

12 September 1978

## GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Lord Allan. The next large Meditation Meeting is on Tuesday, 10th October.

We could do with some help at the working parties during the next fortnight. If anyone would like to come and assist, there are lists on the hall table and the details of times are also on the list. So if you want some good company, would you put your name down.

Dr. R. Is Peter Fenwick here? Some of you may have listened to Radio 4, a week ago yesterday where they had a repeat of an introductory discussion to Meditation. (Lady Allan – Dr. Fenwick has just come in) Oh, Peter come up here – I'm just talking about your gallant efforts – sit up here, I'm not going to bite! I thought it was very good. When was the original done – do you remember?

P.F. I believe some time in June.

Dr. R. I thought you gave a very pleasant impression and you definitely kept it practical so that it wasn't a kind of witnessing-of-the-miracle-sort-of-thing, which puts people off so very much. On the radio you went about as far as you could go. But what a pity that it goes on being on the 'tired-businessman-level' and kept for Doctors and National Health patients afterwards; granted it must be given on the radio and public media like that, it never seems to recover and get lifted. (Dr. F. nods agreement) But here in this circle of friends who trust each other, we could ask the question: 'What really is the meditation designed for?' Not just to make up sufficient energy to get through the day's business and make more money and so on, or even help National Health patients, but for the very healthiest and most intelligent people, what could it produce? So that's what we want to question this afternoon.

Before we do that, I'd like you to spare a thought for the floods in India and the people involved because this territory around the Ganges and the Yamuna ('Jumna') rivers is all H.H's territory and though he presumably was up in the Himalayas when the floods started, he is not a man likely to sit up there and let his people get flooded out. We are trying as best we can to get some news of whether the roads are passable and where he is. We have written to Lucknow which is further from the rivers, and where we have a friend (who runs H.H's finances) trying to get news that way. It may have been serious for his Ashrams in Mathura (the birthplace of Krishna) in Allahabad, and in Benares. Luckily our translator Mr. Dixit died on August 15th after a very long painful illness, for it would have been terrible for him had he been alive. He would have been right in the middle of this flood, so that was fortunate; and our other translator Jaiswal is here in this country which, he says, is the only place where he is 'home and dry'! So spare a thought for what has been the most valuable thing for us since Ouspensky died.

Now about the big question. I see Alan Bray here who has sent extracts from yet another popular book in the United States which purports to deal with the question. *'How and whence comes the voice which speaks with such authority within one?'* The author is a psychologist at Princeton and he gives his own example, describing how 'in his late twenties after pondering alone for days over the question of this inner guidance, suddenly out of an

absolute quiet there came a firm, distinct loud voice which said, "Include the Knower in the known".

The Shankaracharya has often said that the meditation is to get the guidance from the Atman, the Divine Spirit within Who lives in the 'soul' on the Causal Level in everybody. How to get that guidance? How to hear this voice and distinguish *this* voice from all the others? That really is my own reason for meditating, and I wondered if anybody else here has got anything to say about that? We all know what's meant – suddenly out of the absolute quiet in a crisis comes a voice that tells you what to do. I'll tell you why I think it is so important. Everything seems to go right when you remember that voice – when you 'remember yourSelf', the meditation is easier, any difficulties fade away; but if you depart from that and forget yourSelf, things begin to get difficult – mistakes get made and so on. Anybody feel brave and say if to them, this question is important. And why?

Prof. Guyatt. It is very important to me, but as far as I am concerned his voice doesn't sound very authoritative. It's more of a sort of intuition.

Dr. R. As with most of us – it doesn't sound authoritative enough. It's rather like a tape-recording machine where you are continually recording on a tape which is already used and then in a crisis you try to play it back to get the guidance and a muddled noise of different confusing voices of yourself and others come through. That is why the meditation is so important because it is the only thing that really cleans the tape before re-recording. And that's why you do it twice a day and the next day it's clean for recording. (To Dr. Fenwick) Surely that analogy could be put on the radio by somebody who knows more about tape-recorders than I do? H.H. is continually using the simile of the recording machine to describe attention being focused on something and how you have to diminish the background noise in some way. You are quite right, Guyatt, how nice it would be if when you have got to make (for instance) an inaugural speech, you would know clearly and loudly exactly what you have got to say. Or when you are going to propose marriage to somebody – yes or no, you would know clearly and loudly! And so would she! (laughter).

