Param-Atman lives?' He handed it on to the Postmaster, who asked them to bring the boy to him. The boy was brought to the postmaster, who adopted him and looked after all his expenses. The boy was given the highest education, eventually becoming a judge.

Interpreter Dixit. The judge himself told this story to His Holiness!

Dr. R. So it actually happened!

You know it is a strange thing that things of that sort are happening. One has a great many such experiences – 'coincidences', we call them, – and we push them on one side. But if you are remembering the Param-Atman and trying to do His work – all sorts of very magical things keep happening. We couldn't get by without that. Of course you can't do it expecting miracles to happen. We just try to develop this loving respect for the Param-Atman who should occupy all our vacant thoughts – and strange things happen!

It's valuable to remind oneself of unexpected things which would never have happened if we hadn't met this Work or the Meditation, they just wouldn't have happened to us.

If once, in our lifetime, we develop this loving respect or Shraddha for the Param-Atman (the greatest force in Creation – an immense source of Energy) we are out of reach of all harm. At that stage, things change their properties. For instance, a poisonous drink can become nectar.

(Record, 7 March 1971)

In our materialistic kind of outlook there is no place for such things; we cover up the evidence and explain them away.

So, would this be one way, Stebbing, of reminding this sceptical mind of worlds which it doesn't know anything about? The subtle and causal levels are so very different from the physical level; we judge everything, really, by the physical level. It's very narrow and has a

long, slow time-scale; its 'time units' are in weeks, and months and years. On the subtle level the time is thousands of times faster – the time units are moments of three seconds. Time on the subtle level is measured in moments, and minutes and hours – all in the course of a single day.

On the causal level, where there is an inverse of time – the frequency is so high, that like light, we don't see its movement, the causal level appears still. It's like a potentiality – a flower-bed before the seeds come up.

We must get out of the way of thinking in terms of this physical space-time with its limitations.

Mr. Stebbing. So the thoughts we require must come from either the subtle or the causal level?

Dr. R. Actually, the subtle level includes all our psychology. Everything which you cannot weigh and measure – everything which isn't flesh and bones; all our psychology – our thoughts, desires, intentions, memories and dreams; but, if imbued with Sattva, then our psychology becomes different chemically; it becomes imbued with the light from the causal level.

Mr. Stebbing. Would you say that limbic circuits work on the subtle level?

Dr. R. Oh, yes; but they can be governed from the physical, or governed from the causal in higher states of Consciousness.

Now this chap, Peter Stebbing, is manfully carrying on this meeting for us all; no one else is doing a damned thing! Do help him out!

Q. Could you say something about the heart which has to be purified; it must be more than just a blood pump.

Dr. R. Now this is a very interesting question and a very crucial one. They talked about it a great deal at these recent audiences.

When His Holiness refers to the heart, he refers to where you feel the causal level, and he defines it as a space from the physical heart up to the organ of expression – the throat. This is described in one of the earliest Upanishads as the 'lotus of the heart' in which you have an emotional understanding of Truth – a direct emotional realization of Truth, which sometimes we call 'intuition'.

It is not the ordinary physical heart pump; but there is an actual organ which you can dissect and see. Once at Wimpole Street when I was looking at an anatomy book – I was looking at a picture of this special organ – and Mr. Ouspensky happened to come in; he looked over my shoulder and he said, 'Yes, Higher Emotional centre'. I can show those who are interested in anatomy. Really, it is much better to be interested in where you feel things – where do you feel good impulses which light the way for you? Where do you feel them? Be brave! In your foot, or somewhere?

Q. The solar plexus?

Dr. R. No, that is an emotion which is contaminated with the physical world – below the diaphragm; not below the belt! You feel it when you step off a pavement and a car swishes by – this sinking in the pit of the stomach. In ordinary people, that is the strongest emotion they have – the physical stomach!

But when you rise to – the heart plexus – things are different – physical things, the worldly things and so on lose their insistence, and one is wanting to know and express something Spiritual. Plexuses are quite definite things; there are three below the solar plexus, then the heart; the fifth is here in the throat – we don't quite understand it, but it is something to do with the thyroid, the stoking of the furnaces; also something to do with the organ of expression. The sixth is in the centre of the head – the emotional centre around the thalamus – in the middle of the brain; and the sixth is where the whole system is operating together – the cerebral hemispheres – everything. The seventh is immaterial and cannot be defined but when you have reached it you are through. That's the end!

