

14 March 1978

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Part of Vivaldi's *Gloria* was played before the Meeting began. (On the platform: Lord and Lady Allan and Mr. Michael Fleming) Mr. Fleming read the announcements:

M.F. The next Meditation Meeting will be on Tuesday 11th April.

There is to be a Work-in on Sunday 16th April and there are lists on the landing for names of those wishing to come for a day's work and some Good Company. There is always plenty of maintenance work to catch up on and this is one of the ways we try to do it. The day starts at 10 in the morning and goes on until teatime. Bring your own picnic lunch although coffee and cider will be provided.

Lord Allan. Dr Roles is back home and in very good form. My wife and I went to see him yesterday evening. He is very cheerful and all seems to be going well with him.

He gave us a paper which he suggested we should read tonight. It will become fairly obvious, when I read it, that questions will not be very appropriate. This was written by Dr Roles for tonight:

Message from Dr Roles – Spring 1978

This afternoon we want you to hear part of the most recent audience just received from Mr. Whiting of the School of Meditation in London, because it fits so well with the theme of our own visit last October and that of the New Zealanders in January.

Too often, in my opinion, we have grafted on to our own built-in view of life, some idea or fragment of talk from the Shankaracharya or other inspired sayings of the highest human minds, without realising how entirely and radically different is that view of life from the one we derive from today's average Western education. In doing that we lost the impact of the message, which is quickly forgotten because never put into practice.

It is worth, then, spending a few minutes in constructing a workable picture of the pattern of human life (derived from very many talks and impressions) which can bridge that gulf and enable us to put the following quotation into practice right away.

Forsaking our customary view of life – whatever that may be – let us suppose that each person's life is a testing-ground, capable of bringing out what is best in him – showing him the stuff he is really made of.

Further to that, one can regard one's physical life as a hurdle-race or steeplechase where the body is the horse and Mind the rider – Mind in the sense of the best level of mind that human nature has to offer (Sanskrit – Buddhi). The physical hurdle-race is governed by one set of natural laws while the rider is governed by quite a different set of laws and the two belong to different space-time systems. So the important thing is to keep them separate and distinct.

Meditation and the whole object of our Society based on Colet House is concerned with the laws governing the rider; the hurdle-race is left to the individual with no restrictions or even recommendations. We waste a lot of time getting the two mixed up.

For example, without being too clever we can see that just as modern history can be divided into centuries a single human life can be conveniently divided into decades; the interests and needs of each decade being different. In the first we receive our primary education and in the second decade we complete it. The 3rd and 4th decades (the twenties and thirties) are kept busy for most people in building careers and raising families; in the next two decades we are seeing results and reaping the harvest of our endeavours. By the sixties we start having thoughts of retirement, and if we are allowed to live a last or 8th decade we should spend it in preparation for the next stage of our journey – a new life perhaps in one case or a repeat of the steeplechase in others.

The point of all this can be seen in lots of questions that get asked about the Meditation – who should get it and when? Meditation doesn't exist for the first decade; we are forbidden to use it then, for it just doesn't work. Even during the second decade it is a highly individual matter; only a few teenagers would profit by doing it – the rest might easily spoil it for later.

Then during the twenties many people are much too busy and have too many diverse interests to feel the need for it. It's very often in the thirties and forties that people become aware of cracks in their armour, of needs not being supplied; of a suspicion that material life and its ambitions are a trap promising much but fulfilling little. But in my own case and in those of people I've known it was only in the final years that one has realised completely that Meditation is the only possession one can take with one – that it is indeed the pearl of great price for which one sells everything else.

So in the general pattern, it is not the age at which one receives the Meditation that is important. What is important is that Mind, the rider, should quickly appreciate what it is – a chase after inner individual perfection. It is a 'redeeming' or saving of Time – one starts by salvaging a minute or two from the stream of time, making that into five minutes, then ten, then half-an-hour and even two half-hours a day. By that time Mind has undergone a permanent change (a wholly new attitude to oneself, to other people, and to human life). One just cannot go back, for one will never be quite the same again and one can never lose it all.

Now the promised quotation! See if it doesn't agree in essentials with the above hypothesis. The answer about to be quoted came from a follow-up question asked by Mr. Whiting as the result of the famous description about three levels of rest or peace – physical sleep, rest at the subtle level (Mind) *between desires*, and rest at the Casual level which can be felt but not defined.

S. The universe is a movement; everything in the physical universe is moving, and so is the individual, for he cannot live without this movement. Life, then, is a movement; every movement is nothing but an expression of energy which everything living or non-living carries within it. It is part of the Laws of Nature that everyone must make use of that energy; and of course, if the output of energy is greater than the intake, then our business is running at a loss and all our reserves of energy would be lost in course of time.

