

8 May 1979

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

On the platform: Dr. Roles, Lady Allan, Michael Fleming.

M.F. The next Meditation Meeting will be on Tuesday, June 12th. There will be a musical evening here on Sunday, 20th May, at 8 p.m. to which anyone who comes to these meetings will be welcome. It will be given by Alison Gordon, Jane Hassan, Eva Schay and Sue Cassini with music by Brahms, Bloch, Ravel, Debussy, Beethoven, for piano and violin and voice. The full programme will be on the hall notice board shortly.

Dr. R. I hope a good number turn up.

I thought we would try and link today's subject with the one weekly discussion groups talk about, by exploring the relation of Memory and Consciousness to the Meditation, for the people who come to these Meditation meetings but not necessarily to the weekly groups; because strangely enough it is at the very centre both of Mr Ouspensky's Psychological Lectures and teaching generally, and of the Shankaracharya's. But the two are approached so differently and in such different language that it's a good plan to keep them a little bit separate for the time being. So this afternoon it will be the *Ramayana* sort of approach to Memory and Consciousness but I'm sure that if you relate this to your own experience in Meditation, you will be able to see that the two are describing the same thing.

Are there any questions first of all? Has something been brewing during this last two months? (silence) Probably it has, but it's a bit difficult to get the speech centres connected with it! (laughter)

I want, while I remember it, to say please be careful, before you introduce somebody to Initiation, to find out *all* about them. It will help them afterwards. We have just had somebody who didn't confess to Mrs. Fleming that she had tried several kinds of Meditation before. She was initiated this afternoon and if we had known, she could perhaps have been saved a bit of argument with herself when it came to the point. One should know anything they have tried, any groups they have been connected with, any unofficial or official introductions to the Meditation. It makes it easier for them later. So will you try and do that?

When I first raised the subject of Memory and Consciousness with the Shankaracharya quite early on – the first time one had private sessions with him, we came at it from the point of view, both on the same day, of the relations between our sense of time and the state of consciousness. And then we went on in the evening session to what is the relation between Memory and Consciousness. About the sense of time, he agreed that there are different categories of time and our daytime sense of time is extremely variable and unreliable and always within very strict limits. Some days we think we have plenty of time; other days we don't seem to have any time at all. There is nothing real about it; it's just circumstances. Then when we go to sleep at night, time changes. When we are dreaming in light sleep, we see a lot. We cover large areas of time. But as a matter of fact, our dreams are only moments. They pass very, very quickly. A dream which covers a big area of time takes very little time

to pass through our consciousness. In the course of our half-hour we see that again and again, though we oughtn't to look but we can't help seeing, that a dream comes in and we can go right around the world without realising we have stopped repeating the Mantra. I don't know if you have had that experience? (laughter) So one has to have something watching – one thread to consciousness watching to see that one is genuinely coming back again and again to the rhythm. Any questions?

Neither the dream world nor our view of the world we see around us in the daytime has any validity at all. They are both subjective; both dependent on our own personal experience; and contain a lot of dream material about ourselves and other people. So what we are aiming for is to enter quite a new world where all of us comes together in a new state of consciousness which is 'waking up' which we have all experienced over and over again for moments. We mustn't expect to get that during a half-hour except perhaps for a moment or two a feeling of liberation. But if we do the half-hours fairly regularly we get many more of those moments and they last very much longer – it's part of the bonus! Any views on this? (another silence) (to Lady Allan) How are we going to release the flood that one knows is there? (laughter)

Mr. Anholt. (actor) The thread of consciousness which you referred to – is that a normal everyday sort of consciousness?

Dr. R. Yes; I'm glad you raised that because we have to distinguish, and nobody ever does, between the pure full Consciousness that we could call Universal or Cosmic Consciousness if you like, which great seers and saints and others have described; from the ordinary daytime fluctuating reflection of that Consciousness which we see (according to the state of our inner psychology) in the mirror. There are two words in Sanskrit: one is *Chit* – the Universal Consciousness: Sat-Chit-Ananda which never changes; and the other is *Chitta* – the reflection which is felt in the mirror of the heart. And from the heart it modifies our view of the world. So the one English word 'consciousness' or the French word 'conscience' has to do for both. When we talk about consciousness, we must remember that there is relative consciousness, as Mr. Ouspensky called it, which is our own possession and changeable; but that there is also a real Consciousness of which it is a reflection.

