

13 April 1976

## GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Dr. Roles. I want to see if we cannot introduce one or two new angles; after all, we've had these meetings every month for a long, long time. One thing which is very interesting and is going to help us a lot when people get the full significance of it, is the question of the speech centres in the dominant hemisphere. There is a lot of misconception about it. We all of us have our left half of the brain and the right half of the body dominated by the speech centres which occupy nearly the whole of the left hemisphere of the forebrain. And although this has been known for a long, long time, from experience – it's part of our teaching here at Colet House that the noisy left hemisphere is trained to communicate in words and is therefore the basis of our personality and the right hemisphere which, being dumb, is unrecognised and more connected with our essence. But only recently has this become a respectable scientific idea, and it has happened that they have been able to study it very closely. It's not really basically to do with right-handedness and left-handedness. The speech centres are always on the left side in virtually everybody, whereas about twelve per cent of people are left-handed or left-footed.

Nobody has begun to realise the enormous significance of this in human life, particularly in relation to Meditation. We must realise that each of us is two people taking in the same impressions from the world, and dealing with them in entirely different ways; the dominant one doing all the talking and thinking – verbalising, defining, discussing, conceptualising and all the rest of it; and the other one being quite dumb – unable to say anything – although connected with all the rhythms and beauty and the emotional aspects of this same world, but turning inwards instead of outwards. Yoga means 'union' – union of those two.

Now this is a Meditation meeting, so we want to keep to the question of why this is important in meditation. The dominant hemisphere has no part whatever to play in meditation. It is always trying to interfere and take it over and is the cause of nearly all our troubles in a half-hour. It is also the cause of one of the difficulties in checking the meditation, because the checkers use the dominant hemisphere and do all the talking. Then the poor meditator has to try and put into words what has been experienced, which is virtually impossible because it is the other side which has been experiencing and doesn't know anything about it!

That is why we try and talk about Meditation as little as possible, because in so many cases talking about meditation takes the place of meditating!

Are there any questions about this? Do any of you talk to yourselves during the half-hour? (laughter)

Q. (a woman) Is this arrangement the same for a man and for a woman?

Dr. R. Not much difference. Women also talk, don't they, sometimes? But, on the whole, the passive hemisphere used to be more feminine. Nowadays, of course, the sexes are equal, and all that. But in olden days it was the quiet side that was considered to be feminine (Latin 'Anima'), that is, the right side; and the left side was supposed to be dominant and masculine

(Latin 'Animus'). Of course, there *is* a difference between men and women, but it is more subtle than one would think, and it is only obvious on the physical level and on the very physical side of psychology, the beginnings of the subtle level. After that, the sexes are absolutely equal; and in Self-realization there is no difference whatsoever.

But any difference there is should be beneficial and certainly men have to learn from the civilising influence of women so that their dominant hemisphere doesn't ride rough-shod over everything! We can always learn from each other.

On the whole, more women come and want the meditation. Is that significant? And I think more women go on meditating while men tend to give up, but this may vary from place to place.

Any other questions, now?

Mr. Crampton (who was on the platform with Dr. R.). Just a technical one: you start the Mantra off with the dominant hemisphere originally. Does it actually go straight into the sub-dominant? And what about the sort of shadowy area between the two?

Dr. R. It has to start at the very beginning of the initiation in the speech centre, it's a sound; it goes to the speech centre; it starts from there. But very often within the first half-minute it has switched across; people show this strikingly – about fifty per cent perhaps or fewer – by changes in their muscles. They relax; their eyelids stop fluttering; their breathing and circulation change, and it is very evident to the eye that the Mantra has changed across to the passive side where it is meant to go.

That comes at the beginning for some people; in others it takes longer, and in some, although it started like that, they can never get it back again. Yet in others – I suppose in the more usual run – after the first two or three weeks, the rhythm tends to start in the quiet hemisphere at its own tempo, and not to be connected with speech at all. But it changes so much in different people and in the same person at different times.

Now I don't want you to get into the way of thinking: 'Now am I left or am I right?' Just simply note whether some talking is going on, and if talking is going on along with the rhythm of the Mantra, it is only the dominant hemisphere pretending to meditate.

Can you translate that for our Mexican friends? It is one of the great pleasures and advantages of training the leaders of our various Mexican groups, in the art of initiating and checking the Meditation, that they can't speak English very much and we can't speak Spanish; so it all goes along beautifully with very little dominant hemisphere in evidence! Yet Senor Gilberto Gonzales is now giving it perfectly well. Somehow there has been a kind of thought transference.

Q. Is it the passive hemisphere that listens?

Dr. R. Ideally both should listen; and the dominant one should appreciate the factual part of the impressions being received – put them into categories for storage; while the other takes them emotionally and aesthetically. Both should be receptive to certain impressions in their own way.