So in order to keep the cycle of life going one has constantly to recharge one's batteries and also learn how to make extra energy for special purposes.

Again it is a law of Nature that the supply of extra energy is possible only by resorting to *stillness*; and the stillness could be physical, mental or spiritual, thus providing energy suitable for each of those levels. That is why the three types of rest were prescribed, so that the three bodies should acquire the energy they need for further and finer activities.

If one can establish oneSelf as the Observer, then there would be seen to be a great influx of energy both for use and for storage; and by improved use of these different reserves one could do all one's daily work and more. One would never feel short of energy under any circumstances.

Though there is much of interest in the continuation of this talk, we want on this occasion to give you a passage near its end, where H.H. describes the state of Perfection which we should be chasing after and extending till by the hour of death it should be present all the time.

S. An important man, even if he dresses like any ordinary man and moves amongst ordinary men, would not be mistaken as being ordinary. Neither the man himself, nor anyone else would have any doubt about his concealed greatness. This greatness is in depth and this depth lies in the *still* world; so all his expression and movements would exhibit his stillness and tranquillity. In the 2nd chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* (verse 54) Arjuna asks Lord Krishna about such a man:

‘O Krishna, what is the mark of a realized man, “composed in wisdom”, established in Samadhi (that is, in perfect tranquillity of mind). How does such a man “composed in wisdom” speak, how does he sit and how does he walk?’

To which Lord Krishna replied:

‘Arjuna, when one abandons all cravings of the mind, and is satisfied in the Self through the joy of the Self, then he is called “composed in wisdom”. The wise man whose Mind remains unperturbed in pain or sorrow; whose thirst for material pleasures has altogether disappeared; who is free from passion (attachment), fear and anger is to be called “composed in wisdom”’

(Record, 10 February 1978)

So any of us has to do this for a moment or two during a half-hour or between changes of occupation, and never let up until we have succeeded in achieving this counsel of perfection. Let the horse keep completing the steeplechase – it is the rider's business to become perfect.

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A. I don't think there's very much to be said about that, but if anybody has a real question, let it come.

Bearing in mind this of the Doctor's that we have grafted on to our own built-in view of life some idea or fragment of talk from the Shankaracharya without realising how entirely and radically different is that view of life from the one we derive from today's average Western education, we thought we might read from the Shankaracharya, but not in support of any particular viewpoint which we hold. In other words, straight advice from H.H. on a level which we can all understand and which we can profitably follow.

Q. H.H. has told us that in the way the Meditation has been given to us there is no need to do breathing exercises. Many of our people continue to ask about breathing for they have found that very simple breath control practised before Meditation is helpful. In Lucknow H.H. told us that one or two deep breaths could be helpful. Is this sufficient to tell people, or can any further guidance now be given?

S. This exercise of breathing was given to be of help if there is some sort of laziness which has crept into the physical body which can be removed by deep breaths or if there is too much activity in the body which can be lessened by breathing. Three times is enough to settle down either way, but if it is not enough for certain individuals, then at most one can go to six, one does not need more than that. Previously it was told to Dr. Connell that if some people felt a need of emotional approach towards the Meditation they can offer a little prayer, or remember the Realized man or a person in whom they have faith, or any other thing in which they have faith in order to set up a situation where their heart seems to be melted so that they can take to the activity fairly easily. This would be all right for those who are emotionally disposed, and for those who are intellectually disposed, this breathing exercise should be enough.

Q. I have heard it said, I am not sure if it was by H.H. or not, that it was quite helpful, in these three breaths to have a thought in one's mind when one breathes in and another idea when one breathes out?

S. For a person who is sincerely interested in Meditation and wishes to practise, the system which has been given is self-sufficient and one does not need any other inducement because that will nullify the system. But in certain cases where people have not taken to meditation and they are really not very much interested and they cannot attend to it sincerely, falling either into sleep or keeping on thinking about it, for these people only sometimes these things are given; the one which was mentioned particularly by Mr. Allan comes from a source of Yogic practices. These things are not necessary for the system which we have been given but if it helps some people it is all right if they can be brought back to Meditation. But the essential thing is love, and those who love Meditation would not need such a thing. The system of Meditation is very much like the reception which one gets when one reaches the door, so the moment you take the Mantra, you are at the threshold of the inner voice of your Self and with the Mantra you are taken respectfully to the Self itself. So this is a Self-sufficient method.

A. Now comes some pretty strong advice on the half-hour. Would you read it, Michael.

Q. If thoughts continually intrude so that it seems impossible to reach a quiet place, should one persevere for a full half-hour, or is it sometimes better to give up and try again later?