We don't have to think about these anatomical things at all but somebody asked about what His Holiness means when he speaks of the heart – and what we mean when we speak of the heart. It's a perfectly definite thing.

Mrs. Fleming. When people are together and talking one begins to understand something; the voice seems to change; and it seems that when one feels something in the heart the voice does change – one talks differently?

Dr. R. Yes, there's a lot to do with the voice, isn't there, as regards expression—as an expression of emotion. So this lotus – from the heart to the throat – where you feel very emotional things with Spiritual connotations (which was known in the earliest Upanishad – 6,000 BC), has a permanent place in human nature; but scientifically is very incorrect, I should think. You cannot experiment with it on guinea pigs in a laboratory; it doesn't yield any result!

So it is up to Self-study, Self-realization, Meditation; only in meditation you don't pay any attention to physical things. You don't pay any attention as to whether it is the head, or the heart; you simply only pay attention to the rhythm of the Mantra and the one whose Name it is; your own true Self. Don't stop to observe anatomy.

Mr. Weigall. Is it an abuse of the subtle mind that blocks meditation?

Dr. R. The thing is that in the meditation there should be no subtle activity going on at all to come between your attention and the rhythm of the Mantra; it can be going on in the background, but it shouldn't get between you and the silence. That is the important thing.

This is the main difficulty, isn't it, all the time? If we meditate for some time, we are constantly exchanging thinking for really meditating. This is our chief snag.

Mrs. Brunson. The most difficult thing I find is this something that watches the meditation, which says: 'Ah, it is slowing down.' There's a sort of duality which happens when one begins. My question is: How to lose this watcher?

Dr. R. The whole thing is to switch your mind away from the difficulty – away from this perpetual BBC commentator – don't stop to think about the commentator. Turn away from anything you don't want, because whatever stays in your mind, your mind becomes like that. So the great thing is to drop it. If it is the commentator, drop it.

(to Lady Allan): You asked the Shankaracharya a question about that? I don't know whether it solved the problem?

Lady Allan: (not repeated) One shouldn't mind that it is there and not let it come in the way.

Dr. R. Make it of no importance, and it will get tired and disappear. So the great thing is to use this method, as the Shankaracharya is saying, first thing in the morning and last thing at night, and at any time during the day when your attention is not fully occupied. He didn't mean words; it's a feeling, a memory – this is of the utmost importance.

It might possibly agree with this saying: 'The Lord your God is a jealous God,' but I often think that the Param-Atman has so many different aspects. In fact, it could be said that almost anything that has ever been said about 'God' is true up to a point; but any of those taken singly is utterly false. The Param-Atman as Creator of the Universe – of Heaven and earth in its grandeur and power – exploding stars, spiral nebulae, solar systems coming and going – enormous power; with the shifting surface of the Earth, earthquakes, volcanoes; in one aspect there is all this. In another aspect – in relation to the individual – the Param-Atman or the Atman behaves like a child playing with a pet kitten; and the individual just has to be like this pet kitten – entirely unsophisticated.

As the Param-Atman contains everything, there are a thousand different aspects – a million different aspects. But one seems to be the guarantee of success, and I often say to myself that poem by the Marquis of Montrose which seems to express what the Param-Atman desires:

Like Alexander, I will reign, and I will reign alone;
My thoughts did ever more disdain a rival on my throne.

Dr. R. And the last verse of that short poem goes like this:

But if thou wilt prove faithful then, and constant of thy word,
I'll make thee glorious by my pen and famous by my sword;
I'll serve thee in such noble ways as never seen before;
I'll crown and deck thee all with bays, and love Thee more and more.

So, in meditation we dedicate the half-hour entirely to the Atman – nothing petty or personal or difficult must come in. Then, if we do that often enough, it will show in all our actions and in all our thoughts during the day.

For the one thing which is essential is, that, like Alexander, 'He will reign, and He will reign alone.'

It is just after quarter-past-eight, so try and make some experiments; try and use music if you like and produce this Sattva, and not sit down with your mind going round and round in circles and full of trivial things. Do something to shift that; then you'll be spared a tiresome battle in your half-hours.

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