

10 July 1979

MEDITATION MEETING

On the Platform. Dr. Roles, Lady Allan, Miss Harp & Mr. Howitt.

Lady Allan. The next Meditation Meeting will be on 14th August, but there *won't* be a Meditation meeting in September.

During the holidays there will be two Sunday Work-Ins – 22nd July and 9th September. Details will be found on the lists on the landing tables and anyone who can come will be most welcome as there is always plenty to do to keep this House in good order and people might find it a helpful stimulus to meet during the long holidays. Also during the holidays are maintenance parties on Thursday evenings at 7.30 for anyone who can come then. There is no need to put your name down for Thursdays but please note that there won't be one on 30th August.

Dr. Roles. We would welcome more people who are likely starters for the Meditation. That is people who have been looking for something. We'd like to have twenty to thirty people each term because it helps the meditators if they can join in the giving of Initiations and we also want to try a different sort of approach. Some sort of informal 'study group' of question and answer, not just about Meditation but to find out what's in the air and what people are looking for – what they are searching for. Especially at a time when there is a renewed interest in Mr. Ouspensky. So if you would be thinking about which of your friends are likely to want to come to some informal meetings of that sort and who are likely to stay – because it's not any good their coming to meditate for a month or two. You should hope that they would meditate for at least a year.

Now this afternoon we would like some perfectly ordinary questions about Meditation. Take it that none of us is very good; we could all be better from time to time. Here on the platform are two very experienced people – Nolan Howitt you know. We knew him well before the coming of the Meditation in 1960 as a senior member of the SES, and then we got the Meditation from the Maharishi for whom we worked for about eighteen months. My wife and I went in the autumn of 1960 to give the New York people the Meditation and again came back when we went round the world to check them the following year. In January 1961 we went to South Africa and Kenya and then out to India in June and July where I met the Shankaracharya for the first time and transferred from the Maharishi to him. We went out to New Zealand in the autumn of 1961 at Mr. MacLaren's invitation and Mr. Howitt did all the arranging of initiations and checks. They left the SES to join us so we have been very close ever since then. There are about 200 in your Wellington group now, Nolan? (Yes)

Then, here is Miss Jami Harp who was not in the New York group when we went the first time, but sometime about 1963 you joined up with Mr. Rabeneck? (Yes) And later we empowered you to give Initiations. And for some years now she has been looking after, under Mr. Rabeneck, all of the Meditation in the New York group. But also one time when she was in California she very kindly went to Mexico and initiated newcomers to our

English-speaking Mexican group – Joysmith’s group – So she also has plenty of experience. They both leave next week so can you think of some way of using them while they are still here?

Miss Harp. I am going to recommend that our New York meditators come to England for a week and I’m sure that everything will then be all right! I have never seen so many beautiful roses as there are in the gardens here in my entire life.

Miss Wright. I thought you meant the people! (laughter)

Miss Harp. Them too! (laughter)

Dr. R. Jami, the sort of questions we keep asking here fall into two main groups. One during the early two or three months, before the Meditation has become part of people’s nature, and the questions are: How to sit still for half an hour; how to sit with a straight back for half an hour without getting tense; how to sit symmetrically; how to set the Mantra running; how to let it go the way it wants without interfering? That sort of thing. Have you any dodges that you use in New York that would help here?

Miss Harp. I think it’s pretty much the same everywhere meditators are. Of course individually it’s very different but the main thing seems to be to see what are the priorities for those fifteen minutes or half-hours. We have so many desires. Usually when we really want something, whether it’s steak and kidney pie or New York steak, we can give our full attention to it but when it comes to Meditation we often hold off a little bit which isn’t quite getting itself to that half-hour. So that’s the kind of thing we tell people and hopefully they will see it. And if one persists – I don’t know if Jocelyn Rose is here or not? (No) Well Jocelyn gave me a beautiful example of this kind of persistence that one needs. She is a potter and in the beginning was potting for perhaps two months then stopping then picking it up again, but having to pick it up again where she had left off. And it’s the same way with Meditation. If you aren’t persistent with it – you can’t do the full half-hour sometimes, but be sure that you do it consistently and with love for yourself and with love for what you are doing very gently. She did that with her pottery, she took a small piece every day twice a day but she did more by doing that than by doing the whole load at once.