S. One can try not to attend to the intruding thoughts, but one should *never* give up because once you give up in despair, the next time the same situation presents itself another giving up will be needed. So persist with the exercise for half an hour and see how much one can do away with the thoughts. To do away with these intruding thoughts before one starts, one can say a little prayer, or firmly bring the resolution that now I am going to give them up and take the Meditation. But under no circumstances should one give up the Meditation in the hope of doing it better next time. This idea of giving up is a sort of delusion which people accept only to

escape what they are thinking in the moment. One can take to prayer or one can recite the Mantra loudly so that this will bring some sort of attention within and meditation would then be possible. Even if the prayer or saying the Mantra loudly takes quite a long time it doesn't matter, but the effort must persist for half an hour. If anybody thinks that by postponing he will get a better moment, that is certainly an illusion. This is a tendency to postpone the work, and the next better time will certainly never come! We have the routine work of our life, and if for some important work we give up the routine work, the next day there will be *more* important work, and we shall have to give up the 'important work', and the third day still further important work will undo the 'more important' work, and this can simply go on and there is no end to it. So stick to the half hour.

(Record, 9 March 1970)

A. That fairly clear? Keeping to the purely practical side of things is there anything anybody would like to ask?

Henry Hammond. What is really meant by rest on the subtle plane?

A. It means having the mind at rest – the mind that clatters all the time. I'm sure you must know, Henry, the marvellous sense of relief when the mind at last stops. It churns on night and day all the time. If through this method of meditation one really gets to the absolute stillness, then this mind is at rest. Would anybody like to add to that?

Mr. Hodge. When the mind is at rest, isn't there a second factor which should come in?

A. If we are talking about meditation, no. There should be no second factor. There should be nothing.

R.H. What should happen to our feeling when the mind rests?

A. Don't you find, Ray, that when you are meditating the first things that lose their power are the physical feelings – the itch behind your ear and all the rest of it – then come the thoughts of what I didn't do yesterday and what I don't want to do tomorrow. Then they slowly lose their power to intrude and one is aware of these other continuing levels of thought that go on all the time until they too fall away. And if one is lucky, one is absolutely at peace.

M.A. What floated into my mind were the Shankaracharya's words 'in deep meditation, there is no experience'; and this can reassure many people. I can't remember the answer, but I know he went on to say. 'One might say – What is the use of this deep meditation if there is no experience?' And then he went on with an answer to show how the manifestation of this was in one's life and one would know by one's general state that this had been so.

A. That leads on to what I suggested you should read of your own question:

M.A. Yesterday His Holiness spoke of consistency at the end of the answer to my husband's first question. Is it this that can provide the thread of remembrance through the day and keep a little light in the darkness?

S. There is a Shloka in one of the Scriptures. The gist is that a good man who wants to go on the Spiritual path speaks what he feels and does what he speaks. That is, he speaks from pure feeling. When he has impure feelings, he tries not to speak

or rush into action or express them. A bad man does the reverse: he *feels* something and *says* something else; he *says* something and *does* something else.

If one really did speak what one feels, and do exactly what one says, then this would build up the inner strength of the man and, because of this clarity and unity of his mind and sincerity of his heart, the way will be fairly clear for him.

There is an example from the life of Rama when he went to Janak-Puri: he was taking a stroll in the royal gardens and he happened to see Sita there. He had only Lakshman with him, so he said to Lakshman: 'Why is it that I had a glimpse of this girl in this garden?' The tradition of our great family of Raghu (Raghu was the first King of this solar dynasty called Raghuvansha) is such that the men of this family should never have a glimpse of any woman unless he was destined to marry that woman. So it seems that this girl will be married to me.'

This is the sort of purity one gets only if one follows pure feelings and expresses them in true words, and does exactly what one says. If one learnt this System, kept this consistency, then one would grow – one would become more serious and have more strength of character. This brings unity into a man and creates a sort of depth, and to this unity and depth of the individual the glory of the Absolute descends, and then manifests all round all that one knows of the glories of the Absolute.

M.A. Does what you have said signify a certain order of action? You mentioned twice 'beginning with feeling, and then speak what you feel and do what you say.' Is this order important in this connection?

S. It's not only important, but necessary. For this is the ultimate thing that happens – it belongs to the pattern of Nature. This is how things do happen, but by ignorance we do not follow this sequence, and complicate ourselves. Ordinary man – common man – does not go by this sequence. Men who want to go on the Way should follow this sequence.

(Record, 18 January 1974)

A. That would be manifesting the kind of meditation you were talking about, wouldn't it?

M.A. A deep meditation that has no experience. Do you mean that one would have the power to be consistent?

