

12 July 1977

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

After a few announcements about arrangements here over the holidays, Dr. Roles began as follows:

We have just come to the end of giving a large number of people the Meditation, and we have noticed over the years that there are two main kinds of reception at the Initiation. Perhaps, four out of five people in the general run want to meditate, yet when they start, they try to hammer the word out with this dominant hemisphere. And we notice the difference between them and those in whom it goes naturally to the quiet hemisphere and penetrates inwards in the first minute or two, causing an obvious change in their inner (autonomic) nature which is shown at once by changes in breathing and muscular relaxation, so you are not at all surprised to hear that the rhythm of the Mantra has also changed. The others show no change at all; their eyelids continue to flutter; their foreheads continue to be contracted; and when you ask them if it has changed speed they say, 'No'. You ask them 'what speed was it going at?', and they show you with their hand that it is going thump, thump, thump at the ordinary speed of their thoughts.

This is merely tiring for them; it takes us quite a long time to get them to stop doing it in that way; and they tend to revert to this mechanical repetition when they get on their own.

Well, we are all subject to this. We have weeks when we try and hammer it out because our minds are so busy; but to go on to fuller and fuller evolution of the Meditation we need to know a bit more about the mechanism of the two hemispheres and the harmonious action that meditation should produce.

I still think the best, most general description of the action of the two halves of the brain is in this UNESCO periodical, *The Courier*, 1976. It describes how each of us is two entirely different people in the same skull trying to coexist; but the trouble with all these scientific pronouncements is that it is always the dominant hemisphere domineering, and describing these things in scientific experiments and language; and it is impossible to understand the function of the inner half of us that way.

So, while all this was of great interest to the scientist a few years ago, the wave of interest has now passed on to other things. But for meditators it remains very important. How are we going to understand how different the two people within each of us are in the way they see the world? How are we going to learn how to unite them? Because this is the function of Yoga or Union; and our Meditation is derived from Raja Yoga, the Yoga of Consciousness, which can unite the Consciousness of these two, so that the Meditator the rhythm of the Mantra, and the Divine Self all become One.

Are there any questions on this. (Pause) No words; that's good! (he laughs)

Miss Sue Cassini. What will bring that feeling which you had at the Initiation back?

Dr. R. There are lots of ways. The chief advice the Shankaracharya gives is to increase the intake of Sattva – to read or look at whatever will produce more Sattva; also save it from

being wasted; and to learn how the stores of Sattva already within us can be released. It is all to do with a Third Force, this Sattva, which can unite the other two. Then the two sides of our nature unite and everything goes happily. So, it is an individual matter; I mean; in the BBC I expect you have your own methods? (laughter)

So the first thing we have to do is to know a bit more about it; and we said that the scientific descriptions won't get us there. It is left with the imaginative writers, the artists, painters, poets – to give us the most useful and vivid accounts. Here is a remarkable one (an account which you and I were probably brought up with) namely: *Alice through the Looking-glass* which is quite the best description of the dream world – the subtle world of the autonomic – that I've been able to find.

I will get Lord Allan to read just a little bit at the crucial moment – suppose Alice had sat down to meditate (holding the kitten of course) how does she get across? How does she get her attention from the ordinary daytime state to the other?

A. reads (p.9):

Now, if you'll attend, Kitty, and not talk so much, I'll tell you all my ideas about Looking-glass House. First there's the room you can see in the glass – that's just the same as our drawing-room, only the things go the other way... all but the bit just behind the fireplace.

...the books are something like our books only the words go the wrong way; I know *that* because I've held up one of our books to the glass...

How nice it would be if we could only get through into Looking-glass House! I'm sure it's got, oh! such beautiful things in it. Let's pretend there's a way of getting into it, somehow, Kitty. Let's pretend the glass has got all soft like gauze... Why, it's turning into a sort of mist now, I declare! It will be easy enough to get through – she was up on the chimney piece while she said this, though she hardly knew how she got there. And certainly the glass *was* beginning to melt away, just like a bright silvery mist.

In another moment Alice was through the glass, and had jumped lightly down into the Looking-glass room. The very first thing she did was to look whether there was a fire in the fireplace, and she was quite pleased to see that there was a real one, blazing away as brightly as the one she had left behind. 'So I shall be as warm here as I was in the old room,' thought Alice. 'Warmer in fact, because there'll be no one here to scold me away from the fire. Oh, what fun it will be, when they see me through the glass, and can't get at me!'

Then she began looking about, and noticed that what could be seen from the old room was quite common and uninteresting, but all the rest was as different as possible. For instance, the pictures on the wall next to the fire seemed to be all alive, and the very clock on the chimney-piece (you know you can only see the back of it in the Looking-glass) had got the face of a little old man, and grinned at her. [No 'Time' any longer!]

