

13 June 1978

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Warm applause greeted Dr. Roles as he took his seat on the platform which he acknowledged as he sat down.

Dr. R. I've been laid off for four months and there have been some quite profitable things to be had during a time when one is forced to have no duties whatsoever. One, of course, was to try and get a certain detachment from physical pain and discomfort. I didn't achieve the degree reached in this story which you may have heard on the radio not so long ago:

Two men were fishing in the Florida Everglades from each side of a boat with their legs dangling over the water and they were getting quite 'high' on whisky. Suddenly one of them called out, 'My goodness me, a crocodile has bitten one of my legs off!' His friend said, 'Which one?' and he said, 'How on earth do I know? Once you've seen one of these crocs, you've seen 'em all!' (laughter)

But though I never got high on whisky, much is possible. The other discovery was the great help that deep stillness can give one and that, I feel, should be the theme of this afternoon's meeting; because although most people are not in a very favourable position these days, yet there is a good deal more we can do even when we are householders and mothers and fathers of families.

At your last Meditation Meeting in May the theme was that when you get the first realization 'I have nothing of my own' suddenly you get the second realization, well then 'Everything in the world is in me and I am in everything in the world – the whole universe is mine'. This paper that group-takers have got is the result of attempts to reach that, and I'll ask you to take it slowly, trying to penetrate deeply into the ideas suggested in this approach to a vast subject. We won't discuss any of that today.

I think those are the two most profitable ideas to carry about with one. I have nothing of my own and that meditation and the ultimate end of Self-realization lies in the stillness, complete stillness – an internal immobility. So now, are there any questions? Have you taken the idea of 'I have nothing of my own' further since May? Have you got anything to tell?

Mr. Hodge. If we use this idea 'I have nothing of my own', the things we use are just given – everything is given to us. Is this it?

Dr R. Yes, including a certain life given to us that we have to lead, certain parts we have to play in that life, certain duties we have to perform. It's all given to us. You are quite right, it isn't one's own initiative inventing all these things. One cannot, therefore, claim the results. Good or bad – bad results as well as good results are not me, they are part of a whole play. Moreover it's a comfort; it's not just a disillusioner – it's a comfort as well. We spend a lot of time blaming ourselves; we shouldn't do that. We have nothing of our own to blame. That's what you mean?

R.H. We are always struggling to get something or to achieve something. But if we realized we had nothing of our own, we would give up this struggling.

Dr. R. The struggle should be more to see what our own Divine Self is expecting of us. What would please, in what way we could help the general plan of the author of the play in a small way. But not to feel that it is necessary to struggle on our own account.

Miss Bolton. This idea has helped me a great deal because I tend to panic about little things and this idea has helped me so that I can leave it to the Divine Self to push.

Dr. R. Yes, but one has to keep awake to greet the *moment of opportunity* and make the most of it. To do what one has to do in the most efficient, economical, beautiful way; because it is only on the physical level that the results of meditation, the results of Self-realization are visible. It's our job to make them visible. We have to do our share but we don't have to push and worry and struggle about it.

Have you given up regretting the past or worrying about the future?

Mr. Kindersley. What do we do in the moment, if we have given up worrying about the past or the future?

Dr. R. We realise that we don't do anything because the moment is our only connection with the Divine Self Who does things for us. There is no time for the Param-Atman or the Atman and, therefore, He is always in the present moment. We are far away in the past or the future, so we never benefit. If we come to ourselves in the moment, then He will do what is necessary to be done. If we could really understand and believe and practise that, life would be altogether different. I'm sure you want to say something more.

P.K. When I'm walking along, I keep thinking to myself that I should be in the state you describe but I find it very difficult to separate from the things that are going on in my mind. I wonder if there are a number of ways we could use to get into this moment as you described?

Dr. R. This *is* the moment of opportunity that we mentioned. There are a number of ways in which we can get out of all this stuff that we carry about in our minds when we are walking along. Why do anything but walk? We walk along thinking about the past and the future. Just walk! Every step – just walk along, and not let all this go on. Then you will be ready for any emergency that may happen. So it's chiefly ways of dropping off the impediments. It's natural for us to be in contact with this divinity, this spark of God within us. That's natural, that's our birthright. But we have built up such a mass of impedimenta that get in the way – it means dropping all that off, you see. I'm sure there are a lot of people here who find that.

Lord Allan. Do you think that if you have the feeling that you ought to be in this state, but can't get into it which is Mr. Kindersley's problem, that as you are walking along, a repetition of the Mantra can help?

Dr. R. Whatever helps you to get rid of that feeling of pressure, but if you can, instead of those thoughts, say the Mantra a few times with attention – let it come, let it go – it does help to clear the mind.

I think we could do a little meditation now and then again perhaps before we leave. After this meditation we might read something about the stillness.

MEDITATION

We'll do some more later. To get the stillness, we don't have to force anything, do we? You didn't look strained at all. One retreats gently away from the noise that's going on, the inner noise, on to the rhythm of the Mantra. Don't try and force anything out of your mind, just withdraw from the noise in it. Any questions there?

