

9 August 1977

## GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Dr. Roles first asked Lord Allan to give the announcements:

A. The next Meditation meeting will be on Tuesday, 13th September, and then there will be another one on the 11th October.

There are Working Parties each Thursday evening during the holidays until the end of September, that is, and those begin at 7.20 p.m. Anybody is welcome and one doesn't need to come regularly, but when you feel the need of good company.

Then we are asking for more people to help us decorate during the first fortnight in September Dr. Roles's room where the Initiations are given, so it is of particular importance to us. There are lists on the landing and on the hall table with details of what is required, and would you have a look at them and see what you could do.

Dr. R. They have got the old man out of the way to the continent just for that fortnight, so he would be very glad if you got it done then!

A. This Autumn, we want to try and make as early a start as we can with the Initiations of new people into Meditation; so we are asking for people to give the names of those who they think would be interested, *now*, rather than wait until the beginning of term. The sooner we get the names of people in, the better.

Dr. R. (to Mr. M. Fleming) Michael, is there anything you want further to say? Is Alan Caiger-Smith here? (No.)

Mr. F. stressed the need to get the preliminary interviews going now and not to wait until next term.

A. Finally, about Programmes. These Programmes, which Dr. Roles is showing, are ready for anyone who wants one. Would the people who sent in an envelope for one please collect their envelope from the table on the top of the stairs. If they are not collected, they will be posted.

Dr. R. These Programmes were rather hurriedly put together, because we only had about a fortnight ago a letter from India enclosing these extracts from two talks which His Holiness had given just recently at his Ashram. They are very entertaining and may be appreciated by people during the next two months.

I don't know if anybody has questions about the Meditation which they have been saving up? – questions of interest to large numbers of people, not just small things.

\*

As there was no response, Dr. Roles went on:

I want the subject of our talk to begin, at any rate, with one reason why the need for Meditation as a part of life seems to become more and more obvious if you take the Meditation in the right way. *One of the reasons why any human endeavour tends to fail is because it changes all the time, and what is needed is permanence.* I would like Allan to read

to you a passage (which some of you may have heard) pointing this out. It was a letter from the Shankaracharya to me.

A. Dr. Roles had written in the following terms:

Q. Is there any further advice His Holiness can give on the subject that the Atman alone is real, and looks on all the changing events and situations as a passing show without getting involved.

The Shankaracharya's answer was this:

S. In order to appreciate the Self described in the Upanishads one needs simple methods. Many such descriptions have been given in the past, but more light can now be thrown on the subject.

The states of consciousness experienced in deep sleep, dreams, the daytime state, spiritual awakening – Samadhi, etc., are governed by the influx of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, in people, situations and events. These all undergo change, but the Observer who sees them all as a passing show always remains the same. This Observer never registers any change in itself. If any modification appears, this must happen to the individual ego since change is in its very nature.

For example. Pure gold always remains gold while its uses and shapes and forms are larger than any modification.

The sky remains the same while storms, clouds, rain and snow keep on changing our view of it, and yet do not affect the sky in any way. One experiences this very vividly every time a plane takes us up above the cloud ceiling.

The waves of the sea cause no loss or gain to it.

In the same way, all these passing shows of the Gunas do not change the Atman, but only provide variety in its appearance.

(Record, 30 August 1970)

Dr. R. So, the Atman alone is real in the sense of being permanent and unchanging.

There has been remarkable corroboration about this which we will go into in the Autumn. Many people now have recorded their clinical 'death' when their heart has stopped and they have been pronounced 'dead' by their doctors, but who have been resuscitated and returned to life.

Strangely enough, they all say the same thing – that death is a very happy state from which they are very reluctant to come back; and it is happy because they meet up with what they call a 'Being of Light', which we think must be the Atman; and they enter a new and permanent state of Consciousness which they never remember having had before.

Well, there is a lot of evidence about this and we will go into it.

But to revert to the question of *permanence* just on the physical level – gold. Here is a colour photograph from the *National Geographic* of a statuette from Tutankhamen's tomb thirty four centuries old and yet quite unchanged.

So this casket of gold which I'm holding up for you to see will probably survive for a very long time after we are all dead, if nobody steals it and melts it down! It is a beautiful piece of work.

And I have here, too, a golden Russian rouble from the time of Catherine the Great, and it is dated 1775 sent to me by somebody who was a member of the Royal family who escaped

from Russia with a certain amount of possessions. It reminds me – and I think it should remind all of us of Mr. Ouspensky's remark in the Psychological Lectures that 'If one understands the value and permanence of certain things, one will understand a great number of other things, too'. He used to say that 'If we looked at a silver Russian rouble at the time of the last Czar, its value was about two shillings; and then consider the value of the rouble in Soviet Russia today, and you will learn a lot.' We don't know how much that is worth (referring to the rouble he was holding) but a golden rouble at the time of Catherine the Great was worth the height of Russian glory.

