

8 February 1977

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Dr. Roles to Lord Allan: You have some announcements.

A. The next of these Meditation meetings will be at 7.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 8th March. There will not be one in April because it is the Easter weekend if we stick to our normal date, so the one after that will be on May 10th.

You will see outside that there are copies available for sale of the new Journal published by the Study Society. It is called *The Bridge*, and this publication is really an experiment. It is a Journal produced under the auspices of this Society in the hope that it will provide a means of communication for members of this Society – indeed for all those people who come to our meetings – and our friends who are not necessarily associated with us here.

Dr. R. Both in England and in several other countries.

A. Yes indeed.

We are also hoping that it will provide a forum for the exchange of experiences and the fruits of our study together, and of our own.

So that we can know whether the Journal should be continued, whether we should try and produce further numbers, the editors would be very grateful if they can hear from those who have read it and learn from them whether they think that this or some modified form of the Journal in a different format or with a different approach would answer a need?

to Dr. R. Do you want to add to that?

Dr. R. The general aim of this Society must be implicit in such a Journal, so that anyone can recognise it, but there mustn't be anything *explicit*, which would certainly be misunderstood and get into wrong hands. So there must be no special language or matters private to the Society in such a Journal. We played safe on this first number, but we want to try other experiments with your help and comment.

A. I think that if people have ideas, it would be very helpful if they would send just a brief note to the editor, who is in fact Mr. Anderson jointly with Miss Wright. So if anybody has any ideas, just put them on a card and leave it here. It would be much appreciated.

Mrs. Henry. asked how often it is proposed to have this?

A. It is thought that we might do three a year if we had enough copy of the required standard and enough demand.

Dr. R. The only comment we have so far is from a friend (Maurethe) in the New York group who writes (2nd February):

The Bridge is wonderful! There's something in it for everyone; the poetry better than anything I've read for some time. I cried at the 'Winter Copse' by Bernadette Murphy; some years ago I had a longing to capture just such a scene with paper and pencil. She has completed my picture.

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Dr. Roles then began as follows:

Now I venture to say that not one of us is really getting the full benefit from two half-hours of Meditation yet. Many of us would agree that there must be a lot more that we cannot guarantee to get, although occasionally we get some surprises.

Now the reason why we are not getting even what I call 'Stage Two' of the Meditation has recently become rather clear, and the remedy is really easy. I would like to lead into this by getting Lord Allan to read a direct description of what I am talking about from a meeting with the Shankaracharya when I first experienced this Stage Two.

You, Allan, had gone to Lucknow in August 1964, and ten days later I followed and was there at your last audience before you flew off to the airport. After that, everything went exceptionally well for me (I think you had prepared the ground!) and my third session took place on the Friday of that week and it started with only two other people present, both of whom I had known and admired before.

I decided to sit on the floor with them and not in the usual chair like a VIP! His Holiness started to meditate, humming a scarcely audible little chant, as was his custom. I just kept a straight back – legs crossed – and set my mind wholly on the Mantra. The rhythm quietly slowed to the peaceful state. Suddenly it began to accelerate, going faster and faster as if my Consciousness was being carried up in a lift to some place at the top of my head. Then it descended again getting slower and slower until it disappeared in the silence; and this happened four or five times during that half-hour.

The talk that followed was recorded and Allan will read the recorded account, being translated (in Jaiswal's absence) by this man whom I admired and am now in touch with again.

A. The Record opens by saying that when the Shankaracharya opened his eyes, Dr. Roles was very happy.

Dr. Roles then said:

During the meditation just now I quickly reached to the silence. Then suddenly the Mantra rhythm began to go quicker and quicker, and my centre of Consciousness seemed to move up through the solar plexus, through the heart, to the centre of the head – the 'heavenly heart' – and then to the top of the head. Then the Mantra slowed gradually and I reached the silence again. This happened four or five times in the half-hour and now I feel happy and full of energy. Will you please explain this?

S. In happiness the Prana (call it 'Life-force') rises upwards, whilst in pain, strain or sorrow it is pressed down – depressed. At its lowest level it is activated in the pelvis, then goes from the lower abdomen up to the solar plexus. It can go higher, from solar plexus to heart, larynx, centre of the brain, to the top of the head, which is called Sushumna. Here, at the top, it swings on the waves of bliss.

The suffering and strain are heavier matters and they depress it down to the lowest point where it feels weak, limited, powerless and ill, as it becomes very dense and heavy.

Due to Meditation, the Prana is stilled, and in stillness and happiness it becomes lighter and rises higher in proportion to the degree of stillness and bliss.