Mr. Lamb. I wanted to ask you a question on this very point because it's very easy in a meeting like this to get this quiet, but after meditating for seven years, one would think it would be easier to reach this more often. But, in fact, one still meets the same difficulties. Does there come a point when it does get easier?

Dr. R. The Shankarcharya admits this: that owing to circumstances, one's nature, the life one leads, many people go on for years without getting really what is promised in connection with this stillness – spontaneous happiness and so on. When your life comes to the point where you've not got too many irons in the fire you will find that having done this patiently without any seeming reward, what has been promised will suddenly come unexpectedly. Furthermore, if the crunch comes and you are up against it – if you have got to do something which you don't believe you are capable of – having done this patiently you will find you can do it. But there is something more in the way of 'redeeming the time', making more of the moments between jobs, between motivations, between tugs of desire. The more you remember to do that, the more easy the first five minutes of meditation will be. The deeper you sleep at night, the more Sattvic energy you will have. So the more you remember to do that, the more benefit you will get from your half-hours. Just being patient and going on with it and never under any circumstances giving up or being hopeless about it will produce the inevitable goodness in the end.

It's all very well to talk about 'giving up', but let's think of something positive and to do that I think we should read something from the only man I've ever met who carries this stillness about with him all the time. There was a question from a person who initiates in New York, Mr. Rabeneck, and H.H.'s answer:

Lord Allan (reading):

S. When we go into meditation, we reach a Spiritual world where quietness prevails like that of a deep undisturbed ocean. No movement, no waves, no currents – everything absolutely stationary. This is the meditational world. When we look out of such a Spiritual world, then we become everything and nothing else remains.
(Record, 29 November 1973)

Dr. R. In answer to your question, Lamb, there is this world of stillness within us. It's always there, it's a question of coming out of all the other worlds where there is noise and racket going on, into this world of stillness. It's a game of hide and seek.

Lady Allan. Is it because of the way we are made that we are always going to have to go through this layer of movement – this will never cease because of the way we are made – but we could learn to skip through it quicker particularly if we give up recognising it as a difficulty – just part of how we are made and skip through.

Dr. R. Yes. Man was given free will; the only species in organic life to which evolution has brought the power of choice. Part of the liability of this power of choice is that we build up a lot of difficulties for ourselves which we have to overcome. So, you are saying, stop blaming it on yourself, but realise that it's part of creation. See how clever you can be in dodging this which is called 'Maya' or illusion.

Dr. R (reading):

In another conversation about the same time, he spoke specifically about three levels of stillness. Stillness at the physical level which we get at night in sleep provides us with enough energy to do everything we have to do during the day. But of course during that stillness we know nothing at all. You can't rely on dreams.

The stillness at the subtle level (our psychology, our inner world) by cessation of turning thoughts and conflicting desires brings another dimension to the idea of stillness.

The third, or Causal level of stillness, is a profound stillness – total immobility. And that is in the realm of the Absolute. Since the Causal level cannot be described, one learns about it from its effects on the activities and dispositions of such men who provide themselves with spiritual rest.

There are three prominent features. Firstly, they show love and affection towards everything they encounter – *everything*, note, even what gets in their way. All activities will be initiated with love, and then held and nourished with love till they come to their fulfillment.

Secondly, their intentions or motives will be pure and simple. Purity and simplicity widen the horizon, and they think and work for the whole of humanity and only through the natural Laws. Their thoughts encompass the whole of the human family, and its intrinsic goodness.

Thirdly, the physical movements of such people are only geared to the natural rhythm, and the result is simplicity and economy of movement. Whatever they do will emerge from stillness, be held in stillness, and again submerge in the same stillness which they experience in this great total immobility of the motionless world within.

Any questions about that? One knows such people who carry this stillness about with them. In this same talk he goes on to apply it to meditation:

The ultimate end of the meditation is to reach this profound stillness and this is very deep. No meter can measure it. It is without end. But what you have to remember is that it is not necessary to have that for long periods at a time. The whole half hour is simply a preparation for two or three moments of this stillness which is enough and will set you up for a long time after; just as if you take a little food and drink, you can go on actively for many hours before the next meal. Longer meditation doesn't guarantee anything further as regard the profound stillness. Most of the time is spent by people churning their mechanical thoughts in mechanical rotation.

(Based on Record, 9 November 1973)

That is probably what happens with your seven-year half hours, doesn't it? (That's right) So aim to retreat far enough to get a moment's *complete stillness* but don't sit there thinking, 'O Lord I've got a half hour ahead of me and I am no good at it anyway!'

He told a story at this point which some of you have heard but which is good to hear again:

During the great war of India described in the *Mahabharata*, one day a man called Karna was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the whole army. On the way to the battlefield, his charioteer said to him. 'Although you are a great warrior and an efficient leader, it will not be possible for you to vanquish Arjuna because he is supported by Shri Krishna who has achieved this profound stillness. Karna was very proud of his descent from the Sun god and his own strength and efficiency. The charioteer then told him a story about a flock of crows.