Dr. R. Do you go along with that Nolan?

Mr. Howitt. Yes, I do very much. I can speak more of how I found the Meditation has come to this stage in our dealing with people by taking it as a natural process and, as Jami is saying, that the object of Meditation is to arrive at that state of Self-realization. I don’t think that one hopes to go straight into that and so it seems that one collects these drops little by little whereby one is drawn deeper into one’s nature. As one gets a taste for these drops in some way one finds the same taste externally and so it seems as if the inner movement and the outer life slowly begin to merge together.

Dr. R. That’s how we find it. Now would the Floor like to respond to this generous treatment?

Mr. Wenham-Prosser. I’d like to say that mostly at the beginning of the half-hour there is always this level in the mind which is full of desires and goes wandering off and this always happens at the start. But eight times out of ten, I manage to slip underneath it and I wonder if this is the right way for meditation? It happens by itself and it brings a feeling of timelessness with it.

Dr. R. You 'slip underneath it' – it's rather akin to the Sermon on the Mount: 'let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth'. You have got to keep this dominant hemisphere quiet.

Mr. W-P. In fact this superficial level goes on but you don't fight it; you just get away from it.

Dr. R. Yes. Any other questions – from beginners please, so-called... nice fresh meditators anyway.

Mr. Howitt. From our own experience, I think that what was said just now is very much related to beginners because one has noticed over the years, particularly when initiating people, that when they come to the ceremony it is usually a very special occasion. The setting is so very good and when the person comes in you can often tell that they are a little bit nervous, but underneath – those who have the right attitude – already seem to be pushed into a deeper part of themselves so that when they receive the Word and they go off to practise it, I have found that so many people experience on that day possibly the very best Meditation they ever have. Why I say it is so important to beginners is because Meditation ultimately has to become a very *innocent* process and it seems as though, having tasted that on the first day, you go home and the conditions, particularly if there are lots of children and so on, are not going to be like the room where you were initiated. So long as we have this idea we never quite get back to the innocent state. Even in these moments you were speaking of one must be strong and want it again in the next moment because it is the 'innocent repetition of the Mantra' that does carry you into the depths and ultimately to that place where there is only the consciousness of Consciousness.

Dr. R. Well now if we've got any innocent people here (laughter) it's now that 'they should speak or forever...' no, not that...! (laughter) Just speak up.

Miss Benning. (repeat) Could Mr. Howitt say that again or explain it again because this is very much my experience. At my Initiation it was the best Meditation I ever had and while I don't necessarily seek it, I feel it must be possible to have the same again without trying.

Dr. R. It's so many people's experience, isn't it? Try and recall what you were asked to do when you came for Initiation. You were asked to empty your mind; to approach it as if you had never heard of anything like this before; quite fresh with an open mind; and just listen to instructions without any preconceived idea. Now do you come to your half-hours like that every day after all this time? One should take every half-hour as new and fresh as if nothing had ever gone before.

Mr. Howitt. We have people, who, after they have finished their Meditation say: 'Today it was two; yesterday I had a six.' (laughter)

Lady A. I think if I had to label my meditations for success or failure, I would have given up long ago! (laughter)

Dr. R. Yes, that's the thing. The Maharishi used to say that the Mantra worked in different rooms in your house. It wasn't always working in the drawing room with spectacular results. It could be working in the cellar or kitchen, and it wouldn't produce results that you would notice, but it's always doing something and we mustn't be discouraged because this dominant hemisphere doesn't think it's doing well enough – not up to standard. More questions.