'They don't keep this room so tidy as the other,' Alice thought to herself as she noticed several of the chessmen down in the hearth among the cinders; but in another moment, with a little Oh! of surprise, she was down on her hands and knees watching them. The chessmen were walking about two and two... [She began to see a pattern in there]

Dr. R. And so on.

That is the truth the Rev. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) seemed to have understood as a teacher of mathematics. For instance, the subtle room is rather like a playback of a tape

recorder in reverse; one view is the mirror image of the other and visually as she said about the writing. 'It is looking-glass writing.'

This makes it very difficult for this dominant hemisphere to understand what is going on in the subtle room – the looking-glass room. And although we are all made on the same plan, yet the contents of this dream world of Looking-glass House is entirely individual; and it reflects the house one lives in during the day.

So, one can't expect to see chessmen or talking tiger lilies or Tweedledum and Tweedledee, Humpty Dumpty or the Lion and the Unicorn etc. What we all share with Alice is the chance to start on the third square and get crowned queen on the eighth; if we persist over some time in giving up all the self-will we have, because every intervention of the left hemisphere takes us in the opposite direction.

Alice is soon to find that if she stops determining to go in a given direction, and goes in the opposite direction, she suddenly finds herself face to face with the next scene or whatever she wants.

Now is this, as the Americans say, 'meaningful' (he laughs) – or not?

We still think of this inner hemisphere as functioning in exactly the same way as the one we live in during the day; so in this materialistic age we neglect it completely, and this quiet one only comes into its own at night.

Any questions about this?

Q. (a woman) Is it important to see that the quiet hemisphere gets some food during the day?

Dr. R. Yes, I do think so. And what is important is that it gets some *recognition*; it likes having its existence recognised; because, ordinarily this one – the quiet one – gets trodden down all the time and is being treated with no respect at all, not even realising it is there!

It is important to give it some recognition and try and give it a little of its favourite food.

Michael Fleming. Is it the pumpkins, which the Shankaracharya described in a story, we should listen for?

Dr. R. That story was a good description of the different operation of the two halves. An 'emotional' and an 'intellectual' were going down to the river to have a bathe, with the intellectual grumbling away:

'I can't understand this stupid Almighty who makes tiny little fruits like mangoes grow on great big trees; and enormous great fruit such as pumpkins grow on little bushes. I mean, it is just illogical; it doesn't make sense.'

The emotional man heard all this, but could only suffer in silence. [Couldn't he, Bobby? (laughter)]

When they got back and were taking a rest under a tree, a mango fell off the tall tree and hit the intellectual on the head – hurting him very considerably.

On recovery he said. 'Well, now I see that the Almighty had some sense because a pumpkin would have laid me out completely if it fell from that height.'

(Record, 8 March 1970)

Dr. R. (to M.F.) That is the one you mean? (Yes)

This illustrates the differing viewpoint of people dominated by one or other hemisphere.

Mrs. Fleming. He said that at any moment one has a prompting of what is right or wrong in relation to Self-realization; perhaps one misses these, because one has to be quiet to hear them?

Dr. R. Yes, that's it. There are promptings going on at any moment which are available; but we make so much noise that we don't hear. So we need to be *still* as often as possible during the day between jobs, instead of switching on the radio or reading the paper. *Be still* if you have a few minutes to yourself.

Q. (a woman) This external considering; is it in the non-dominant – the passive-hemisphere that it works.

Dr. R. No, it is *the two working harmoniously together*, each doing its right share; this is what we aim for. It is not to get one working more than the other; but it is to get the two sides of our Being – the personality and the essence – working in harmony, and especially in our dealings with other people. So that this one – the dominant – isn't allowed to ride roughshod over somebody who looks at things differently and is made differently to oneself. Our job is to be One – not to be split into two, so that we neither have to sacrifice one or the other, which is what people do in ordinary life. But to be One, and for this One to develop all its potentialities by harmonious working together.

Because – the whole brain is subject to what we described a month or two ago as 'The Alchemy of Happiness'; and *both* sides have to be transformed by this Alchemy – each in its own way, but with the Unity at the end of it. It is rather hard for this hemisphere – the passive – to describe in words!

Alan Caiger-Smith. When you gave that description of Looking-glass House, I rather took to it because sometimes it seems to me that this room which we go into is extremely untidy, particular when you first go into it. Things are all over the place, and surely there is a real difference between the sort of confusion of dreams and recollections limited by that room, and the room you get to sometimes when you pass through it?

Dr. R. Yes, the Causal realm is beautifully clear. But there's also a difference between the untidiness of Looking-glass room when people first get to it, and its comparative order when the Meditation has been at work in there over some time. (C-S. agreed)

With the good influences, the good company, the Meditation, the true Knowledge and the influence of the Realized man – the motley content of the inner room gradually begins to take shape and form in a creative kind of way, so that it performs orderly and useful functions. They don't go in pigeon holes as in the other one; but will be governed by rhythms and patterns and harmonies, and by the Divine presence eventually. But just going into it at first is rather frightening, do you find?

