

14 November 1978

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Dr. Roles. We have one or two things to say first.

Lord Allan. If there are any people who are Members of the Society, those who pay an annual subscription and have not yet filled in the forms in connection with the increase in subscription, would you please have a look on the table in the hall and collect the forms from there.

There will be another Meditation Meeting here on Tuesday, 12th December.

This is an opportunity to lend a hand to our work and we would like to know if people could help with occasional typing.

Dr. R. Not just *occasional!* I've got about 10 letters on my table at the moment asking questions, from different parts of the world, and what one wants is to have somebody to type an answer from the Shankaracharya or from our Meetings to this question and get it off to the person (with a copy to the office here). And if there were people who could do some home typing with their own typewriter, it would be nice to have names and then we can get it organised more efficiently.

There is this account of Mr. Ouspensky produced by Yale University and if anybody here is interested in reading what will be the best account of him, I think, we will ever get, they could put their names down for a copy of this brochure; the list is on the far table outside.

Tonight though is a *Meditation* Meeting. You don't *have* to be interested in Mr. Ouspensky. Some are, some aren't. What we here all want is to get the meditation to take us as far as it will. But in casting back to our beginnings long before we got this House and since, one notices what a tremendous change came over everything in 1960. So that the work we do here now is utterly different from how it was in Mr. Ouspensky's time. This change was occasioned of course by meeting with the meditation in 1960, and the guidance of the Shankaracharya since 1961. I'd like you to hear something from an account which is one of the things I very much want typed at the moment because there are lots of demands for it. It is an account taken down at a meeting I gave three days after returning from my first trip to India where we had met the Shankaracharya for the first time. To give you a sample relating to meditation, I'll ask Lord Allan to read a couple of extracts. The theme at one of the first talks he gave to a lot of Westerners like myself and a lot of Indians in this Ashram in India was that *'in Meditation we begin to be what we are.'*

A. (reading)

S. *If you begin to be what you are* you will realize everything, but to begin to be what you are *you must come out of what you are not.* You are *not* those thoughts which are turning, turning in your minds: you are *not* those changing feelings: you are *not* the different decisions you make and the different wills you have: you are *not* that separate ego: well, then, what are you? You will find when you have come out of what you are not, that the ripple on the water is whispering to you 'I am That', the birds in the mango trees are singing to you 'I am That', the moon and the stars are

shining beacons to you 'I am That': you are in everything in the world and everything in the world is in you since for you it only exists because it is mirrored in you; and at the same time you are that – everything.

(Record, 1 June 1961)

Dr. R. This relates to something he said about introducing the Meditation to people more recently when he said that of course you begin by saying that Meditation saves energy, enables you to do your work more efficiently with less labour, but you should also stress that in addition to the physical life you lead, Meditation prepares you for the long journey to come and when you die, you will be in this state that the Shankaracharya describes – the ripple on the water – where everything is you and you are everything. It's only in this short period of physical life, bodily life, that we are limited in the way we are. So that Meditation helps one to prepare for that journey as well as overcoming the limitations of the flesh.

Any questions from that point of view? (Pause) We have got to attach all importance possible, each one of us, to the Meditation. Otherwise we don't get ahead with it. If there is anything really important that we realise that we haven't got and are not getting and we realise that this can be got through the Meditation, then we'll do it with zest. It's important to try and connect it, each of us, with something we really want. Would anybody speak to that?

Miss Blum. (repeated) While all those things mentioned are very desirable, they are all physical and I feel the desire should be beyond this.

Dr. R. I don't understand that... what's physical?

Lady Allan. ...the birds in the trees.

Dr. R. Well it's only a poetic expression of the spiritual meaning of being everything so that 'everything is you and you are everything'. It's an illustration. It's not that you should desire all those physical things at all. It's an illustration of what universality would mean.

The note which was handed in to me by somebody just now says. 'I find a *bigger scale* vital. I mean that the current revolution is producing all kinds of insecurity; people who have no inner support and vain remedies from all kinds of politicians and all kinds of other popular remedies, and that what people need is a strength which is going to support them if difficult times lie ahead, a *change of Being* as well as simply information, knowledge which is the dominant interest at the present time'.

So if meditation does that – increases one's Being – I think that would please a great many people. How would you put it in your own words? (Pause) Perhaps this isn't the way to go about it?

Mr. Harbord. Could you call the Meditation the Ark in the time of flood both individually and universally?

Dr. R. I've often called it that to myself, yes. And I think it was designed by Guru Deva and people around him at the beginning of World War II with that in view: An Ark for the dangerous Western way of living. So we would like you to interest your friends, as many as you think will genuinely want it, and try and do it before the flood comes – and get on with it ourselves before the flood comes!

