

10th May 1977

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING**COLET HOUSE**

Lord Allan began as follows:

If you know of anybody who would like to be taught the Meditation, would you let us know here at the office their name and address. The sooner you can do it the better because we hope to be ready to give the Meditation fairly quickly.

We find that the new arrangements which Mrs. Fleming, Michael Fleming and others worked out seem to be operating quite smoothly; and that is that there is an individual and private talk to each person first of all, and this is found to be the most helpful introduction, and is a way for both the person who is interested in the Meditation and whoever sees them, to satisfy each other this is really what is wanted. Then that is followed by a meeting which is usually taken by Mr. Caiger Smith at which any questions are asked; then the Initiation ceremony follows that.

The intention is that there should be one Initiation ceremony or two (as many as are needed) in June, so we want to try and get these preliminary things over first.

Mrs. Fleming suggests that those who might be going to sponsor people might care to read a short paper which is to be found in the Library and in the Blue Room indicating their responsibilities.

Dr. Roles. I think we ought to do a bit more in getting the idea of the Meditation to people who would benefit – friends of ours who would benefit. There is still great interest in the Meditation everywhere. It does depend so much on the right approach to the person, and on patience in bringing them round to the idea.

I have just had a letter from the Van Oyens with whom we started (two of us in Amsterdam before the last War), a little group for Mr. Ouspensky; and 'this group in Amsterdam,' she writes to me 'is now more than 2,000 strong (all Meditators) and 170 people are waiting for Initiation right now'. That is Amsterdam alone; there is another big one in Brussels. So there is still a great deal of interest in Meditation and it is clear that the Van Oyens and their senior people have the right touch.

We would rather go for quality than quantity, as you know. But any close friends of yours would surely, if you find the right way with them, want it and enjoy it when they get it. It is so refreshing to anybody like myself who is not very good at the Meditation to try to bring somebody else along, for it gives one's own meditation a lift!

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Dr. R. then went on:

Today at this big meeting we want more audience participation, especially from the newer people. So don't let us have to talk from this platform into a huge vacuum. Do stick your necks out and say things – doesn't matter what, as long as it's about the Meditation! (after a pause) You know, if we were to sit even for this long in front of the Shankaracharya without asking him a question, we would probably have travelled several thousand miles with no result! He would not say anything unless we asked him a question.

Mr. Ouspensky was worse still. I have known him come in and sit there for ten or fifteen minutes not saying anything, and then go, over his shoulder saying: 'You carry on!' (laughter)

To A. Like I do with you! (Yes)

Mr. Weigall. – beginning to ask a question.

Dr. R. Are you a *new* person, Al?

Mr. Weigall went on: I had heard you say that there was somebody in California or Mexico who was having difficulty with his Meditation, so you were going to send somebody over. I wanted to know what happened?

Dr. R. That is how a Russian story gets around!

The facts are that Roy Jacob was sent by his firm to South America, and got their permission to stop off in Mexico! It happens there was a young man in Mexico City who was having difficulty with his Meditation, and so Roy checked him up. He gave him a push on and came back and told us about it. We wouldn't really *send* anybody out there just to do that!

So we would like to know if any of you are going to far countries (at the firm's expense!) so that we can communicate in the same way. Is there anybody especially interested in Australia – Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra? – as a group is gradually building up there. Myrle Swan who has gone to live there says there are great many people wanting the Meditation. That's just by the way.

So here and now, the 10th May: How is the Meditation going?

(As there was a pause), Dr. R. went on: It doesn't seem to be going very fast!

Mrs. Cardew. I admit that I am not new, either, but I want to know urgently how to deal with this dispersion of the mind that seems to take place when I sit down to meditate.

Dr. R. This is rather inevitable that the mind keeps forming habits all the time. When we discover such a habit, then it is up to us to be clever enough to find a solution. I know; I have felt this: I think we all do. It varies from week to week. Some weeks we are not troubled by it so much. Those weeks when we are troubled by it, don't you find, Mrs. Cardew, that the more you do, the more you fight it, the worst it is?

It is as if we are sometimes using the wrong instrument – using the Meditation in the wrong way. It is rather as if we were using it as a corkscrew, and it should be a bottle-opener!