So, having said that, the Shankaracharya went on to give an illustration which you cannot hear too often – I'm afraid some of you have heard it several times! In the *Ramayana* the figure of Rama is the ideal man, the man who has had all human experience, and he has a brother called Lakshman who is also ideal, like us, but hasn't had the experience. H.H. wants us to realise that there is nothing wrong either with us or with Lakshman! It's just that we haven't experienced all that the fully Realized man has experienced and knows about, because our mirror is not reflecting but covered with a coat of ignorance.

Lakshman, the brother of Rama, told him that he would like to see the great illusion of Maya, the Maya that Rama was always taking about. Rama replied, 'You will get into trouble through seeing it so I shouldn't bother about it.' But Lakshman persisted. 'I'm sure it won't affect me. I'm still curious to see it.' So Rama said, 'All right, you will see it by and by,' and changed the subject. They went to the river to bathe. When they had finished bathing and both were coming

ashore, Rama said, 'My brother, I have lost my ring in the water. Do you think you could dive for it?' So Lakshman went and dived for the ring and at the moment his head hit the water, he lost his consciousness and his memory. Under the water he remembered nothing. He dreamt that he was in a different land, a beautiful but unfamiliar countryside, and he met there a lovely young woman who said she had no one to protect her and they settled down together, established a house and lived like householders. They had four sons and when he became an old man, he caught malarial fever, developed pneumonia and eventually died. When his sons took him to the river, as the custom was, to immerse his body in the water, as the body hit the water at that moment Lakshman came out of the water, out of Maya, and recovered his memory. He approached brother Rama, who was standing there just the same, with tears in his eyes and repentance in his heart, but he still couldn't make out what had happened and was utterly confused. Rama said to him, 'You wanted to experience Maya – the illusion that men live in – now you have had the experience.'

(Record, 19 October 1962)

So all the differentiation of time and space which results from our structure in the course of evolution is an illusion. There *is* a real world but the view we are taking of it is all wrong, and very different for each person. Although we are looking at the same world, and think we are seeing the same world, the world is really different for each of us.

In the Atman or in Brahman there is no time, no space; it's all One. Even in the Antahkarana on the Causal level, the inner organ, we are off the circle of time and everything is very still. Only then do you realise that you have been in a dream all the rest of the time! Just as only when you wake up in the morning, do you realise you have been dreaming. Makes it a bit difficult to discuss! But I think we have all had this experience of awakening, don't you? It's hard to remember from one state to the other; but next time you get a moment of waking up, we find other moments of waking up are connected with it. Meditation is really to ensure that we have more and more of these moments of waking up. They are very useful not only in this ordinary life that we live, but in the moment of death when you are given by that 'figure of Light', the Atman, a flashback of your past that so many people have described, it won't come as too much of a surprise. Any questions now? We don't discuss that final moment but only where we are now.

Roger Clayton. You said that the only difference between us and the Realized man was that he had more experience. Is the dream part of the experience or is the experience only in the moments of awakening?

Dr. R. No, he has both but he knows what are dreams and what aren't. He doesn't waste much time in dreaming. Our friend, the Shankaracharya, directly his head hits the pillow, he is fast asleep and he sleeps for four hours or so and then he wakes up and gets about his business. He doesn't waste time. At the same time, he knows what are dreams, what are daytime states, what is Samadhi and what is Turiya – four states.

I wanted just to read to you a paragraph from a letter that Lord Allan wrote to our friend, Nolan Howitt, in New Zealand which was the Allans' next port of call after Sydney:

Recently I have come to feel that the Atman is not something distant and

awesome but really it's me, as we have so often been told. Not of course the me that is continually changing, continually active, doing this, that and the other. But the me who is and always has been watching and watching over me. There is a strong feeling of P. D. Ouspensky's 'guardian angel' here.

Dr. R. I would modify that; I would say that it includes both; *both* the 'me that is continually active, doing this, that and the other', *and* the me which is watching over me continuously. But I'm quite certain that he was ready, prepared, and he died with very full Realization. There is more in that letter, but too private to read out.

What we can learn from his example is that this is not far away. The Atman is *not* something awesome and distant, but is right here; and he was able at that time in his life to pull out of many of the wide interests that he had, so he had more time for the Atman. We don't have to get out of our interests or change our lives or anything like that; we have gradually to get the inner change, being able to have both the I that knows where you are and the I that knows what it's all about and where you are going. That clear? There should be no conflict.