R. If it happened to descend would coming back to the Mantra send it up again?

S. If it cannot rise then some strains are pulling it down. It is one of the laws of nature that when anything rises upwards, gravity will start pulling it down, just as one is pulled down by the leg while stepping up a ladder. If one gives importance to material substances then attachment to those things will drive one down. But if one is deeply detached from everything then Nature cannot hinder one's progress. Once you reach the top the forces of Nature cease to have any hold at all, so falling is out of the question. The way up is against Nature and the danger is only on the way. Once you reach the top then Nature gives up.

Dr. R. You need never come down.

(reading continues):

R. Have you any further instructions to give?

S. The Meditation discipline is a part of Divine activity – more like a medicine or panacea to give happiness. In everyday life and at all pressing moments it acts as a tonic to strengthen one with happiness and serenity.

R. One of the things which keeps me happy is the story you told yesterday.

S. (repeating the story of yesterday): Since the seventh room (the highest place of happiness) is one's birthright, some set of circumstances will happen to a spiritual aspirant at some time in the course of your life as was the case with the famous sage, Tulsi Das, author of the Hindi *Ramayana*.

Dr. R. He was the Indian contemporary of Shakespeare, and his *Ramayana* is now the chief popular form of religion that collects the crowds.

(reading continues):

S. He had always been very worldly and never inclined to spiritual things. He was so devoted to his wife that he couldn't bear to be away from her for twenty-four hours.

When he returned one evening he found the house empty. By the time he had traced his wife to her father's house it was nearly midnight. When he beat on the door she came out and said to him:

'If only a small part of the devotion you have to my body could be devoted to God, you would attain spiritual enlightenment.'

This was the shock which put him on the spiritual path.

(R Our System calls it the 'Second Conscious shock'.)

The Shankaracharya concluded:

It is the same for you. A certain set of circumstances had to happen before you could attain Realization; now just be happy, keep happy.

(Record, 22 August 1964)

Dr. R. then said:

Does that mean something to you all? We practise getting to the silence, dropping everything off that we can, and maybe we come to a place where it is very peaceful.

But I, personally, have never been getting enough of this Stage Two which is a rare thing; it comes once in a way, and we have absolutely no direct control over it. But if we cultivate

happiness in all circumstances; and particularly if when we sit to meditate we try to make the meditation an occasion for happiness – each half-hour – as if there had been no half-hours ever before; then we can quite quickly bring about a new sort of current that will lead to Stage Two.

Mr. Weigall. It seems very important to enjoy what little you have got rather than to hope for something else?

Dr. R. Enjoying what little you have got will bring more in due course. Don't regard all this as out of one's reach; it isn't at all. Nor is it dependent on one's external life. One can get this in prison; one can get it in the most frightful circumstances and, in fact, the more frightful the external circumstances, the higher one can rise if one just manages to do something.

In case anyone wants to know, my shocks don't come from my wife, like Tulsi Das, nowadays – not so much anyway! (laughter) My shocks come from the Shankaracharya and from within.

Nevertheless, a certain set of circumstances has to happen for each person, and once experienced they know clearly what they are after. You may have noticed that at these meditation meetings anyway, but also in whatever we do at Colet, we try to produce an atmosphere and a set of circumstances which will give the best opportunities for anybody who is just ready at that moment for the breakthrough. So we try different things. Are there any questions? Are you sure of what we are talking about?

Tony Anholt (actor). When the Shankaracharya was talking about gravity, did he mean to imply that the Mantra itself was bound by the laws of gravity? Then, if so, could the practice of the Yoga head-stand help? This isn't meant facetiously.

Dr. R. It is not quite like that; nor like the levitation described by Yogis! The body, in general (and many of its functions) is under the law of gravity.

The mind gets infected with physical gravity, and comes under a kind of spiritual gravity which keeps it on the floor. This is what we have to get away from, and it's why this is called 'against Nature'. The nature of the physical body is gravity – everything is falling – meditation is here to lift us up spiritually.

Dr. R. (to Anholt) You come to Professor Guyatt's meeting? (Yes) You asked a very important question: 'What is the Observer?' 'Who is the Observer?' Didn't you ask that? (Yes.)

Dr. R. Now this is an all-important question. The only permanent Observer is the Self that we are trying to approach in Meditation. But other parts of our mind have to do duty for this permanent Observer – we can train a part of our mind to act for Him. It used to be called 'Deputy Steward'. Though it will be discussed at your next meeting, keep on asking that question of yours.

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Dr. R. then continued:

Shall we try an experiment? Now we'll meditate in cold blood in the ordinary way. Just let everything fall away. If you can, find a little feeling of happiness, of being altogether; but just meditate – take it as it comes. After some music later, we will try again.

MEDITATION

Mr. Weigall. During meditation, don't you think that is the one time when we don't want an Observer?

Dr. R. Yes.

Mr. W. contd. I get the sort of feeling that there is an Observer at a low level during meditation; and so when I drift and seem to go to sleep I get the feeling of a knot being untied.

Dr. R. Not physical sleep; just a giving up, relaxing.