Mr. Fleming. It seems very important not to forget about the unity of experience that comes from the Meditation because so often insecurity makes us feel very separate.

Dr. R. Yes; makes us feel very separate from other people and makes us feel very split up within ourselves, doesn't it? For unity of one's whole Being, and unity with other people who enter our lives, gives a very strong feeling of security which everybody really, at heart, I think would like.

Mrs. Melville. I would like to mention someone who was initiated very recently and who has not been back to Colet House since, but she already feels connected with everyone here. This is so much like what Mr. Fleming just said.

Dr. R. Oh yes. When some disturbance comes like a major illness or operation or some shock in your life – that's the time when you notice that the meditation is a refuge; whereas when things are going in the same way all the time, you don't notice anything to be thankful about.

Now I would like to read a little further from that account and then meditate. I'd never heard anybody use the expression 'Remember yourSelf' other than Mr. Ouspensky years before, so that at a meeting two or three nights before I said goodbye to the Shankaracharya that first time, he greatly surprised us as we sat down by the river with this conversation with the Maharishi translating.

A. (reading) 'It was the last evening I sat with him, about two or three days before I left, and he suddenly said':

S. The whole thing is that we *never remember ourselves*. All our troubles come from not remembering ourselves, only we can't talk about this at the beginning because it is never understood. You have to reach realization before you can understand it.

Dr. R. A degree of realization and a degree of understanding.

A. (reading) I will tell you a story...

Dr. R. You've often heard the story of the 10 men so we won't repeat it now. He went on after that story:

A. (reading)

S. It is as if each of us possessed two houses. One is a tiny little house, no furnishings, bars on the windows, and in that house we live all our lives. We forget that we also possess a magnificent house, full of costly rugs and furniture, everything we could want, servants at our command. If we could only remember that we owned also this other house, we would not be content with living in the little house all the time. When we start to meditate we come out, gradually, out of the little house, and we sit for a time between the two houses; when we transcend everything that belongs to our personal life, and reach the stage of absolute silence, we are sitting between the two houses without yet realising the big spacious house. If we come out of the little house often enough, and sit for long enough, the memory of the big and spacious house will begin to come to us; we will begin to walk there; we will get a glimpse of it; we will be able to go in; once we realise what a wonderful house it is we will never want to go back to the little house. So, memory of this great big house is Self-remembering but it is not

the same as realization. Self-remembering is remembering the existence of this big house; realization is when you go in and live there.

(*ibid*)

MEDITATION

Dr. R. (to Miss Blum) Were you able to get away from the 'physical' as you mentioned? (Yes)

Q. (repeated) Miss Blum says she does see the point of being bigger than oneself which is enough for the moment, but this is life and life is very desirable.

Dr. R. Well yes, for 'life', both the physical and the psychological (the subtle world) have to go on and they each have their own value, but the big house referred to there is the Causal world. One can lead one's ordinary life but from the freedom of the Causal world, and not from the little prison (with all its restrictions) in which we ordinarily live.

For there is a catch to this. Many people who have tasted the joys of this big house think 'Oh lovely to drop out and just be there.' And that's precisely what one cannot do. Occasionally a very special person, a monk (say) on Mount Athos or someone like that, but even there provision has to be made to pass the time in disciplines of various sorts. I know people in this room who try to meditate eight or nine hours day, and I myself tried that with the Maharishi in Switzerland and elsewhere. But even for a short time it's more than one's command of attention will permit. People groan enough about trying to be quiet for half an hour and if you try and meditate for eight hours a day, you get less and less attentive – not more and more. So the solution is to lead one's life which is half of Self-realization, fulfil one's obligations, and enjoy one's life and live it to the full as the productive side of our nature, but to find a way of coming to the Causal level quickly and easily. Incidentally every night of our lives we are at that level in deep sleep and when we die we (again) return to it. But in meditation we must keep the thread of consciousness all through our visits twice a day to that place.

Any questions about that?

Mr. Anholt. How can one be conscious of being united with everything, when in fact being conscious of it implies some separateness or duality?

