

13 March 1979

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

[Shortened from tape recording]

INTRODUCTION

You will, I think find it repaying and helpful to Meditation to revise the relationship between the shortened System that we in the West were given in January 1960, and the full-time Yoga System from which it was taken. Though many descriptions of that System attributed to Patanjali (? 4th century BC) can be found, it would be wise for us to keep to the Shankaracharya's guidance in the matter since he was one of those who was present with his predecessor Guru Deva when this modernised version was being worked out before and during World War II.

It was in 1971 that he described it like this to interpreter Jaiswal and myself:

S. To create any lasting result, there must always be a System (Sadhana), and one must go through the System with steps appropriate to achieving the desired result. Under Conscious direction the steps can be shortened and changed in their order, but the System must be there.

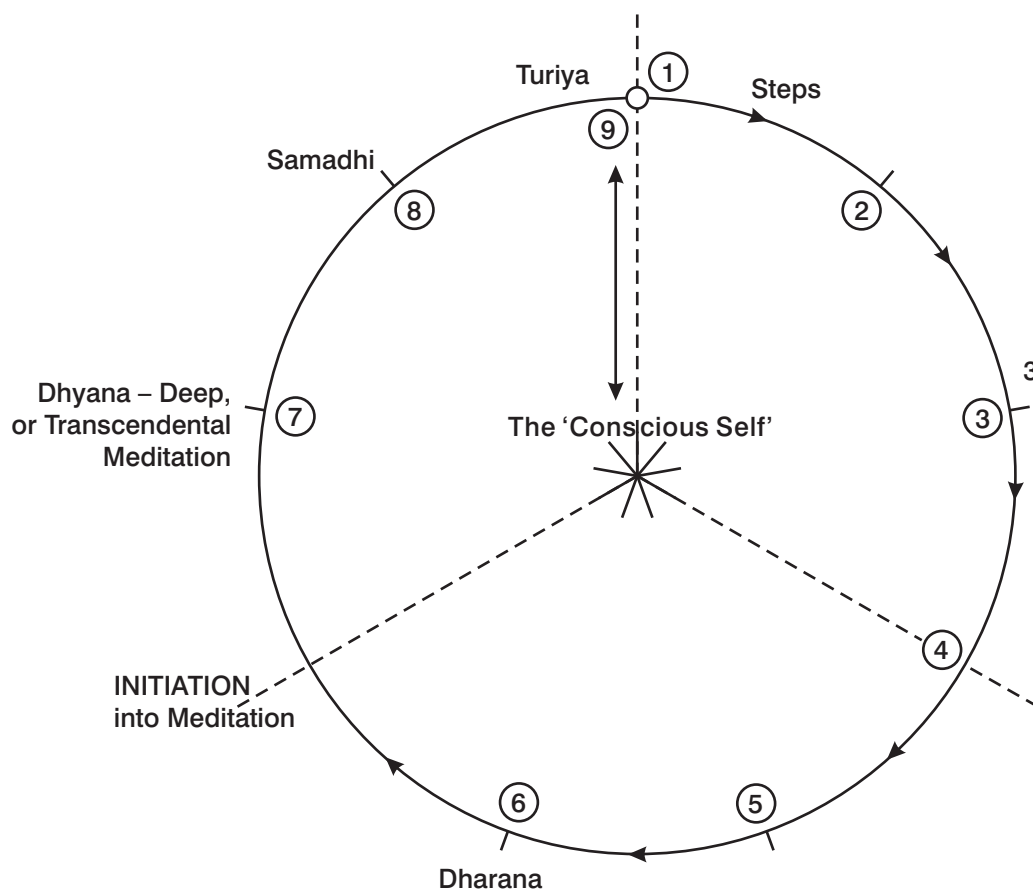
The Eightfold System of Yoga (Patanjali) is composed of: 1) Yama, 2) Nyama, 3) Asana, 4) Pranayama, 5) Pratyahara, 6) Dharana, 7) Dhyana, and 8) Samadhi.

In this System the body and the Conscious mind (Buddhi) are progressively trained for control over the senses and their registration by the mind through the practice of attention. Thus one had to learn to regulate one's outward activities and obey certain rules of conduct – (Step 1); to learn and practice special rituals and disciplines to promote mental and physical purification and study the Vedanta (Step 2); learn to take up a certain posture and to sit quietly without making much movement (Step 3); to regulate the breathing system (Step 4); to give up all worldly thoughts set up by the physical senses (Step 5); and learn to hold one idea in the mind at a time (Step 6). Only then was the man allowed to be initiated and to meditate.