There is too much pushing, too much Rajas. If one can just simply introduce the rhythm of the Mantra into the field of one's attention in place of one's thoughts we can use the rhythm to help us retreat from the thoughts – not trying to push the thoughts out, not trying to stop the dispersion. All this, Mrs. Cardew, is just that you are being too active; so change your posture; try various forms of experiment and dodge it somehow, rather than using a frontal attack.

It really depends on how you behave the rest of the day. I mean, are you sometimes in control of random thoughts? Are you moving with attention? Or are you worrying too much the rest of the day about the past or the future?

But it is up to each of us to find ways of overcoming difficulties.

Mr. Weigall. There is one question –

Dr. R. No! (laughter)

Dr. R. Come and have tea with me, Al. This meeting is mainly for newer people.

Q. (a new meditator) This is really about how to cope with noise. I feel it is absolutely all right when there is peace and quiet, but when there is noise – when the children are being obstreperous or something – I find I become tense.

Dr. R. That is also quite natural and one has not to get too worried about it; especially if it is because there are children around. You may have to wait for a moment of quiet; get them interested in something on their own, and then start to meditate.

You wouldn't believe what noise we have in the Ashram when we meditate with His Holiness. London is as quiet as anywhere! I mean, out there, there are birds singing in the rafters; loudspeakers outside; mooing cows; dogfights going on! And nobody notices. There are quite a few children playing around during audiences – he encourages them!

My wife and I have a particular difficulty over meditation which *we* want to consult *you* about. It happened again this afternoon. We sit to meditate and a loud cooing sound is heard, and this is a pigeon sitting on the drawing-room chimney.

(to Mrs. R.) What sort of noise does it make, dear wife?

Mrs. R. Coo, Coo...

Dr. R. Well, can anybody help us with this difficulty?

Mrs. Farley. suggested a gun.

Dr. R. No, too difficult. Have you tried taking aim up a chimney? Otherwise we'd have to stop and go outside in the rain to shoot it! Now surely you know the answer? You *must* know the answer.

A. Light a fire?

Dr. R. Yes. And just a few of your letters are enough! Then the bird goes over to the dining-room chimney where we don't hear him. Anyhow, all these difficulties have to be overcome by each of us.

Dr. R. to Q. who spoke about noise: What time of day do you find it possible to meditate?

Q. Early – it would mean getting up about 6 a.m. as the children wake so early now.

Dr. R. So what is the best time?

Q. Only if you get up so early that nobody else is about, then it is O.K.

Dr. R. Yes, that is difficult; then one gets less and less sleep. But people find ways of finding quiet until the children are trained to amuse themselves for half-an-hour.

Q. (another) Is it really possible to become oblivious to the noise around you if you persevere?

Dr. R. It is, you know. Strangely enough, it really is.

At one time when I was out with the Maharishi with two or three other people in Switzerland staying in an hotel at the top of the Simplon pass, we went up one morning to

meditate on an alp below the glacier. It became apparent that somebody was driving a herd of cows through us, and we looked at each other afterwards; for at the time we didn't open our eyes. And we asked the Maharishi: 'Was there something?' He said: 'I believe there was.' (laughter)

It is possible to get used to anything.

It is always said that the *inner* noise is the difficult one, the dangerous one – the noise of the whirling wheels of our psychology.

Can you dodge that all right?

Q. (who had spoken about noise) Yes.

Dr. R. Good for you (clapping his hands). Any other questions?

When Mrs. Henry began to ask a question, Dr. R. said:

Are you new, Mrs. Henry? You practically brought me into the Work! (laughter)

A. (to Dr. R.) Well, you have rather silenced her!

Dr. R. Come on, more questions!

As there was still no response, he went on:-

May I just start something by saying that there is a lot of evidence that what the Shankaracharya says is true: that we lose a *sense of direction*, every now and then (with Meditation). It is, he says, all-important to recover our sense of direction, a general direction of where we hope the Meditation will take us and what it is for – then everything goes easily.

He tells a story in relation to that:

A countryman – not greatly endowed with brains – had to go to visit his father-in-law in a neighbouring village, and it meant going to the station and catching a train. And in the flurry of the moment, in his excitement, he could not remember the name of the place where his father-in-law lived. So he said to the booking clerk:

'A ticket to my father-in-law's place, please.'

The booking clerk said: 'You must give me a name.'