But then gold, of course is a symbol – a symbol of something probably even more permanent. One marvellous pot in gold also from Tutankhamen's tomb (picture shown) had an inscription with it which was part of a prayer – 'Praise from the chief wife of the King, his beloved Nefertiti, living, healthy and youthful for ever and ever' – this is part of a hymn which shows that the ancient Egyptians valued permanence above everything else.

They achieved permanence, of course, on the physical level with all these golden ornaments and other things left with people when they died; but it is all symbolic because they regarded their souls as the important thing and the bodies as the showcase of the soul.

Now that is thirty-three centuries ago, and there is some evidence that it is about the same age as our Mantra – the Mantra we have been asked to use. It is pre-Indian; it is not an Indian word; it has come from Egypt; it has the same derivation as an Egyptian word; and it is still as good today as it was then and that is why we use it.

In the Meditation we are trying to achieve permanence, and let us regard it that way.

Now, are there any questions about that?

(to A.) Do you think that is rather mixed up; have you any ideas?

A. No, I don't think so.

Miss K. Snewin. Is there any value in being passive to events?

Dr. R. That is too general a question. Some events demand action. If one lives at a better level of consciousness, one will know which events demand action and in which events one has to be passive.

Undoubtedly, we are much too active for no reason at all – like a squirrel in a cage. That is of no value, so as you say, it is often valuable to ask yourself, 'Why am I doing all this?' The secret ultimately will be to develop peace of mind and keep it whatever one's body is doing. Does that answer your question or will you ask some more about it?

Miss Snewin. It seems that it is necessary to do one's daily work; but apart from that one is engaged in a lot of unnecessary activity.

Dr. R. Only you can tell whether it is necessary or unnecessary; so, by coming to yourSelf twice a day and consulting the Atman which is living inside you, you will learn what you are required to do – how you are meant to be using your life. Don't think anybody else can be close enough to you to advise you about what was necessary and what was unnecessary.

All right? Are you happy with that? (She nods)

We are, of course, citizens in the West supposed to be living an active life and to be taking part in our family and social circle, and sometimes even in the affairs of our country. We are

not supposed to retreat from these responsibilities and the art of living is to learn how to live one's life fully and enjoyably, and yet prepare for the next stage in our journey, that moment which all embodied beings have to face one day or another.

For people who have been resuscitated say that at the time of death one is asked (very benevolently) such questions as. 'Are you ready to die?' and 'What have you got to show me from your life?' and you will then get a flashback of the whole of your life in a moment and in every vivid form. There is no condemnation or anything in those questions. They are part of one's education people feel.

But what stands out are any acts of unkindness to other people. In this flashback those are the things that become evident to the dying person.

So, that is all we have to do – to try and get more and more Knowledge of this Self, this 'Being of Light', and to come to resemble it by being more tolerant and kind and reasonable with other people. Then our destination is assured. Meditation should help that. If it is not helping that, you have to know the reason why.

Anything about Meditation now? – is it helping those things?

Mrs. Cardew. Is it lack of sufficient devotion towards the permanent that makes our Meditation so often weak?

Dr. R. It certainly is with me, yes; one does not put first things first, and other ridiculously unimportant things crowd into the mind.

(to A.) I think you agree with me there? (A. laughs)

Q. Since one gets such a lot from Meditation, how can one avoid having a high expectation when one sits down to meditate?

Dr. R. One should set one's sights high, but not as an expectation. Rather it is a *communion*; you are not wanting to get something out of the Atman. You are trying to communicate with Him and do Him honour, make His name holy.

(To Colin Lucas) What do you feel about that, Colin?

Colin Lucas. I think the feeling of gratitude helps enormously.

Dr. R. Yes. It is putting the 'Being of Light' first, the Being whose Name you are repeating in Meditation, isn't it? – and your own petty affairs a long way behind.

So it is not an expectation like, 'You give me something damn quick!' That attitude is not appreciated, I am told!

Mrs. Field. Do you think it is wrong to do the Meditation without a belief in an afterlife?

Dr. R. Not at all; it doesn't matter what we believe. We all have to die one day, and then we'll know for sure! So don't speculate about the future. You just live this life as best you can and when you die you will know; I hope that will be a long time ahead!

That's the big joke – on believers or unbelievers alike – they have to find out. (he laughs)

Mr. Lucas. Is not this idea that you repeat *innocently* a great help?

Dr. R. Yes, and I think that can answer your question, Mrs. Cardew.

Lady Allan. (as repeated) My wife reminds me that the Shankaracharya said to me that 'If,

during meditation, experiences or thoughts however high-flown, come in, then you are not meditating properly; and the meditation is not complete. In full Meditation one has no thoughts and one gives up completely. Therefore, there can be no expectation.'

Dr. R. A valuable reminder! Expectation may come at other times, but you are quite right, during meditation one should know or expect absolutely nothing.

A. I rather regard Meditation as a 'coming home', and I think that if one sits down with the idea that one is 'coming home' and then meditate, perhaps it is all right.