Mr. Harbord. Dr. Roles, could you say something about the role of Buddhi as the consort or the wife of the Atman? I feel that there is a very big link.

Dr. R. Yes. The Chitta and the Buddhi are like a married couples, the Chitta (consciousness) reflecting the Purush or Lord, and the Buddhi running everything for Him, seeing that everything is in order and clean and tidy and straight and that he is keeping his appointments and so on. Is that how you see it, Maureen?

M.A. And the Buddhi to remind you to stay in the present moment which is invaluable just now.

Dr. R. Yes, certainly. In the next conversation he made this easier to understand, the same day in the evening, when I asked this question:

M.F. (reads):

Q. The sort of memory I mean that is associated with consciousness is like the memory Lakshman lost when he dived into the water. Would you tell us about it?

S. He gives a description of three types of memory according to the three Gunas or kinds of energy. Memory imbued with Tamas is lost immediately. You lose everything that you have observed; impressions vanish or never reach us. Memory with Rajas is sharp but short-lived and may be distorted; it's always on the move; it's not yours and will go away. The third type of memory arises from the Sattva. That is the memory that people hold even in dreams. Most dreams we don't remember when we wake up – Tamas. Other dreams associated with Rajas we remember something about them for a short time. And now and again certain dreams visit us which we never forget – they are the dreams that come from Sattva. So memory too depends on the three Gunas.

(Record, 19 October 1962)

Dr. R. Well this is much the easiest way of checking your consciousness as you go along. If you are busy and active and Rajas is predominating, you remember things sharply and you are conscious of things but they disappear very quickly – one succeeds another, nothing stays.

Then there are times when one is absolutely dull, nothing goes in at all, when Tamas is predominating – tiredness, fatigue, reaction. And then there are those lovely real moments when everything is clear, feels like illumination, light, and the memory you want (just right for the moment) comes in when you want it. The human mind is marvellously endowed if it has the right energy. Does that make it any easier?

Miss Scrutton. In order to get the rare moment, the Sattvic moments, can one do anything? I was thinking of making sure that ‘you know that you know’.

Dr. R. Yes. (to Lady Allan) You were giving a very good answer to that question when we were talking just now in my room. It’s the present moment. If you are worrying about the past or dreaming of the future, you effectively exclude this lovely clarity where in the present moment everything you want comes. So bringing yourself back, releasing the mind from its burden of past and future, does away with worry and obscurity. One may as well establish that habit of doing that as soon as possible.

Miss S. This feels very necessary, but it isn’t always very Sattvic. Is there something one could start...

Dr. R. Oh, I see. It means of course also saving energy. Any moment one can save a drop of energy whereas we splash it about the whole time – Sattvic, Rajasic, every form of energy we waste in a spendthrift way so that, as you say, this does mean saving energy and it also means cultivating things which bring you that kind of energy. In your long experience you know that certain things that you read or look at or listen to in the course of a day give you or release the kind of energy you want. It’s a matter of taste, the taste for one or other of the three aspects of energy. For a lot of necessary action you need Rajas – it isn’t that it’s wrong. At times you need Tamas – you have to put the brake on! You can’t live at high speed the whole time. So you have Tamas when you want rest. Then for the special moments, to solve some problems or to remember something you have forgotten, you need Sattva.

Miss Newington. Dr. Roles, is there something in the power of Meditation – one can see that on the physical level and one repeats the Mantra... (repeated): Is there something helpful in the idea of repetition? One uses repetition on the physical level and in repeating the Mantra, is there something helpful connected with repetition for the Causal level?

Dr. R. It’s a very valuable idea to have in mind that everything repeats, that it’s never the end! Nice moments will come back; bad moments go away. Also to establish something it needs to be repeated. It is also one of the dimensions of time, as Mr. Ouspensky proved. What is needed is not to remember the past but to remember something *now* that one keeps forgetting and when energy comes back, be ready to remember.

Q. Dr. Roles, when you are in the moment now, as we are told we ought to be, are we to a lesser degree under the influence of Maya?

Dr. R. Yes, to a lesser extent. We are for a moment free or maybe if not free, at least we see what it’s like. But it is *the* way of getting out of it because if the moment now comes often enough, is felt deeply enough, it can expand into complete liberation.