Say, listening to music now: your music critic on the media is probably doing a lot of associative thinking and labelling, and all that; but his other hemisphere is taking it aesthetically – judging whether the playing is agreeable to someone who knows the

composer's intentions, the quality of the interpretation on the aesthetic side. Both hemispheres (even of the critic!) should be listening and, ideally, both should work together; and they do in many of our small actions. For instance: stirring a cup of tea, we stir with the right hand, hold the cup and saucer with left, and the two work together very nicely, but we don't notice it. They are meant to work as mirror images one of the other; but if one or the other becomes too dominant, then things don't go so nicely. A kind of 'stammering' occurs in other organs as well as those of speech.

So the question is: How do we get quicker results in meditation through simply knowing this fact, without thinking about it?

Q. Does what you have just said indicate that listening plays a connecting role between the two hemispheres?

Dr. R. Yes, it is something they have in common. Take meditation: You start the rhythm of the Mantra, set it running as a sound, and you listen and that's all you have to do. Having set it running, you just listen. Then it ceases to be sound as it goes deeper, and it loses its physical characteristic and becomes a pulse. Later it becomes a 'presence'. You cannot describe or define it, and later it ceases to exist at all. But right up to Samadhi it is there; and in Turiya – the final stage of Enlightenment – it disappears, and you have disappeared. Everything disappears; there is only one Universe and no second thing at all.

Listening is often the basis of attention and memory.

Q. What about left-handed people? Would there be a danger in their case of the passive hemisphere being contaminated by its neighbour?

Dr. R. No. The only contamination comes when someone tries to turn a natural left-hander into a right-hander, otherwise right-handedness or left-handedness doesn't affect it. I believe there have been some celebrated saints who have been left-handed! It doesn't affect the main issue which is simply that nobody should be *talking* during a half-hour's meditation. If you want to become One with the Atman, with your Self, all thinking and talking must be put on one side; you must leave it all, because the Atman is only able to manifest in complete silence. That is all that matters.

Q. Should one make any particular attempts to be still before starting the Mantra?

Dr. R. Well, this is a debatable point. The Maharishi used to describe anything you did in preparing yourself as 'mood-making', and certainly one shouldn't try to build up a kind of artificial psychology before meditating.

At the same time, we are told, that if you come from the office full of Rajas the Shankaracharya recommends that it would be much easier for you to meditate if this dominant hemisphere with its activity of speech and all the rest of it is allowed to simmer down and rest. He recommends various things like music, a hot bath, or a little walk or some exercises, to allow a sort of settlement within yourself before shutting your eyes and beginning.

Q. Before starting the Mantra, very often one is aware of a rhythm. If one follows that rhythm, the connection seems to be made?

Dr. R. That's fine, very good! There's infinite variety as to what happens to you and to other people at different times. You just have to go by the result. You find what you describe rather nice, don't you, when it happens? (Questioner nods) You follow the rhythm and everything is done for you – fine!

Some people try and carry a tune in their mind, or a line of poetry, or something; but there are dangers to this as you may not be able to shake it off. Whatever is in your mind while you are repeating the Mantra gets fixed; mental repetition fixes whatever is there. So if you don't want to have that tune or poem in your mind for ever, you had better not encourage it!

Mr. Crampton. Is there an area where the Mantra is more or less sounding all the time?

Dr. R. Yes, that is so. We have just learnt quite a lot from the three people who have been seeing the Shankaracharya in confirmation of things he has hinted at before. He talks about the physical, subtle and causal levels; the subtle being all our psychology dominated by thought, and the food of the subtle body is Knowledge.

But beyond that is an area which is predominantly emotional, which is not so subject to change, it belongs to the 'Causal Level', he calls it the 'Inner Organ' or Antahkarana, and he says we feel it between the heart and the throat; that is in the mid-line; it is not the flesh heart beating away on the left, but it belongs to this Inner Organ which he describes as the dwelling place of the Atman – His 'with-drawing' room.

If it is clean and pure enough, the Atman lives there, and the Mantra will also be there without your knowing it, and will come to the surface of consciousness when you want some energy or have some decision to make. That is the ideal. Is that what you suspect?

(continuing to Mr. C.): When you get an idea for sculpture – when it is working out – do you have any assistance from that area? You do, don't you?

Mr. C. I think all the time – Yes. It is a fairly continuous area which one can tap.

Dr. R. Certainly, when I came into your recent exhibition and saw all those lovely golden birds, my 'inner organ' got quite a lift.

Mr. C. Has the inner organ got a particular food, Dr. Roles?

Dr. R. Yes, it has—it has got the three-fold food coming from the Self – Truth, Happiness and Love (emotional), and Unity and it lives on those three.