Mr. Tyou. Sometimes when one is meditating and the left hemisphere has become quiet and the Mantra has become dominant, one seems to come up against some sort of barrier where one is presented with a choice of having to give up something. Why that is I'm not sure, but the shock of that realisation often drives one back into the left hemisphere and one starts thinking about it. Can you offer any help?

Dr. R. My dear Mark, quite frankly I don't think you ever get out of this left hemisphere, but we might have talks about it. It's quite a big step when it is entirely stilled. What is needed is that the whole of you, Mark Tyou, meditates. It's out of proportion – one part of you is doing the whole thing and speaking for the rest of you. So the right way to go about it is with the gunas. If you know that the active dominant hemisphere is always working with Rajas, always active, always moving the whole time; anything that is moving must be that. On the other hand the quiet one is sleepy and damping down rather like the smoke with which the beekeeper subdues the bees which are buzzing and attacking him, in order to be able to handle them safely – that's Tamas, the smoke which befuddles one and one can't meditate from there. Only with the third and different thing, the Sattva, which unites both so that both sides of you and all your nature is all at one going towards the Atman at the centre can you really meditate as a whole person. So it's largely a matter of the gunas and the better people can understand that in the way the Shankaracharya speaks of them, the better for them, I think.

Mr. Howitt. I can add one little bit to that because on one of my visits to His Holiness's Ashram, I asked a similar question about having become quiet and finding what I felt was this barrier and could he help me. He just said, 'You don't want to worry about that. You should pick up the crumbs you are already getting under the table!'

Q. Could you say something more about preparation for the half hour?

Dr. R. We campaigners of the Maharishi were put very much against preparing in any way, weren't we? It's the dominant hemisphere wanting to set the stage for itself with preparations. (laughter) The thing is really more to take yourself as you find yourself at the given moment so he was very much against what he called 'mood-making'. I think that he was quite right. But there are ways, the Shankaracharya suggests, like having a little music as we are going to try this afternoon, taking some deep breaths, even having a cold shower. There are ways of getting rid of the office, anything to get out of our daily routine.

Helen, is there anything your friend next door would like to say? (No, not yet)

Miss Harp. The best preparation seems to be that you are going to meditate. But in New York City we have a lot of noise and people find it difficult to get to quietness so we do sometimes take a few moments just to re-direct where we are going – we're coming from something and going towards something.

Dr. R. And the central thing being that you are going to meet a very important Person, and you've got three minutes on the trans-Atlantic line to get in contact. Just the first three minutes are important – of every half-hour.

Mrs. Roles. Do you remember that the Shankaracharya one time spoke of this saying that one didn't go straight into the private room of one's house; one first met the family and one's wife

and so on and then when all that had been done, one went into the quietest room after just a little preliminary preparation.

Dr. R. Yes, people are of course, very different. Everybody needs some different way in and very often the same person needs a different way in at different times. Sometimes you will find it necessary to dust the room first before settling to meditate; sometimes you have to go right into it dust and all like I do! (laughter)

Lady A. Dr. Roles, do you think that sometimes preparation takes the form of actually preparing ahead that you will actually be able to meditate at the best possible time. I find this is a thing I'm sometimes bad on; quite unnecessarily I leave it too late and then I know that I'm going to be sleepy. I do my best but it won't be the best!

Dr. R. The sooner you can meditate when you have really woken up and got up and dressed, the nearer sunrise the better, and the sooner you can meditate after getting home before the evening's excitements and the cocktails and everything gets going, the better.

Now the other set of questions usually come from people who have been meditating for some years and it's natural that something which has been going on for some years – in our case it has been nineteen years – will have its fluctuations and there will be dull periods and one will, perhaps, during that time get bad habits creeping in. Are there any remedies that are used in other parts of the world for this?