So now, difficulties in meditation such as were discussed at the August Meditation Meeting, they really all arise from the inveterate habit of substituting thoughts of yourself, your personal small world, for the memory of the Divine Self which is what meditation is all about. Your own ego, your own small thoughts creep in and spoil that half hour. So when that becomes noticeable you take yourself in hand at other times, not just the half hour, and you try and devote a few days where at every moment between jobs you substitute the thought of this Divine Self for your own petty thoughts which are going on all the time. You have got to get desperate enough to take some step about it. And upgrade the idea of this Self which seems so small and insignificant in our lives. How much time do we spend in communion with this Self, or in worship of this Self? Nothing; we just never think about it. But if we gave it more time and attention, we would hear it loudly and clearly. Somebody asked Mr. Ouspensky at a meeting in New York which I was at: 'Is conscience a still small voice?' And he said, 'No, when you hear it properly, it's not a small voice at all. It's a loud voice! And if you are doing something you are ashamed of, conscience bites you.' Conscience is only part of this and the word is wrongly used in the West, but it's part of the

‘emotional realization of truth’ which is what the meditation should be polishing up for us.

Dr. Connell. One feels a lack of reverence for the thought of this Self. How can one increase this?

Dr. R. It’s very important and there are several ways of doing it, aren’t there? (To Dr. Fenwick)  
That’s another thing you can’t do on the radio – you can’t say, ‘I am a friend of the Atman’s and everything I say goes!’

Dr. Fenwick. You could, but they would think you were mad! (laughter)

Dr. R. Yet people are doing it all the time! You have only got to murder a man with an umbrella, the poisoned end of an umbrella, and you will be doing it because the Atman tells you to do it and therefore what I do is right even though you don’t say it out loud. It’s the universal excuse for crime – God told me.

We want to understand the nature of the Atman, not make claims, but to raise the level of our love and respect for the Atman. That one can do, Connell, by picking things about it to read to oneself. There have been many beautiful expressions – there is one from the *Mathnawi* which will be familiar to many of you, I daresay, but it couldn’t be put better. Earlier than that, there is the *Philokalia* – a group of early Christian men of the 2nd and 3rd Century AD who were called collectively ‘The Desert Fathers’ and one of them, St Isaac of Syria, is recorded in the *Philokalia* (which was their record) as saying:

A. (reading):

Try to enter your inner Treasure house and you will find the Treasure house of Heaven. For both the one and the other are the same, and one and the same entrance reveals them both. The ladder that leads to the Kingdom is concealed within you in your own soul.

Dr. R. That probably came originally from the Shankaracharya Tradition which says ‘in the soul or Antahkarana of each person there lives the Universal as well as the individual Atman for the purpose of guidance.’ And there in Syria, they were saying the same thing many centuries later. Then in the *Mathnawi* in the 12th century or thereabouts, Mevlana is commenting on the Koran text. ‘And He is with you wheresoever ye be’.

A. (reading):

Once more we come back to the tale, when indeed did we leave it? If we come to ignorance, that is His prison and if we come to Knowledge, that is His palace. And if we come to sleep, we are His intoxicated ones; and if to wakefulness, we are in His hands. And if we weep, we are as if cloud-laden with the bounty dispensed by Him. And if we laugh, then we are His lightning. And if to wrath and war ’tis a reflection of His might; and if to peace and forgiveness, that is the reflection of His love. Who are we? In this tangled world, what other permanence is there but Him? Nothing, nothing.

Dr. R. I feel now we could turn our attention to Him and, in silence, drop off our personal world.

## MEDITATION

Dr. R. Don't you think, Koren, you could stress that aspect of the Mukabeleh (which comes in *Mathnawi*, Book 1, about p. 83) even more than you do? It could make the good effect of the turning last longer – from one Mukabeleh to another.

But, let me stress that we mustn't expect to hear that voice casually when it isn't necessary. It comes when the Atman knows it to be necessary for you. *You* don't know. All we can do is to come to the silence; have reverence in our hearts for the True Self and try to keep as close to that influence as we can at all times.

Any questions?

During meditation one doesn't think about all that. This dormouse (picture) has given up everything except his nest and a few nuts, but the dormouse doesn't know (until he wakes up enough to reach for another nut) whether he has been asleep or meditating or in Samadhi! Same way in meditation when you transcend, you know nothing until you come out. And I think a lot of people are disappointed because they expect fireworks during a half hour of meditation. Any questions on a more practical level?

Prof. Guyatt. Does that voice always use words?

Dr. R. No, never, with me and my betters it speaks without words. Any words one puts in oneself after the initial 'impulse' or 'soundless sound' on the way. You know exactly what this voice means without words and that comes out in that record of resuscitated people called *Life after Life* that the 'Being of Light' doesn't use words. So when people misquote the Atman, they are putting words into his mouth – they can make him say absolutely anything. I think you would agree that he does speak without words. In that small theosophical book, *The Voice of the Silence*, that comes out very clearly.

Mr. Melidis. Who is it that substitutes ordinary thoughts for the thoughts of the Absolute?

Dr. R. The two parts of the mind – one the mechanical level which is all the time without selection turning impressions into actions, into sensations and actions – that's called the Manas. There is a higher part of the mind like the charioteer who should be conducting our day but who is asleep. It's that Buddhi – the charioteer – which should be kept awake and would tell you when the other part is just substituting ordinary thoughts for the guiding voice. The Buddhi needs training like any good charioteer or chauffeur.