One of them was strong, clever and good looking and they made him their leader. This king of the crows felt proud of his exploits and, therefore, looked down on all other creatures. One day a young swan appeared in that vicinity. All the crows assembled round the swan and asked him if he knew about the great deeds of their king. He pleaded ignorance and said he would like to meet their king. The king crow appeared and asked the swan about the different types of flight. The swan in his simplicity said that he knew only one style of flight. The king crow then embarked on an exhibition of 101 styles of aerobatics. After going through all of them, he asked to see the art of the swan. The young swan took off on a graceful, gentle and natural flight and as usual increased his speed only gradually. Since the crow was small and swift, he flew round and round the swan, far ahead and back again. But the swan gradually increased his speed and it was not very long before the crow became tired, his wings trembled, and he ultimately fell into the waters of the sea. The swan came down and rescued the crow and helped him back to his flock and the crow was ashamed of his pride and thanked the swan for his modesty and magnanimity. You see, the swan lived a natural life while the crow occupied himself in aerobatics and cleverness.

'The ultimate victory goes to the steady, still and simple man. So, my dear master, you must keep in your mind the steady, still and natural Krishna for no one can ever transcend Him or anyone whom He likes to support.'

Dr. R. Now that is a true account of the two sides of our brain – the two hemispheres. the crow, the king crow, and all the flock of crows are like the dominant hemisphere – the personality – but the Essence with which the in-turning hemisphere is connected is like the young swan who knows only one style of flight. This has a good psychological meaning. Meditation should be done by the swan and not by the crow! Perhaps it's all the crows trying to meditate that is our main trouble.

So, Hodge, all these efforts that one thinks one ought to make are only the dominant hemisphere making the efforts... the crows. One ought really to wriggle out of making any efforts at all. That appeals to Anne Brunsdon I see! (laughter)

Mrs. Guyatt. I suppose 'not making efforts' you are in a very good state because there is nothing to do.

Dr. R. Yes and you stop thinking that it's you doing things. I remember coming into Mr. Ouspensky's room at Mendham, New Jersey, full of questions about efforts I ought to be making, and saying to him, 'About this effort, what's the chief effort, what's the next effort

and the effort after that?’ And he just looked up from what he was reading and said, ‘Only effort is not to make effort.’ (laughter) It’s quite an effort not to make any efforts, it really is. So you can be very cheerful. Stop looking for results and then the results will come to you.

Now, what do you make the time? (It’s just one minute past eight.) Are you hungry?

I’m still much engaged in exploring this next stage of our journey which is acquiring the stillness, as the charioteer told his general. I don’t feel in any sort of state to be teaching anybody about it. I don’t know enough about it. In any case, I think each of us must, in the end, find his or her own way. You set your sights on something which you know to be true and find your own way to get it.

Lady Allan. In giving up in order not to make these efforts, one has to acquire a type of trust that the right guidance comes and everything will happen correctly. By giving up, you will probably perform what is required of you better.

Dr. R. But if you look at it, you will find that this is what has happened all through your life – that you felt you wanted all sorts of things, you had many intentions and plans and all the rest of it, but some power has taken you safely along at all essential points without really your knowing where you were going.

M.A. (laughing) Yes – we have always been very lucky.

Dr. R. You can’t really say; ‘I thought all this out.’ I think we can be really confident about that and not what he calls ‘accommodate doubts’. ‘One should never accommodate a doubt’.

When I first came to the Work, I was very worried about money. I was in debt and we didn’t have any prospects but the man who helped bring me into this Work said, ‘Well, you’ve never been in prison before for debt, so don’t expect to be in prison – it’s not part of your fate!’ and he was right. (laughter) But even if I was in prison, it wouldn’t be the end of everything.

Well let’s meditate for our last few minutes...

M.A. Somebody had a question...

Dr. R. One has only to say let’s meditate and somebody has a question! (laughter) What was it?

M.A. It’s vanished, I think!

Miss Stern. One way I’ve found to help with the beginning of meditation is to pick a flower from the garden, bring it indoors and sit down and first of all look at the flower and then think of the Creator of the flower. This puts me in a good frame of mind for meditation.

Dr. R. It could really be so – yes. This is the important thing, to get this feeling of where there is anything beautiful or powerful or magnificent or honourable in any way that this is a very small part of the Creator of the universe. Whenever we see something like this, it brings the absolutely essential inquiry, ‘Who is responsible for this lovely thing?’ Whenever a meditation produces something nice, you think of the Creator and the tradition behind it. So let’s meditate for five minutes and then depart and have supper.

MEDITATION

Dr. R. Don't forget that on the Causal level we are always together and together with the head of the Tradition and Realized men past and present. We don't have to come physically and sit in this room to be together. When I said goodbye to the Shankaracharya after our first visit, he said, 'Goodbye and in meditation we shall be meeting.'

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