Miss Harp. It varies with people, but one has to keep on going and going and going. It seems as one goes on that the Atman is the best teacher as long as one is persistent. The Meditation itself is the best teacher but one has to meditate. There are times when we feel dry – we get that in New York a lot. 'I'm having a dry period or my heart is heavy.' I went through such a period and had to absolutely... as Dr. Roles said, my mind had let in a lot of things that shouldn't be there. So we do fall asleep. But it's the consistency, gentle consistency...

Dr. R. One of the things which freshens me up is some crisis or difficulty assailing one. I have never meditated so well for years as I have since Bobby's death. Something which absolutely knocks one sideways... don't you think it is important to get the Mantra linked with disaster or crisis of any sort?

Mr. Howitt. We certainly had this problem with people who had been meditating for a long time. For years they had a very strong tendency to force the Mantra in the mind and what seemed to help people to overcome that was to suddenly realise that it was possible to do it. Somehow the feeling arose among us that this was possible and this allowed the heart to believe and immediately this seemed to allow the Mantra to pass through an area that for a long time had held the Meditation in a lot of old habits.

Dr. R. This is true that any moment one can go with resolution enough straight through to the antechamber of the Atman. One really can. It is a lack of belief in ourselves and a lack of emphasis that stops us. The story of the merry Mahatma under the tamarind tree and how the Absolute descended straight away to him illustrates H.H.'s views on this subject.

This question we're asking just now about what you might call 'chronic meditators' I once put in a different form to the Shankaracharya and he answered:

Lady A. This was in 1975 and Dr. Roles asked:

In addition to Meditation is there any special self-applied discipline that you recommend? Something, for instance, to control the restless and involuntary thoughts and movements at times when Rajas comes instead of Sattva?

S. At such times there is only one thing to be recommended and that is love of Atman, love of the Self within. Having achieved love for the Atman, all that which is non-Atman, apart from Atman, will be set aside because it will not attract you; and if the worldly things which are non-Atman have lost their attraction, then one will find inner peace, clarity of mind and restfulness.

(Record, 29 September 1975)

Dr. R. That finds an extraordinary corroboration from the man, Dr. George Ritchie, who inspired the research that led to Raymond Moody's *Life after Life*. He has at last produced his own description of his particular experience when, as a GI at the age of 20 in a 'flu epidemic at Camp Barkeley, a large force with thousands of recruits, just before the Normandy invasion, he died and was certified as dead by the doctor and the orderly. During the ten minutes which ensued he had this experience part of which I am going to read to you. When he 'came back into his body' the orderly happened to see him and noticed that his hand had moved, so called the doctor again. The doctor again examined him and certified him as dead and pulled the sheet over his face again and ordered his burial. But the orderly, quite against etiquette, experience, and so on, said, 'I am sure his hand moved. Couldn't you give him an injection of adrenalin into his heart.' An injection which was never given at that time during an illness like influenza or pneumonia, only for starting a normal heart again after the shock of an accident. This worked at once but it was three days before he could speak and fourteen days before he could walk. His whole life changed, whence the extraordinary impression he gave Moody when he was a lecturer and Moody was a student that started him off on all the research which led to the best-sellers. Now from Dr. Ritchie's own book: there he is lying above his body which is covered by a sheet:

I wasn't sure when the light in the room began to change. I stared in my astonishment as the brightness increased, coming from nowhere, seeming to shine everywhere at once. This light, I thought, would destroy my eyes in a tenth of a second if it were physical. No, I corrected myself, not the light, He. For now I saw that it was not a light, but a man who had entered the room, or rather man made out of light. The instant I perceived him, a command formed itself in my mind, 'Stand up.' The words came from inside me, yet they had an authority my own thoughts never had. I got to my feet and as I did, came this stupendous certainty. 'You are in the presence of the Son of God.' It was a kind of knowing, immediate and complete... Above all, with the still mysterious inner certainty, I knew that this man loved me. Far more than power, what emanated from this Presence was unconditional love. An astonishing love, a love beyond my wildest imagining; this love knew every unlovable thing about me – the quarrels with my stepmother, my explosive temper, the sex thoughts I could never control – every mean selfish thought and action since the day I was born – and accepted me and loved me just the same.