C.M. (cont.) How can one put oneself in the position, in the middle of an ordinary busy day, of handing over to this power?

Dr. R. You don't have to do that luckily, Mr. Melidis – one's ordinary life would go to pieces. You wait for a moment when you have finished one job before you begin the next and you simply learn how to 'come to yourSelf' in a couple of seconds instead of letting your thoughts drift on from one job to the next. You train yourself to 'redeem the time' at any spare moment to remember the Self.

Q. I try and do that, but I find the thought too vague to bring me to any kind of reality. Can you help me to do that?

Dr. R. It does take time; we have spent so many years the other way that our habits are deeply ingrained. You can accelerate the process by reading things like those we have read to you;

by trying to do things for other people without thought of yourself. That's good training for coming in touch with the Divine Spirit without thought of yourself, without making demands. You can get advice as to what particular habit of yours is interfering most. I don't mean necessarily interfering with the half-hour's meditation but interfering with your contact with this bright Spirit at other times.

One habit which is deeply ingrained in a lot of us who began in the sad days of our old System – we spent so much time and energy confessing our sins to ourselves, dwelling on: 'We have done those things we ought not have done, and we have left undone those things we ought to have done' and so on. This is all really increasing the ego. You are turning your attention away from the Divine Spirit (who is always benevolent) to this miserable sinner, and that doesn't interest Him at all. (laughter) We must stop doing that and use the other approach to divinity which H.H. recommends:

A. (reading):

There are two types of approach. One only describes the glorious aspects of the Absolute, and the poet does it in a beautiful form, speaking of everything which the Absolute has manifested in different ways in this world. The other way is the way intended to remove the extension of the Ahankar, and in that sort of approach one does not speak about the glory of God, but about one's own shortcomings, so one says that one is not capable of doing this, one has done this wrong and that wrong, and asks the Absolute to be merciful and to save one from all these vices. Although there are these two ways, the better way is the first where one speaks about the glory of the Absolute. Although by the other the Ahankar is reduced – (Dr. R. that is, it is made to be less pleased with itself) – nothing much positive is put in its place so one always lags behind, not that one *is* inferior but the glory does not immediately descend on one. By the first sort of approach, one says that the Absolute, God, is all-knowing, all-pervading, has all knowledge, has all the forces in the Universe, has created a beautiful world in all forms; and because one is his son, one would also like to enjoy everything that he has created, and also partake in the creative act, just as the cub of a lion in course of time acts like a grown-up lion. But by the other way one keeps saying to the Absolute, as is said in one of the Sanskrit prayers: 'I am a sinner, and I have been indulging myself in sinful activities, and I am very lowly, would you please be kind enough to deliver me from these things, will you please forgive me for being like that?' Ultimately you see that an approach which goes towards the glory aspect is much more positive, much more rewarding.

(Record, 25 September 1975)

Dr. R. And then he went on to tell the story of the Mahatma under the Tamarind tree who didn't take 'no' for an answer which you have heard so often I won't repeat it now. These ingrained habits of our mind are barriers between us and the bounteous and benevolent divinity within us. One should keep reminding oneself of that glory. We might read from the Upanishads because the same things have been said all through human history in different language suitable to their own people and times. Here is one of the earliest writings which has been passed down by word of mouth long before writing was invented, from the Mundaka Upanishad between four and six thousand BC.

A. (reading):



The Self (Atman) is found by Truth, purity, intelligence; so purged, the devotee discovers His burning light shining in the heart. Truth lies beyond imagination, beyond paradise; greater than the greatest, smaller than the smallest; nearest of all, yet further than the furthest; hiding from the traveller in the cavern.

Not penance can discover Him, nor ritual reveal, nor eye see, nor tongue speak; only in Meditation can mind and heart, grown pure and still, discover formless Truth. The Self shines out of a pure heart; a man with mind fixed on someone who knows the Self, gets all he wants...

(Dr. R. You must get it at first hand from somebody who knows and get it privately.)

A. (cont.)

The Self is not to be known through discourse or splitting of hairs, or learning however great. He comes to the one He loves; takes that one's body as His own. He who has found *Him* seeks no more; the riddle is solved; desire has gone; he is at peace.

Dr. R. One longs to do five minutes more:

#### MEDITATION

Dr. R. Before we have our next Meditation Meeting in October, there will have started on October 4th, the Centenary Exhibition of Mr. Ouspensky's birth put on by Yale University who have assembled *all* available writings by him and his circle. We here in this house will be trying to recall what *he* would most like to be remembered by. To my mind, it happens to be 'this guiding voice' which he said leads to what he called 'the emotional realization of truth'. So there will be a chance for any of you who are interested to hear something of that.

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