'I don't know the name, my father-in-law's place please! You have got to give me a ticket!'

And the booking-clerk said (as the train went out of the station): 'You had better go away and try to find out where you want to go. Then you can have a ticket for anywhere.'

(Record, 29 April 1973)

Dr. R. H.H. commented: 'In just that way when we sit to meditate we forget where we want to go; it is as if we dialled the wrong number.' Any questions about that?

Q. Is the Meditation meant to take us beyond the mind?

Dr. R. Yes; and it is meant, first of all, to rest it completely from all mental activity, and take us from all external sensations and thinking and knowledge to a place where none of those exist, where there is no psychological activity at all. And Stage 1 of the Meditation is when we get to complete silence and peace.

Then stage 2 is the result of that. You come through the physical level, through the subtle level, and you reach what he calls the Casual level, which is at best unrealised potentiality. Then things can happen; the mind can then expand and be refreshed, and the true Self will reveal itself.

You are right; at the beginning of each half-hour we must remember that most of this inner noise is unnecessary and enquire how much is within our power to give up. Gradually we learn to give up everything for a few moments. All right? (Yes)

That is the only way we can stop this dominant hemisphere from talking the whole time – talking and acting; and only if that is silent will the quiet half of us whose natural function is going inwards – who naturally knows about the Divine Self – only in that way will our inner nature begin to get free – Liberation – and it will do the rest for us.

Q. I have had experience of this kind of thing, that when I begin to meditate I put the ideal into my mind, then I lose myself eventually in the meditation and then realise after a half-an-hour that I have experienced this.

Dr. R. Yes, that is quite true; you lose your ordinary self and you don't know anything at the time. During meditation you should have no knowledge at all, and in Samadhi you don't know that you are in the bliss. When you come out you come out with that ecstatic feeling. That is quite right. All we have to do from time to time is to pronounce the Mantra to ourselves to make sure we are meditating – make sure that we are not just drifting off into dreams.

Don't worry if the Mantra disappears, because that means it is going below the level of our consciousness; it is doing good work underneath without our knowing it. But every now and then just pronounce it to make sure.

We have all got a lot still to learn about the Meditation and about the nature of this Self, the Atman.

Q. I very often find after meditation that I am reluctant to talk to anybody. Does this mean that the dominant hemisphere has been put to sleep?

Dr. R. Yes, that's fine; I am very glad to hear this. I wish more people felt this, lack of desire to talk!

It shows me how justified Meditation is. Yes, the dominant hemisphere does all the talking. The quiet hemisphere has no words, so what you say is quite true. The personality, ordinarily so dominant, has not necessarily been put to sleep, but made quiet so that you are a more balanced person – both sides of your nature are working as one. It is a lovely peaceful state. Good.

Dr. R. then went on:

We have something we would like you to hear of the Shankaracharya's, and we have a little music; then we would like to meditate after that. But first we want to hear some more genuine and practical questions, like these, as we have come all this distance, and it is still only a quarter to eight. We want a little conversation; so please carry on.

Q. If I try and meditate before I go to work in the morning I become so sleepy that I go back to sleep again.

Dr. R. That we don't call meditating. You are just sleeping in a chair instead of in bed. I should get to the office and sleep at work! Miss Scrutton explained that the questioner said that he found the meditation so soothing that he just went back to sleep again.

Dr. R. It is good that it is soothing, but to go back to sleep is not what meditation is for.

This brings us to the inevitable guide, the three Gunas. The dominant hemisphere varies from excessive activity to being worn out, tired and inert; it varies from Rajas to Tamas. The silent hemisphere during the day does not get a look-in.

What we want is to have Sattva, which is the energy of awakening where this lovely feeling of the two halves of us come together; it is only the Sattva which unites them. It is a feeling of suddenly waking up – light coming into the darkness. This is when the two sides join up.

So you must distinguish in your morning meditation where that Sattva disappears and it is replaced by Tamas or sleep.

The way to do that is to sound the Mantra loudly to yourself. If you want to go to sleep at night you sound it softer and softer and softer; then you are asleep. If you want to stay awake during a half-hour, you sound it louder and louder, and keep it as loud as possible whenever you have this feeling of wanting to go to sleep.

There are a lot of good questions coming, from which I am learning a great deal. Please go on.