When I say He knew everything about me, this was simply an observable fact for into that room along with his radiant Presence simultaneously had also entered

every episode of my entire life. Everything that had ever happened to me was simply there in full view contemporary and current, all seemingly taking place at the moment.

Dr. R. People often say the word 'Param-Atman' has no meaning. But this he is referring to is the Param-Atman which is there, immanent, all the time in everybody. So we can learn much about the nature of Param-Atman through people like Dr. Ritchie.

Now I'd like you to hear a little more of that talk with the Shankaracharya in answer to that question of mine – before we meditate.

Lady A. (reading)

Sattva certainly leads to the light through which all the energy is made possible, so having acquired some energy and light one must use it in some activity. Having used energy in Rajas one must have Tamas to get oneself recharged to begin another day.

In the 14th Chapter of the *Gita* there is the following passage describing that cycle:

5. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the aspects of energy which the Law of Nature brings forth. They fetter the free spirit in all beings.
6. Of these, Sattva, being luminous, strong and invulnerable, binds one by its yearning for happiness and illumination.
7. Rajas, engendered by thirst for and attachment to pleasure binds the soul through its fondness for activity.
8. But Tamas, the product of darkness, stupefies the senses in all embodied beings, imprisoning them in chains of folly, indolence and lethargy.

And then there was another question:

Q. Buddhi (Mind) seems to need convincing that we are always in the presence of the guru and the Param-Atman. Is it to be achieved just by remembrance?

S. In the natural set-up of Creation, there is this unity which is logical, which is natural, which is causal. In fact, there are no divisions or separations in the Causal realm. But as well as on the Causal, unity can also be achieved on the subtle level. Whenever you have a thought it will reflect all the light and the words also that you have heard here; they will present themselves in some form, and the Guru will be there.

So whatever light, whatever knowledge, whatever promptings come to your heart even when the Guru is not present in the physical form, you should be able to see that the union is taking place on the subtle level. The union with the Guru or the Param-Atman, through the knowledge within the individual is also ever present and immanent.

The physical world is also the Creation of the Absolute, and the unity is there too, although it may be difficult to see or comprehend. But nevertheless, be assured that whenever you remember the Unity, it becomes immanent. And even if you do not remember, it is still present, though not consciously known.

Dr. R. So shall we meditate for a few moments then have a little music (an Indian flute solo which John Hersey sent us without telling us its date), and then meditate again. See if the gunas are right.

MEDITATION

(Flute Music)

MEDITATION

Dr. R. That was about twelve minutes and I thought that the feeling was very still. Do you think that music would help you? It's such an individual thing, music. Best results seem to come when a 'few birds of a feather' collect together and have their sort of music. But H.H. uses it to shift the molecules, if people come in a very stuck routine sort of way, he puts a concert on. We've been at several. What does anybody think? Was it better the first part of the Meditation than the second part? Hands up those who thought it was better without the music. (a few hands went up) Now those who thought it was better with. (a lot more hands shot up) They win! (laughter) I'll tell John Hersey. He was very moved by that and says he has been meditating much better since he found it.

Any more questions now? It's only twelve minutes past...

Mr. Melidis. How does one go to meet a very important Person? That idea always makes me feel very unworthy and I fall to pieces.

Dr. R. Of course you fall to pieces because *that is not thinking of the important Person*. That is thinking of your own ruddy self! (laughter) Directly thoughts of oneself substitute themselves for the thought of that very important Person, we are sunk! (to Miss Harp) Would you agree with that?

Miss Harp. Yes, I do. I see this very important Person as so full of love that it's the place one wants to go to. In Moody's book, it talks of this Presence, this Light, as love and feeling no judgement at all about what he was, just accepted and loved in a way we don't even know about.