This is a hard System and only the brave could take it even under a worthy guide. The same System is to a great extent shortened in the way you have been given the meditation, but during the practice of meditation all those steps will have to be accomplished in the end, for they relate to the removal of the 'sheaths' or 'layers of scum' which have grown up with us through habit-formation in ignorance and which prevent us from the True Knowledge that the Atman (Divine Self) is perfect and always present within every individual whether he knows it or not.

(Record, 30 January 1971)

Now we don't need to learn all these Sanskrit names; we can refer to the steps by their numbers. But they only acquired a practical meaning for me when I saw them in our Symbol of the Circle of nine points (known also to the Shankaracharya though never expressed that way for he uses no screen or blackboard). A 'system of 8 Steps' suggests an octave which the symbol demonstrates by dividing a circle into 8 equal arcs, thus showing its repetitive character. The Yogi achieves Samadhi again and again; only when the 9th step coincides with the first is the circle completed and full Realization (Turiya or Enlightenment) achieved once and for all. (See Figure overleaf)



In this version of the Yoga System we have only named three steps immediately related to our System of Meditation – those are the only names we need remember. As a check we can recall that Step 1 represents the intake of food, Step 4 of air, Step 5 of sensory impressions and Step 9 suprasensory impressions in our Western version. In the figure you can see that the 4th Step of Yoga – ‘Breath Control’ comes at the point of entry of *air*; and that the meditation is given as a sensory impression (between Steps 6 & 7) in the form of a mantra or ‘sound’.

Moreover we have always been assured that *no* further ‘disciplines’ other than meditation become necessary later on. The idea is that if you let the mantra rhythm take you inward as far as it will, twice a day, when you emerge it will look after all the preliminary steps. For example, as we’ve all experienced, the breathing becomes quiet and economical for a time during every half-hour and we avoid the dangerous and unnatural practice of interfering with what should be an entirely instinctive function by attempts to control it intellectually.

So *all* that our meditators have to do is to give up everything during a half-hour until meditator and the object of meditation become One! Two steps – and yet you should hear the groans and complaints that arise from such a terrible discipline. (laughter) Now let us just do 5 minutes and then in the second half of this meeting, we can approach the same subject in an entirely different way.

MEDITATION

We must realise that all normal people know at quiet moments far more about this than they claim, but the difficulty is just one of communication because common or worse still ‘scientific’ language can’t do it. A week or two ago a boy of 9 was ‘caught’ by his mother deep in Reading 3

which he found by her bed. ‘That is nice,’ he said ‘it’s all about listening to God.’ Asked how he knew that in spite of all those difficult words, he said ‘I don’t know about the words, but I do know *that*’ and pointed to the phrase on p.1, ‘The Voice of the Silence.’

What means of communication can we use then for our emotional experiences? One (today’s most popular form) is through the creative arts; Mr. Ouspensky used often to say that Self-remembering and artistic creation used the *same* triad or combination of the Three Forces. This same ‘language’ has been used by *some* people for at least 6000 years and it is basic to the Shankaracharya’s Meditation Tradition. That visit of ours in 1971 coincided with the annual mass religious gathering or Mela, and this time, our friend had invited a company of professional actors, dancers and musicians to his tent to give a public performance of part of the Krishna music-drama cycle called the Rasa Leela. Just as the Greeks had 9 ‘muses’ whose mother was Memory (Mnemosyne) so in India there were 9 Rasas based on Self-remembering. With interpreter Jaiswal I was encouraged to sit on the stage with H.H. at the first performance; and in thanking him next day for that unforgettable experience, remarked that ‘I have never been so near the Lord Krishna and the milk-maids (‘Gopis’) before.’ [You will remember that in the legend Krishna was trained as a herdsman (like Apollo at Delphi) and the Gopis are the milkmaids.] I had previously heard him keeping the crowd delighted with the stories from that legend for more than two hours.

This time he spoke to us as follows:

S. What you saw yesterday was the introduction to all that is going to be played today. The Rasa Leela (Krishna music-drama) is a picture of Creation itself in which the Absolute desires to play and so from One he becomes many. The manifold Creation is the emanation of His love in giving as much bliss as possible to the beholder. The play is acted in such a way that the people and the devotees come to understand that their life also is *part of the play*. In the play there are certain roles which show that the whole meaning is love. In Divine Love there is no place for passionate desire. So one should not pollute love with attachment to desires. In today’s play, Cupid (*cupido* – the Latin for ‘I desire’) the god of passionate love will try to attract the attention of Krishna, now grown up and ‘married to Radha’, by presenting scenes of love, desire, attraction, lure, and all sensuous nature to try to bind him with the senses and displace him from his unified, steady and detached position. Since Krishna as Lord of Creation sees the whole of Creation as part of his own Self, so he would not be dragged down into the duality of ‘subject/object’ conflict. And since individuals also don’t use their own body and being as sensual objects for attachment, so if one understood the world as an extension of one’s own being then the attractions of objects will vanish like a mirage and one would play one’s part in the Rasa Leela with freedom and enjoyment.