We try, in initiating people to meditation, to reach to their inner organ – the Soul. The Initiation ceremony is designed to do that. At the end, when you have done the invocation and the others have gone out (the helpers) and you are kneeling together and you pronounce the Mantra, it should go straight through and be felt in the heart. If it does that, then a lot of future difficulties are avoided. It is quite quiet; it is not what ordinary people on the media call 'being emotional'.

Q. I find sometimes that at the moment of deepest meditation that the heartbeat appears to change. Would you say something about that?

Dr. R. Well, except: 'Don't notice it!' Withdraw your attention. Certainly heartbeat and breathing are changing all the time with the depth of meditation. Ideally, they should both

become very economical and almost unnoticeable. But you should never let your attention connect with anything physical. If you feel something happening here or there, withdraw your attention quickly, because if you turn your attention to anything physical it increases tenfold. In the course of my medical career I found that quite a lot.

Dr. Hamilton-Pearson and I were consulted about a girl who complained that whenever she talked to anybody the palms of her hands dripped with perspiration. It was a bit difficult to treat her psychologically because every time we mentioned the hands she began to drip, and we had to have buckets around! It's very hard to get out of some habit that's been contracted by which the attention has got linked with something physical. I won't tell you any more horror stories.

The whole bodily metabolism has been proved, (as you know if you have read the various learned discussions and papers about the Meditation) to change in a certain proportion of people and becomes very economical – rather like a state of hibernation in squirrels.

Mr. Crampton. Is there any difference between sleeping and meditation?

Dr. R. Yes, there's a very pronounced difference in both quality and result. The brainwaves are quite different in meditation and physical sleep, so it's easily proved scientifically, but what is more important is to be able to recognise it in oneself, and just experience the peace without the dominant hemisphere analysing everything.

The way you recognise it is that although in deep meditation you may feel drowsy; since you are in unexplored territory there's nothing to catch hold of, you are not quite sure whether you are repeating the Mantra or not; yet when you 'come to', your mind is absolutely clear if it is real meditation. If you have actually been to sleep your mind is muzzy and heavy when you come to yourself.

It is all to do with the three Gunas that you have heard so much about; rest in Tamas is physical sleep which is not what the Meditation is for. That is not only a waste of meditation time, but it starts a habit which stops the Mantra evolving naturally.

Rest in Sattva is refreshing to the inner organ and to the subtle body as well. It is not just for the physical body.

And in the third Guna – Rajas, of course there is no rest at all, its whole nature is to be active.

Are there any questions about that because it is rather important. It makes so much difference if, in a half-hour, you are charged with Sattva – if you have liberated some Sattva during the day before. It lends wings to the Mantra and everything is much easier. I think you all know the taste of Sattva; it is quite undefinable.

Q. Doesn't rest mean relaxing the dominant hemisphere?

Dr. R. It means complete silence in the dominant hemisphere – it is relaxed, silent but not asleep.

Just ask away.

Q. If breath is considered a food and if breathing changes during meditation, can you say what happens to the breath?



Dr. R. Well, it simply means that the centres which control the breathing are taking a rest too. During deep sleep in bed at night the breathing becomes deeper and slower, but it doesn't necessarily become very restful, and when you dream it shows agitation. But in meditation it becomes very restful because the whole organism is taking a rest.

Q. (same) Is the breath itself being transformed into some other kind of energy?

Dr. R. It's simply doing all the work it needs to do with about a tenth of the energy. So that your energy is being stored up instead of being spent in snoring. (Dr. R. made the appropriate noise.) You are storing energy for future use; that's one of the many ways in which the meditation helps you to store energy.

We run very expensively. If we were a car we run with the choke out; we leave the engine running! It's terrible the things a doctor notices about how people treat their bodies.

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Dr. R. contd: I know my dominant hemisphere is very much in evidence, but I would like you to have the opportunity of asking anything you want to know. What you feel you ought to know though we're all naturally nervous of displaying our ignorance. Really none of us knows anything quite frankly!

What one needs to know more than anything is the nature of this Self that the Meditation is all about.

Q. Is the energy which comes from the meditation inevitably benevolent?

Dr. R. Energy is energy – it depends how you use it. The energy is all right. The question is: Are *you* 'inevitably benevolent'?

The energy is always good, and the Atman – the Self – is always good – always benevolent, always well-wishing.

Man's own nature can be either human, or angelic, or devilish. It often prefers to be devilish, in many parts of the world, anyway. So it is the individual's choice as to whether he is benevolent or malevolent.

Q. Is it an intellectual choice?

Dr. R. No.

Q. (same) So how does one control it?

Dr. R. Are emotions not allowed in your world?

Q. (same) Too much so!

Dr. R. Never too much – just too impure. The control centre is the Antahkarana, the site of the purified emotion, which, with the help of the intellect, makes the choice. It should always be checked – the mind should always check and see that one is not off on a wild goose chase. But the ultimate decider is your heart.