A. Caiger-Smith. The interesting thing is the way that, sometimes when one begins to meditate – speaking for myself – I can get into more jumble than before, because all these things seem to go wrong. When I was busy, I didn't notice them. Then, if you persevere, you get through them where it is much cleaner and simpler; and indeed leave a lot of the jumble and 'chessmen in the fireplace' behind you.

Dr. R. Yes, and this is the thing that we don't do really properly in Meditation; because if we do go into Looking-glass House we keep stopping to look at the view and examine the contents and stop to play with things; whereas we should, as the Shankaracharya tells us, walk straight on to the silence dropping off everything else.

But if we remember that it is all a dream-world and unreal, I think it is easier to go on through it all and not believe in it.

Then, if we do that patiently we find at moments when we have more Sattva that we are suddenly more creative than ordinarily. It is rather thrilling; there is a world of discovery, a world of beauty that one didn't suspect. This, of course, is unlimited; it reveals more and more possibilities; and the supreme examples to the Christian are the parables in the Gospels which are dreams, but dreams which illustrate Truth.

So we are interested in the way creativity seems to come; and on a more mundane level I would like to mention the story of Robert Louis Stevenson which his wife, Fanny, tells in her memoirs – about how he wrote *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, which is another description of what I have been talking about.

He was ill from his tuberculosis – had a high temperature and haemorrhage, but one night he seemed to dream all night; and the next day he wrote it all down feverishly and read it to his wife.

She said, 'You've spoilt it; you've ruined a good thing.' So he looked at her furiously and threw it on the fire.

But the next night he had the luck to dream the same dream over again, and this time he understood it much better; and he remembered it much better. So when, in the subsequent forty-eight hours he wrote it down again, it was a masterpiece and a best-seller so it established his literary career.

Well, perhaps we have wandered around a bit too much, do you think? What might be nice would be to meditate; at any rate not go on with this thing – the dominant hemisphere – and after that to read something from the Shankaracharya which gives one of his many descriptions of what we are talking about.

MEDITATION

Afterwards:

This question was put to the Shankaracharya in 1973:

Q. The Shankaracharya has spoken of Meditation as Union; the practice of Meditation as one-pointed Attention; and has emphasised the repetition of the Mantra. Could he say more?

S. This is a journey of the individual Consciousness into the Universal Consciousness. One starts the Mantra and repeats the Mantra, and one initiates this at the level of the individual. (Dr. R. The personality) And this repetition of the Mantra is leading on to the bare thread of Meditation which is one-pointed Attention (Dharana).

This movement is aimed at only one thing. That is, to cut out or diminish the activity due to the Rajas that is involved in life.

Although it is known as 'the practice of Meditation,' yet this practice is leading towards the end of activity. Slowly, and gradually, this march towards non-activity

takes place, and one reaches the realm of Union, which is stillness or Unity. This is the experience of the Self as Universal. Here, there is no duality and there remains no *place* to move on to; and there is no *time* to change to. For He is the place, the time, and also the substance. In that profound silence, stillness, or Union, all movements stop, and there is only One without a second, and that is the Atman Himself – the Observer.

Dr. R. All this is in relation to Meditation, for at the time he was speaking to the head of the School of Meditation in London.

A. continued:

S. This does not mean that all relationships and agitations would have disappeared from our inner universe. It only indicates that there is, during meditation, no initiation of any agitation from the Self.

We know that there are five levels of consciousness, known as unconsciousness, sleep, dream-state, daytime state and Samadhi. This particular state which we are considering is unique and does not come under any one of these five states of consciousness. When one comes away from that state, then one feels joyful, just as when one goes to see some great man and returns feeling that everything seems good, beautiful and pleasant.

That state of Union is devoid of all agitations, desire, need, and is profoundly still without any hankering; fully satisfied and complete in all respects.

(Record, 9 November 1973)

After a pause, Dr. Roles concluded:

Well, we meet again the second Tuesday of August, which will be the 9th August. I hope you have a marvellous holiday and don't stay back in order to be here on the 9th August!

But, there might be a chance – even for two minutes – to get this profound stillness if you are on holiday and out of routine work. It is when one escapes from the habitual rut that one finds again the stillness and the freshness of everything.

Then:

If you had one last question before the end of the world, what would it be?

Dr. Cox. The question suggested is that there is the coming of the Messiah – He who takes others' burdens.

Dr. R. You think that is coming?

But it is said that at times of great trouble when everybody gets into an insoluble mess that that is the time when some power shows the way clearly and takes the trouble away in time; and some have said that the coming of this Meditation in the West around 1960 was a prelude to such an event.

Dr. Cox. That is the feeling that led to the question.

Dr. R. Good. Well, let's pretend, as Alice said.

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