Comment: I had noticed the night before that Radha and the Gopis were obviously women – in the old days all the parts were played by men, but it didn’t seem to matter whether the actor who played Krishna so gaily and naturally was man or woman. ‘He’ was evidently brought up to lead a special life and was a very special person.

S. Krishna is represented as the Self; Radha is his Buddhi; the Maya is the desire to play – creative art – which will create all these beings to take part; the Gopis, the milkmaids are his own ideas or manifest desires; Chitta is the playground or stage where the scene

is being enacted; Cupid, the god of desire, will be presented as attraction and shown playing with all these embodied beings, but the Lord Krishna will come out stainless and free from 'attachment'.

It is for the people in the audience to see that there need be no division in Creation. The big world outside is the same as the world within and should be enjoyed as *part of oneself* to keep from losing one's identity in identification and attachment.

R. This figure of Eros, or Cupid, with bow and arrows which he points at Lord Krishna – is he firing desires at him from which he remains completely detached?

S. These five arrows have a special meaning being five stages of lovemaking which Kama Deva (the God of Love) has in his quiver and carries with him when he goes to Krishna to challenge him. This God (like Eros, or Cupid) had by then overcome all beings in the Universe, including ascetics, gods and supernatural beings; and he wanted to make sure there was no one left who was not subject to his command.

When Krishna came to know of his pride and arrogance, he summoned him and asked him in which way Cupid intended to make war on him; there being two ways, 'either through the fortress' or else 'on the plains'. When the meditator withdraws himself in meditation into Samadhi (those two steps) then he is described as being 'in the fortress'. When he is out in the sensory world, it will be a 'war of the plains'. The god of love had opted for a war of the plains to which Krishna agreed.

The next thing was that Radha (Krishna's 'Buddhi') was inspired to bring all this about and she asked Krishna to arrange such a play in which lovemaking and enjoyment would be the main theme, but that this would be kept within the bounds of fine art and no character in the play should have to suffer from 'attachment'. So Krishna's Maya created all these scenes and episodes and beings. The great Rishis (seers and teachers) became the Gopis (!) representing various aspects of Love and desire, while Radha as Reason (Buddhi) kept her dominion over the Gopis.

The first arrow was shot when Krishna invited the Gopis for play during the day; when they arrived the following night for play, the love God fired his second arrow. But Krishna, remaining detached, dispersed all the Gopis and sent them home. So this arrow was lost for nothing! Later on, Krishna, with Radha and the Gopis met in the beautiful garden forest of Vrindavan, on the river Jamuna and called for a dance. On a moonlit night with fabulous garments and decorations the Gopis danced and played under the sole direction of Radha; so the play continued without any delusion or attachment, lust or passion. Here the third arrow also fell fruitlessly.

On the fourth night, the Lord Krishna with the Gopis came to dance together, and while dancing he came into close physical contact with them. Here he had appointed a chief milkmaid to organise the dance maintaining its object of detachment, so the play-dances went on all night without any trouble and love's fourth arrow fell to no purpose.

The fifth night was the climax. It became very involved indeed for each Gopi has a Krishna for herself so the force of attraction was at its height. But even here the nature of Krishna being pure through and through made it possible that during the all-night dance these beings all merged in bliss were never distracted by the Love God or passion or lust or identification with the senses. Thus all five arrows fell harmlessly and the Love God suffered total defeat. When he asked a pardon, he was given protection and asylum and allowed to live in the Creation to keep it going!

Dr R. Which he is doing very successfully today! (laughter)

The victory of Krishna is due to one fact – that he felt one with Creation and thus no question of desire arose. This is also the lesson by which people can feel united with the Absolute, the Param-Atman, as manifested by the whole of Creation. And thus can do away with duality and live in the world, doing all their work, performing all their duties, fulfilling their needs for enjoyment and recreation and carrying on the race – all done with complete detachment.

(Record, 6 February 1971)

Dr R. Well, we greatly enjoyed watching this. When we got to the festival the next day, the crowds were so immense that we couldn't get near the tent at first, but slowly we worked our way to a vantage point, had a good view; and heard the lovely chanting and singing (stage-managed by a young Sanyassin in saffron robes whom we had often met at the Ashram – one of H.H's disciples – who had also the job of conducting the actors and actresses to their makeshift changing room which was just a curtain behind the stage). It all went without a hitch and then we were very lucky to be there when later in the week he invited the same company to do another drama-cycle at his Ashram – this time about Shiva.

[After some conversation a further five minutes Meditation was much enjoyed.]

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