Mr. Howitt. I don't think you can invent a very important Person for the sake of Meditation. It's something that gradually grows so that one has this attitude towards someone or something and then the very thought of them seems to cut through what is normally cluttering up the mind.

Dr. R. And it grows when you realise more and more that every good thing comes from this Person. That you have nothing that you have produced in your own life yourself. Every good thing has come from Param-Atman.

Mr. Howitt. That's what the music may have done because in listening to the music, one had to turn out, hear it and get away from this; and then turn back and of course it was much easier to meditate.

Dr. R. Well now, Param-Atman is a very big idea and His world is a very big world. We have narrow parochial ideas about the Param-Atman. We've been sent some rather different kind of music now belonging also to the Param-Atman's world, very, very classical music.

MUSIC

Dr. R. Any mastermind know what that is? (loud shout of WHALES!) Yes, it's the song of a whale in the Arctic that has been going for fifty million years, I understand; whereas our

Meditation has been going in its present form (laughter) for only twenty-five centuries and only about 5,000 years altogether. Fifty million years and they say that's all one whale! We've been sent this by our doctor, probably therapeutically! (Laughter) Because we sometimes take things too seriously and Param-Atman has a very keen sense of humour! Otherwise He wouldn't have made that enormous whale (the largest creature on our planet) sing such funny little songs to convey a 30-mile message: 'Whale here'.

Miss Wright. He was singing it for a very long time before we heard it.

Dr. R. Yes, indeed. Our human ears have only been invented during the last 3 or 4 million years.

Mr. Hodge. You gave the experience of a man who died – his experience with the light – but Mr. Ouspensky had this experience with the light, but he didn't have to die to have it.

Dr. R. Not only Mr. Ouspensky but many of us have had experiences like this without having to die. But what is so important is that we all have to die in the end, the dying moment must come to each of us; and the Shankaracharya and Mr. Ouspensky both say that that moment is very important. The last conscious thought, the last desire of the dying man, is very important. There is now an enormous number of well-corroborated experiences of people who have been resuscitated, brought back, and these give one a much better idea of what we might expect, so we could learn to love and welcome the moment of death as union with the true Self that we have been in love with all our lives. That should guarantee it, shouldn't it? Do away with all fear of death?

Mr. Hodge. Shouldn't we try to get that experience more and more while we are still alive?

Dr. R. But good heavens, aren't you doing that? Oh my dear chap! (laughter) We've been at that ever since we got this House!

Pam Wheatley. I'm a bit concerned about this loss of innocence. It's my experience that this innocence grows with Meditation.

Dr. R. That's as it should be! Quite right! And so the difficulties diminish.

Pam Wheatley. To do with the innocence and freshness of the first Meditation.

Dr. R. That's why we don't like going into all the difficulties because they give people ideas – people who don't ordinarily have difficulties at all.

Mr. Howitt. Innocence is said to be the death of the intellect. The moment one stops having an aim which is what activates the intellect, then you begin to become innocent.

Dr. R. What is this loss of innocence anyway? It's to do with 'I am also something' isn't it Maureen? Said at a rather dramatic moment by the Shankaracharya. Because when you are going to see this very important Person, you should not think, 'I am also something'.

Dr. Cox. It's rather curious, isn't it, that in one part of that record of the whales they speeded it up 10 times and the whales sounded like birds. So that hearing it slightly differently, perhaps hearing ourselves slightly differently, we might have a fresher notion of ourselves.

Dr. R. It is true that organic life, the creation, is run on a scale of frequencies like a great symphony with an enormous orchestra. It is said that at any part of the earth at any given moment, some inhabitant of land, sea or air is singing the praise of the Creator.

Well, well, holiday time – getting on for twenty-five past – and I hope you have a glorious holiday and a little music and some sunshine and some sea and all that. The next Meditation Meeting for those who remain will be on August 14th (but there won't be one in September). See you then!

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