Mrs. Newble. This is a question about loss of direction. What is the right effort involved in remembering what one has forgotten?

Dr. R. I think it is *to be silent* for a moment. In that silence one collects oneSelf – one comes to oneSelf. It seems to be the one effort that works.

One aspect of this is to give up all problems, all thinking, all mental activity and do what you have to do as if you were under orders – simply stepping out when you are walking, unlocking a door with attention, nothing else going on at all. That is so very refreshing; one is just a servant of the Param-Atman.

That becomes very interesting if you take the Gospels psychologically. You remember Christ saying:

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

(Matthew 7: 21–23.)

Now meditators, just doing empty repetition, just repeating the Name, are saying 'Lord, Lord'. But what counts is, do they use the Meditation to do the Will of the Param-Atman, the Divine Self, the Christ or whatever you like to call it? 'Doing the Will' is not allowing anything to come between the action and the Director.

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Dr. R. then went on:

Well, at this point shall we read a little from the Shankaracharya?

A. This answers a question as to how one can have help to dive deeper.

S. There are three ways in which this help can be taken and these three ways relate to the three bodies. The first one is the field of activity, and there are a number of disciplines and practices which have been given us for the physical body.

The second one is in the realm of the subtle body – the mind, through which one communicates whatever one has within. Whatever one feels, whatever one thinks one communicates and tries to get further guidance, which is of course being done here and now. [Dr. R. That means in his Ashram at this audience].

The third realm is Bhawana, the emotional realm of the Causal level. This is by far the most potent of the fields. In this field the aspirant gets inspiration – inspiration to move on the spiritual line. This is usually what takes one to the deeper levels. To be on the deeper levels is to be in the purified state of these three types of function. So, when the activity which one undertakes is entirely tuned to the Truth, to that true Knowledge which has been given to us, then the physical activities will take one to the deeper level. When the ideas, the true Knowledge which is being imparted to the aspirant are held in their true and pure form, without being adulterated with any other ideas or doubts. These then purify the mind and take it into the deeper level.

The third one is the realm of emotions. For that, the Meditation has been prescribed, and the more one does it properly, the more one goes deeper. One comes to the state where there is no division in the act of meditation. Then one would find oneself at the deeper levels.

It is only through these three ways that one can go deeper. Whatever one says, one should do: whatever one thinks, one should say: and whatever one feels, one should express.

Dr. R. That is in the unified state which should continue during the day. The next question was from Lady Allan, wasn't it?

Reading continues:

M.A. One has no doubts about the Meditation, but one often has doubts about one's own meditation and feels that it is only Grace which can purify it. One could not do it oneself.

S. This observation is of great importance, and great devotees have always expressed this situation all over the world. They do everything in their power to carry out the discipline of body, mind, and heart and yet they feel insufficiency and have this longing for the Grace of the Teacher. This, in fact, keeps the path of transformation and union open for the Grace pouring from the Teacher. The aspirant makes the effort by himself, but the Teacher's Grace joins in to enliven the stream of transformation. The feeling of insufficiency livens up the possibility of the flow of influence from the Teacher.

If, on the other hand, the aspirant feels confident of having done enough to deserve this or that, then this cuts off the stream of Grace, so that reconnection is difficult and further advance is impossible.

(Record, 17 January 1974)

Dr. R. It is very, very important to realise that we are part of a very large Tradition of Conscious origin and Conscious continuation – that we have one of the four heads of it as a constant guide; only seen occasionally perhaps on the physical level, but on the subtle and Causal levels present always as a constant guide. I sent him a message just lately saying that I was having a great many answers from him to my questions on the subtle level, and I have just had an encouraging message back that we are all in his mind at the same time just as much.

So try to realise that the individual has nothing of his own at all – that he is raw material; but if he is lucky enough to be in this stream of Grace from a Conscious person and a great Tradition, then he is bound to succeed. So do let us give ourselves a lift with this thought when we feel depressed over the insulation or isolation that the awful feeling of ‘I’ gives us. Let us raise ourselves to a state where we have this lovely confidence in a power which is ‘Greater than I’.

Dr. R. then concluded:

Now let’s have some music, and after the music go into Meditation.

Music: Slow movement from Brahms Sonata in A Major for violin & piano

MEDITATION

(Very Sattvic! A quarter of an hour with no disturbance at all)

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