Dr. R. Yes, I can understand that. It's a matter of degree, you see. If one comes out of an hour or two of Samadhi, it's quite possible. But in the ordinary way what is possible for Anholt or myself? This is what we have to ask. For instance, you know moments on the stage where you have felt much more aware of everything – yourself, the audience, the other actors – haven't you? – those moments stand out and you remember them. And all of us have moments like that in the course of the day. It's those moments that you have to turn to account when you get the chance. You have to remember them and turn them to account because from those moments the whole Ladder can be ascended – like that, very quick. When nothing is moving you can't do anything. Those moments come from storing up energy and from the necessity of the moment, the demands of the moment. You have to have the energy of the moment and then make use of it. Is that how you see it, Dr. Cox? We ought to have the doctors' blessing on this and there's a doctor behind you too. (laughter)

Dr. Cox. (repeated) My mind always likes something to hang on to and to believe in and the difficulty is to leave this in meditation. I always like to have one foot in the world just to make sure that everything's all right. (laughter)

Dr. R. It's possible to have something *which is not in words* for the mind to hang on to. The words that go on in one's thoughts limit one; one can't get past them. It's possible to have a *feeling*, if you like, for the mind to hang on to and one of the feelings one can have is an inexpressible feeling of 'it's all right, Jack!' (laughter) – a feeling of serenity, a giving up of flurry and worry. But don't put it into words; cultivate this feeling; come back to it again and again because that is a wonderful support both at times of meditation and also under stress.

Any other *natural* questions arising, not necessarily 'good virtuous' questions? This feeling that we should hang on to.

Mr. Hodge. Where should this feeling be – in our head or in our heart?

Dr. R. It won't be in your head (whether it should or shouldn't be) but it will be in your heart. You mustn't get too ascetic Hodge. I get the feeling about you that you're almost too 'intense' at present. You must be lighthearted. One can put a straitjacket on oneself all too easily. The meditation should lead to lightness of heart, not an additional burden. (To Lord Allan) Would you agree about that? (Yes) Is there anything that would stimulate them? I want to get at the hearts of people. (laughter)

A. You're doing all right! (laughter)

Mr. Lucas. What always helps me is the Shankaracharya saying it's like 'coming home'.

Dr. R. Yes. So we've got to keep finding things that help us, each of us. Sometimes things that other people say help. It's difficult to make myself realise that the Atman – the source of all this wealth and the sun that shines in this big house – is *present all the time*. This is what I cannot make myself realise for so long in the day.

Dr. Cox. Is this small house part of the big house or quite separate from it?

Dr. R. Something quite separate and artificial. It's like the television screen compared with real life. It's an artificial place which has no reality at all but in which we believe fervently! (laughter)

Lady Allan. I was very interested in what the Shankaracharya said about the period you had to spend or did naturally spend between the two houses and that this seemed to be something needing a great deal of patience – that there was a time when you were between the two and I would like to ask about this.

Dr. R. Well I know – so glad you mentioned it. Because I think a lot of people are there, a lot of people get to that stage where they are between the two but are not yet enjoying anything about the big house. (Yes) They know it's there, but can't get at it. How to get on from the first stage to that stage? How would you say? (To Lord Allan)

A. I think persevere and, as you were saying earlier, know that it's going to be all right. This is a question of faith, I know.

Dr. R. Well, I'm not good at just persevering myself. (laughter) I like to get rich quick!

Lady A. He's very good at persevering! I'm not nearly as good! (laughter)

Dr. R. I feel I've persevered long enough! (laughter) However – I think there must be aids. How do we get more Sattva guna? Everything is possible if our store of Sattva is suddenly turned on – things seem so easy. How do we get more of that? It comes from the heart, Hodge, the Sattva. It shows itself in the area between the diaphragm and the voice, organ of speech, and it always gives the feeling of waking up. We have to get adept at knowing where to find this juice and how to store it and then how to get at it when we need it. I think I would rather do it that way than persevere. (laughter)

A. But of course you have to have some hope or some faith that your perseverance will work! (laughter)

Dr. R. Oh yes. I know you don't just persevere! (laughter)

Mr. Bullough. How about the man under the 'Tamarind Tree'?

Dr. R. Yes; Now he's a great hero of mine and becomes increasingly so. He can be imitated very well. Ordinarily we get an impulse and at once thoughts crowd in of 'I cannot do it', 'it's not the right moment', or 'I'd rather do something else'. If one could only penetrate all that thinking; lift that load off the Buddhi; put all the thinking part of the mind on one side and simply concentrate on the fact that the Absolute is always here. Go straight through everything – like the man who went through the seven gates and got the keys of the Kingdom. If your own experience makes you believe it – this is what you mean by faith Allan? (Yes) If you believe that and go for it, it works. And you remember that the Absolute came at once to this Mahatma and embraced him, breaking all the rules of mechanical evolution because he should have waited thousands of years.

Mrs. Fleming. I feel sometimes that it's just such a very thin thing that you've got to slip through and then you're there.

Dr. R. It's quite so; but one wants to stay there for more than one breath because one is there sometimes for a fraction of a second. But we want to be there for longer, as Mr. Ouspensky used to say 'for two minutes, then perhaps five minutes' and anyway to remember that you *can't* be there for long – Sattva doesn't last for more than three hours at the most. So it's evanescent and comes and goes quickly and one cannot expect to be there a long time. But it would be nice to be there for five minutes when you want it.