You’re looking as if I were being rather complicated! I’m not tiring you? (laughter)

M.A. Dr. Roles, would you say that's it in the present moment that you can be confident and be and know just what you have to do for that moment which may be very little; and that is a great comfort because nothing much is demanded of one in any one present moment?

Dr. R. Yes; and you were saying to me that there was one thing you could do in the moment and that is 'give up your suffering'. (Yes, yes) You can let it fall away. Suffering comes from going over the past, losing one's attention, going over worries about the future.

Miss Cassini. Dr. Roles, it seems to me that memory – you can't really make the effort to remember. Is this just the beginning when it comes? Or should we work towards it?

Dr. R. She says that it seems to her that memory just comes. You don't make an effort about it. Right; but it is the result of previous efforts! You mustn't expect an effort to bring a result the next moment; but if you make efforts to be in the present moment and to drop the burden of the mind, these bonus moments – no claim bonus – come much more often.

Dr. Cox. Is it significant that Jesus gave to his disciples that special prayer in which they were asked to say, 'Remember our Father'?

Dr. R. Everything Jesus did was significant! (laughter) And I don't think that Dr. Roles is a very good judge. (laughter) Nevertheless *it has been of immense significance to us*, the Lord's Prayer, as explained to us by Mr. Ouspensky and you remember that it is in the present tense – 'Our Father Which *art* in Heaven, For Thine *is* the Kingdom' – there always, unchanging. Many things about it have been of immense importance to us so I think it must have been significant!

Dr. C. I wondered if this was Sattvic memory?

Dr. R. Yes, a gift or response that one might get after efforts of Sattvic memory. If one has done one's own share, God comes to one's help. This Lord's Prayer comes from something much higher than oneself. But it won't come, unless you do something to deserve it.

Now Mr. Psychologist (Dr. Dale Beckett) I wanted to interest you in the idea of two different kinds of loss of memory which we should avoid. It was connected with what Lord Allan wrote, namely that one needs to have the moment-to-moment ordinary awareness of who one is, what one is doing, and so on; that's equally important. And one also needs to have the memory of where one is ultimately going and what it's all about... Not conflicting in the mind but present in the heart. There is a bit, also from the *Ramayana* which H.H. went on to describe:

M.A. (reading):

In the *Ramayana* epic when Rama was searching for Sita in the forest, he was so identified with his search that he lost his own identity. He asked questions like, 'Who am I; where is this; where am I; how did I get here?' When reminded, he woke up but soon lapsed into unconsciousness again. Over and over again these questions have been asked but forgotten again and again. That is what is happening to all of us. How in a state of hypnosis (artificial sleep) we are searching for something without finding it. 'Where did I lose it? Outside my house or inside?' We want to know what we are; we want to be happy. That means we are seeking Param-Atman. But Param-Atman is sitting in everything

though there is a curtain of ignorance between us. But we should set about seeing Param-Atman in everything. If we do that, we receive unexpected favours. Then this curtain of ignorance lifts and the Maya which has been cheating us all the time stops deceiving and begins to help instead.

(Record, 29 April 1973)

Dr. R. That's the simple remedy against all the obstacles to consciousness, all the causes of loss of memory – to cultivate seeing the One thing in everything and that One thing is the Self that lives in the hearts of all, the Param-Atman, which is just a word in the beginning but if you cultivate it, attach importance to it, realise that it is always the same, always One thing and that whether you like things or dislike them, it's all part of this. Then at one cut of the knife, you cut all the obstacles to consciousness that we spent years dwelling on in our Western system – imagination, identifying, considering. All these obstacles are cut off by the habit of bringing the One thing, the One consciousness, into one's mind whenever one can.

Q. Does one cease to compromise with the world?

Dr. R. It doesn't worry us; we are one with it. 'Param-Atman' is a mere word to begin with, but the mere word has an efficacy.

Shall we now stop me talking and (laughter) regain the thread of consciousness? Nothing but 'I am' and let everything else fall away except the Mantra rhythm.

MEDITATION

Not so difficult when all together! A lot of peaceful faces, I see. So just in conclusion, it's now I think 12 minutes past eight. We all of us have got our own kind of memory and no two people have the same endowment among all the different kinds of memory, visual, auditory, all the rest. So we don't go into the differences in people's memories, short or long term... short term in personality; long term in essence. But one thing we have all got in common; none of us can remember himSelf at will when he wants it, when it's most important. So we had better set about getting that capacity without further delay.

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