A. I don't know about the power, but one would *be* consistent.

M.A. It's a great relief, I know, when it happens.

Bridget Hall. Does this not tie in with Mr. Ouspensky's comment when asked how one could tell the level of a man. He said, 'It depends on his reliability.'

A. Yes, I'm sure that's right. At an earlier meeting here, I quoted what the Shankaracharya said about reliable servants. I quoted it with reference to something that one of our members had said when Mr. Ouspensky told her: 'You are now a responsible person.' The two systems tie up there as they do in so many places.

Mr. Melidis. It also seems to tie up with what we were told. 'When in doubt, do nothing.'

A. Yes; because if you act according to that sequence which we read, there is no doubt.

M.A. What was reassuring was that the Shankaracharya didn't assume that one would never

have impure feelings. He just says when you have impure feelings, try not to express them.

Q. Might not one be deceived about the purity of one's feelings?

A. I don't think so. One knows these things – one could kid oneself but then one knows that one is kidding oneself. Anybody have any other ideas about that?

Naomi Stern. This surely ties up with the idea that in this House we shouldn't talk about other people or indulge overmuch in gossip?

A. That is the greatest waste of energy of all. In the piece that Dr Roles gave us, the Shankaracharya says that we have to save this energy. 'If the output of energy is greater than the intake, then our business is running at a loss. Then all our reserves of energy will be lost in due course.' One of the greatest outputs of energy is talking negatively about other people or just gossiping.

Mrs. Simpson. Sometimes one has a strong intuitive feeling and still has a doubt as to whether it is right. Is it because one is not pure enough?

A. Not still enough perhaps.

M.A. It makes everybody look terribly serious. (laughter) But I have a feeling that it's for lightness and simplicity – all the things we have been talking about are burdens and leave nasty tastes. If one has a way of being free of them, one is light and happy, if nothing else!

Bill Anderson. What Dr. Roles said about life being a steeplechase reminded me of a 17th century poem on 'Hope', whose final lines are these:

True hope's a glorious hunter, and her chase
The God of Nature in the fields of Grace.

It had the feeling that the Meditation gave us hope all round us and that there was this extra zest to life.

A. I think that was what Dr Roles was hinting at in these sentences which I have read twice – the Shankaracharya and other great minds have a totally different view of life from ours. If one does occasionally get glimpses of that, life is tremendous fun. One really begins to understand the drama and enjoy the drama and the part one is playing in that drama. Normally though we are captivated by the part and assume burdens which we are not meant to.

I would like finally to read another extract from the Record:

S. The physical help which one gets within the limits of time and space is fairly small, but His Holiness' mind is always open to help us a hundred times over. Not only that, but his heart is always ready a thousand times over to help all of us. He keeps us in his heart and mind all the time. The physical limitations are certainly very coarse and not much can be done, as one can see from ordinary daily life experience. For instance, people who walk on the street have to face so many obstacles and the motor cars driving in the road have to meet so many obstacles that their passage is not always clear. But from an aeroplane it is all very clear because there are not many obstacles for it. There may be cloud or mist, or some birds flying might collide with it, but these are very insignificant. So even on the mental level

though there may be difficulties they are so small that they can just be forgotten. The speed of the mind is far quicker than can ever be achieved by physical means, one simply remembers someone and one is just there. The speed of the emotions (the heart) is far faster still, and His Holiness keeps his heart open for all of us all the time. To connect in such a case is simply to remember. For instance, if one wants to talk to somebody by telephone, one simply has to dial the numbers in such a way that the connection is made and one can have a talk. It is simply necessary on the spiritual line to remember the person to whom one would like to be connected and it is so instantaneous that there is no obstacle of any sort.

(Record, 9 March 1970)

- A. Dr Roles gave a very similar message to Dr. Connell for his group that they only had to bear him in mind to establish communication.

To end I'd like to read [again] what I am sure is the core of what Dr Roles is thinking now:

Too often in my opinion we have grafted on to our own built-in view of life, some idea or fragment of talk from the Shankaracharya or other inspired sayings of the highest human minds, without realising how entirely and radically different is that view of life from the one we derive from today's average Western education. In doing that we lost the impact of the message, which is quickly forgotten because never put into practice.

So any of us has to do this for a moment or two during a half-hour or between changes of occupation, and never let up until we have succeeded in achieving this counsel of perfection. Let the horses keep completing the steeplechase – it is the rider's business to become perfect.

- A. If we try during this holiday to ponder on these ideas, it will make it very much easier for Dr. Roles to pick up the threads when he is with us next term.

Thank you. A very happy Easter to you all.

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