Dr. Dale Becket. If Sattva is produced by meditation, and if Sattva facilitates meditation, does it follow that the more one meditates, the more Sattva one will have?

Dr. R. No, no, Dr. Becket it doesn't! It's *quality* of meditation, not quantity that counts. One

does not say that meditation produces Sattva. It prevents, first of all, the wastage of Sattva which is in store in many areas in the body. We have stores in the sympathetic nervous system, and meditation a) keeps us from wasting that precious stuff. And b), when the Mantra rhythm touches a certain spot it liberates the Sattva and one gets an extraordinary feeling of happiness and confidence due to this release of this energy. But it doesn't follow that an indefinitely long meditation is going to produce more Sattva.

Although this time of half-an-hour twice a day is, in a sense, arbitrary; it has been worked out that this is about the limit of the time that the ordinary 'man in the street' can genuinely attend to one thing for most of that time. Even about half-an-hour you hear groans, all right, don't you? It is said that even if you got two minutes of full attention and pure feeling in the course of a half-hour it would serve you fine for two or three days. But if you go on feeling you ought to have meditated longer or more often, it might be that you just get spiritual indigestion and suffer afterwards.

What is the word in the *Philokalia* – 'accidie', spiritual exhaustion. The Shankaracharya is always warning us against that – against trying to do too much. He likens it to food; food is very nice, but if you eat too much of it, does it follow that you get more pleasure the more food you eat? It doesn't with me!

Does that answer your question?

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Dr. R. contd:

I would like you to be thinking about this description of the Inner Organ situated between the neck and the heart. Sometime we might have a word about the possible significance of this. It is empirical in the sense that that is where you feel it. But, of course, the mechanism is in the hypothalamus in the deep nuclei of the brain. But this is where you feel it.

Well now shall we just stop talking and let our dominant hemispheres relax? Shut our eyes, set the Mantra running, and put the maximum of attention – the maximum of effort – into the first minute or two by having your whole attention on the Mantra, and then relax it gradually.

about ten minutes' MEDITATION

Dr. R. afterwards:

About the Nature of the Self; in the individual the Atman is like an orphan who is entirely ignorant of his royal birth, of his kingship and the grandeur of his own Nature. He is ignorant of himself. It is up to the ministers of the crown – the Buddhi, the Manas, the Ahankar, the Chitta – the various experienced ministers of the human endowment to demonstrate their loyalty to bring the Atman by their loving and devoted attitude to a recognition of the fact that He is One with the Lord of the Universe; and Self-realization is when the Atman realizes His true nature and assumes the throne – his rightful throne.

As experienced in the ordinary person, the Atman is far more child-like and far less sophisticated than people seem to think. It is important to remember that that is why we are told in the Gospels that we are to become as little children, and also why we are told in the

Tradition of the Meditation that we have to give up everything and come to the Atman empty handed – with nothing of our own.

In order to do this we are told that we have to have in mind the Lord of Creation Himself – the Param-Atman – who is of the same nature, but has a far greater grandeur and sphere of influence to affect that purpose. It is this that is so difficult to understand and explain; but in a small passage in answer to a question, brought from Wellington by one of the two New Zealanders who have recently been out to India, you will see that the Shankaracharya is simplifying things and doesn't waste words. He doesn't waste words trying to describe the Atman:

Mr. Crampton reads:

R.N. To me, one of the most meaningful sayings in the World is that of Vyasa:

I have made a study critical of the Vedas and the Shastras several times. The gist of all that, as I have found, is that we should think of the Param-Atman at all times.

Dr. R. Param-Atman is the Atman of everything in the Universe – the Self of the Universe.

R.N. contd: I would like to strengthen this thinking of the Param-Atman at other times as well as during the meditation. However, I felt that the mind needs something more positive to consider than just the concept – Param-Atman. That aspect of Param-Atman which appeals most to the mind is that of Consciousness. The overriding desire is to do some positive work on the way.

S. The name of Param-Atman is the best thing.

N.A. The world is unreal – a mirage. Then what is man – whose mind is so vast, and yet who seems to require the body for his existence?

S. Man does not require the body for his existence. Whether the body does exist or not, man does exist.

N.A. Who hears the Mantra?

S. The one who asks.

N.A. Who ceases to hear the Mantra?

S. The same one.

N.A. Also, who desires?

S. (laughing) Same answer to all the questions.

Dr. R. One must be continually asking the question of oneself – but without words, then the 'Voice of the Silence' will answer in very unexpected ways.

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The next question was about prayer: 'I've often felt the need to pray;' and His Holiness said:

Why pray if you haven't done anything wrong? (laughter)

Dr. R. The next meeting is on the 11th May. Put up a little prayer for us – my wife and me – because we are being thrown to the lions in New York at that time!

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