May I just come back to what you said. One doesn't want to observe anything during meditation; that is absolutely right, and this is meant to cultivate an approach to meditation at other times. That is what we are talking about now.

Also to counteract advice which I may have given inadvertently that one has to go deep in the sense of *down* in meditation: it is not deep in the sense of down; it is deep in the sense of *inward*. There is no need to go down at all. I know some people have got into trouble because they try to push the mind down all the time and get depressed.

Sue Cassini. I would like to know how you could observe exactly what was happening to you during meditation?

Dr. R. What we've said about not observing, not knowing, refers to what I'm calling Stage One. Stage Two is so striking that if you just let it happen, you can't help noticing. The point being that getting to the silence we may go through the whole eight stages of classical Yoga to Samadhi without knowing it. We don't know anything; even the Mantra disappears. We don't know whether we are repeating or not, and it is only afterwards that we know whether we were happy or not.

But this second stage I talked about has to do with Turiya, and then you begin to know. Having been to the silence, not knowing anything, then owing to this shock you rise up into Turiya and you know what is going on.

Again, don't worry about *place* in the body – where the meditation is, or anything like that. Don't begin to enquire – nothing like that; but simply recognise that we never get very far with the meditation unless we have Grace from within – from the Param-Atman Himself. It is the Param-Atman which produces this second Conscious shock and transforms one's ordinary half-negative emotions into ecstasy.

That comes through Grace, and any attempts to do it deliberately or to go through the motions are doomed to failure.

Evidently there is one brave woman in this room! Surely there are some more? We don't really know anything, do we? I don't! So can we start with somebody mentioning something they do know!

Q. I find that when circumstances in life are hard, then it becomes easy to meditate and more fruitful.

Dr. R. I quite agree. Good! But one shouldn't wait until circumstances become hard.

Q. (same) In that case you really need not worry because when you have to meditate well the circumstances will make you.

Dr. R. Yes, don't worry; that is a very good attitude. In a poor state the circumstances are always wrong: 'I can't meditate now because, because, because...' It depends on one's state. In a good state, the worse the circumstances, the more one can meditate and get results.

Mrs. Koren. If one does not get drawn by the circumstances of the day and one gets into the state that this is truly joyful, then I am reminded of the story of the holy man who pretended to be a holy man before a King and subsequently became holy. This pretence can turn into reality.

Dr. R. Yes, it is just as well if you don't feel cheerful, to *look* cheerful.

You start this second Conscious shock by not expressing negative or unpleasant emotion outwardly. That is within our power to acquire, it is a long time before we have control over the emotions themselves.

All right; we agree on that.

Mrs. Simpson. I doubt whether if the second Conscious shock ever comes during meditation?

Dr. R. Yes, yes – either then or later but rarely. What that term means is the transformation of negative emotions into positive – into love and joy which cannot turn negative.

One last point is that we waste a lot of time and energy – a lot of good chances – at moments when we *are* in contact with something higher (whether within us like the beginning of a good impulse or during some fine words being read to us at a meeting or, just when nothing is happening – in moments of peace).

At one talk which His Holiness gave to the general public he told this story to illustrate that in the life of a busy householder, the idea of the Meditation and the Source is often lost sight of:

Often a shock is needed, he said.

A rich man used to go to a Teacher, but while with him he would only talk about his household affairs. When asked why, he replied that: 'It was because his household people loved and respected him so much. Therefore they were always uppermost in his mind.'

One day after a session of this sort, the Teacher went to the man's house and gave a sewing needle and a reel of thread to his wife, saying to her: 'Your husband seems to be planning to take all his things with him when he leaves for the next world. Tell him to be sure to take this needle and thread for my sake as I shall need it to repair my torn clothes in heaven.'

When he heard *that* the husband got the message!

(Record, 16 January 1972)

So let us keep our possibilities more in mind, so we shall take with us when we die what we *can* take, namely the devotion and realization – the emotion of the Causal level instead of trying to take with us what we can't possibly take, namely things pertaining to our physical body and our turning thoughts.

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Dr. R. then concluded:

Well, what we planned is to have a little music of a different sort. (to A.) You have a nephew who has a remarkable son with a lovely treble voice, who has now gone to Eton with a musical scholarship and this music we are going to put on is from Fauré's *Requiem* (Pie Jesu) and it is the treble solo by this boy, when one of the choristers of St. John's, Cambridge.

Excerpt from Fauré's *Requiem*

MEDITATION

Afterwards:

The thought came to me during the *Requiem* that our Communion service (of the Church of England) expresses this feeling which we have tried to put forward tonight, particularly at the point where the Priest says:

Lift up your hearts,

and then:

Therefore with angels and archangels, and all the company of Heaven we laud
and magnify Thy glorious Name...

We should try and cultivate thoughts like that.

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