Dr. R. Yes. That's probably part of what Lucas means by 'repeating innocently'. But don't expect to know what you are experiencing during the half-hour. The summit of achievement during Meditation is Samadhi, and in Samadhi you know nothing at all until you come out.

So, don't be too hard on yourselves if you don't know you are getting anything spectacular in a half-hour; you are not supposed to know. The result will be more energy, more efficiency, more peace and calm, and more ability to cope with your active life. You will only know by results at other times.

Mademoiselle. How can one avoid the long spells when the Meditation does not mean anything?

Dr. R. We can't directly avoid even that Mademoiselle, except by noting how you spend the time – how you spend your life otherwise. If you are helping other people; if you are reading inspired writings; if you are extracting this Sattva – this special kind of energy, then it will show in the half-hours. But I also think you especially are being too hard on yourself – both about your Meditation, and about the rest of your life. You are so involved with yourself, ribbing yourself all the time. So, let yourself be, and let the good Lord take you 'for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer'.

Shall we meditate now?

## MEDITATION

Dr. Roles then asked Lord Allan to read something from the Shankaracharya in 1974.

A. reads:

S. The ultimate end of the Meditation is to reach to this total immobility or the profound stillness, and this is very deep. No meter could measure it; it is without end.

It is not necessary that one should remain in this state for a long period. Longer meditation does not mean the achievement of this profound stillness. Most of the time spent during the meditation is in preparation to lead one to this state. There may be meditators who would sit for hours and hours but without any avail, for they keep on turning their mechanical thoughts in particular rotation. They end up tired both physically and mentally.

Those who manage to dive deep, they come out with potentiality emanating from the Will of the Absolute.

(Record, 9 November 1973)

Dr. R. I am quite sure that during the Meditation just now there were a lot of other people meditating fairly deeply, for I never ordinarily have so much of the stage of Meditation where

one is just floating – called Dharana – where you are not sure whether you are meditating, whether you are repeating the Mantra or not. In and out, in and out, but very peaceful.

Whatever they say about themselves, I am quite sure there are a lot of people here who are meditating very adequately indeed.

Remember the first stage is Dharana – one-pointed Attention to the rhythm of the Mantra – not necessarily to its physical characteristics as a sound or pulse; but to its Presence in a subtle form.

But the second stage is where you know nothing – you are floating and you are ever at peace.

But when you suddenly jerk to yourself, you realise how refreshed you have been; how much energy you have got; and how differently everything looks.

Did anybody feel that? Put your hand up. (Several hands were put up.)

Now it is quarter-past eight. Is there anything anyone wants to say?

Q. (a woman) One is for ever wanting to know for oneself whether one is doing it correctly, and for me, this is constantly interrupting my meditation.

Dr. R. Yes, yes; one must not be bothered with things like that. There is no such thing as doing it ‘correctly’. It is absolutely different for everybody, and for the same person at different times.

And it is not you doing it, anyway! (he laughs) So get rid of that right away; it belongs to the Being of Light, the Atman. That Being is doing it and really all we personally achieve is to get in His way sometimes – but not always!

(to M.F.) You would agree that there is no ‘correct’ Meditation. Checkers have to be very careful not to insist that their way of meditating is the ‘correct’ one.

(Then further to A.) Did you want to say anything more about what you were thinking in Majorca – the two birds on the tree?

A. I think one can get the feeling of that permanence if one thinks more about that particular story of the two birds.

Dr. R. That particular simile in the Upanishads about ‘the two birds of identical plumage inhabiting the self-same tree; the one eating of the sweet fruit, and the other not eating – looking on’.

These two birds of identical plumage – one is the individual Atman, and one is the Self that lives in the hearts of all – the Param-Atman.

(to A.) That is what you were thinking of?

A. Yes, and the idea that in Realization they are both the same.

Dr. R. Yes, both the same; one has a more limited outlook, that’s all.

A. asked if there could be a further reading.

Dr. R. Why not?

A. reads:

During the *Mahabharata* episode, Arjuna asked Shri Krishna about the man with such stillness. In the *Gita*, such a man is called one who is steady and still in his Knowledge and Being.

Dr. R. You heard that? – ‘One who is steady and still in his Knowledge and Being’.

Krishna said that such a man would not be agitated in discomfort, pain or misery. He would not rise in revolt against any misfortune. Even if a calamity befalls, he neither gives up, nor feels sorry. He only attends to overcoming its effects with a smile.

When honoured with success, pleasure or comfort, he never bursts into jubilation. He simply accepts them with gratitude and then forgets. In short, one could say that such a man with this profound stillness *always remains the same*, and expresses efficiency, wisdom, love and mercy.

(*ibid*)

Dr. R. I think that is enough. I think that is beautiful.

And it doesn't mean only a *man*, Mademoiselle. (laughter) Whatever mistake comes, one accepts it with a smile; and when honoured one doesn't erupt into jubilation.

Well, I think that is a very nice note to end with. It is twenty past eight. Have a nice holiday if you haven't had it yet.

The next meeting like this will be on Tuesday, 13th September.

\* \* \*