Miss Cassini. Could you say something more about turning those moments to good account?

Dr. R. The trouble is, you see, that anything one *says* just spoils it; words – somebody else's words – spoil it. You've got to get down and do it. You've got to be sensitive to such a moment and then by your own instinct you'll know what to do. And directly you start trying to put it into words and explain to somebody, it will fade out altogether. There is a difficulty of communication. I think you know that.

S.C. I just wondered if that was the key to getting more Sattva?

Dr. R. Well, it is, yes.

Mr. Anholt. (repeated) What did you mean by... did you mean that Sattva couldn't last more than three hours?

Dr. R. *Sufficient Sattva*. The three gunas, the three forces, are there all the time, but to have sufficient Sattva (like a saturated solution) you can't keep that for more than three hours at the most. And usually it goes much more quickly. This chemical in the body has been suspected by the scientists and many attempts have been made to discover this chemical, and of course they would like to synthesise it. It was called Sympathin by an American who thought he'd got it – Cannon at Harvard. But it's so evanescent – it's only in the blood stream for three seconds so nobody has been able to get it since! (laughter) It's a fact – there *is* Sympathin, but it changes quickly into something else, and something else and something else. It's manufactured in the sympathetic nervous system. So it's there and the only thing you can do is to find your own step-by-step ladder to get from one rung to another until you have five minutes of this. Something like that. It is brought about by necessity. For instance, you've got more of it since being in a play than you had when you were not being taxed, tested, haven't you? (Anholt nods.)

Miss Blum. What is the best thing to do after a Sattvic period? Should one indulge in activity or get on with one's work?

Dr. R. You do what you have to do; but you enjoy doing it. It's hard to say that there is any best or not best. If you can remember yourSelf and do what you have to do, it doesn't matter all that much what it is you do. As the Shankaracharya says, you can be selling things in a shop or cultivating crops in a field – it doesn't really matter that much. It's to be in touch with your source of energy and to be doing what ought to be done in a more economical and light-hearted way.

B.B. I ask because sometimes I've noticed that after a good period like that there can be a sort of degeneration when things feel worse for a while.

Dr. R. Oh yes, yes! Seesaw, you know. The further up, the further down with a bang. So one has to be prepared... I see what you mean... to avoid the bump afterwards.

Mr. Torikian. (blind) During a period of Sattva – a good period – I very often find that creative ideas come to mind and it is a period of creative mental thinking. If I could draw a picture of it, it would be in patterns of creative thought. The feeling that you said we should carry about... to remember this feeling so that you come back into a Sattvic state. Good ideas come into your mind during these good periods and remembering this, could bring you into this state again.

Dr. R. It is a great help, Mr. Torikian, to have a perennial idea which always interests and lifts you. Some people interested in biology have a perennial interest in evolution. There are many things which help to prolong, and make you return to this state of Sattva. But what we must remember is to save this precious energy all the time – not to spend it uselessly. One thing you can always do at any moment is to save a drop of energy, of Sattva. Store it up, not spend it.

Q. How can you store it up in fact if it doesn't last very long? (laughter)

Dr. R. It has a form of storage, a form in which it can be stored. For instance, sugar. You don't store sugar, you burn it quickly. But it's stored as glycogen in your liver – I can't show you (laughter) – you store it as glycogen. And in the same way, you store Sattva in a storable form and very often that is an idea or truth or some expression which has been produced by people who have lived in that big house, inspired writing. I'm very glad you pulled me up on that, because certainly you must find the form in which it can be stored.

Lady Allan. If your body is harmonious, I mean in feeling and a serene mind, does this help to store it?

Dr. R. Your body is, I think, very important in this because what disturbs the feeling and uses the energy is an unsettled state where you've got a lot of bodily energy which is not being expended, like attentive physical work. Mr. Ouspensky used to say that 'some people find carrying logs helps Self-Remembering. And the heavier the logs, the better your Remembering!' (laughter) And that is what we went through every weekend at Lyne!

Well, it's time, you know. I don't think we can keep Sympathin going much longer. My body is calling for something else! About the next Meeting – I don't know if you realise that the second Tuesday in December is the Varsity match? (laughter) And if Oxford were to win, I don't think I would be in a fit state to take a meeting! (laughter) Perhaps you would take it for me (to A.)

A. I'll be all right! (laughter)

Dr. R. Still if anyone can get through the traffic, we'll try to be here! Unless (hopefully) they would like to cancel it altogether?

A. I doubt that! (laughter)

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